WAITING IN THE WINGS
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERFORMANCE ANXIETY AND IDENTITY

BY

Martin Wright

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS
in the Faculty
of
Education

© Martin Wright 1999

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

November 1999

All Rights reserved. This work may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy or other means, without permission of the author
The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author’s permission.
Abstract

The following paper is a conceptual study of the relationship between anxiety and individual identity as experienced in musical performance.

Conscientious musicians expect to play to the best of their abilities at every performance. In order to perform well most musicians' learn to adapt their normal feelings of anxiety and apprehension to enhance and inspire their playing. However, for a substantial percentage of musicians the physical and psychological effects of 'performance anxiety' present more serious challenges. Despite talent, musicianship, ambition and dedication the effects of performance anxiety may interfere with technical efficiency, damage physical health or in some instances end a promising career.

The relationship between performance anxiety, individual identity and musicianship is, therefore, an important aspect of the musician's art. Indeed, some theorists suggest that the primary causes of poor playing are directly related to the musicians' level of self-esteem. Other theorists suggest environmental causes, and others point to historical and cultural influences. In response to these divergent theories the multidisciplinary approach taken in this study seeks to illuminate our understanding of the influence that anxiety exerts on musicians and musicianship.
An essential ingredient adding depth and breadth to musical utterances is supplied by what Jerome Bruner calls the 'Interconnectedness of Knowledge'-an interconnectedness which leads ultimately to mind expansion and to human growth in the highest sense of that expression. And since . . . what one hears in music is a product of who one is as a human being, anything that contributes to greater humanness will contribute in the end to heightened perception in the strictly musical level. As in the course of all human endeavours, a restricted world view is invariably reflected in an impoverished creative or recreative act. The things which create awe and excitement are always greatly increased in number and intensity by the extent of experience with the world outside of oneself. Nothing is more disappointing to the listener than a musical conception that is bounded by the performers ego-which is conceived on a plane that has no horizons beyond the eighty eight black and white keys. The pianist, (musician) who is most vulnerable to an attack of extreme performance anxiety, as a matter of fact is often one who has based his art upon just such a fragile foundation. Although other factors usually contribute to his discomfort, human frailty makes unmistakable difference in his ability to resist debilitation by anxiety. The refinement of attention is directly related to ones fascination with the subject at hand, and fascination is intensified by ones growth as a human being, both the intellectually and spiritually. The ability to focus attention, as we have seen is crucial to the maintenance of psychological equilibrium in performance and ultimately to the control of anxiety.

Reubart

(Axiety and Musical Performance. p. 114)
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Yaroslav Senyshyn and Dr. Flemming Larsen for their help and encouragement during the writing of this paper.

A special thank you to Stephen Gray, for his insight and advice. I also extend my thanks to my son Joshua, as well as John Leach and friends for their continued support.
Chapter 3: Self-actualisation

Anxiety and Creative Potential
Anxiety and Self-actualisation
Anxiety, Education and Psychological Health
Hornbrook and Psychological Man
Dichotomies
Maslow and Self-actualisation
Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs
Esteem
Summary
Notes

Chapter 4: Psychology

The Anxiety or Fear Debate
The Medical and the Analytic Model
Freud and Anxiety
Summary
Notes

Chapter 5: Biology

Anxiety and the Musician
The Startle Reflex
Cannon, Freud and the Unconscious
Psychological and Physiological Reactions to Anxiety
Anxiety or Fear
Emotions and cognition
Beta Blockers
Summary
Notes

Chapter 6: Musicianship

Preparation
Musical Values
Peak Experiences
The Gypsy
Summary
Notes
Chapter 7: The Relationship Between Anxiety and Identity: Conclusion...100

Sources of Anxiety
The Musician and Anxiety
The Musician and Identity
Conclusion
Notes

Bibliography...........................................................................................................107

Appendix-i.............................................................................................................113

Research Goals
Research Instrument

Appendix ii.............................................................................................................116

Interviews
1st ...........................................................................................................116
2nd..............................................................................................................129
3rd..............................................................................................................146
4th..............................................................................................................152.
INTRODUCTION

The most unpleasant and at the same time the most universal experience, except loneliness, is anxiety. We observe both healthy and mentally disturbed people doing everything possible to ward off anxiety or to keep it from awareness.

Fromm-Reichmann

(Antiety and Identity, p. 129)

Music and the Musician

Music is a ubiquitous presence in our lives, it accompanies our most inconsequential acts and it adds dignity to our most profound and sacred ceremonies. In the supermarket, elevator and hotel lobby it is nothing more than white noise, designed to promote an unconscious acceptance of our surroundings or encourage commerce. In the church and concert hall music can, with overwhelming power, reflect our deepest and most intimate feelings.

There are many reasons why people attend musical performances, consequently no one performance will satisfy all tastes and expectations. Concert audiences can be noisy, fickle and cruelly judgmental. Nevertheless, it is safe to assume that the majority of people who attend musical performances do so for positive reasons, expecting, at the very least, that the music will be interpreted and performed with appropriate skill and artistry.

In western cultures classical music is usually played by career professionals whose individual personalities, spiritual beliefs and, to some degree musical tastes, may not necessarily be in accord with the music they are playing. As professionals, however, they
are expected to perform to a phenomenally high degree of musicianship.

Normally the attention of the audience is focused on the music. The personal problems of the third violinist or the second trombone are not relevant at that moment. In order to produce the magnificent sound of the symphony orchestra or the subtle dynamics of an Early Music Ensemble, musicians must bring to their performance a high degree of musicianship and artistry. However, for their own psychological well being musicians must be able to perform at a level of dedication, autonomy and personal strength that is not required in most occupations. When these qualities are absent there is a possibility that the performance will suffer, and if anxiety is a factor it may prevent the realisation of the musician’s full potential as an artist.

What used to be known as stage fright is better known today as performance anxiety. Anyone who has had to stand in front of a crowd and has felt their knees begin to shake and their mouth suddenly feel like dry leather will have some understanding of the degree to which anxiety can sabotage a well-rehearsed performance. Musicians, actors and many others who perform or regularly present themselves for public scrutiny are rarely in physical danger. If, however, anxiety is a factor, then the psychological well being of the performer may well be at risk.

Performance anxiety can destroy careers, relationships and physical health. These are not considerations for the audience, but they are, like an unwanted guest, a constant irritation for many musicians. Therefore, for the sake of career and health, the musician should have a comprehensive understanding of all the aspects of performance anxiety.
Purpose

According to the respondents who participated in the research that accompanies this paper anxiety is always an aspect in the success or failure of a performance. To compound the pressure artistic success is an elusive goal, and can never be taken for granted. Indeed, anxiety is just one of many obstacles which stand in the way of the artist and a satisfying musical performance. How do some musicians find the inner resources to perform while others find the stress so defeating that they are unable to reach their potential despite their talent, training, dedication and hard work? The following study addresses these questions with the aim of furthering the understanding of performance anxiety and the effect it has on the lives of musicians.

In order to keep the paper within a reasonable length this study focuses on the experiences of professional musicians who play classical music in the western tradition. This does not mean that the experience of performance anxiety is any less challenging for musicians in other fields or for the beginners who are preparing for their first performances.

What is the incidence of performance anxiety amongst professional musicians in North America? The following statistics are taken from a survey undertaken in 1988 amongst members of the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians. “Stage fright was the most frequent complaint; it was mentioned by 24% respondents as a health problem, with 16% reporting it as a severe health problem. . . . In a sample of 29 premier violinists, 83% agreed that every artist experiences some performance anxiety.” These figures are from a paper published in the journal Medical Problems of Performing Artists by Mary L. Wolf. She also makes the point that despite the reputation that drugs
are detrimental to health and career, most answers to performance anxiety involve the use of medication. It is not the purpose of this paper to argue against the use of medication, however the continued use of any form of chemical intervention whether it is prescription medication, alcohol or soft drugs such as marijuana, will eventually create a degree of dependency. Therefore, if therapeutic intervention is deemed necessary, then ideally the goal should be to promote awareness of the symptoms, whilst allowing the level of musicianship to remain unaffected.

The effects of performance anxiety are sometimes devastating to a promising career or simply damaging to the psychological health of an individual. I do not believe there is one methodology capable of meeting all the requirements in managing anxiety. To adequately research sufficient numbers of musicians and correlate their responses to a specific thesis was beyond the scope of this paper. The research goals were, therefore to collect information from four individuals concerning their experiences as musicians with performance anxiety and use their experience to build upon the conceptual study without specific reference to the data.
Chapter 1

The Age of anxiety

In certain historical periods the dilemmas of life become more pronounced, more difficult to live with, and harder to resolve.

Rollo May
(Psychology and the Human Dilemma, p. 23)

We are living in an age of anxiety. Throughout the twentieth century writers, artists, philosophers, psychologists, and many others have drawn our attention to a pervasive degree of anxiety that, they say, is unique to our age.

In this chapter some of the forces which have contributed to our contemporary experience of anxiety are painted in bold strokes. The purpose is to create a background onto which, in further chapters, we will add comprehensive detail illuminating the significant influence that anxiety exerts on contemporary life.

The Musicians Perspective

What is anxiety, and how did our modern understanding of its relationship with individual identity develop? The level of stress and anxiety present in our lives is already at a very high level. Thus, the musician who regularly experiences performance anxiety may be compounding an already stressful life with additional pressures. It is unlikely that a young musician whose playing is affected by performance anxiety will turn first to
philosophy or history for solutions. However, it is hoped that a closer look at the historical connections discussed in these pages will reveal that there is much to learn from the past.

According to Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), the existential choice between a faith in God and denying God's existence is a fundamental source of anxiety in western man. Indeed, many writers have concluded that at the heart of contemporary anxiety is a loss of spiritual values. At the same time, in western cultures, people have treated the planet as if it is indestructible. We have learned, to our dismay, that the planet's resources are finite, and so too, as a species, are we. If we continue our abusive ways. Without guiding principles and an awareness that we are not endowed with the right of hegemony over all we survey, there is reasonable cause for anxiety. The question arising from this situation and compounding our stress is, what is our purpose on this planet?

We are now in the so-called Postmodern era. In the second section we will see that Postmodernism has done nothing to alleviate the stresses that are our inheritance from the oil and grease of Modernism. We refer to the architect and social commentator Charles Jencks to aid in our understanding of Postmodernism and some of the paradoxes inherent in a pluralistic society. The chapter concludes in section three with a comment on the connection between the power of corporate advertising and the psychological manipulation of our anxieties to sell their products.
The Measure of all Things

All life on earth is sustained by the interaction of natural forces. Cataclysmic events such as the collision between earth and a meteorite which may have resulted in the extinction of the dinosaur sixty five million years ago are rare. Until the twentieth century, when our planetary home began to reveal clear signs of its vulnerability, this balance of natural forces remained largely outside the realm of human interference. Now, in a matter of a few moments our bombs are capable of annihilating the whole planet and, on a longer time scale, our environmental practices are devastating much of earth's precious life-support system.

According to Christian theology, human beings are made in God's image. In this system the human race sits imperiously at the top of a hierarchical structure giving us the right to plunder, and in many instances, irrevocably alter the earth's resources. Modern science has pointed out the errors in this anthropocentric vision, and yet, despite the advances in our knowledge, our identity and conduct remain inextricably linked to the belief in the singularly universal importance of 'Man.' Since we do not take pride of place, but still behave as if we are 'chosen,' is it not surprising that many people feel a sense of unease, a dislocation of moral and ethical standards and emotional incongruence? Like a bird in a strong wind using all its strength to stay aloft, we are utilising all our psychological resources to retain a sense of our own uniqueness.

"Man... is all"... the "perfection" of the world would be incomplete without
In his book, *Pale Blue Dot*, Carl Sagan quotes Plato and then follows with John Dunne's more poetic interpretation of man's significance in the universe: "He is not a piece of this world, but the world itself and next to the glory of God, the reason why there is a world."¹ Twentieth century science denies this divine place for 'man.' We are not at the centre of the universe; indeed, according to recent theory, we are simply products of intergalactic nuclear forces.

Current scientific theory states that we are not made in the image of a deity. According to Stephen Jay Gould we are a contingency, an interesting, but not necessarily, unique branch on the tree of life. "Homo Sapiens, Gould says, is not the foredained product of a ladder that was reaching toward our exulted estate from the start. We are merely the surviving branch of a once luxuriant bush."² More recently, Richard Dawkins has concluded from his own research into genetic programming that the human organism is nothing more than a passive vehicle for the gene to replicate itself. In the following passage Gould challenges the deterministic conclusion that is implied in Dawkins statement, he writes: "The statement that humans are animals does not imply that our specific patterns of behaviour and social arrangements are in any way determined by our genes. Potentially and determination are different concepts."³ The significance of Gould's perspective is in his willingness to let the universe unfold as it will. We need not be bound on all sides by walls of our own making; choice and potentiality remain inspiring options.

Nevertheless, given that we are conscious organisms residing in a vast and apparently unconcerned universe it is appropriate to ask, who are we and what is our purpose? The answers to these timeless questions are far more ambitious than the
following pages could adequately purport to tackle. What is addressed is the psychological difficulty of living with the symptoms of existential doubt and fear. In the following chapters described as struggles with anxiety and the related pressure on our individual identity.

Ever the self-confident rationalist, Sagan asserts that, “The nature of life on Earth, and the search for life elsewhere are two sides of the same coin - the search for who we are.” In the same book Sagan records Andrew Osiander’s attempt to reconcile science and religion. Osiander secretly inserted the following comment into the introduction of Copernicus’ book, *On the Revolution of the Heavenly Spheres* (1543): “(L)et no one expect anything in the way of certainty of astronomy, since astronomy can offer us nothing certain, lest, if anyone take as true that which has been constructed for another use, he go away from the discipline a bigger fool than when he came to it.” As an explanation Sagan adds an ironic comment, “certainty can be found only in religion.”

The conflict between a faith based religious explanation and the rationality of a scientific explanation creates the sense of unease and incongruence that many theologians, philosophers, and psychologists have observed is a hallmark of twentieth century living. Although it is not a new phenomenon, the extent of the malaise in contemporary life is, the theorists say, at the root of much human distress. Displaying both psychological and physiological symptoms, the geneses of our present anxious state is grounded in the philosophical conflict between religious faith and the apparently deterministic assertions of science. We will refer to this theme a number of times throughout the paper.
**Grand Narrative**

Following the Renaissance the development of humanistic values and the rationality of developing sciences contributed to a growing awareness of the possibilities of the individual. The Medieval faith in the divinity of man was replaced by the liberating possibilities of the autonomous individual.

René Descartes (1596-1650) is generally cited as the philosophical bridge between the dominant values of Medieval scholasticism and the subsequent development of values intrinsic to modern western thought. Descartes’ famous dictum, “I think therefore I am,” propelled western civilisation into the modern era and opened the floodgates to many of the gains and ills that have since befallen western society.

The Industrial Revolution, in particular, gained much of its momentum from an explosion in technological possibilities. New inventions created new enterprises that, coupled with the emphasis on the power of the reasoning and autonomous individual, and the idea of unlimited progress, developed into a social, political, and philosophical structure which has been described as ‘The Grand Narrative.’

One consequence of the humanistic principles that were embedded in the Grand Narrative was an early faith in Capitalism. Adam Smith’s so called *laissez faire* theory of a free market economy developed out of the eighteenth century idea that human behaviour could be rationally explained and natural events could be predicted with mathematical certainty. Smith was also influenced by the evolutionary theories of Charles Darwin. He adapted the metaphor of the jungle and the survival of the fittest to the natural ebb and
flow in the supply of money. It was an inaccurate interpretation of evolutionary principles, but at the time seemed to justify the competitive nature of a free market economy. This, one might say, has been the bed which the American Dream has slept on.

In North America, where class structures are much less ingrained than in Europe, the elevation of individual power has become the basis upon which personal identity is constructed. Identity is achieved and maintained through the display of possessions which are attained through occupations with high financial rewards and elevated social status. The pressure involved in maintaining one’s status or finding a respected place in the hierarchy is another factor contributing to high degrees of anxiety in contemporary society. For the creative person, the pressures inherent in this social construct often involve difficult decisions that involve career and family obligations.

Suzi Gablik places the onus for our precarious social, political and environmental predicament squarely upon the shoulders of excesses in the industrialised, patriarchal era more commonly referred to in historical terms as ‘Modernism.’ Since the end of the Second World War the greasy, inefficient wheels of Modernism have been replaced by a cleaner, more efficient Postmodern era. The message is however much the same: consume. Hypnotised by the mantra; consume, consume, consume; we watch as the wheels of technology roll into a bright, market-driven, corporate future.

Many artists have expressed alarm at the dark side of this message. John Grande, for example, draws attention to the subliminal influence that technology exerts on our unconscious awareness. He writes, “Technology is now so pervasive - we are surrounded
by it and live within it - we literally do not realise the extent to which we are contained by it. It is so pervasive that it has become effectively invisible, at least to our conscious minds."

Questions of modernity

Many eminent writers have undertaken the evaluation of our culture in historical terms. According to the psychoanalyst Rollo May, however, most research into contemporary behaviour by modern psychologists has frequently ignored the influence of history. Much of the early research into human psychology was carried out by behaviourists for whom history or questions of subconscious motivation were irrelevant. May and Erich Fromm disagreed with the clinical approach to human nature that the early behaviourists adopted. Without an historical perspective both writers believed they could not fully appreciate their patients needs. In order to garner a more complete understanding of how anxiety affects their musicianship I suggest musicians should also consider the importance of an historical perspective.

The twentieth century is drawing to a close; the curtain is descending on a period of human history that is as fragmented and confusing as a cubist painting. In marked contrast to the confusion of contemporary society, one hundred years ago the beginning of the twentieth century appeared to offer a future with unlimited potential. Like a chrysalis waiting for the warm winds of technology to transform the oil and grease of the industrial revolution into a cleaner and safer technological Garden of Eden. Faith in the powers of
human achievement and the possibility that the universe was logically understandable through mathematical principles contributed to an optimistic "Spirit of the Age." The architect Mies van der Rohe described this spirit in 1923 as the "Zeitgeist" of the new industrialisation. For Van der Rohe this new spirit would solve all our problems, even "social, economic and artistic ones." 7

In North America, it was especially possible to experience this "spirit" that Van der Rohe felt so keenly. It was however, a tenuous optimism and by the beginning of the 1960's it was clear that for too many people the promise was unfulfilled. An unprecedented increase in the world's population and flaws inherent in the economic and political systems of the West inevitably forced a reevaluation. Kurt Riezler had expressed this dislocation as far back as the 1940's:

Capitalists are no longer entirely sure of their capitalism, Socialists are strangely unsure of their socialism. An artificial note suggests a convulsive effort; voices are strained. Suddenly great old words have a hollow sound. Freedom? The average man knows in his heart what it means. His conscious concept, however, is tied up with and formulated in terms of these or those material conditions. They have been taken for granted - and now they are threatened. He cannot recognise freedom, and so all meaning goes overboard and leaves a vacuum. What does "freedom of speech," "pursuit of happiness," or "democracy" mean, unless I know how to earn a decent living by doing decent work? The scaffold of thinking that guides discourse begins to totter- confidence deserts, indefinite fear invades the bewildered mind, impairs our faculty of orientation and thus of action.8

Riezler's disillusionment with the unfulfilled promises of a new age reads like an epitaph for the so-called 'Age of Anxiety.' In the last sentence of the passage Riezler uses the
phrase "indefinite fear" to describe his sense of the social immobilisation that was prevalent at the time. It is interesting to note that a feeling of being immobilised is also one of the typical symptoms of performance anxiety. Some musicians report that concentration becomes increasingly more difficult as the mind and body appears to become disconnected. When large groups of people loose their nerve social dislocation is inevitable.

Art and Postmodernism

In the latter part of the twentieth century a far more cynical interpretation of history than the self-serving optimism of the Grand Narrative has emerged. One of its first principles was to deny the importance of a linear concept of history. Although it is difficult to condense or define the chameleon-like nature of Postmodernism, Susan Rubin Suleiman’s description is a useful template by which to evaluate other more convoluted definitions. She writes, (Postmodernism is) . . . “The appropriation, misappropriation, montage, collage, hybridisation, and general mixing up of visual and verbal texts and discourses, from all periods of the past as well as from the multiple social and linguistic fields of the present.”9 She asks. "Does this style have a critical political meaning or effect, or is it in Frederic Jameson’s words merely a ‘blank parody,’ . . . a ‘neutral practice’ devoid of any critical impulse or historical consciousness.”10

The evils of Postmodernism have been earnestly expressed by the art critic Clement Greenberg. He referred to Postmodernism as the antithesis of all he loved and the lowering of aesthetic standards caused by, “the democratisation of culture under industrialisation.”11 According to the negative response to Postmodernism emanating from a predominately male-oriented, art establishment lobby we are living in a bland landscape devoid of
aesthetic standards and moral values.

The phrase 'Grand Narrative' describes the humanistic values that developed in the West following the Enlightenment. Unfortunately the traditional humanistic values inherent in the Grand Narrative are frequently interpreted by the ignorant and bigoted as a vehicle for promoting rigid attitudes towards gender issues, racial differences and ethnic traditions. Postmodernism is sometimes referred to as a philosophy of resistance. Nevertheless, it cannot be fairly described as the polar opposite of religious or political Fundamentalism. Although Postmodernism denies the objectivity and rational values of Modernism, no feasible alternative is forthcoming. This is because Postmodernism extols the virtues of cultural relativism which, itself, mitigates against the formation of alternative cultural and political systems or spiritual and ethical values.

The architect and critic Charles Jencks has explained some of the confusion which has accompanied the change from Modernism to Postmodernism. His understanding of the subject is from an artist's point of view, and thankfully lacks the virulent and derisive language that is common amongst his peers.

As a commentary on post-industrial society the use of the label 'Postmodern' as a description of all art produced after 1960 misses an essential point. According to Jencks there are two quite distinct schools within the Postmodernist camp. The first is 'Postmodernism' which, he says, is an art of resistance. The rationale reads something like this: rationalism, materialism and a patriarchal ethos are intolerable. They dehumanise the lives of certain segments of the population and alienate us all from a sense of community
Postmodern artists have tried with varying degrees of success to alert us to these dangers. The second definition belongs to 'Late-Modernists,' as Jencks defines them. They do not at all share this negative view of post-industrial culture. For Late-Modernists, technology is a source of inspiration. Their creative tools are the latest software, the fastest hard drive. They use the speed of digital communication to duplicate, record and document our culture, often before we have time to analyze the meaning.

Jencks contends that both traditions started around 1960 and are both a reaction to the end of the industrial era. However, many artist's, Jencks says, "vacillate or unite the two," He continues:

This overlap, or existential mixing of categories, is what we would expect in any period after the Renaissance when, for instance, an artist such as Michelangelo moved from Early Renaissance to Mannerist and Baroque solutions of sculptural and architectural problems.12

Jencks is correct to alert us to the confusion that labelling can cause. However we should not lose sight of an inherent paradox that exists in the use of the latest technological tools to deconstruct, resist, or indeed, glorify. Either way, in depicting the materialistic culture in a generally unfavourable light, artists of the post war era have embraced the creative potential of technology to express their frustrations.
Anxiety Language and Corporate Power

Something unique is troubling contemporary society. Although technology continues to perform amazing tricks, we are not responding as coherently as we might. Why is this? Stephen Hawking suggests that the problem is situated in the lack of a coherent language. Our present means of verbal communication, he claims, fails adequately to satisfy the requirements of all save an elite few:

Up to now, most scientists have been too occupied with the development of new theories that describe what the universe is to ask the question why. On the other hand, the people whose business it is to ask why, the philosophers, have not been able to keep pace with the advance of scientific theories. In the eighteenth century, philosophers considered the whole of human knowledge, including science, to be their field and discussed questions such as: Did the universe have a beginning? However, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, science became too technical and too mathematical for the philosophers, or anyone else except for a few specialists. Philosophers reduced the scope of their inquiries so much that Wittgenstein, the most famous philosopher of this century, said, “The sole remaining task for philosophy is the analysis of language.” What a come down, from the great tradition of philosophy from Aristotle to Kant!13

This is not the forum in which to debate the demise of philosophy, however, Hawking is correct to claim that the language of science has become too technical and too mathematical for philosophers, as well as the majority of science. Therefore we might reasonably ask, what has happened to the language of daily discourse? The answer I suggest is to be found on a more prosaic level. For example, one of the main sources of contemporary insecurity is that our daily language struggles to keep pace with the force of technological change.
With the advent of new technologies in medicine and genetics, for instance, we are being forced into reconsidering our moral, ethical and spiritual relationships.

Without a common faith in religious values or an ideological commitment to the political establishment - except that we somehow agree that democracy is better than all the other options we, and especially the young, are at the mercy of the relativistic values of the market place. For instance, one of the more insidious marketing techniques of corporate advertising is the practice of raising the anxiety level of the consumer in order to sell such products as acne cream and diet pills.

Indeed, the power and influence of modern advertising is an excellent example of the hold that Postmodern relativism has on mass culture. Modern advertising measures success in numbers and almost nothing is sacred or taboo. Advertising co-opt's true radicalism and neutralises the rebellious, while maintaining the worst excesses of the competitive market place. No traditions, ethical beliefs, rituals or values are safe from the advertiser's pen. The medium is certainly the message. Overwhelming waves of information swamp our senses every day. Much of this information is useless and serves no other purpose than to create anxiety. In fact advertising relies on its ability to manipulate our greed and play on our anxieties. Envy, jealousy, elitism, and fear of the unknown are some of the classic emotional triggers that create a response in large numbers of consumers, especially the young. By comparing themselves to idealised versions of femininity, masculinity, wealth and power, many people have become hypnotised by this daily onslaught, and, unable to meet the demands placed on them, have become passive victims of corporate warfare.
Summary

In this so-called Age of Anxiety there is a substantial body of opinion that suggests that the secular and humanistic values we value in the west are inadequate. Our spiritual, ethical and moral needs are not served by the language we use or the political and religious values we espouse. If the word ‘anxiety’ is too specific perhaps the word ‘crisis’ more aptly describes our twentieth century quandary. The values inherent in the Grand Narrative have been held responsible by Postmodernist for many of our ills including the destruction of the environment in pursuit of money and power. Indeed our environment has suffered disastrously; the endless pursuit of resources and the clearing of natural space for more human activity continues to place the future of the species in doubt.

Are we the passive victims of history and are our only choices those dictated to us by economic self-interest? Postmodernism is never going to alleviate the sins of the past. Quite the opposite: Postmodernism makes use of everything. Economic self-interest is the Holy Grail of corporate ethics and it utilises everything including our fears and anxieties to enhance its position and power in the global market place. As nothing is sacred we can see why Hawking would lament the failure of language to adequately represent our needs. Familiar signs and signals send ambivalent messages. The person with the gun may be our kindly next-door neighbour or the next person who has ‘had enough of everything’ and cannot find meaning anymore.
Age Of Anxiety-Notes

3. Ibid., 251.
5. Ibid., 19.
10. Ibid., 323.
12. Ibid.,
Chapter-2

History and Philosophy

The oldest of all philosophies, that of Evolution, was bound hand and foot and cast into utter darkness during the millennium of theological scholasticism. But Darwin poured new lifeblood into the ancient frame; the bonds burst and the revivified thought of ancient Greece has proved itself to be a more adequate expression of the universal order of things than any of the schemes which have been accepted by the credulity and welcomed by the superstition of 70 later generations of men.

T.H. Huxley.

Questions of Identity

The aim of this chapter is to take from a selection of historical events those relevant factors that have contributed to the ubiquitous nature of anxiety as it is presently experienced in modern society. The chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section the emergence of a Christian identity in the fourth century highlights a darker side of religious orthodoxy which I am describing as a "We Know Best" attitude. Single-mindedness has led believers throughout history to mistakenly assume that they have the only correct explanation available for God, faith and spirituality. I suggest that this rigid interpretation of faith has often resulted in social strife for large groups of people and most significant to this study, a loss of individual identity. In the twentieth century science has cast doubt on the infallibility of deterministic values in religion and science. Eisenberg contrasts the determinism in Saint Thomas Aquinas' faith with recent discoveries in science that proposes that a degree of indeterminism is inherent in all our endeavours.
In the second section the question of individual identity becomes a matter of
cconcern. We will trace the emergence of the concept of individuality from the restrictions
of Medieval Scholasticism to the flowering of the autonomous individual that began during
the Renaissance. An optimistic faith in the powers of reason further enhanced the idea of
man occupying his place at the centre of a well-organised universe.

In the third section we see how the optimism of the Enlightenment was not
sustained through the Industrial Age. Emerging scientific discoveries in a variety of
domains created a loss of faith in the idea of the autonomous ‘man.’ Social mores became
fragmented and the self-confidence of the reasoning individual was challenged. Kierkegaard
and Freud are two very important figures in our study because they both recognised what
was happening. Kierkegaard, in adopting an existential perspective of the malaise, is
generally considered to be the first writer to recognise anxious states. Freud further
developed the idea that anxiety and fear were different phenomena and developed an
entirely new methodology for treating his ‘neurotic’ patients.

Historical Roots of Anxiety

In chapter 1 the inadequacies in our present use of language as a means of defining
or solving problems that confront contemporary society was discussed. The degree of
stress present in our daily lives reflects, in part, the difficulty we are having assimilating
and expressing religious, socio-economic, cultural and technological changes with a lexicon
that fails to properly describe and guide our thoughts and actions. An example of this
quandary is the current debate concerning the ethical problems associated with genetic engineering.

There are many other examples in history that have contributed to the development of the stresses of contemporary life. Two events in particular occurred prior to the Renaissance. The first example sheds light on the propensity we have for understanding concepts in terms of opposing forces: of dichotomies. In a religious context, for instance, there is a tendency to adopt a sanctimonious attitude towards conflicting opinions. In the fourth and fifth centuries A. D. such an attitude was present during the dissolution of Roman Paganism and the subsequent rise of early Christianity. According to Habermas, this was also the first occasion on record in which the concept of being modern was considered significant.¹ Thus, this point in history serves as an appropriate place in which to begin an exploration into the historical sources of contemporary anxiety.

In 382 the Roman's debated the future of the Altar of Victory. Prior to the appearance of early Christians in Rome the altar had been the Pagan "symbol of the gods under whom Rome had flourished."² Symmachus, pleading on behalf of those wishing the altar to be restored to its pagan rituals, addressed the gathering:

I do but ask peace for the gods of our fathers, the native gods of Rome. It is right that what all adore should be deemed one. We all look up at the same stars. We have a common sky. A common firmament encompasses us. What matters it by what kind of learned theory each man looketh for the truth? There is no one way that will take us to so mighty a secret. All this is a matter of discussion for men of leisure. We offer your majesties not a debate but a plea.³
Syrmachus' pleas did not sway the Emperors. Instead they heeded the words of Saint Ambrose, whose words Daniel J. Boorstin describes as a "simple paean to progress." Saint Ambrose answered:

I suppose that back in the good old times of chaos, the conservative particles objected to the advent of the novel and the vulgar sunlight which accompanied the introduction of order. But for all that the world moved and we Christians too have grown. Through wrongs through poverty through persecution, we have grown: and the great difference between us and you is that which you seek is surmise, we know. How can I put faith in you when you do not know what you worship?4

Boorstin comments on Symmachus' speech, "Faith preceded philosophy." Likewise, fundamentalists who, like Saint Ambrose, purport to expound eternal truths are doing no more than expressing their faith when, for example, they advocate the teaching of 'Creation Theory' as a scientific fact. When faith precedes common sense, as it does in cultures all over the world, the need for sufficient numbers of people passively to accept rigid thinking is necessary for social cohesion. As we have seen, however, the existential conflict between faith and reason challenges our recourse to easy answers and is a source of contemporary anxiety. Indeed many people in the West struggle with the awareness that they do not have a focus for their spiritual needs. Paradoxically, it is often the case that those who do say they 'know' are not seeking spiritual awareness or even truth or justice, but are in fact perpetuating traditional prejudices and thwarting hard won freedoms. It is a way of ignoring the responsibility of change and choice. There are always those who would take the easy way and give the power of choice to others rather than face the burden of responsibility that being human demands.
Scholasticism

The second event of significance that is relevant to our study occurred some eight hundred years later as the concept of being 'modern' once again surfaced. In the twelfth century the introduction of new and challenging intellectual ideas from North Africa set in motion profound social and technological changes that ring in contemporary culture like the peel of distant bells. According to the historian J. M. Roberts it was . . . "In the twelfth century, direct translation from Greek began. Euclid's mathematics, the medicine of Aristotle, Galen and Hippocrates, new interpretations of Greek thought (above all, Aristotle, thanks to the work of the Cordovan sage, Averroes) all reached the intellectuals of western Christendom through Spain."5 Until the introduction of these new ideas Medieval Europe had been in a state of chaos. As the general level of education increased however, and reforms occurred in the monasteries, scholasticism became the dominant source of intellectual thought throughout Medieval Europe.

Scholasticism represented the teachings of the Catholic Church and in particular the profound insights of Saint Thomas Aquinas. During this period a blending of classical Greek metaphysics and Catholic Theology introduced ideas that contributed to the development of modern concepts of faith, justice, equality and law. From his spiritual perspective Saint Thomas Aquinas believed that reason could be allied with faith in order to prove the existence of God. Francis Bacon (1561-1626) later challenged the church and its reliance on unsubstantiated beliefs. He sought and believed he had found a scientific basis upon which to place one's faith in God.

The writer Henry Thomas describes this apparent clash of ideals:
In their efforts to discover the meaning of life Aquinas and Bacon adopted methods that were directly opposite. Aquinas had moved from faith to reason; Bacon from reason to faith. Aquinas, the churchman had said: my mind must prove only what my heart believes" But Bacon, the statesman replied: “My heart must believe only what my mind can prove.” Yet the two philosophers arrived in their different ways at practically the same conclusion. The paths to the truth are many; the truth is one.6

Determinism and Indeterminism

As Thomas and others have observed, the truth is often present in opposing philosophies. And yet, from John A. Eisenberg’s secular perspective the truths that Saint Thomas and Bacon sought placed unwarranted faith in deterministic principles. This historical reliance on determinism continues to create social dislocation. Eisenberg alerts us to the mistaken belief that we can rationally determine and control the consequences of our decisions solely through reason.

Eisenberg proposed that a degree of indeterminism is always present in human calculations. For example, he observed that the predominant means of social and moral control in contemporary Western culture is based on a faith in large rationally constituted systems. Nevertheless, he proposes that we cannot predict with absolute certainty all the ramifications of our decision making, because, as he says, inherent in the rationality is a degree of indeterminacy. Our faith in these systems, Eisenberg contends, is not meeting the needs of civil control. Politicians, he believes enact laws that contain within their intended results unpredictable and frequently socially unhealthy consequences.
According to Eisenberg placing all our faith in rational systems is not new, and to illustrate his point he cites Saint Thomas Aquinas, "Everything can be set right... in following God’s Eternal Law." Thus, with God at the centre of a rationally determined universe and all human behaviour, all moral, civil and physical laws are packaged to fit human requirements. As appealing as this philosophy may be Eisenberg argues that it is at odds with recent discoveries in mathematical logic, science and history. He concludes that how we do things constitutes what we know, which, he says, infers the indeterminacy inherent in our technology. "Detached observation and reason, he concludes, cannot serve either as reflective mirrors or illuminating lamps of reality, for they are part of reality and make it indeterminate." 

Throughout this study there are examples of polarised thinking. Debates that lead to entrenched political or philosophical positions are of significance because within the patriotic defence of these positions lies the source of much social unrest. Northern Ireland and Palestine are two pertinent global examples. From the perspective of the individual attempting to understand the world well enough to lead a productive life, reconciling opposing philosophies can be a daunting task. Nevertheless there is a case to be made in perceiving these forces as two sides of the same coin. For instance, objective thinking is only productive or even possible to a point where subjective thinking becomes necessary in order for survival. This point is further developed in chapter 3. Just as light can be described as a wave or a beam, proving indeterminism over determinism does not reveal the whole picture, and despite Eisenberg's efforts to devalue determinism, for many people faith in deterministic principles continues to answer the fundamental questions that modern science cannot.
The Renaissance

We have seen that despite the apparent contradictions, the identity of the individual in contemporary society continues to be fashioned by faith. Often bitter and cynical, the modern individual experiences anxiety because this faith is no longer on solid spiritual, philosophical, or moral ground. We will now return to a particularly appropriate point in history where these demanding questions of faith, modernism and individuality - as we understand these concepts today - began to have a profound and lasting effect on social discourse.

Although the idea of individuality was not unknown in the Middle Ages choices were few for the individual. Hiding in the dark corners of the human psyche lurked superstition, the occult and unknown demons:

... and then came the Renaissance - the reawakening of the human mind.

Astrology gave way to astronomy, alchemy stepped aside for chemistry, demonology became transformed into anthropology, and superstition retreated under the floodlight of science\(^9\)

Descartes significance in the development of Western thought is well documented. He was a prolific writer on scientific matters and is often described as the father of modern philosophy. Descartes importance is described by the writer John Cottingham: “He destabilised the traditional doctrines of mediaeval and Renaissance scholasticism, and laid down the foundation for what we think of as the modern scientific age”\(^10\) What is
especially pertinent for our investigation into the source of contemporary anxiety is found in Cottingham's concluding remarks, "... The so-called 'mind-body problem' which continues to engage the attention of philosophers today bears witness to the compelling nature of the issues with which Descartes wrestled. The relationship between the physical world as described in the objective language of mathematical physics, and the inner world of the mind."\(^{11}\)

Descartes reasoned that he could state without a doubt that he has a thinking mind, but he reasoned he was unable to say indubitably that he has a body. From this insight he reasoned that the mind and the body have separate existences operating like two clocks keeping perfect time. This concept forms the basis of Cartesian Dualism. Whatever the mind perceived, he described as Res Extensa, i.e., matter. Therefore, because matter is subject to the logic of mathematical principles we - our bodies and all of nature - could be understood solely in terms of mechanical laws. This unique and fundamentally mistaken perception, persuaded other thinkers to draw the conclusion that human beings are in effect machines, wound up by God, living out an inevitable plan according to His will.

During the industrial age it was fashionable to compare the way in which the human mind works with hydraulics and pistons. Later, comparisons with electrical systems seemed to reduce the mind to an elaborate circuit board with on/off switches. Today we often hear the working mind itself described in terms of computers. The human mind is 'hard wired' for action, with a 'central processing unit' maintaining equilibrium from which we 'download' our memory banks to access information.
Dualism

The machine metaphor satisfied everything beyond the mind. The body, like everything else was mortal, comprehensible through mathematical principles; but what of the mind? Descartes was a deeply religious man who respected and feared the power of the Catholic Church. It is not surprising therefore that his reasoning led him to the comforting conclusion that the mind, the soul and the intellect form a trinity which he called Res Cogitans. This Holy Alliance was not mechanical, but an essence that exists separately from the determined principles of the body contributing to the stabilising concept of the immortal soul. Cartesian Dualism has had a profound influence on western life. Many writers have concluded that this apparent separation of the mind from the body is a direct source of the psychological and spiritual alienation characteristic of individual identity in twentieth century life.

Cartesian reasoning became a significant factor in the development and expansion of industrialism. A philosophy of rational thinking, based on the indubitability of mathematical principles, supported and justified long held ideas of man's supremacy over nature. Cassirer writes, “Modern philosophy began with the principle that the evidence of our being is impregnable and unassailable.” Standing in his philosophical tower, like a king surveying his vast kingdom over which he believes he has sole dominion, we can imagine the imperious rational thinker of the seventeenth century feel the intoxicating power of new technologies, and the surge of individual importance which accompanied the accumulation of new wealth.
Reason and Emotions

The seventeenth-century interpretation of dualism is of particular interest in the present study of anxiety and its relationship with individual identity. Spinoza (1632-1677), for example, concluded that the body played no part in the management of feelings. Subjective emotions such as fear and hope, he said, were a matter of one's state of mind and therefore reason could be harnessed to manage these subjective responses. Cassirer described, somewhat chillingly, Spinoza's theory as "a mathematical theory of the moral world."¹³

As any anxious musician, suffering days of increasing physical discomfort prior to performing may attest, the control of emotions through reason alone is far from a realistic proposition. For instance, contemporary research suggests that the specific physical reactions which the body displays when subject to anxiety are so intrinsically associated with the emotional reactions that the duality theory seems illogical.

Psychology and Scientific Credibility

Psychology has always aspired to be taken seriously as a science. The Psychoanalyst Rollo May believed that this need for scientific credibility explains why an irrational emotion like anxiety was largely ignored during The Age Of Reason. The reasoning individual during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries would not have accepted the existence of an irrational emotional state such as anxiety. Fear was already a well-documented, visible and universal phenomenon. Anxiety did not lend itself to logical descriptions or successful management through reason alone; therefore it had no place in a reasoning world.
According to May there was a period following the Renaissance in which the application of reason served as a useful antidote to the fear and the, as yet, unacknowledged feelings of anxiety. The shadow of Medieval life was still evident. Although, for instance, witch burning had stopped, the devils and demons that lurked in the dark corners of daily life remained. Nevertheless, the future beckoned and the man who believed himself to be a rational, autonomous individual would be unlikely to allow superstition or occult powers to intimidate the harmony between himself and the well ordered universe.

Pascal

Not surprisingly, Cartesian faith in reason did not remain unchallenged. The philosophers John Locke (1632-1704) and David Hume (1711-1766), for example, believed that scientific enquiry could only advance empirically through observation and experience, and not in the heady, unsubstantiated domain of deductive reasoning. Others, such as Blaise Pascal (1623-1622) were opposed on theological grounds.

Pascal, like Descartes, was a brilliant mathematician. He accepted that the deductive principles of geometry were capable of revealing universal laws. Pascal's philosophy differed from Descarte's, however, in a fundamental way. Human behaviour, Pascal claimed, could not be contained within the parameters of mathematical logic. "The mind of man defies rational analysis," he said. Rather than attributing rational explanations to human behaviour he was impressed by the chaotic and contingent qualities of human life. In Pascal's philosophy, the mind was not capable of understanding itself through rational means. Pascal believed that all our "airy speculations" would come to naught if they are
not based on the evidence of our own experience. He added, “Contradiction is the very element of human existence. Man has no “nature” - no simple or homogeneous being. He is a strange mixture of being and non-being. His place is between these two opposite poles.”

Despite his substantial reputation as a mathematician, philosopher and psychologist, Pascal derived little peace of mind from his worldly acclaim. Indeed, the manner of his writing suggests a tendency towards neurotic thinking:

> When I consider the brief span of my life, swallowed up in the eternity before and behind it the small space that I fill, or even see engulfed in the infinite immensity of spaces which I know not, and which know not me, I am afraid, and wonder to see myself here rather than there; for there is no reason why I should be here rather than there, now rather than then.°

Like many before and after, Pascal chose faith to sustain him through the turmoil of living. For Pascal there was no certainty or comfort in rational, metaphysical, or existential attempts at comprehending or explaining human existence. Faith alone, he believed, would bring comfort, not because faith alone purports to have all the answers, but because it admits we cannot know all things - only the mind of God can do this. Thus, from Pascal’s perception, the Socratic injunction to “Know Thyself” is an irrational and vain grasp at a certainty that can never be attained. The best efforts of man lead only to misery; man is ultimately a lost, hopeless and ignorant soul. Give Up! is Pascal’s message - only God knows best:
Know, then, haughty man, what a paradox you are to yourself, impotent reason; be silent, imbecile nature; learn that man infinitely surpasses man, and hear from your master your true condition, which you are ignorant of. Listen to God. 16

Such an all-pervasive attack on human endeavour and a passive submission to God is difficult to accept. I believe the world pulses with potential and passions that are deeply significant and meaningful to the individual: love, sex, childbirth, playing the ‘moonlight sonata,’ or climbing Mount Everest. These are not futile vanities; we burst with options, choices and potentiality. Nevertheless, Colin Wilson echoes Pascal’s lament when he writes, “They,” (Outsiders) . . . “saw clearly what so many Outsiders have stated: that no man who has ever lived has solved the problem of living; that all men are failures.” 17

When the glass is always half empty it is easy to make a depressingly nihilistic case condemning man for his abject failings. The end result will always be open to criticism, and we could go on denigrating with impunity all human endeavour and potential.

Voltaire (1694-1778) was also not enamoured with this aspect of Pascal’s philosophy whom he described as, “this sublime misanthrope.” Peter Gay comments that Voltaire, rather typically, came to man’s defence. In the following adaptation of Voltaire’s words Gay writes:

Admittedly man’s nature is mixed; it contains “good and evil, pleasure and pain” heady passions and cautious reason. But this does not make man an enigma, a religious puzzle to be solved only by submission to God. Man’s contradictions arise in nature, and they must be understood through the science of man. Pascal’s lament on the human
condition may be eloquent, but they paralyse the will, make men revel in their wretchedness and face the world in despairing passivity. "Man is made for action, as fire tends upwards, and the stone downwards."18

Process and End Product

We are, indeed, made for action, and if that action makes us anxious, we have the capacity to understand the processes involved. We should, however be clear about our goals. For any creative individual, especially in the case of the anxious musician, the difference between process and end product should always be clear. For example, the perfectionist musician who concentrates solely on the end product is likely to miss the special energy that is part of the process of making music and the performances are likely to be stiff and wooden. When musical standards and goals are set too high, then the perfectionist may never be free to get out of the way of the inner critic and simply perform. If however, the process of making music is displayed with distracting self-conscious mannerisms, attention may be drawn to the performer and away from the music. In both examples, neither the music nor the audience is served and the performer may well perpetuate his or her anxiety because neither musical excellence nor personal satisfaction is attained.

Choice and Responsibility

In comparison with the Medieval artist, the individual performer in contemporary society is relatively free to choose his or her own destiny. We have seen that during the Renaissance the first steps towards our modern concept of individualism were taken.
Frankel writes:

The concept of the individual, as we have come to know and use it is the product of gigantic historical process of social disengagement . . . Family, village craft, class church, and sex it came to be believed, told men something about who people were, and what their rights and opportunities should be; but these classifications did not tell everything . . . And the object of individualism as a social movement was to release men from irrevocable subservience to any group, and to give them some choice about their associations and obligations. 19

Increased freedom meant more autonomy for the individual. It also brought the stress of being responsible for making choices that hitherto had been the prerogative of the church or higher secular authority.

Loss of Reason

May suggests that the modern concept of anxiety began to emerge in the nineteenth century. The gradual loss of faith in the power of reason accompanied a widespread development and subsequent separation of a number of scientific disciplines. The defining image of human autonomy that marked the optimism of the Enlightenment became fragmented as the sciences split off into separate disciplines.

Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) was an astute social commentator who recognised this disunity and, according to May, Kierkegaard “broke down the dichotomy between psychology and philosophy, . . . recognising the whole individual as a feeling and acting as well as a thinking organism.” 20 Kierkegaard believed that passion could not be divorced from thinking, and he advanced theories of anxiety that for the first time recognised the
important role anxiety plays in the development of the self.

Kierkegaard is often cited as the first person to recognise and describe the qualitative difference between anxiety and fear. He noted the affect that the decline in trust in rational thinking was having on the psychological well being of his contemporaries. In doing so Kierkegaard began the process which has lead to our modern understanding of anxiety. Kierkegaard is also considered by many to be the first to write from an existentialist perspective. Our existential choice was, he said, between faith in God or a denial of God’s existence; a choice that inevitably led to anxiety. Choosing faith rather than denying a spiritual life was, therefore, our most fundamentally existential source of anxiety. At risk was our self-esteem, our relationship with ourselves and our society, and ultimately our lives as spiritual beings. This is a very profound observation, and it is the basis upon which I make my exploration into the relationship between anxiety and personal identity.

The nineteenth-century individual would no longer have felt protected by the dogmatic proscriptions of religious orthodoxy or the deterministic explanation of Cartesian Dualism. Doubt emerged as an unsettling factor in the moral and ethical life of the individual. From a psychological perspective it is not surprising that, for the individual, a ‘diffuse’ anxiety became a symptom of this new responsibility:

For the words that go with the concept of individual are words like “doubt,” “decision,” and “choice.” Above all, choice. Men discover their individual identities when they make a break with what they have been told, . . . For there is no getting around the fact that the thought of being an individual, when its full force dawns on one, is a rather
formidable and frightening thought.  

May asserts that both Kierkegaard and Sigmund Freud recognised the fragmentation of philosophical, cultural and aesthetic life in the nineteenth century. He suggests that both men sought a "new unity of personality." Kierkegaard recognised that in order to advance through the pitfalls and dangers of life we should not deny or hide from challenges. He advocated that each individual must face the potentially hazardous waters and the emotional rapids that accompany doubt and choice. From this courageous stance developed the potential for self-actualisation.

Freud observed that suppressing feelings and emotions, in previous centuries dismissed as irrational, created psychological symptoms he labelled 'neurotic'. These suppressed feelings and emotions were the result, he said, of repressed libidinal energy emanating from the subconscious. In Freudian terms then, we become perpetual victims of subconscious states, not courageous managers, making conscious choices as Kierkegaard advocated.

Summary

Both May and Fromm observed that the competitive nature of western culture has severely damaged the ability of the individual to find a personal sense of self-worth. To our detriment, our esteem is located in the use of the power that economic and social status enables us to exert over others.

In contrast to the existential choices of modern society the communal nature of
Medieval society recognised the individual primarily in his or her relationship to God. The rise of the economically powerful individual who attained and maintained his power through various means, moral or not, created a climate of aggressive competitiveness which has remained the basis of our economic and social life ever since. Unfortunately, the consequences of this competitive focus are an isolation of the individual and a loss of meaningful intercourse within communities. "When man lost faith in religion and reason what could he believe in? Nothing," argues Donald Goodwin. He continues with his own, all too familiar, catalogue of ills that in many respects characterises the historical journey from Medieval chaos to twentieth-century anxiety. He writes:

The Age of Anxiety has been attributed to loss of religious faith, a decline in morals, the deterioration in family and community life, disillusionment in science, excessive individualism, materialisation, secularisation, industrialisation, urbanisation the threat of nuclear annihilation - all leading to inner confusion alienation, uncertainty with respect to values and leaving us as Auden says "as unattached as tumbleweed." Goodwin makes an interesting point, however when he asserts that we also lost a lot of the normal fears that plagued men in the previous centuries. Diseases, fear of animals, of tyrants, of starvation are no longer the predominant preoccupation of people in the west. As Goodwin says, a way to avoid anxiety is to have fear; life was a frightening business in previous centuries.

The traditional rituals and ceremonies that we associate with religious adherence are disappearing. Fewer rituals mean fewer rights of passage and a mistrust in myths. Previous generations derived personal and cultural identity through these celebrations. If personal
identity is buried behind poverty we may turn to simplistic external “authorities” for our salvation. For some the inflexible dogma of religious fundamentalism is the answer. For others the erection of false earthly idols, who have the political solution to our perceived prejudices and hates, may provide solace. Thus, without a strong sense of personal autonomy, it is easy to fall victim to single-minded pronouncements and rigid personal philosophies. As a consequence we can fail to mature and we may seek approval and direction in all the wrong places.
History and Philosophy-Notes

3. Ibid., pp. 69-70.
4. Ibid., 70.
8. Ibid., 3.
9. Thomas. Understanding the Great Philosophers. 188.
11. Ibid., 191.
13. Ibid., 22.
14. Ibid., pp. 11-12.
21. Frankel. The Love of Anxiety. 112.
23. Ibid.
Chapter-3

Self-actualisation

By "self-realization" I mean . . . a persons use of his talents, skills and powers to his satisfaction within the realm of his own freely established realistic set of values.

Frieda Fromm-Reichmann
(in., Anxiety and Identity. p. 134)

Anxiety and Creative Potential

The physical and psychological effects of anxiety have been interpreted in various ways. For example, Freud originally proposed two classifications; 'normal' and 'neurotic.' For our present discussion these two concepts will suffice. A more detailed account of the pathological symptoms of anxiety is discussed in chapter 4. Normal anxiety is sometimes referred to as 'diffuse' or 'free floating.' This is a description of a level of anxiety that is generally present in all our lives. Some practitioners place performance anxiety in this category; others are inclined to associate it with neurotic anxiety. Neurotic describes behaviours that are profound enough to impede normal functioning. For some musicians anxiety is so severe, disrupting normal functioning to such a degree, that the artists' full potential is never realised. As I have already stated neurotic anxiety can sabotage a promising career, prevent a talent from public recognition, and be so physiologically and psychologically damaging that in extreme cases suicide becomes the final option.

We should remember, however that the word 'neurotic' is just a word, it is not a
life sentence and it does not describe the entire person. Individuals behave in neurotic ways. We may even describe someone as having a neurotic personality. Unfortunately the label ‘neurotic’ is difficult to remove and creative individuals are especially vulnerable to accusations that pigeon-hole them as a particular class of unstable personality.

The following chapter, which is in two sections, explores the concept of self-actualisation. In the first section self-actualisation is defined according to the writings of Frieda Fromm-Reichmann. Her definition paints a picture of mental and emotional congruence which, I propose, the aspiring as well as the experienced musician will find instructive as an aid in managing the challenges of professional life.

Also in this section we discuss the fact that there is no empirical proof that a state of mind we call self-actualisation exists. It is a concept, and schools of thought differ in their willingness to give credence to unsubstantiated hypotheses. Indeed, the very act of giving credence to hypothetical states of mind is for some theorists a symptom of a larger malaise that is endemic throughout society. I am referring to the preoccupation with the introspective life of the individual. For example, the English Drama Educator David Hornbrook has maintained a particularly acrimonious debate with his colleagues many of whom have embraced the idea that the student’s emotional well-being is of paramount significance. Hornbrook’s objections to this trend are relevant to our discussion because self-actualisation might also be characterised as an obsessive preoccupation with self, a narcissistic preoccupation that ignores the bigger picture of the collective human experience.
The philosophical and psychological ramifications of dichotomised thinking is another factor that emerges from the debate between Hornbrook and his dissenting colleagues. History teaches that entrenched beliefs frequently create unnecessary strife. The first section ends with a reference to recent research which suggests that perceiving of concepts in pairs is a normal function of the human brain. May describes the unrealistic conclusions which dichotomised thought can produce. A realistic perspective, he says, derives from a willingness to consider both sides.

The second section of the chapter is devoted to the theories of Abraham Maslow. His name is synonymous with the concept of self-actualisation and the wider subject of human potentiality. Maslow is particularly significant to this study because he did not limit his research to the behaviour of mentally ill or neurotic personalities. He also studied the behaviour of psychologically healthy individuals - a unique approach in the 1950's. Maslow's well known 'Hierarchy of Needs' is a theoretical structure that mapped out a process by which an individual might obtain self-actualisation. Maslow's theories form an important aspect of my thesis. It is my hope that the musician who struggles with performance anxiety will find inspiration and encouragement in his writing.

The musicians' personal journey of realising his or her full potential is related to Maslow's concept of self-actualisation. The value we place on our identity is inextricably connected to our sense of self. If anxiety remains manageable and neurosis is not a debilitating factor we shall see that there is always the potential for growth.
Anxiety and Self-actualisation

The term self-actualisation is also defined as self-realisation by the psychoanalyst Frieda Fromm-Reichmann. Her definition is quoted at the heading of this chapter. She alludes to the level of consciousness that an individual may experience given the successful use of skills and talents allied within a realistic set of personal values. This level of awareness is unlikely to be attained when neurotic anxiety is governing individual behaviour. If, however, normal anxiety is perceived in terms of potential and not as a negative phenomena to be conquered, I suggest, that anxiety can be a force which, if used courageously, enhances the potential of the individual.

Unfortunately, as a concept, self-actualisation and its relationship with anxiety remains elusive. Many Freudian analysts and those psychologists with an existential humanist approach to psychotherapy have proposed their own subjective definitions that, in effect, are remarkably similar to one another. To date, however, there remains a lack of empirical proof to substantiate their theories. Behaviourists, for example, have always been especially keen to attribute empirically proven laws to human actions, while dismissing as unscientific, those theories that cannot be proven through standard research procedures.

Although he was a scientist Maslow disputed the behaviourists rigid adherence to objectivity. He wrote: “The persistent attempt to make science completely autonomous and self-regulating and to regard it as a disinterested game, having intrinsic arbitrary chess like rules, the psychologist must consider unrealistic, false and even anti-empirical.”1
Many of these laws that Maslow referred to were deduced following experiments with animals. The educator Graham Richards cautions that the inspiration for this kind of research seems to be the desire "to predict and control behaviour."\(^2\) Richards also alludes to more constructive trends in research that attempts to find ways for others to understand themselves well enough to "resist attempts to predict and control them."\(^3\)

Encouraging personal autonomy such as Richards described was an important aspect of trends in humanistic psychotherapy that Maslow and others developed after the second world war. A liberal perspective which placed satisfaction of introspective needs at the heart of its methodology appears to be in direct opposition to the controlling aspirations of the empirically oriented behaviourists. Nevertheless Ernst Cassirer believed a more philosophical perspective revealed similarities in their goals. He suggested that the debate between the introspective humanistic approach and the rationalistic are not so much antithetical as different methods attempting to attain the same goal; that is, "self knowledge."\(^4\) Despite Cassirer’s cogent observation, post-war Psychology has frequently formed into opposing schools of thought which, not surprisingly, become entrenched in their own form’s of philosophical and methodological dogma. Nevertheless, although psychoanalytic and behaviouristic theories differ on fundamental issues, both schools of thought are inclined to characterise human potential within negative or deterministic values. Huxley described this form of thinking as "environmental determinism" he writes:

> We have grown accustomed to books on the science of Behavior in which no reference is made to the behaver’s hereditary make-up; we are all too familiar with psychoanalytic case histories in which there is never the smallest indication of what sort of creature, biologically speaking the patient was.\(^5\)
From a philosophical and historical perspective both existential and psychoanalytic theories have a better understanding of anxiety than either the behaviourist or the more recent cognitive psychological theories. Particularly the relationship between anxiety and self-actualisation. Nevertheless, the more successful methodologies developed to assist sufferers of anxiety disorders in recent years have largely rejected an over-emphasis of introspective concepts as inappropriate in an applied context. Although introspective thinking is an integral component of our psychological makeup, as Cassirer points out, it does not in itself allow for a well-rounded concept of human nature:

Without introspection, without an immediate awareness of feelings, emotions, perceptions, thoughts we could not even define the field of human psychology. Yet it must be admitted that by following this way we can never arrive at a comprehensive view of human nature. Introspection reveals to us only that small sector of human life which is accessible to our individual experience. It can never cover the whole field of human phenomena. Even if we should succeed in collecting and combining all the data, we should still have a very meagre and fragmentary picture - a mere torso - of human nature.6

Anxiety, Education and Psychological Health

We can see that there is no one single perspective on the truth and our understanding of what constitutes self-knowledge is equally open to philosophical debate. A respectful exchange of views is clearly preferable to the predominance of one philosophical system over another.

Theories of education practice have been especially vulnerable to this unfortunate dichotomisation of philosophical principles. Polarised positions regarding teaching
Methodologies have resulted in particularly acrimonious debates. In Britain, for example, many drama teachers, influenced by trends in humanistic psychology, have focused their efforts predominately on the development of the emotional life of their students. In doing so they have met strong opposition from other drama teachers, educators from other disciplines and bureaucratic agencies who are alarmed at what they consider to be an excessive emphasis on the introspective life of the student. The primary purpose of education they say, is to prepare students intellectually and socially to become productive members of society.

From a broader social, cultural and political context questions arise out of this debate that challenge the humanistic perception of psychological health. For example, we might ask, is the humanist focus on the introspective life of the individual a narcissistic ambition which inevitably leads to the development of individuals who are emotionally and intellectually unprepared for social responsibility? The Drama Educator David Hornbrook (1991) argues that a primary focus on feelings and the evangelistic enthusiasm that some drama teachers have adopted promoting an experiential approach to drama education has been detrimental to the overall education of young students in Britain.

*Hornbrook and Psychological Man - The Fallacy of the Individual*

We have seen that the emergence of a psychological perspective of human consciousness developed, in part, as a result of a steady decline in transcendent spiritual values which began during the Renaissance. Without satisfactory spiritual or religious explanations, a secular view predominated and a level of anxiety is said to have appeared in the individual identity of citizens which has been filled in contemporary society by a
preoccupation, (Hombrook might say an obsession), with the torso of human nature - the interior, psychological life of the individual.

Without a spiritual base or safety net, how are we as human beings to understand ourselves and our place within social and cultural discourse. According to Hombrook, what he calls “psychological man” is an unsatisfactory response to this fundamental question. Hombrook’s profound mistrust of our modern preoccupation with the individual is well illustrated in the following: “Both psychology and phenomenology can be seen as twentieth-century responses to secularism that seeks to mystify the self and to create a morality of introspection.” He concludes, . . . “as a consequence of this inward preoccupation . . . we are in a vacuum, an . . . existential, narcissistic, wilderness around which we circle in search of truth, value and meaning.”

Hombrook refers also to the social psychologist David Hargreaves who echoes Hombrook in the following unequivocal description of the problem: “The fallacy of the individual” or “the belief that if only schools can successfully educate every individual pupil in self-confidence, independence and autonomy then society can with confidence be left to take care of itself.”

We may agree with Hargreaves in his assertion that too much emphasis on the individual will not necessarily result in ideal citizenry. However, to dismiss the concept of the individual as a fallacy is a much less palatable concept. Where is the role of potentiality in this perspective? Where is the inner life of the individual? Hargreaves’ views were influenced by the American sociologist George Herbert Mead. Mead’s research led him to
the belief that the "self is a social structure." From this insight he concluded that . . . "The self is not inborn . . . the self arises from the social experience of interacting with others."9

This is a variation of the familiar Tabula Rasa or Clean Slate theory which Locke hypothesised upon in the late seventeenth century. It is an unsatisfactory hypothesis. A far more enlightened perspective proposes, as Huxley has, that "nature and nurture are always synergetic."10 The self that forms from its interactions in society is not just a neutral entity without potentiality. Whatever the self is, it is much more than a reactive agent without a dynamic or unique inner life. It is a complicated mix of genetic, hereditary and social factors. The Psychologist Hans Eysenck illustrates this point from his studies into introversion and extroversion:

Many groups have been studied apart from American and English samples: Japanese, Nigerians, Indians, Greeks . . . We may conclude that this aspect of personality is deeply founded in human nature and is not the accidental product of any particular national or cultural environment. The suggestion is plain that we are here dealing with some genetic feature of humankind that emerges regardless of environmental pressures.11

Eysenck's studies reveal that theories of human behaviour which seek definitive answers solely on the basis of environmental influences will produce faulty conclusions. When we neglect the inner life of the individual we objectify human behaviour. When we reduce data to statistics, we can, as Graham Richard said, perceive of human behaviour in terms of prediction and control. What we miss however, is the well-spring of human creativity, and we ignore at our peril the fantastic diversity in human potential. Thus, the more we attempt to turn our misguided understanding of human actions into measures for
conformity and predictive consequences, the shallower and more colourless will social discourse become. As a result, the possibilities in each one of us to achieve our full potentiality may be diminished or aborted in favour of conformity and social expedience.

Dichotomies

As we have seen, the separation of ideas and concepts into opposing camps frequently results in ideological entrenchment from which erroneous conclusions are drawn. According to Claude Lévi-Strauss this phenomena of explaining concepts in pairs is a product of the way our brains work. Stephen Jay Gould writes:

We seem so driven to division by two, even in clearly inappropriate circumstances, that I must agree with several schools of thought. . . . In viewing dichotomisation more as an inherent mechanism of the brains operation than as a valid perception of external reality.\textsuperscript{12}

An excellent example of how polarised thinking distorts our perception of reality is illustrated in Rollo May's book \textit{Psychology and the Human Dilemma}. The ‘dilemma’ we face, says May, is the unnecessary dichotomy of our subjective and objective perceptions of the world. May asserts that \textit{both} concepts are necessary for healthy functioning. It is one of the paradoxes of human life that we must live not only with the subjective awareness that we are beings; living by determined laws and patterns that require sustenance and certain amounts of sleep, but also that we posses the objective knowledge that we are separate and individual, capable of making autonomous choices and aware that one day we must surrender to the inevitability of death. May writes:
My point is that both are necessary - necessary for psychological science, for effective therapy, and for meaningful living. I am also proposing that in the dialectical process between these two poles lies the development and deepening and widening, of human consciousness.\(^\text{13}\)

This is an inspiring perspective for anyone seeking to understand how human consciousness can be used to its full potential. May breaths life into tired concepts, finding unity where others see conflict and disharmony. In contrast to May's life affirming statement compare B. F. Skinner's gloomy determinism. He writes:

(\text{The}) \ldots \text{"individual organism simply reacts to its environment, rather than to some inner experience of that environment, (therefore) the bifurcation of nature into physical and psychic properties can be avoided."}\(^\text{14}\)

I suggest that the result of objectifying human behaviour to the point of denying any significance to the subjective experience of the individual is a form of psychological totalitarianism.

There is already copious amounts of literature devoted to describing the misery and failures of humanity. Any historical perspective of the distressingly repetitive damage that we inflict on ourselves and the planet might well say something similar to the following:

\text{History for the great majority of men and women who have lived and died, has been a tale of unremitting labour and oppression, of suffering and depredation - so much so that, as Schopenhauer had the courage to confess, it might well have been preferable for many people never to have been born at all.}\(^\text{15}\)
Although it would be foolish to deny the clarity of objective thought it does not, as May suggests, give a holistic picture. We do not know, for example, the individual stories of the masses that Schopenhauer condemns to having led useless existences. It would be more courageous - but would mean getting one’s hands muddy - to inquire into the faith and hope, the passions and small acts of heroism, which undoubtedly kept the individual spirits going as long as they did in the face of their personal horrors. For instance one need only think of the amazing stories of survival and faith that occurred in the concentration camps of the Second World War.

I am not suggesting that the performer ignore the terrible realities of human existence or adopt a Pollyanna attitude to the serious political issues of the day. On the contrary the ability to express the full range of human emotions is an intrinsic component of the musicians art. Given the high demands and expectations placed on the performer, how can the musician maintain a sufficiently healthy psychological attitude to life and art? We want the musician to be receptive to the vicissitudes of life, yet at the same time maintain a healthy perspective and a strong self-image in order to give of his or her best on the concert platform.

From May we learned that maintaining both subjective and objective perspectives is an important aspect of sustaining a healthy psychological outlook. In the next section we continue to explore ways of attaining a healthy mental attitude to all our endeavours. Abraham Maslow’s concept of self-actualisation contains wisdom which I suggest, is directly applicable to the healthy management of the musician’s life and art.
Maslow and Self-actualisation

In America, during the 1950's, Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers and other psychologists and therapists began developing an existential humanist philosophy that stressed the positive aspects of psychological health. They developed a radically different philosophy from the Psychodynamic theories that were employed by most analysts and psychologists at the time. In setting out the parameters of these new ideas Maslow labelled the movement "The Third Force." A response to the two highly influential forces of Freudian Psychoanalysis and Behaviourism that dominated psychological practice in the pre-war years.

Maslow concluded that Freudian Psychoanalytic practices had made a profound error in using the suffering of neurotics as a paradigm for judging healthy motivational characteristics in human beings. To understand properly the qualities that constitute positive mental health he advocated the study of the motivational factors behind healthy and strong persons as well as the "defensive manoeuvres of crippled spirits."16

Likewise, Maslow believed behaviourists ignored the possibilities and potentialities of the individual. According to behaviourist theory of that period personal histories and the conflicts that elicit emotions and passions were too subjective for the rigours of scientific scrutiny. Behaviourists, were therefore, not interested in studying consciousness or the phenomenology of mental activity. Instead the objectifying and measuring of human responses to certain stimuli formed the theoretical basis of behaviourism.
Self-actualised individuals, Maslow claimed, could access these hitherto murky and dangerous aspects of the human psyche because, he said, they were psychologically prepared to choose their own angels or demons. This was a radically different perspective of human potential. In the Maslovian concept of psychological health self-actualised individuals are not victims, nor are they automatons, but highly conscious beings with healthy and thriving inner spirits, able to make intelligent choices and act as responsible citizens.

From Maslow’s scientific perspective, existential humanism grew out of the mistakes and wisdom of the past. Nevertheless, he wrote, “I am a Freudian, I am behavioural, I am Humanistic.” In fact, on occasions, Maslow’s scientific training led him into philosophical conflict with his less disciplined colleagues. “Verification is the backbone of science,” he proclaimed. His feet were in both camps and he continued to merge experiential learning and practice with scientific methodology. What, one wonders would he have thought of the so-called New Age therapies?

Maslow believed that healthy individuals developed from the satisfaction of biologically basic human needs. If these needs are sufficiently met, there exists, he claimed, the potential for self-actualisation. Throughout his writings the word that defines most clearly what he was advocating is simply; ‘choice.’ Without adequate satisfaction of our fundamental needs, such as food, shelter, love, and esteem then clearly our choices are limited.

In Maslow’s concept of self-actualisation he attempts to point us in the direction
of an alternate conception of human potential. It is a dignified and unashamedly optimistic view of human potentiality. Dedication, sacrifices, triumphs and disasters can indeed blossom into creative musiciantship; the weight of anxiety need not lie heavy on the creative spirit.

Although empirically unproven, Maslow asserted - as Freud had done earlier with his theory of the existence of the unconscious - that self-actualisation had to exist. It exists in the same way that new planets have been found to exist, because they "had to be there in order to make sense of a lot of other data." As a scientist, he believed in orthodox research methods. And yet he was firmly convinced that research was not enough. His statement in the first issue of the Journal of Humanistic Psychology illuminates how, despite scientific rationality, his optimism and idealism fostered extraordinarily high expectations for the development of human consciousness:

The Journal of Humanistic Psychology is being founded by a group of psychologists and professional men and women from other fields who are interested in those human capacities and potentialities that have no systematic place either in behaviouristic theory or in classical psychoanalytic theory, e.g., creativity, love, self, growth, organism, basic need gratification, self-actualisation, higher values, ego transcendence, objectivity, autonomy, identity, responsibility, psychological health.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

What are these needs that Maslow referred to, and how did he arrange them in order of significance? Human needs, he suggested, arrange themselves much like the shape of a pyramid. At the base and, most basic to our physical survival, are human physiological
needs such as food and shelter. Next, are our safety concerns, followed by the need for esteem. Ultimately, if all these needs are met, at least to some degree, we are better able to access that part of our biological drive that seeks a higher level of value-based behaviour which characterises the self-actualised individual. One of the most significant of these characteristics is the value we place in our own self-worth.

**Esteem**

Describing his concept of the human need for esteem, Maslow separated the need into two categories. The first is based on the perception of our own behaviour and motivational influences. For example, the "Desire for strength, achievement, adequacy, mastery and competence, confidence in the face of the world and independence and freedom." His second category he described as esteem seen through the eyes of others. We have he said a "desire for reputation, prestige, status, fame and glory, dominance, recognition, attention, importance, dignity and appreciation."22

With a feeling of high self-esteem Maslow believed we are capable of experiencing personal satisfaction that is grounded in our own healthy personal value system. He continues: “But thwarting these needs produces feelings of inferiority of weakness, and of helplessness. These feelings give rise to either basic discouragement or else compensatory or neurotic trends."23

It is clear from his writing that Maslow believed psychology was not simply a window on the worst of our human qualities. In his view the transcendent is a potentiality for all psychologically healthy individuals. From his western perspective however,
transcendence was not attainable without the satisfaction, to some degree, of our more basic needs. For instance, a sympathetic social environment is crucial for the satisfactory advance towards reaching one's full potential. In the following he reminds us of some of the controversial political issues that dominated the 1950's and cites them as forces that prevented the satisfaction of these basic needs. Our cognitive capacities he says... "are a set of adaptive tools that have, among their function, the role of organising the satisfaction of our basic needs". If our ability to satisfy these needs is impeded by dramatic events such as, ... "secrecy, censorship, dishonesty or a blocking of communication, then all our needs are threatened." 24

These particular events reflect more accurately the problems of white middle-class Americans in the McCarthy era. In contemporary society we still combat these difficulties. Nevertheless, for a huge section of the population it is not middle-class concerns or even neurosis that prevents any movement towards self-actualisation but the continued inability to satisfy their basic human needs. The debilitating realities of poverty, abuse, family dysfunction and addictions haunt so many and cripple so much potential.

Maslow rarely addressed the difficulty, we might say impossibility, of climbing out of this pit. Philosophically, Maslow's concepts are reductionist, a position which makes him an obvious target for accusations that he is an ivory tower academic producing yet another set of unrealistic, unscientific and arbitrary set of parameters for human behaviour. Maslow's critics point to his unrealistic view of human nature and that his theories lacked any scientific proof. He understood this criticism perfectly well, frequently apologising to his peers for the paucity of empirical evidence that could support his propositions.
His lack of proof should not blind us to the wisdom of his ideas and the possibilities for individual growth that he encouraged. Maslow sought integration, and to his credit, he refused entirely to separate the American humanist self-growth psychology, from Freudian analysis or the Motivational theorists. He distinguished intellectually what seemed to him mistaken or onerous in previous theories yet remained conscious that weaknesses existed in all methodologies and philosophical positions. For example he disapproved of the more extreme Freudian tendency to “pathologize everything and for not seeing clearly enough the healthward possibilities of the human being.” He accused Freudians of seeing the world through “brown coloured glasses.” An echo of Aldous Huxley’s condemnation of Freudian’s as living in the “basement of the basement.”

Equally unrealistic, said Maslow, were some of those in the growth school who “tend to wear rose-coloured glasses and generally slide over the problems of pathology, of weakness of failure to grow.” Seeking a middle ground, he observed, “one is like a theology of evil and sin exclusively, the other is like a theology without any evil at all, and is therefore equally unrealistic.”

Given a sympathetic environment and a suitably motivated person self-actualisation becomes a “state of being in a continuum.” How does that translate into practical terms? The following is one of many passages that serve to illustrate Maslow’s concept:

Even if all these needs are satisfied, we may still often (if not always) expect that a new discontent and restlessness will soon develop, unless the individual is doing what he or she, individually, is fitted for. Musicians must make music, artists must paint, poets
must write if they are to be ultimately at peace with themselves. What humans can be they
must be. They must be true to their own nature. This need we may call self-
actualisation.29

Summary

In the first section of this chapter the relationship between self-actualisation and
identity was discussed, in particular from the perspective of the musician who experiences
performance anxiety. For some theorists this preoccupation with the introspective life of
the individual is maintained at the expense of cultural and political awareness. We saw how
Hornbrook had taken a philosophical position on this issue which contributed to a
polarisation of opinions amongst educators in Britain.

I have taken the liberty of extrapolating the dichotomisation of political and
educational ideals to illustrate, in an analogous way, that we do the same individually with
much the same ambivalent results. The unfruitful dichotomy between objective and
subjective thinking which leads to a distortion of our perception of reality is an example.
May reminded us that a realistic perspective is difficult to maintain when dichotomised
thinking is employed.

In the second section Maslow’s concept of self-actualisation was discussed. What
can the musician take from Maslow’s concepts and apply to the exigencies of the
performing life? One appropriate interpretation would be the necessity of being true to
oneself. It is a profound and ancient wisdom that continues to resonate in contemporary
life. We have seen this idea dismissed by Pascal as vain and futile. Nevertheless, I suggest
we listen to Voltaire’s advice and make an effort; as he said, we are built to act.
I have selected two other factors which emerge from Maslow's writings as relevant to the demands of musicianship and the challenge of performance anxiety. First, consideration should be given to the satisfaction of basic needs. Secondly the necessity for the musician to establish a set of values that are realistic. This involves making autonomous choices, and as Kierkegaard reminded us, anxiety accompanies choice. Reubart echoes this optimism in the following passage:

... it is anxiety that can end in joy if the values being pursued are a reflection of one's own human-ness uninhibited simultaneous efforts to grasp values that are contradistinctive. ... for the self-actualising person everyone and everything is considered from the point of view of intrinsic value rather than from the point of view that is formulated from sources outside oneself:30

The artist who makes choices based on his or her personal value system rather than make decisions that suit social convention can adapt anxiety as a creative tool. Discovering in the process a liberating source of strength and identity.
Self-actualisation-Notes

3. Ibid.,
8. Ibid., 68.
17. Ibid., 248.
18. Ibid.,
19. Ibid., 155.
20. Ibid., 249.
21. Ibid., 25.
22. Ibid., 26.
23. Ibid., 27.
24. Ibid., 23
26. Ibid., 48.

62
Chapter 4

Psychology

Thus anxiety is a Janus - headed creature that can impel man to self-improvement, achievement and competence or can distort and impoverish his existence and that of his fellows. The distinction appears to be a sheer matter of degree, of intensity, as it is with many other phenomena of human life. The urgent need is to acquire the knowledge to utilise anxiety constructively, to be its master not its slave.

Levitt

(The Psychology of Anxiety. p. 199)

The Anxiety or Fear Debate

Sir Thomas More wrote a play in 1525 in which the word anxiety appears for the first time in print in the English language. There are, of course, many examples in literature published prior to the sixteenth century of anxious and phobic states. The motivating energy of fear, for example, was a well understood emotional phenomenon often used to encourage men to fight in battle. It seems only reasonable to suggest that anxiety could not have seemed any different than fear to people prior to the eighteenth century. Since the middle of the nineteenth century however the concept that anxiety and fear are not the same psychologically has been widely debated. In the first section of this chapter the psychoanalytic interpretation of anxiety and fear is compared with the traditional medical model. In the second section Freud’s original theory of anxiety is discussed, in particular his first theory which proposed that the seat of anxiety is to be found in the ego.
The idea that anxiety and fear are different phenomena was first proposed by Kierkegaard. In his book *The Concept of Anxiety* (1844) he wrote: "The concept of anxiety is almost never treated in psychology. Therefore, I must point out that it is altogether different from fear and other concepts that refer to something definite, whereas anxiety is freedom's actuality as the possibility of possibility." In this rather difficult language Kierkegaard is drawing our attention to the indefinite nature of anxiety. We have seen this aspect of anxiety expressed in contemporary language as 'diffuse' or 'free floating.' Freud’s writing is more accessible, referring to fear as realistic anxiety, he wrote:

Realistic anxiety strikes us as something very rational and intelligible. We may say of it that it is a reaction to the perception of an external danger, that is of an injury which is expected or foreseen. It is connected with the flight reflex and it may be regarded as a manifestation of the self-preservation instinct.

Both Freud and Kierkegaard agree on the psychological separation of fear and anxiety. Freud however, writes like a scientist seeking universal laws to explain human behaviour. Kierkegaard seeks truths in existential choices in which only God and the individual can evaluate the outcome.

In 1950 Rollo May published *The Meaning Of Anxiety*. May acknowledges the importance of the works of Freud and Kierkegaard, adding his own observation that anxiety had become, as Freud had surmised thirty years earlier, the single most important cause of psychological distress in our society. May believed that until the 1950’s Freud and Kierkegaard were the only two authors who had published literature addressing the social and psychological aspects of anxiety.
Since 1950 however, research and literature into anxiety has mushroomed into a massive industry. Donald Goodwin (1986) believes that this trend grew as a result of several factors. Along with a dramatic expansion in our understanding of brain chemistry he cites improvements in pharmaceutical research which resulted in the marketing of synthetic chemicals designed to treat anxiety. Plus, the development of new diagnostic schemes that divided pathological forms of anxiety into separate disorders which in turn developed new treatments for a number of anxiety disorders.

The Medical and the Analytic Model

Goodwin has described normal anxiety as an itch that can’t be scratched. He also characterises the diffuse nature of anxiety as undesirable since, he says, it can lead to nothing useful. He writes, “nobody needs or wants anxiety.” However, he describes the problem as semantic: what do we mean by ‘anxiety’? “If there is a difference,” Goodwin argues, “then we really don’t need to feel anxious we already have fears enough, anxiety about the unknown is a waste of time and energy.”

Eugene E. Levitt (1966) also emphasis the scientific perspective. Anxiety, he says is a construct; we do not have an anxiety organ. Therefore anxiety cannot be studied objectively. Separating the actual physiological reactions, which can be observed and measured, from the psychological reactions, which are purely hypothetical does not, Levitt contends, produce satisfactory data. He asserts: “It should be noted that no difference between anxiety and fear, no matter how they are conceptualised in theory is reflected in physiological concomitants. The human body reacts in much the same fashion whether the anxiety is considered to be specific, diffuse, exaggerated or realistic.” Nevertheless, as
we have seen, separating fear and anxiety into two separate phenomena is common practice, particularly amongst Freudian analysts and existential humanists. Despite the lack of empirical evidence to support their assertions, Karen Horney (1937), Rollo May (1950) Richard S. Lazarus (1991), and Frieda Fromm-Reichmann (1955) have all proposed that a fearful reaction is based on an object or event that can be seen and labelled. They describe the human reaction of fear as outside of the individual. Whereas anxiety is an interior reaction to an anticipated event or situation.

May defines the analytic concept of anxiety as follows: “Anxiety is the apprehension cued off by a threat to some value which the individual holds essential to his existence as a personality.” Here May draws our attention to the threat to the personal values that anxiety triggers as opposed to the external physical threat which fear illicits.

A further component of the psychoanalytic model proposes that fear is a desirable emotion as it leads to appropriate reactions, avoiding immediate danger for example. Conversely, because in this model anxiety is “diffuse” it therefore leads to inappropriate subjective reactions. Horney writes:

Fear and anxiety are both proportionate reactions to danger, but in the case of fear the danger is a transparent, objective one and in the case of anxiety it is hidden and subjective. That is, the intensity of the anxiety is proportionate to the meaning the situation has for the person concerned and the reasons why he is anxious are essentially unknown to him.

As we might expect, Levitt disagrees. He asserts, “The proportionality argument is very
much like the matter of source. It can be maintained only at the extremes but it is otherwise lacking in applied value."9 Levitt, however, is willing to acknowledge that anxiety plays an important role in the growth and maturation of the individual, but Goodwin fails to see any redeeming features. With his tongue firmly planted in his cheek he writes:

... many think that some anxiety is necessary, even good for you. It builds character, enhances creativity and enlarges awareness of life's possibilities. Actors act better, they say, if they feel a little anxious. Anxiety keeps us on our social toes. Criminals commit crimes because they don't have anxiety. Hurray for anxiety!"10

It is one of the primary intentions of this paper to state that anxiety is a positive force in human development; so I would say, 'Hurray for Anxiety!' What we call normal anxiety is part of the growth process toward maturation, and the development of a healthy identity.

We are accepting that the physiological responses to fear and anxiety are synonymous. In either case the body is reacting in well understood ways. The interesting aspect that we should note is that these reactions are predominately focused on the physical survival of the individual. When survival is the uppermost instinct the physiological and psychological responses are unified towards safety. If, as in the musicians case escape is not an option, such a potentially inappropriate reaction is far from helpful. For instance, standing in the wings of a concert hall waiting to walk on stage is not the time to be preparing to flee from the theatre.
If one is trapped in a burning building and is immobilised with fear/anxiety there is very little to be gained in analysing the philosophical subtleties of the situation. It is the survival of the self, in a physical sense, that is in immediate peril, and that should occupy ones full attention. The immobilised musician however, cannot run but has to stay and find a way through the turmoil. We will call it anxiety because it is now a useful definition. It is describing a response that, if understood, may become manageable; indeed, as stated throughout this paper, it can be the source of creative potential. We can now appreciate that the apparent separation of the mind from the body is a manifestation of the physiological and the psychological states being disoriented.

When danger is perceived, the natural inclination of the human species is toward action; but the body can be a traitor to the mind, and the hours of practice and preparation may be compromised. The musician may experience nothing more than mild embarrassment at a relatively minor technical mistake. However, the effects of feeling immobilised may also go much deeper into the psychological heart. Thus, anxiety and identity become enmeshed, triggering a disabling sense of futility, of wasted effort, and low self-esteem.

What can the musician do to manage the psychologically damaging effects of performance anxiety? We might be inclined to say 'nothing.' if we were to take as our guide the stories that surround Sir Laurence Olivier, Lucianno Pavarotti and many other well known artists whose nightly experiences with the physiological affects of anxiety are
legendary. Nevertheless, on a psychological level there is always room for hope. In the following section we will adapt Freud’s early work on anxiety to illustrate that the arbitrating role of the ego can be utilised to balance the slide into self-defeating thoughts and behaviour.

The reader will recall from chapter 2 that May has suggested that by the nineteenth century there had developed a separation amongst scientific disciplines into various theoretical camps. Both Kierkegaard and Freud recognised that this separation had contributed to a fragmentation of the human personality. Thus, anxiety became one of a number of “recognisable” symptoms. However, prior to Freud, any awareness of the importance of anxiety in affecting human behaviour was perceived in spiritual or philosophical terms. Freud took a different view, and his theories have profoundly influenced the way people in the twentieth century understand the role of anxiety in the development and maturation of the individual.

Freud and Anxiety

Freud’s interest in anxiety began with his attempt to understand neurosis. He thought that the experience of anxiety was strictly a physiological response connected to dysfunctional sexual practices. According to William F. Fisher, Freud was the first to write about the connection between anxiety and emotional and behavioural disorders. Freud wrote, “The problem of anxiety is a nodal point at which the most various and important questions converge, a riddle whose solution will be bound to throw a flood of light upon our whole mental existence.”¹¹ A number of years later he had developed a more comprehensive theory. “Anxiety,” he argued, “would be the fundamental phenomenon and
the central problem of neurosis.”12 The source of this new theory was the traumatic experience of birth and the subsequent separation from the mother.

Despite Freud’s reputation as a radical and revolutionary thinker he accepted much of nineteenth century social and scientific dogma. For example, he accepted the Cartesian separation of mind and body believing that all things could be reduced to “causally graspable determinants.”13 However, although he accepted that universal laws governed human behaviour, he also recognised that logic alone could not adequately account for the diverse and contradictory nature of human behaviour.

Freud could not accept that consciousness arose spontaneously from metaphysical sources, it too, he argued, was grounded in science. Something else, he argued, must be present within the minds of human beings, powerfully influencing cognition and actions. He labelled this unseen something the ‘Sub Conscious.’ In his book An Outline of Psychoanalysis (1938) he wrote, “The starting point (for psychoanalysis) . . . is provided by a fact without parallel, which defies all explanation or description - the fact of consciousness. Nevertheless, if anyone speaks of consciousness, we know immediately from our own most personal experience what is meant by it.”14 Freud’s insights went beyond the investigation of neurosis and he argued that if the subconscious was an actual physical fact then a case could be made that disproved the Cartesian mind/body duality. He reasoned that if something was influencing the mind, then that something had to be real and consequently as determined and as subject to universal laws as all other facets of human existence. Fisher writes, . . . “The founder of psychoanalysis had already taken for granted man’s fundamentally animal heritage, both phylogenetically and ontogenetically.
Further he assumed that human reality, in all it's aspects, was ultimately reducible to physical, biologically given, causally graspable determinants.¹⁵

Freud sought logical explanations for our unconscious behaviour and his interpretation of Darwin led him to believe that he had succeeded in finding a scientifically explainable 'Natural History' of human behaviour. He based his ideas on what he called 'unconscious drives.' He labelled these drives: economic, dynamic, genetic, phylogenetic, adaptive and structural. The 'structural' component is significant to the present study because this is where Freud believed the ego was located. We find in Freud's model that anxiety is a component of the structure of consciousness. Therefore, it is to the ego we must look to find the arbitrating voice mediating between our fears and our desires.

In his concept of a hierarchical structure for consciousness Freud postulated that the Id represented the instinctual and animal drives. A 'basement' full of dark, repressed passions and unfulfilled desires. The Super Ego was concerned with the idealised version we have of ourselves. For example, the moral and ethical values we have absorbed through social interaction forms the basis of our identity and constantly seeks validation. The ego can be conceived in this system as an arbiter between the two drives. In effect, attempting to create meaning not just within the closed system of the individual psyche, but in its equally significant interaction with the outside world.

The relationship between neurosis and childhood experiences is a fertile area of study for the musician wishing to understand anxiety. The following passage from R. W. White illustrates the significance of anxiety and the role that 'patterns of defence' play in
the formative years:

One is certainly not justified in asserting that people without neurosis are free from a residue of childhood anxiety and defence. No one can get through childhood without anxiety, and no one is likely to be wholly free from the patterns of defence that served him in his early crisis. It is perhaps reasonable to suppose that when childhood anxieties are less severe, the defences will be less primitive, less indiscriminate, less likely to interfere with important directions of new learning.16

The use of ‘defence mechanisms’ to repress socially unacceptable desires, has created a lexicon of definitions which are still very much part of daily discourse. For example denial, avoidance, repression and compulsivity are common ‘jargon’ words which owe their genesis to Freud’s insights.

Freud’s early explanation that neurotic anxiety is a conflict between the various topographical aspects of personality, has been challenged and modified many times. The Post-Freudian analyst Harry Stack Sullivan, for example, agrees that the the arousing content is in our thoughts, wishes, drives, and actions. According to Sullivan, however, these cognitions are interpersonal and not instinctual, as Freud had thought. In Sullivan’s concept anxiety arises from the possibility of rejection, and one’s reactions are mediated by our early environment.

Summary

May and others have written that our experience of fear is triggered by our survival instinct: the flight or fight instinct. In the psychoanalytic model it is the relationship with
the feared object that is primarily understood as a physical threat to the individual. The main objective is to remove oneself, or attempt to eradicate the source of danger. Personal reflection follows the event and survival is justified by the action taken. Anxiety is perceived as an immobilizing factor which acts as a threat to one’s self-image. As we have seen there is conflict between the existential perception and the standard medical model which responds to all forms of anxiety as treatable medical conditions.

In the first section of the chapter we saw that Kierkegaard proposed the first existential concept of anxiety. Freud also recognised the significance of anxiety as a reflection of inner conflict. He was profoundly influenced by eighteenth and nineteenth century tendency to seek scientific explanations for all natural phenomena. His first theory proposed that the site of human anxiety lay in the ego. As part of a hierarchical structure, the ego mediated between the Id’s base libidinal desires and the idealism of the Super Ego. The concept of the ego as a mediator can be extended to include more recent theories. For example Maslow’s self-actualised individual may be understood as possessing a strong ego that ‘negotiates’ between the world outside and the inner life. We may conclude, therefore, that one important component in the management of performance anxiety is a strong and healthy ego.
Psychology-Notes

4. Ibid., 1.
5. Ibid., 3.
13. Ibid., 2.
15. Ibid., 2.
Chapter 5

Biology

To explore and to affiliate with life is a deep and complicated process in mental development. To an extent still undervalued in philosophy and religion, our spirit is woven from it hope rises on its currents.

E.O. Wilson
(in., The Way Life Works. p. 222)

In chapter 2 we saw how the roots of our contemporary competitive social system took hold during the Renaissance. The constraints and shackles of Medieval Scholasticism were released in a spirit of autonomous individuality. As a result, a competitive approach to business and social discourse developed, which, over the centuries, has resulted in moral and ethical fragmentation. Contemporary society is the flowering, or we might say, the severely damaged hybrid. After four hundred years of faith in a predominately patriarchal system which has relied on competition and individuality modern western societies are experiencing an Age Of Anxiety.

In the first section of this chapter we will explore in more detail the effects that anxious states have on the neurophysiological and psychological life of the individual musician. Even before appearing on stage there is the likely-hood that the artist already experiences a substantial level of stress. Clearly, if the daily stress and the rigours of performing are not managed appropriately the musicians health and career may suffer.
As discussed in chapter 4 the human physiological response to anxiety and fear is believed by many theorists to be the same. I do not take issue with this conclusion. I do, however, dispute the claim that the psychological experience is therefore the same. I argue that understanding the difference will result in better self-management, as suggested earlier on and off the stage. In the second section the relationship between emotions and cognition is discussed. Recent theories proposed by the American psychologist Peter Lang have stressed the importance of understanding the physiological and psychological responses to anxiety from an holistic perspective. The significance of this fresh understanding is examined, and a discussion on the related option of using medication in order to alleviate anxiety closes this chapter.

Anxiety and the Musician

The practical concerns of family, money and career accompany the performer like a noisy shadow. Maintaining a suitable level of self-management in order that anxiety does not interfere unduly with normal living is not a simple task. Performing regularly as a professional musician requires a high degree of skill, dedication and resilience. Fortunate is the performer who has a retinue of managers, aides and a very understanding spouse to take care of the practicalities.

If, however anxiety interrupts or interferes with the successful management of daily life to such a degree that pathological symptoms occur and some form of medical or therapeutic intervention is required on a regular basis we describe this condition as
neurotic. Neurotic symptoms are displayed in a variety of pathological behaviours both physiological and psychological; excessive cleanliness, fear of strangers, fear of darkness and fear of dead or mutilated bodies are examples of pathological states.

Reubart puts this level of stress into perspective for the musician. He writes, “While there is no question that the level of anxiety commonly sustained by performers is extremely high, if it is heaped upon an already anxious life, a variety of serious illnesses can be expected. No performer can hope for much relief from anxiety until he brings his whole life under control.” Some individuals are able to compartmentalise the sources of the stress in their lives and leave everything behind except the music when they appear on stage. I am suggesting that the relationship between anxiety and identity becomes an especially important factor for those performers who are unable to separate themselves psychologically from the pressures of daily living.

Normal anxiety is, in this sense, a neutral component; it can be a source of inspiration, the thrilling spark that ignites creative energy. Conversely, anxiety can immobilise action. Therefore, for those anxious performers, unduly stressed with personal responsibilities, there is a strong possibility that they will be unable to attain their creative potential while simultaneously struggling with conflicting feelings of low self-worth and threats to their personal value systems. Reubart comments on this familiar scenario:

There are two states of mind which will start performance anxiety faster than any others. One is, ‘I am a rotten pianist,’ and the other is, ‘I’m a rotten person.’ No other convictions will bring stage fright more quickly. Such cognitive self-statements are at the heart of nearly all failures in performance, no matter what the fundamental origins of
Clearly anxiety can be a significant factor in the musician's ability to perfect his or her art. In order to communicate their art with self-confident authority, the performer must understand physiologically and psychologically how anxiety affects them. To aid in this understanding we will now explore those fundamental origins to which Reubart alluded.

The Startle Reflex

According to Goodwin the earliest manifestation of fear or anxiety in humans is the Startle Reflex. He refers to the work of C. Landis and W. A. Hunt who described the most prominent feature of the startle reflex as a general flexing of the body. If a baby is startled by a loud noise it will react in a number of predictable ways including blinking its eyes, moving its head forward, bending the torso and turning its hands backwards. Goodwin writes, "It is a basic reaction, not amenable to voluntary control, is universal, and occurs in infants as well as adults in the primates and in certain of the lower animal forms."3

According to evolutionary theory this reaction is universal. As the organism matures, secondary reactions such as "curiosity, annoyance and fear occur."4 Goodwin comments that the ability to recognise and describe variations in emotions and feelings differ amongst cultures and even sub groups within cultures. "When it comes to fear he writes, the 'language of the body' is the most eloquent and universal."5 Goodwin draws from Robert Burton's book Anatomy of Melancholy (1621). Burton writes that fear includes, "many lamentable effects" . . . in men . . . "as to be pale, tremble, sweat, it makes sudden cold and heat to come over all the body, palpitations of the heart, fainting."6
seventeenth century these were already well understood physical reactions to fear. Nevertheless, there was little understanding of the automatic systems at work inside the body. Goodwin continues, “Burton new fear but nothing about the nervous system. Much has been learned since his time, especially in the twentieth century.”

**Cannon, Freud and the Unconscious**

During the first half of the twentieth century the Harvard psychologist Walter B. Cannon conducted experiments into the relationship between emotions and bodily reactions. According to Goodwin, Cannon’s was the “first systematic account of experimental observations linking emotions to bodily changes.” Today we take for granted the existence of an unconscious mind which, in ways still mysterious, affects us physiologically and psychologically.

Cannon, who was writing during the same period as Freud, concluded that “extraconscious” was an adequate term to describe those processes in the brain which were, at the time, inexplicable. He made no leap of faith as Freud had done. In a busy organisation such as a factory, decisions and production continues in many areas of the plant. The manager cannot be aware of everything that is happening at any one time but it need not imply mysterious processes at work. So too with the mind. Cannon proposed that comparing the mind with the way a busy factory is organised explained in an analogous way why there is no need for an entity such as a subconscious or unconscious.
Psychological and Physiological Reactions to Anxiety

The bulk of empirical evidence collected by physiologists in the first half of the century into the relationship between emotions and the body suggested that anxiety and fear were synonymous concepts. Nevertheless, as was discussed in chapter 4, despite a lack of scientific credibility, the practice of separating fear and anxiety into distinct concepts had been common procedure within traditional and Neo-Freudian schools of thought since Freud’s original work on anxiety.

From the anxious musicians perspective the psychological difference between anxiety and fear is significant and should be considered whenever therapeutic intervention is considered necessary. On a neurophysiological level, however, making a distinction between the two concepts is not helpful. As Reubart says “the same is true whether they are anxiety or fear reactions.” It is well known that the neurophysiological response to danger is to either run or fight; we understand this as the “fight or flight” theory. Preparing to meet or escape the danger the appropriate organs of the body are put on alert by the autonomic nervous system.

Responding to danger, the autonomic nervous system reacts without conscious awareness. Messages are sent to the oldest part of the brain through nerve fibres and the blood stream. We respond by fleeing or standing our ground, preparing to fight. The problem for the musician arises at this juncture because his or her automatic reactions would be better suited to survival in the primal forest rather than the demands of the concert platform.
The autonomic nervous system is divided into two opposing parts. The first is the sympathetic nervous system which activates the emergency response system and the second is the parasympathetic nervous system which manages the body once the danger is alleviated. The sympathetic nervous system activates a number of physical reactions which have a direct and profound effect on the musician's ability to perform. The heart rate speeds up, for example, and adrenaline is pumped into the system increasing speed of response. Sweating palms indicate a rush of blood to the muscles, temporarily sustaining the extra effort required to escape danger. The skeletal muscles, which are part of the skeletal nervous system, promote an increase in muscle tension enabling the cause and effect mechanism to work harder for a brief period of time. The mouth becomes dry because all extraneous bodily functions are shut down until the danger is over. When danger is perceived, sometimes we run and sometimes we stand. Automatic reactions within the sympathetic nervous system can benefit the performer, but generally they are counterproductive. Spontaneous physiological reactions that are very useful if a tiger is chasing you, may be disastrous if you are about to interpret Mozart on the piano in front of a panel of judges.

From the performing musicians perspective the successful management of these powerfully instinctual reactions is obviously crucial. Whether we label them fear or anxiety, such dramatic physiological reactions are, for the most part, counterproductive. Reubart described them appropriately as the "phylogenetic miscalculations of nature." Crossing the stage from the wings, trying to control thoughts, emotions, and physical responses, the anxious musician may continue or even develop new behaviours. Reubart
describes a number of these behaviours from a pianists perspective:

... an awkward and unnatural walk to the piano, stiff and uncharacteristic posture at the instrument, fiddling with hands and the piano bench, wiping the hands, hands shaking, a deadpan expression combined with paleness, shrugging the shoulders, quick restless movements of the arms and hands to and from the keyboard, knees shaking and feet trembling, moistening lips, subvocalizing.\(^{11}\)

_Anxiety or Fear?_

Those who perceive of anxiety and fear as one phenomenon are unlikely to be persuaded otherwise by Reubart's descriptions. Indeed, from the musicians point of view the debate may seem to be about semantics and not about coping with performance anxiety. I suggest, however, that the differences between the two reactions are worth considering particularly if medical advice is being considered.

The accepted interpretation of our reaction to danger is that humans will either run or stand and fight. Both reactions have to do with physical survival. As discussed earlier Freudian analysts believe that anxiety is of a different. nature. Anxiety, they say, is an immobilising response because it is our emotional identity that is threatened, not our physical survival. If we accept this interpretation, it would seem reasonable to suggest that many musicians experience both fear and anxiety. The physical and psychological responses are akin to simultaneously having one foot on the accelerator and one foot the brake. Something has to give. The mind/body relationship is out of harmony and it reacts in ways which, for the performer, are counterproductive.
Fear mobilises ancient responses to escape and anxiety immobilises action to the extent the unfortunate musician may feel disconnected from body and mind. This latter phenomena is well described by the pianist Robert Silverman: “Almost invariably, my initial ‘warming-up’ period during a concert was sheer torture; particularly during concerto appearances, I often felt a total disconnection between my hands and mind.”12

It is the function of the parasympathetic system to return the body to stasis. Once this is achieved, thoughts of food, sex or drink again become possible. With a return to a more stable equilibrium the performer would reasonably expect to be able to perform without further physical complications. Unfortunately this is not always the case. A residue of adrenaline in the blood stream may continue to affect fine motor skills.

As stated earlier in this chapter there is nothing to be gained in debating any apparent or hidden differences between the human neurophysiological response to fear and anxiety. Goodwin is of the opinion that there is nothing useful to be gained in separating fear and anxiety. In fact he says, anxiety is no more useful than a stress headache. This is too simplistic. The variations in the psychological reactions within individual performers are, as I have suggested, highly significant. For instance, for some musicians the increase of adrenaline will magnify the reaction of anxiety into a neurotic state. Whereas for other artists it is the physical jolt they need in order to give of their best. Eventually however, there is fatigue. As the tension increases the muscles no longer respond as they should and hypertension in the related muscles may develop. As the physical problems increase, so to do the psychological problems, and the phenomena of anxiety creating anxiety is the unhappy result.
Both Goodwin and May point out that these physical reactions should not be perceived as merely mechanical responses with no corresponding relationship to feelings. For example Goodwin writes:

This is how the body handles emergencies, but what about the feeling of fear? The feeling, of course occurs in the brain. Not only that, it occurs in specific areas in the brain. To imply, however, that the brain operates by push-pull buttons is misleading. Electrical and chemical stimulation of discrete areas in the brain sometimes produces specific emotions and sometimes does not. Brain function is highly plastic and, while there is some degree of localisation, connections also tend to be diffuse and hard to trace.13

From a typically psychoanalytic perspective May writes, “. . . the equating of a neurological area with a psychological function can be done only very loosely, not literally.”14

Emotions and Cognition

What is the relationship between emotions and cognition? This is one of the fundamental questions asked of Psychology. In the early part of this century William James and his associate Carl Lang proposed that emotions follow reaction; we are afraid because we are running is a well known interpretation. In other words cognition follows reaction. The James-Lang theory postulates that the relationship between emotions and cognition is sequential. First the brain senses danger, this triggers physiological reactions that result in a cognitive awareness of the danger. Although very influential in shaping
psychological thought in the twentieth century, the James-Lang theory has never been completely substantiated. As Goodwin and May point out, reducing consciousness to an on/off paradigm does not adequately describe the relationship between thought and action. There are far too many psychological and physiological variables amongst individuals to make a universal theory that adequately fits all individuals on all occasions.

Another critic of the on/off concept is Julian Jaynes. He dismisses the James-Lang theory as an inevitable conclusion of strict evolutionary theory. According to Jaynes the James-Lang interpretation is incorrect because it describes that "what we do is completely controlled by the wiring diagram of the brain and its reflexes to external stimuli. Consciousness is not more than the heat given off by the wires, a mere epiphenomenon." Jaynes asks, "If consciousness is the mere impotent shadow of action, why is it more intense when action is most hesitant? And why are we least conscious when doing something habitual?" He later describes the complex array of tasks involved in playing the piano as an example. He concludes, "Certainly this seesawing relationship between consciousness and actions is something that any theory of consciousness must explain."\textsuperscript{15}

According to Salmon and Meyer (1992) an important contemporary model of anxiety has been developed by the Psychologist Peter Lang. Lang incorporates into his theory cognitive, behavioural and physiological components. Each component has particular characteristics which, he claims, interact according to the subjective experience of the individual and not, as James-Lang proposed, in defined sequences. Salmon describes the advantages of this three-factor theory:
First, it subscribes a significant role in anxiety to both overt (behavioural) and covert (physiological and cognitive) components. Second, it accounts for the observation that the different components of anxiety may be only moderately correlated except under conditions of extreme anxiety. Third, it acknowledges that the activation of any one of these three anxiety systems can in turn stimulate the others.16

Lang’s theory is a step in the right direction. It allows for an empirical reduction in the various elements, yet the elements themselves are acting as part of the subjective experience of the individual and not reducible to wiring mechanisms or mathematical formulas. The presence of all three components would, for example, imply a high level of anxiety with a correspondingly high degree of synchronicity between the components.

The musician who is experiencing high degrees of all three components may decide to turn to medication in order to alleviate the physiological and psychological symptoms. An apparently simple option which has become fraught with controversy. In the next section some of the factors involved in the debate are discussed.

*Beta Blockers*

If medicine can be taken prior to a performance in order to alleviate performance anxiety, why should the performer not make use of this method? There appears to be no consensus within the medical or musical communities as to a satisfactory answer to this difficult question. When medication is taken with the single purpose of alleviating the physiological and psychological symptoms of performance anxiety there exists a strong judgmental position taken by many musicians and educators particularly with regard to
beta blockers. A position based not simply on medical or psychological reasoning but also on ethical grounds. The comparison with athletes who obtain an unfair advantage over their competitors by using steroids is frequently used as an ethical argument against the use of beta blockers. If, for example, a musician uses medication before attending an audition and happens to win a seat in an orchestra ahead of other musicians who did not use any form of anxiety reducing medication, there exists the possibility, at least in the minds of the losers, that an unfair advantage has been gained.

Brandfonbrenner disagrees, writing in the journal *Medical Problems of Performing Artists* she believes that the decision whether or not to use beta blockers is a matter of private consideration between doctor and patient. The guilt imposed from the outside as well as inner struggles she says are “both inappropriate and counterproductive.”17 Despite Brandfonbrenner’s professional response the use of medication to relieve anxiety continues to be controversial. It is perceived as a sign of psychological weakness, the inference being that one’s skill and authenticity as a professional musician is suspect.

A further criticism levelled against beta blockers is that they are not anxiolytics, (the FDA has never officially approved the prescribing of beta blockers for the specific relief of performance anxiety). Therefore, it is argued, they are ineffective in dealing with the symptoms of performance anxiety which may start days or weeks before a performance causing loss of appetite or insomnia. Dr. Brandfonbrenner believes that the evidence is anecdotal. Citing contrary research into memory and concentration, she writes, . . . “Individuals taking single, low-dose beta blockers have shown no adverse effect on memory or mood but do show an enhanced ability to concentrate.”18 She adds that other
symptoms do not preclude the use of appropriate combinations of medication, and she believes that the encouragement of a supportive physician may also be helpful.

A poll taken in 1988 at the International conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians found that of a total of 2,122 members, 27% used beta blockers, in this case Propranolol also known as Inderal. According to the poll, 19% used Propranolol daily, 11% regularly, and 70% infrequently. Writing in the same journal as Brandfonbrenner, the musicologist Nubé observed that there was no accounting given for the individual reasons for use. Nubé is skeptical of the validity of such surveys because as she comments, “the interpretive and emotional spectrum of the subjects is seldom if ever addressed” 19

There are degrees of opinion of course. Some music educators have been known to advise the anxious performer to seek another profession. “Either live with it or leave the profession” is the dubious advice proffered by Professor Hans Pitzka. Professor Pitzka maintains a comprehensive web site and discussion group on the internet, which is where he wrote the following:

Beta Blockers work well for persons suffering high blood pressure, but not for playing the horn, . . . drink cognac or champagne before the concert and some cups of espresso . . . forget about the musical values completely, exaggerate dynamic values especially in the double forte, attend all parties - and shorten life and real life. 20

Pitzka's advice to musicians who use beta blockers is extreme. It does however serve to illustrate how deeply felt are the objections to the use of medication.
Summary

We have seen that the musician must cope with a general level of anxiety as well as the added pressure of performing at an appropriate level of professionalism. For some musicians the added burst of adrenaline that typically precedes a performance supplies the creative boost needed to put life into each performance. For others, despite talent and aspirations, physical and psychological reactions handicap and sometimes sabotage the musicians ability to perform at a professional level.

It is important that the anxious performer understands how the physiological response of the autonomic nervous system affects the human psychological responses to fear and anxiety. We have discussed how, according to the existential model, anxiety is related to the sensation of the body and mind becoming separated with the result that one may feel physically and mentally disoriented. Fear on the other hand is related to action and survival. I have suggested that performance anxiety triggers both reactions. It seems appropriate that the artist should understand the differences in order to successfully manage their own idiosyncratic responses. I am not suggesting that the body is wired in discreet systems labelled 'Fear' and 'Anxiety.' On the contrary Lang's holistic approach, which his recent research into emotions and cognition emphasises, is a welcome development. If the anxious musician is capable of cognitively assessing what is happening on an emotional, physiological and psychological level then there is an opportunity for the successful management of performance anxiety.

If the artist is unable to find a successful solution to the rigours of performance
anxiety through self-management he or she may choose to use medication. The chapter ends with a discussion concerning the controversial use of medication. Dr. Pitzka's response is far too extreme for my own taste; there are too many variables to be so dogmatic and inflexible. There is room for the individual to develop coping skills without impairing performance.
Biology-Notes

2. Ibid., 34.
4. Ibid., 17.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., 14.
10. Ibid.,
11. Ibid., 9.
12. Ibid., viii.
18. Ibid., 26.
Chapter-6

Musicianship

... it is important to realize that anxiety and attention are interfaced; what affects one will necessarily affect the other. Excessive anxiety precludes well-focused attention; poorly-focused attention may result in uncontrolled anxiety

Reubart

(Anxiety and Musical Performance. p. 55)

In the first section of this chapter we ask the question, how does good musicianship and technical preparedness affect the performer's susceptibility to performance anxiety? In the second section the writer and violin teacher Kato Havas discusses the uninhibited musicianship of the Gypsy violinist. According to Havas, the Gypsy violinists is unaffected by the rigours of performance anxiety. Her evocative descriptions and invaluable insights point to a connection between inhibitions and anxiety.

Preparation and Musical Values

Reubart suggests that the single most important attribute the performer needs in order to manage anxiety is the ability to concentrate. A second factor Reubart asserts, is the ability to consign much of the mechanics of playing to the subconscious. Lilies MacKinnon's aphorism reminds us that "consciousness (is) the centre of practice;
subconsciousness is the centre of performance.”¹ According to Reubart there are two other aspects of musicianship which are important. The first is ‘Musical Values,’ which he describes as anything connected to the music as an auditory experience. Second, is what he calls ‘Musical Gestalt,’ which, he explains, is “one’s ‘here-and-now’ location within the musical structure (figure) with respect to the whole (ground).”² He adds:

Under the rubric ‘Musical Values’ are included such things as sonority, mood, line and timing (to name those that appear most often), whose auditory realizations are integral to projection and communication. Matters relative to execution and technique, along with self-conscious considerations are excluded (e.g., fingering, note identification, questions of personal acceptance, etc.).³

Reubart emphasises the importance of understanding the relationship between the parts and the whole. Without knowing how the individual notes relate to the whole piece there is a strong possibility that the performance will sound disconnected. For the inexperienced performer it can be a short step from aesthetic frustration to personal frustration.

Reubart developed his thoughts over many years of teaching and performing. He also consulted with a group of well-known musicians whom he euphemistically labelled the ‘Olympic Gold Medalists.’ His teaching practices were influenced by the results of a letter-poll he conducted in which he asked a number of these ‘Medalists’ to “detail their foci of attention as accurately as possible, at those times when they felt they had been at their best.”⁴ Reubart was particularly impressed with his respondents’ experiences with heightened levels of awareness. They all reported that the intense level of concentration
they attained in order to perform at their best developed into a raised level of consciousness.

Peak Experiences

Indeed performers talk reverentially about the ‘space’ that such deep concentration takes them. Maslow, and Colin Wilson, (1956) have referred to such states of mind as ‘peak experiences,’ and Mihaly Csikszentmihaly (1975) has described these same experiences as ‘flow.’ Transcendent mental states are, of course, not limited to musicians. It is an experience familiar to people in all walks of life. Maslow stressed that he did not characterise peak experiences in theological terms, because he believed, there are adequate scientific explanations. Among the characteristics of peak experiences Maslow includes the following:

... loss of concern for the past and future, innocence, narrowing of consciousness, loss of ego, disappearance of fears, lessening of defences and inhibitions, strength and courage . . . aesthetic perceiving rather than abstracting, fullest spontaneity, fullest expressiveness of uniqueness, and fusion with the world.5

Despite Maslow’s scientific perspective, his description of peak experiences is similar to the transcendental state which Zen Buddhists call Satori. In this level of consciousness desires are unified, winning and losing become meaningless concepts, and ones inner ‘civil wars’ are at peace

In the West also, we look to the artist to inspire and reflect our need for transcendental experiences. For example, there are fortuitous occasions which arise during certain concert performances when the audience senses that the musicians have raised the
shared aesthetic experience of the music beyond the norm. For a brief period of time the audience and performers appear to share a mutual place where time and space are suspended. When the music ends, the applause seems like an intrusion, but the audience has to show its appreciation, and not just as recognition for virtuosity, but as an offering, a message of gratitude for the shared extraordinary experience.

There are many challenges facing the young person who aspires to the artistry of the concert musician. Indeed, for most aspiring musicians the elevated levels of consciousness attained by Reubart's respondents may appear as unobtainable as a distant star. Nevertheless, whatever talents and goals the musician possesses the importance of understanding and successfully managing anxiety is crucial. Reubart expresses this point in the following passage:

It is easily appreciated that loss of ego, fear, concern for the past and future, defences and inhibitions, etc., can be manifestations of the 'peak experience,' but it is also important to realise that that state of awareness is impossible to achieve in the first place if there is anxiety, fear, inhibitions, preoccupations with self or with the past or future. These must be dismissed from consciousness before there is any hope that the peak experience is to be achieved. What this means for the pianist (musician) is that all technical concerns must have been eradicated; there can be no concern for the notes; and there can no longer be any doubts concerning personal worth or acceptance. The challenge for the performing artist is to eliminate all of these possible objects of concern before the concert begins.

Reubart's reveals a wisdom and sensitivity towards his art and his students which is admirable. Without resorting to psychological clichés, he emphasises that adequate emotional, physical and technical preparation is essential if the musician wishes to attain
such elevated levels of consciousness.

The Gypsy Way

Kato Havas (1973) has written about performance anxiety from a violinist’s perspective. Havas discusses many of the same topics as Reubart as well as adding passages relating solely to the violin, which poses its own unique set of physical problems. Referring to anxiety, she asks the question, “Why don’t the Gypsy violinists suffer from it?” She answers in the following manner, “First of all they are not burdened with the responsibilities of our social system. They do not have to do better than their fellows in order to succeed. . . . Secondly their sole interest is the pleasure of the listeners. They are free from all obligations, except the one and only obligation - to communicate.”7 Karen Horney writes, “Inhibition is merely the manifestation of one’s inability to cope with anxiety.”8 For more Post-Freudian perspectives on the relationship between inhibitions and anxiety Horney’s theories are recommended.

According to Havas, the Gypsy violinists’ level of musicianship and emotional commitment to the music is phenomenal. To illustrate her point she cites a Hungarian proverb, “The Magyar peasant becomes intoxicated on a glass of water when a gypsy fiddler plays for him.”9 Many great musicians have been inspired by the gypsy violinists’ technical virtuosity and passionate commitment to their playing. Havas describes Franz Liszt’s reaction, whom, she reminds us, lived and worked among the Gypsies. In a letter to a friend Liszt wrote:
I almost envy you for having escaped from the civilised art of music-making, with its limitations and crampings. . . . No prattle and jargon from pedants, cavaliers and critics and all the nameless brood of such can reach you. . . . Yes my dear Jozsy, you have done well not to engage in concert-room torture, and to disdain the empty, painful reputation of a thorough violinist.10

Liszt is inspired and tempted, but it is very unlikely that he would rescind his own heritage or training. Earlier, Havas referred to the gypsies’ lack of social programming as a reason for avoiding anxiety. It is interesting to note that the high levels of anxiety we experience in the West are directly related to our social and cultural programming.

Havas also discussed the obligation that the Gypsy feels towards the audience; namely to communicate. Given the years of practice, commitment and dedication to the craft of playing an instrument, it is a fair question to ask, what are the musicians’ obligations? Echoing the words of Kierkegaard, May, Maslow and others for whom self-awareness through personal effort is a worthy ambition, Morris Goodman offers the following thoughts. “The performer has a double obligation, to the music he performs (score or prior performance) and to himself as a creative artist.”11 Goodman adds:

. . . The conspicuous double loyalty, to self and to other, to inner demand as well as to outer command, is at the core of the ethical existence in its most difficult and hence most meaningful moments. The performer has to make his choices, and nobody can guarantee that he makes them well.12

If we accept Goodman’s thesis, we can allow that communication is the result of musical
preparedness and artistry. Further, from the perspective of performance anxiety, if the performer's degree of anxiety is to be found in musical or artistic considerations and not in extra musical causes, then the obligation to oneself and the music is entirely appropriate.

**Summary**

Without adequate preparation or awareness of musical values Reubart suggests that anxiety will always interfere with the musicianship. He also suggests that the most important attribute for managing performance anxiety is the ability to concentrate. How does this compare with Peter Lang's tripartite theory discussed in chapter 5? In Lang's concept cognition is one of three components: the other two being behavioural and physiological. There appears to be a close correlation between Lang and Reubart. For example, Reubart believes that the peak experiences, such as described by his colleagues, are unattainable without the ability to concentrate. However what Reubart calls concentration could also be characterised in Lang's theory as the three components harmoniously synchronised to such a degree that a heightened level of awareness is attained.

In her excellent evocation of the Gypsy violinists' musical skills, Havas tells us they do not experience performance anxiety as we do in the west. The reason she cites is lack of social programming. As she said the inhibitions which most classically trained western musicians learn from early childhood. However, as Liszt wrote in his letter to a friend, who had joined the gypsies, “I Almost envy you.” I suspect most musicians in the west would respond as Liszt did. The gypsy violinists music is intoxicating, but our social programming will not let us be that uninhibited

98
Musicianship-Notes

2. Ibid., 40.
3. Ibid., 44.
4. Ibid., 42.
5. Ibid., 53.
6. Ibid., 54.
9. Ibid., 12.
10. Ibid., 13.
12. Ibid., 280.
Chapter 7

The Relationship Between Anxiety and Identity:

Conclusion

The alert citizen, we may assume, would be aware not only of the more obvious anxiety-creating situations in our day, such as the threats of war . . . and of radical political and economic upheaval; but also of the less obvious, deeper, and more personal sources of anxiety in himself as well as in his fellow men - namely the inner confusion, psychological disorientation, and uncertainty with respect to values and acceptable standards of conduct.

Rollo May
(Meaning of Anxiety. p. 3.)

Sources of Anxiety

There is a bumper sticker that reads, “Whoever has the most toys when he dies, wins!” A facetious commentary perhaps, limited in its philosophical insight, yet it is also a perceptive observation of contemporary attitudes to material possessions. Many people in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have chosen to put their faith in things, thereby exacerbating an already alarmingly uncritical acceptance of the social benefits of technological progress. At the same there is, in certain segments of the population, a profound mistrust of institutions and political authority.

The challenges associated with learning to live with the ambiguities of life is a
fundamental source of normal anxiety. This point is supported by Levitt, who writes, "Research has correctly identified that anxiety is an inevitable by-product of the process by which a person learns to become a member of society."¹ "Anxiety-proneness," he concludes, "Is the conglomerate result of a natural human capacity and the need for social conformity."² There is, however, a fine line between the degrees of anxiety that learning to become a member of society demands and the manipulation of those responses for political or economic gain.

In chapter 1 we saw how political and corporate institutions pour outlandish amounts of money into packaging and marketing their messages. A political saviour here, a new product there. Indeed, the pressure to conform or belong has become increasingly one sided as the influence of political and corporate agenda's spread their propaganda across the political and social arena. Before the day begins and the musician has not yet taken his or her first autonomous breath the children may already be curled up in front of the television absorbing the messages and cultural stereotypes like electronic junkies.

*The Musician and Anxiety*

Anxious musicians frequently place themselves in the position of facing their fears. Compared to the relative safety of the concert platform the risks involved in flying are obviously more hazardous. Nevertheless, the psychological conflict which some musician's experience prior to a performance can be very damaging to their mental and physical health. The fear of dying a terrible death in an aeroplane crash, is however, always understandable no matter how neurotic we may classify the behaviours. Whereas for a young musician with talent and great potential, to be incapacitated by performance anxiety, is perhaps, less
comprehensible, but no less a tragedy.

Nevertheless, despite personal and environmental handicaps the professional musician, like the professional actor and athlete, is expected to perform to a high level of excellence at every performance. We have discussed how such high expectations places tremendous pressure on an individual; further affecting the ability of the artist to perform. It might seem therefore, that the elimination of anxiety from a performer's life would improve performance standards. Clearly this supposition is not borne out in practice, and according to Levitt neither is it substantiated by research. Although Levitt argues against the existential interpretation of anxiety and fear he is also aware that anxiety does have a positive role to play in the process of human development towards maturity. He writes, “The mental health professional regards anxiety as a painful, even catastrophic condition that cries for alleviation.” He disagrees with this perception, arguing that it is a limited concept because it characterises anxiety from its most extreme and most disruptive characteristics. He adds, “Behavioural science has not been able to progress very far beyond this diffuse conclusion. . . . Moderately intense anxiety,” he says, “energises and improves performance.” Reubart also believes that this false impression of anxiety is the result of inappropriate research techniques. He states, “The atomistic tendencies of researchers have invariably led to a segmented view of the whole that is both incomplete and, at times, out of perspective.” Despite the limitations of research into the psychological aspects of anxiety there is a rapidly growing understanding of the physiological affects. The majority of what is now accepted as good science has come about as the result of research undertaken in the last twenty years into brain function and genetics.
Performance anxiety does not appear in the standard diagnostic textbooks as an anxiety disorder. It's symptoms fall into the category of normal anxiety, and it is only when these symptoms become unmanageable that we assign psychiatric labels. We have seen how Maslow argued that the line between normal and neurotic anxiety becomes of concern if one's personal values are unmanageable or unrealistic. When there is harmony between what we hope to achieve and what we do achieve our values are balanced and anxiety can be manageable. When the two concepts are out of balance psychological health is difficult to maintain and anxiety disorders can be the result. Therefore, to promote a healthy relationship between ambition and achievement it is important to make a realistic assessment of ones talents, abilities and physical limitations.

*The Musician and Identity*

The central theme in this paper has been the musician’s experience of anxiety and the affect it has on performance standards. When anxiety becomes unmanageable musicianship suffers and neurotic behaviour may be the result. In chapter 3 we noted that artists in general, are particularly noted for exhibiting neurotic or unbalanced behaviour. Does this mean that artists, as a group, are more in need of psychological help than other sections of the population? According to research undertaken by Robson and Gitev for students of the arts in Ontario it is common practice for art students to seek counselling - far more than regular or gifted students:

Art students viewed themselves as more anxious and perfectionist than regular academic students and worried about their capabilities compared with those of their art student peers. As with adult artists, these students complained frequently of performance anxiety.
The reason given for the statistically high number of art students who sought counselling was not born of excessive neurosis, but simply because they are more psychologically minded and have a sensitivity to counselling assistance. The suggestion that artists are more psychologically sick than so-called normal people was not borne out by their research. Gitev and Robson report that „as early as 1962... Guilford found that the gifted and talented preferred to express rather than suppress anxieties.”7 Their research also revealed a hierarchy of students likely to seek counselling. Drama students came first, then dance, music, and finally students in the visual arts.

Nevertheless, research conducted by Poznaski found that amongst adolescents there is a direct relationship between self-image and incidents of anxiety and depression. He writes: “Self-concept has both intrinsic factors based on one’s view of one’s self and extrinsic factors based on environmental influences - the opinions of teachers, parents and peers. Extrinsic evidence should improve the self-concept of talented art students.”8 From the point of view of performance anxiety Poznaski’s findings appear to conflict with Robson and Gitev’s. In their conclusion they state that, “The hypothesis that a low self-concept is a precursor for later anxiety related to the stress of a performance career is not confirmed.”9 They also found that statistically, art students do not have a low self-concept, but they do verbalise their anxieties, and they do seek counselling and assistance. Robson and Gitev conclude: “As psychologically minded individuals, they can be helped, and more serious psychopathologic reactions can be prevented.”10 In both instances the researchers advise that appropriate intervention are necessary. However, Poznaski revealed a direct link between self-concept and later incidence of anxiety, whereas Robson and Gitev found no direct correlation. This would appear therefore to be a fertile area for further
research.

Conclusion

We all have potential, and yet so many people are unable to access the best and most creative aspects of themselves. I have suggested that from the musician's perspective the ability to reach one's potential is connected to his or her skills of self-management. These skills are not easily acquired, and we have noted that theorists from different disciplines propose that early support and encouragement is crucial. The challenge for the young musician is to develop a strong sense of identity. For the professional musician the psychological stresses of maintaining the high performance standards and the idiosyncratic problems which their instruments exerts on their physical health also requires a commitment and dedication which is sustained more readily with a strong sense of identity.

To aid in the writing of this thesis we have borrowed from several disciplines: History and Philosophy, Social Psychology, Biology, and Cultural Anthropology. The aim has been to have a better understanding of what triggers the shaking knees, sweating palms, the panic, memory loss, doubt and self-recrimination. There is evidence to suggest that the relationship between performance anxiety and identity is significant enough to warrant further research, especially from a multi-disciplinary perspective.
The Relationship Between Anxiety and Identity

Conclusion-Notes

2. Ibid.,
3. Ibid.,
4. Ibid.,
7. Ibid.,
10. Ibid.,
Bibliography


107


Appendix-1

Research Goals

The following research project seeks answers to the following questions. What effect does performance anxiety have on?

1. Personal identity.
2. Self-esteem.
3. The question of reaching one's potential.
4. How these dynamics affect performance standards.

The effects are sometimes devastating to a promising career or simply damaging to the psychological health of an individual. I do not believe there is one methodology capable of meeting all the requirements in managing anxiety. My research at this juncture is an exploration of the needs of a select group of musicians whose experiences I hope will add to my own knowledge and to others in the same field.
Research Instrument (Interview Questions)

An exact copy of every question asked cannot be supplied because the interview format meant following the course of the responses to the questions.

Demographics: All subjects
Gender, age, what areas of music / performing have you worked in?

Individuals and their experience with Performance Anxiety:
1. How long have you been performing?
2. Have you experienced performance anxiety in that time?
3. What psychological effects has this had on your ability to perform?
4. What physical effects have you experienced and how have these effects influenced your playing?
5. When do you experience performance anxiety?
6. Did you ever consider quitting as a result of your experiences with anxiety?

If the respondent has remained a performer
1. What methods have you used to manage your anxiety?
   a) How successful have your methods been?
2. Is it correct to use the word anxiety at this point, does another word describe more accurately what you feel?
3. How would you describe yourself generally; as insecure, self confident, etc.?
4. How does performing affect how you feel about yourself?
5. Can you imagine what your experience as a musician would have been like if you did not experience performance anxiety?
Research Instrument: continued,
6. Have you sought professional help?
7. What is your opinion of psychotherapy or other forms of therapeutic intervention?
8. What should the performing musician do whose experience of anxiety is so crippling that the physiological and psychological affects become neurotic?
9. What should the musician do whose anxiety is manageable on occasions but on other occasions is immobilising?
10. Should the performer turn to medication?
11. Is there a palliative that alleviates the pain but at the same time allows the performer to experience the music?
12. What is your opinion on the use an efficacy of Beta Blockers?

If the respondent chose to abandon a career as a performer because of his or her experiences with performance anxiety:
1. What brought you to your decision?
2. Do you regret your decision?
3. What methods did you use --If any -- to manage your anxiety?
4. Did you remain in the profession or seek a career outside of music?
5 What should the performing musician whose experience of anxiety is so crippling that the physiological and psychological affects become neurotic?
6. What should the musician do whose anxiety is manageable on occasions but on other occasions is immobilising?
Appendix-2

Interviews

The following pages are transcriptions of audio-taped interviews conducted in Vancouver, British Columbia during the summer of 1999. The interviews were held in my own home or in the respondent’s homes.

1st Interview
I . . . 39 year old female, and you play the piano.

R Piano, organ, harpsichord and others.

I Right. Okay. So I'll start with straight forward questions. How long have you been performing?

R What do you mean by performing? On a stage by myself? Or with a choir or with an orchestra or with a band or?

I On the stage by yourself.

R Well I actually don't play that much on stage by myself. But I do perform in other, mostly in ensembles.

I How long have you been doing that?

R Well, probably since I was 8 or 9. Because we were playing in piano recitals, and then you're in the band, and then you're in choir, and then -

I Have you experienced performance anxiety?
R Yes.
I Yes, okay. What has been your experience of performance anxiety?

R Well, I'll describe a period of three months, which was the summer of 1994 when I was playing organ. And I can describe that to you with the most clarity, because it went on for three months, week after week.

So I was playing organ at this big church, St. Andrews Wesley downtown. So that's I guess pretty well a solo. Solo thing and accompanying. And if I had to play on Saturday, if I had to play weddings, I would start to feel sick Friday night. And if I didn't have to play weddings, but I had to play on Sunday, I'd start feeling sick Saturday night. And I would just feel - oh I never actually threw up or anything like that or - but I would just feel really ill and very high anxiety level. And I just - the fact that after the first two weeks that I did it, I just wanted to quit the job. But I couldn't, because I was replacing somebody. I'd agreed that I would play for him for three months. He was in Europe, the regular organist.

So I had to persevere and it was - and I guess at that time, I was in the stage of playing when I thought - if I made a mistake, that I was a failure. Well, not that's actually been for - about 29 years of my musical life has been thinking that way. And about the past year I've managed to get, kind of get over that, right? But every time I would make a mistake I would just beat myself up. And I'd think - Oh, I'm a total failure. And that's something - like, I had this rating system of the mistakes I made. I had three ratings. The first kind of mistake was the one's nobody would know about except me. The second type of mistake was, ones that probably nobody noticed, but I knew about. A little bigger than the first. And then the third type was the real bloopers that people would really notice.

So I just felt ill for the whole summer. And it was very, very hard work, because -

I On you personally?
Well, yeah, it was just hard work. It was - for me, it was a difficult job because I just had to turn out so much music week after week after week. Being an organist is actually very demanding. And kind of, you're unrecognised because people walk in, you're playing, and they just sit there and talk. And then at the end you play your big piece and they walk out, right?

Anyway, so - yeah, I just felt sick for the whole time. But like I said, I never got to the point where I - I never threw up. I've heard stories worse than me, believe me, where people are throwing up before. And it was not enjoyable. And I just - and I didn't take drugs. I could have taken beta blockers, but I thought, no, that's not why I play music. If I have to take drugs to -

Would you say more about that-

Pardon?

Could you say more about that -

Do you want me to say more about that?

Yes, about that thought that you just had about why - that isn't why you play music.

Well, I thought that if I have to take drugs to play music, which is supposed to be enjoyable, then I've missed - it's not the point. I didn't want to do that.

So the taking of the drug represents what?

I don't know what you mean?

Well, I didn't want to put words in your mouth, but it has a negative context. It represents maybe failure, or -
I So what would it represent?

R I guess maybe it represents loss of control. Or - and I did take drugs once, years ago for my organ exam at UBC. And I took drugs. And it was the weirdest feeling. It was very - I was just so deadpan, so calm. But the other thing about music - playing music, is - even though you feel - you might feel awful while you're performing, afterwards if you've played fairly well, and you're - if I'm pleased with how I've played, then you feel really great.

I You know it. Is there any difference between the knowing the way you're describing it and the knowing - how you'd feel if you'd taken beta blockers. Is there a difference?

R Well, I only took beta blockers once.

I Just that one time. Can you remember what it was like - did you -

R Well, I was just totally flat, dead calm, and then when I finished my exam, it was like, - Oh yeah, ok, well - there was just no change. It just this flat line kind of emotional state which is very weird, because usually performance anxiety is kind of like, you get very anxious and it's kind of like a peak. And then you kind of build up to excitement, and then, when it's over, you're really excited.

I Can you tell if there is - is there actual a conscious change between anxiety and excitement. Are you able to translate for yourself, or does it happen in the process of - as you're readying yourself to perform?

R Well, it's kind of changed for me, that experience. Because, say before this three month period I was talking about - the anxiety never changed to excitement.
It remained, as it were a negative - can we use the word negative?

Yes. It was a negative experience. And the whole, well, it was just something that I had to go through.

Did you manage the whole thing on your own? Did you not have anybody to turn to, or use any kind of philosophy or meditation or -

Oh, I was doing meditation. At that point I wasn't able to make the meditation work for me in that context. Because the anxiety was too overwhelming. It overwhelmed any - now, maybe now, I could use the meditation. Actually, I took up meditation to help me with my performance anxiety. That's the reason I started meditating in 1991.

Can you tell me - what's the result?

Well, the result is that I'm still meditating, and I'm not really performing very much! (Laughter) So the meditation has been a bonus in many other ways. Maybe at some point in the future I'll actually be able to integrate the two and really work at what I've learned from meditation. Use that to help with the performance anxiety. But - see my performance anxiety has changed, I would say, in the last year and a half. So this period again, in '94 which I'm talking about, was sort of the height of my anxiety. And after that I basically didn't play anything for about three years. It was such a horrible experience. And plus I was going to school and working, so I actually just didn't really have time anymore. So that's why I'm describing that particular experience, because it's so marked in my mind. And it certainly marked - well it - anyway, I learned a lot from the experience.

Did you learn a - I'm particularly interested to know what it is you learned about yourself in that time.

In that time.
I Yes.

R Well I guess - well, okay I'll tell you that after about two weeks, or three weeks of just - I just felt like total shit about myself.

I May I just interrupt? Did that spread over into the rest of your life? Did it affect your relationships with other people close to you?

R Oh, I was, I was not very happy that summer. And so, about after three weeks, I just couldn't stand it and I'd heard about this counsellor who said he specialized in performance anxiety. And so I went to him. And that was a bit of a - false advertising - but I guess what basically it comes to is, is what I call, it's opening up the black hole.

I People usually refer to that in terms of depression, black holes.

R No, that's not how I refer to black holes, that's not my definition.

I Ok, so can you describe what you mean?

R Oh, my definition and my personal black hole is - sort of everything that's down there that you've tried to avoid for years. And it's all in there. And maybe it's not manifesting itself, but it's in there, you have to - well maybe it's not manifesting itself in ways that you're conscious of. Or maybe I wasn't then. Now I think I'm more conscious of these things, because of the meditation, because of a lot of things that have happened since 1994. But -

I It sounds as if you're saying that you're more capable of dealing with that consciousness now.

R Yeah, I think so. I' think I've done a lot of excavating down there in that black hole no. But in 1994, I think that was one of the beginning points in my life of starting to
acknowledge what was in the black hole.

I Is anxiety a trigger to it? If you weren't a musician, would a relationship that had gone bad, that might have triggered - it's a place that you got to because you were meant to, not just because you suffer from anxiety at certain times in your life. But it's a place that you needed to go to.

R Oh, I think so, sure.

I But I think part of it - the other thing is that I've always sort of - my dream has been to be a musician. And maybe that summer also kind of shattered my illusions about what being a musician is. Because somehow, I think that I always had this kind of ideal that it's this magical, wonderful experience. And actually, now I think it can be. But back then, it was just such hard work. I just --

I What kept you going then?

R Well, I guess I still really want to be a musician! (Laughs)

I Is there any relationship between spiritual faith, and the faith that you had in whatever - either yourself or your faith in being a musician. Is there any connection between where you place your faith in being a human being, and a faith in the rewards you get from music. Are they connected in any way?

R I think we talked about this on the phone, and I still didn't - I didn't really understand what you were getting at then, and I still don't really know what you're getting at. Do you mean, sort of like, am I a Christian?

I No, no, not at all.

R Well, how do you mean - faith?
Well, I'm saying that there's some - whatever it is that keeps you going in the face of all that personal, inward turmoil.

Yeah, there must be something there.

Something is there that says - I want to keep going. And I'm wondering if there is any relationship in that - I want to keep going - between that feeling and the way that we have faith in higher powers, or who knows what it is. It's not the same thing?

No. Like has it got something to do with God, or-

Well, I don't know.

Umm, no.

It doesn't appear that way to you?

No. No.

So there's no - in a religious faith there's usually a leap. You have to make a leap. But for you there wasn't. There's nothing, presumably. I'm not putting words in your mouth I hope but -

Well, I guess my faith, I would not - personal faith - I wouldn't define in maybe the sense you're talking about, is religious faith. Well, okay, I practice Buddhism, but it's got nothing to do with blind faith or - it's more pragmatic than that. And the only faith you have is through what you've experienced. So, - I mean, I wouldn't say that all my musical experiences have been negative, certainly. But, I would say the overwhelming thing has always been that it's been negative. And I've never had enough confidence in myself to really sell myself as a professional musician because, I never know when I was going to get performance anxiety. And most of the time I would. And so, I would make mistakes, and then I would think - Well, I'm just not good enough to be a musician, or to try to be a
professional. But see, I think there was that 20% or 30% of the time when it was good. And I'd think, well, this is it. But even as I say that I think that I can now understand that in a different way, and that's just because I did (attending) meditation with .... Because what I learned in that meditation retreat at the end of June, that I can now think about the very ability of music, and my performance anxiety, I can think about that in a different way, even now. But back to the faith question, you need an answer.

I No, we can let that go.

R This is very non-linear you know.

I Yes, that's fine. Fine by me anyway. I've got another question about - and this one would be another - how you express yourself personally. Would you see any connection between what you're describing there and fear of success? And also, self-sabotage. Those are both kind of concepts that are thrown around in this - around performance anxiety. Does that have any bearing -

R I wouldn't say fear of success, no. I would say - Fear of failure!! (laughs)

I Okay.

R And what was the other one you said - self-sabotage?

I Self-sabotage -

R I don't know if -

I You do yourself in because it's a whole lot easier not to do something than to do it. So you just find a way of blowing it.

R No. No. I wouldn't say that's in there. I don't try to blow it. (Laugh)
I So, what's driving you is a very honest kind of relationship between you and the music -

R Driving me to what - keep playing?

I To keep playing despite the anxiety.

R Well, I think being able to play music is just really wonderful. And, like I said, in about the past year and a half, I've been able to let go a lot of my preconceptions about how I think I should be as a musician, and why I think I should be doing more. I should be performing and I shouldn't make any mistakes. And it's not okay if I just play for myself. But now I'm kind of letting go of those, and I just play for myself, and I think - If I don't want to play for anybody else because it makes me too nervous, then, okay, fine that's where I'm at right now. And I think it's just coming to accept that. And now I can actually sit down and play piano music. I actually stopped playing piano in 1985 because I had a huge fight with my piano teacher at UBC. And I stopped playing piano and I switched to playing organ and harpsichord, and I didn't play piano for about 10 years. And so I finally, I bought a piano about a year and a half ago. I'd never owned one. I own a harpsichord. But I just started playing piano again, and I just found that - Gee I really enjoy it. There was none of that pressure of music school crap, you know? You don't know, but I could tell you a lot of people had very negative experiences at music school. And I just found that I could really enjoy it. And then sort of, also what we talked about the right brain, left brain, I sort of started reading about that and understanding more about that, and that made a huge difference. I think it's just the point I'm at in life where I just decided I'm not going to beat myself up about things like making mistakes and being anxious and, so - But certainly performance anxiety has been a long history with me.

I Right. You mentioned also perfectionism, was that an early -

R Oh, I think I'm a perfectionist.
I Are you still that way?

R Oh, yeah, but I've also decided that - um - I've never been able to play perfect, so why do I think I should be able to?

I Good point.

R I'm not a concert pianist. So, I've sort of given up on - or allowed myself some leeway with the perfectionism thing. And so I don't feel that - I'm not going to try to beat myself up for not being able to achieve what's actually not possible.

I Right. Okay, so that's - realistic goals is the jargon expression for that.

R Yeah.

R I guess I've had - my experience - now that I think about it I think that's it - well, it's all been about becoming who I am or something. Or becoming who I want to be, and not who I thought I was, or trying to get rid of the voices in my head that aren't mine. Like, the critical voices, and the negative voices. That's family background. It's not me, but those - that's in there, you know. And so it's a long process of becoming aware, and well, it's awareness. So this has been a very, very focussed thing. It's not just something that I've chosen not to deal with or whatever. Because you're right, obviously I still play music, despite all this difficulty. So, yeah, why do I keep playing. Well, - well, I've experienced some of the good things about music. And, I'm still not actually playing that much at this point, but it's still on my agenda in life. (laughs)

I So, it's a joint - there's a sense of self-discovery going on.

R Oh, it's all about who I am. And whatever it is that I choose to do. Now I've started doing art. And it's funny, because the, with the art, I don't have this - a lot of this negativity, or anxiety about ... what I do, or - And I don't know why that is. Well, I think
I'm pretty good. I've only been doing it a year and a half.

I: You mean you're a pretty good artist.

R: Well, yeah, I'm quite pleased with where I'm at after a year and a half. But whereas with music, I think maybe it's because the music started when I was a kid, and there's carrying along all that family garbage is always part of it. And maybe I'm letting go of that. My sister's also a professional musician, so that's kind of hard because it's like keeping up with my younger sister. And why can she do it and I can't, so, that's another thing.

I: To what extent do you think that your education contributed to your anxiety?

R: My music education?

I: Yes.

R: Oh, big time. I would say that all my music - I'll make two points - all my music education except for maybe one teacher, has been - what I'll call it - the negative feedback kind of education. This is what you did wrong, this is what you did wrong, this is what you did wrong. So maybe you'd play 20% of the piece that wasn't quite right, but that's all they'd focus on. And I recognise that because now I'm a piano teacher. And so I recognise that, and it's so damaging. And the other thing from music education is about focusing on mistakes. And now with my kids I say - Well, mistakes don't matter. It doesn't matter. And they don't! At some point of course they matter, but in another sense they don't. And so these things I try to address, certainly. And what was the other thing. I was going to say two things and now I forget. What was the question?

I: How much has education contributed to your anxiety?

R: Oh, right, okay. And the other thing I realised, in the last year and a half, about my music education, is that nobody ever taught me to play music. The only thing that I ever
learned was how to play technique. And this is back to this left brain right brain thing because, when you play technique, you're only in your left brain. You're not in your right brain. And that's where the music happens in when you're in your right brain. When you're in your left brain all that happens is technique and nervous notes. But when you're in your right brain, that's when the music happens. That's my personal experience.

I A practical question now. What literature have you used - what books and methods have you used to assist you with your anxiety?

R Oh, ah - I think - at UBC I did something - I don't know if it was with Dale (Reubart) or not, I can't remember. But it was - oh, you're supposed to do a stress free diet, and relaxation exercises. Okay, that wasn't really much. Then I started doing this meditation in 1991. And I knew a fellow at choir, and he said - Oh, well, why don't you do this meditation? Because I thought that would help me focus.

I What symptoms were you experiencing, by the way, when you were experiencing anxiety at that point?

R In 1991?

I Yes, in the choir and so on.

R Oh, I didn't experience anxiety in the choir.

I Oh, what about when you were playing the organ.

R The organ? Oh, same as ....... Oh, choir's not - it's only when it's a solo.

I What about books?

R Well, I'd say the only - well, um, the Inner Game of Music. And then, - I haven't
read a lot of books on it.

I  What is it about that one that appeals to you?

R  Oh, let me think, what was that one about? Well, it was talking about basically left brain right brain kind of stuff. I don't know if they exactly described it in those terms, I don't remember. But that one talked about how to experience music rather than just play it. And then that Notes from the Green Room, which I read the first little bit, I can't even remember what it's about. So mostly it hasn't been books, it's been meditation and just going to a counsellor and just other personal cathartic experiences.

I  I think we'll call that it. I think there's lots more, I just sort of feel like -

R  Well, you can't describe - I mean a transcriber - a six hour conversation.

2nd Interview

I  Female: aged 50

In what areas of music are you predominately engaged?

R  In several areas. It basically covers music from about 1100 to about 1720. It's early music, and then in that area I played (Viola de Gamba) in Renaissance ... music. And mediaeval ... in mediaeval music.

I  How long have your been performing?
R Up to about 15 years in greater or lesser degrees of professionalism.

I When did you start performing? When did you start playing as a musician?

R I think I played my first concert at age 11. In those days I played - actually, no, it was even earlier than that. I first started playing at my piano teacher's recitals. And I think I must have been just about 8 years old at the time.

I And have you experienced performance anxiety?

R Many times.

I Could you describe your own personal experience?

R My greatest anxiety would come when I was playing violin. And I'm not sure why. But I would - my bowing hand would shake so much that I couldn't actually control the bow. There was one performance that I did when I was 18 under very difficult circumstances anyway, which actually caused me to give up the idea of being a musician for a while. I didn't think I would be any good. It really undermined my confidence. It was such a traumatic performance. And such a disappointment for a piece that I thought actually would go well. My performance with piano was always more secure. And even though I got nervous, I would still keep going. But I noticed after the bad violin performance that the next time I did something on piano, I was very shaky. And clearly the one bad experience affected everything.

I Anything else you can say?

R Looking back on, I think that what happened was, that when I was younger, and played my one little piece, it was easy to go up and play. Once you start playing when you're a teenager, I think your awareness has grown. Although it didn't seem to me as though mine had, but perhaps more is at stake. And also, now that I look back on it, I
realize I hadn't actually been taught how to play in a concert. My own teacher had been extremely sick the whole year that I was getting ready, this piece. And I'd actually put myself through my final grade 8 exams on violin. I had had a couple of lessons with one of the other teachers in the music school I was in, and he thought I was pretty good. And so I just went to play this piece, but I hadn't actually done a lot of performing on the violin before I played this big concerto solo. And it was a great shock to see that I had nerves that were actually acting in this way. And once something started going wrong once, I didn't have the experience to say "Oh, well, this is really awful. Let's try and get a grip on what's happening." I just went to pieces.

I How old were you at that point?

R I was 17 I think.

I Is there any connection between the way you were taught and your ability to cope with anxiety?

R I think so. But I think part of it's in my own personality as well. I think however anyone tried to teach me, I think I just would end up sort of turning it into myself, in that I would play the pieces, and kind of not like myself if I couldn't play them well. And I tried to practice the hard bits but actually didn't know how to practice. And probably wouldn't have had the faith at the time, in doing the practice suggested that would be necessary to correct things. But in general I was a kind of large picture person. And because I was quite talented, I could just sort of - sort of play through a piece right away. And in that respect perhaps it was bad for me that I didn't actually really have to practice, I could come and muddle through. It's ok if you're doing exam pieces, perhaps, because you pass. You don't get high marks, but you pass. But when you need an absolutely sound technique, as it's been built up through a very careful kind of practice, and when you absolutely need to know a piece back to front so that you can play under difficult circumstances, it wouldn't hold up. This kind of playing just from your talent alone, doesn't hold up.
You've mentioned several times that when you've experienced anxiety, you experienced it as personally, you felt diminished somewhat.

R  Oh, yes.

I  Could you go into that a little bit?

R  The diminishment has to do with, I think, the reputation I had in this place. I was one of the better players. I led the youth orchestra in this music school that I was attending. And there were a lot of good players around. And I think it was one of the last performances I was going to do there, because I would be leaving to go to university. So, in a sense, one's reputation and one's image is all bound up in that. That's the diminishment side of it. I think also, just a huge personal disappointment that I wasn't as good as I thought I would be. And I thought that I would be able to do a good job, and that, also, there's always worry that you won't. There's always the element of self doubt. So I think huge disappointment, but also in a sense, one's worst secret fears, realised as well, all out in the open, so everything hits you at once.

I  Over the years, what has enabled you to manage your performance anxiety?

R  Well, first of all, just growing up, and having time to get more of a sense of proportion about myself and other people. That's one thing. I think also, what happened was my career, not just in playing, but in all sorts of things, has been a series of feeling that I haven't quite managed to do what I set out to do. No matter whether I've got qualified for something or not. And so I've kept on re-introducing myself to subjects until I felt satisfied. And when I left university, for various reasons I felt that I hadn't actually succeeded in the way I wanted to succeed. I wasn't satisfied intellectually about myself. And so I sat down, I wrote a list of all the things that might be wrong, with why I didn't feel any achievement. And I realised that the huge factor in this was that I was scared of everything. And I did a number of things to try and stop me from being scared, like writing a list of things that I was scared of that I could do, and trying to analyze when I felt scared.
And it wasn't just playing, this was a huge number of things. I think that that gave me a lot of courage. I just did about three things on the list, after which I didn't feel like I needed to go through the whole list anymore. But one technique I had was to say, first of all, what is the worst thing that can happen to you if you fail? And I realised that in a sense, I was scared of the fear as well. And that often you didn't die from fear. It couldn't kill you. And often the worst things that would happen would not be - they wouldn't kill you, and that wasn't comforting. And secondly, what I realised was that, it's possible to learn, and that you should never feel that - that's it, you've had all your chances. And I sort of proved - I set about proving it to myself, and it was also something that I wanted to do, in that I registered myself again for music, because I'd realised I couldn't stay from it. I'd given up classical music entirely. And I realised I couldn't stay away from it, and that it was a gift going to waste.

So I registered myself for instrumental lessons, but also for (pedagogy??) so I could get a violin teacher's diploma. And I thought, well if I fail, I'll just work out what went wrong, and I'll learn how to pass. It didn't occur to me - I stopped feeling that I was the failure. It seemed to me that there were techniques that one could learn to pass. That I'd basically not say - This is a fail - I'm a failure - that this, I'd just learn how - what was needed in order to not be a failure. In order to do what was necessary. This may again be personality that one needs a certain amount of courage. But I remember I did the same thing about handling money years and years before when I was quite young and worked in a bakery - I was always too scared to actually do the mental arithmetic. So, it may be personality too, but - I'm not quite sure where I found the resolve to go into the music again, but I did. Actually I do, there were a few significant encouragers along the way.

I Oh, yes, you had people who - were they mentors?

R Well, they weren't exactly mentors, but there was enough of a glimmer. For example, to get back into playing music, I decided I'd ease myself into it, that'd I basically not give myself challenges that were too great at once. I wanted to feel that each stage I was going to enjoy, and be a success at. And so I registered myself in two things. One
was keyboard harmony, where clearly the teacher wasn't that impressed with my piano playing, but I also registered with a group where amateurs could bring along pieces that they knew on the violin. And the teacher there said to me - "You know, you should carry on. You really do have a future in this kind of music, I don't know why you stopped." Which got me thinking. So, I thought - Well, OK. This is what I want to do. It was just sort of odd things here and there like that.

I Was there ever a point in your - probably in your early career - when the goals that you'd set yourself and the talent that you perceived that you had were not congruent with each other, that your values or the way you perceived yourself as a musician, you couldn't live up to them?

R Always. Even now, yes. But it comes and it goes, you know. It comes and it goes.

I think that depends so much on opportunity, and whether you're getting the opportunity to show what you can do. And that in turn depends on where you're living and the people that are around you. It really does come and go. And it just depends so much, not only on your own talent, but on what's going on, and who else is like you around the place.

I But does your support system, your family and relationships matter at that point? I'm talking about now, about the encouragement to do it.

R I'm not sure I've ever had - (how to put it) - I have a very wonderful support system in that I don't absolutely have to work for a living. I do work for a living, because I do a lot of the things that otherwise we'd have to pay someone else to do, but - so, the working I do is the housework, and all the child stuff and the driving around. And basically organizing most things in the house. But I am free to go off and practice. In some ways that has undermined my ability to achieve though, because it's too much of a cushion. That, if I don't play .... and I can see that it's both a helpful factor and an undermining factor, because what I need from that, what I have to do is, my only motivator is ambition
alone, and desire. It's not a practical one. And I think that the practical one is extremely important and strong. And I think it's also had a lot to do with undermining my image of whether I - how seriously I've sometimes thought of myself as a musician or not. As far as encouragement in terms of sort of, personal support from my family, it's very sporadic. There's no discouragement at all, in fact I think my family's very proud of what I do. On the other hand, in some ways my son and my husband are both flakes, in that they don't carry each other's or mine in their minds sufficiently. So that they say- We'll get home early the next three days because she's working for this big concert. When it's brought to their attention I get the support. But in a sense, I have to demand everything of it. And it seems to have been a feature of my career since I left home, in fact, that I feel that I'm always doing it, mostly on my own. That the support now comes from my colleagues, rather than from family. And it's wonderful, actually, and it's inspiring, but it mostly comes from my colleagues.

During the years, there have been very significant moments where support has come from people I consider models and role models. When I registered myself at Trinity College of Music, there was one piano teacher who was absolutely brilliant. She taught me how to practice. And I was twenty-four at the time. I think that she thought that I was worth taking trouble with. Even though comparatively I was much older than most of the other musicians, and I had no piano technique to speak of. She went right back to the beginning with me. And I didn't end up getting my piano qualifications because she didn't think I was ready. And the violin teacher there was much more lackadaisical. She thought I was good and it was ok that she let me take the exams. And I knew, because of - I guess because I was learning to think more critically about each piece, because of the piano teacher, I knew that I would pass. But it would be an ok pass. It wouldn't be brilliant. And I was getting, at that stage, because of this piano teacher, to get an estimate of what was good and what was satisfying, and why things would work, and when they didn't work, and why. So even though she didn't - the piano teacher wasn't full of praise, but she took such pains, that in itself was a support. The same thing happened with a piano teacher I had at McMaster University as well. My string teachers have never thought I was that brilliant. My violin teacher, this is. I started
out playing piano and violin, so. In a way I probably had more problems with violin even though, musically, when people have heard me, they still called me talented.

When I came to Vancouver, one of the instructors thought I was very good in the early music program. He only taught for a year. And when the full-time one came back, he clearly thought I was ok, but didn't want to teach me the instruments that I wanted to learn. For various reasons. I think by then I was getting panicky and pushy about what I really wanted to do. And he had no time anyway. But, there was one woman, who is probably one of the best players in North America, and in Europe, and at a workshop she did come over quietly and say to me "I think you should get serious about this instrument." So, I've had sort of, very strange backward and forward things that - it's interesting. All it needs is one person you respect to encourage you, and it can set you up for a year.

Also, I used to take, and occasionally still will, the advance mediaeval workshops which also gives you inspiration for a year. It doesn't give you personal encouragement, but seeing someone who's good, helps your resolve to keep on trying. And I've kind of overstepped the mark, I'm talking about inspiration now, rather than personal encouragement.

I'm going to go back again to your early experience with anxiety. Did you seek any professional help?

R No, because I think when you're a teenager, you just assume that other people know how to do things. You just assume that that's you, that that's it. At least that's what I did anyway. It was how I functioned.

I And in a contemporary context, how do you feel today, about other people or yourself, exploring psychotherapy or medication or drugs, or whatever. Alternatives to sort of sticking it out.
R To sticking it out?

I Meaning, working through on their own, their anxiety.

R I can only speak about myself. There is in me, I think an arrogance, in that I'm not sure I would ever find a psychotherapist who I felt would understand all sides, enough sides of what I was - of what I wanted to say - to be able to see the picture, as well as I think I could see it myself. And this is perhaps intellectual arrogance on my part. Or maybe it might be something else, I don't know. But I've always felt that the strongest, I've felt strongest when I've tried to work out my own solutions and they've worked. And this also does give you kind of an arrogance, like the sort of the self-made person.

I Yes. Well, how do you feel if colleagues turn to - beta blockers for instance, or to therapy.

R It's up to them. I think whatever helps you play. I play with people- I mean, I don't even know half the people. I'm sure they take beta blockers that I play with, and it doesn't - you know, it's not up to me. Whatever helps them.

I There's no automatic stigma in your mind.

R No, not at all. There are enough things to cope with, I think. And whatever - if you're a musician and you want to play, if someone is willing to put themselves through that, or risk that, or try that so that they can carry on doing what they love, then that's up to - you know, that's what they have to do. You just admire them for trying and going ahead with it.

I How would you describe yourself generally. As a secure person, insecure, perfectionist - that kind of self-analysis.

R I think it's changed so much. And it changes, it keeps changing, is the problem.
And again I'm very secure in some areas, and insecure in other areas. I would say by now, I'm a reasonably secure person. In that, if I'm nervous I usually know a few good reasons why. And I think I've exposed myself to enough really, in every situation, that I know I'm probably not going to fall apart. But at that age, and experience - I think in general I'm a fairly nervy person. And I'm inclined to anticipate fears. But when you play with other people, and when you work with other people, as a musician, and when you organize things, that may not come into it. Because it undermines what you're trying to do. So you learn to put nagging aside, and you learn to try to be as open and sort of, just cope with whatever turns up, because that's what we need to do.

I Are you able to leave your personal problems behind, when you perform?

R Absolutely. There's noting else on the stage when you perform music.

I Can you .... how are you able to be so single minded?

R Music's in a completely different place, in a way, from the person that - all the things you have to do - it's like a job. And it's like a vocation, but it's also, there's something about playing music that engages every faculty. It's akin to acting on the stage. That when you play the music, you are the person doing that particular piece at that time. And in a sense you're entering into the framework of what that music is like, what the composer required of that piece of music. It's very much a total giving situation.

I Does the word 'communication' or the phrase 'communication with the audience', does that - do you respond positively or negatively to that.

R Yes, and I think they're two - well I can think of two things. First of all, music is still a visual art. Even though it is an oral thing, nevertheless you're on the stage and people are watching you. They're watching your own personal body movements, how you look, whether they can see you or not. Whether your face is pleasant to look at as you play. And also how you interact with the other members of the group. That's all -
they do that as well as listening to the music. And you can really turn people off by having unfortunate mannerisms. I go to concerts, and sometimes I can't watch their performer. I can't bear to watch. And when I don't look, then the music's quite nice. But very often the mannerisms can really turn me off enjoying the music. So the first one is the whole visual aspect of performing. And that's communication.

Also, there's an element of - ok, let me get to the other aspect first. If you know the piece. If you know what you think the piece is about, then what you're doing is giving that conception, you're giving the piece to the audience. It's like a gift. And it's your job, it's your responsibility, and it's your delight to offer this to them. And music is - it does say things, and it doesn't have - it has it's own grammar. So for example, something can be rousing, or it can be sorrowful. And it can, one phrase can be hesitant, and the next phrase need not be. So, you have a whole, kind of, lexicon of gestures that you're imparting to the audience when you play. And that's the communication. If you think about something else, then what you get is one note sounding like the next. Instead of sounding, sort of like my voice sounds now, going up and down and trying to communicate something. So if you become self-conscious, with nerves, or if you start thinking about something at home, then what's going to happen is the music starts to sound mechanical and repetitive, and not interesting. In a sense the more involved the group is, the more they've communication. So that involvement requires a huge number of things. Absolute preparation, knowing the piece, knowing the people you're playing with, and be willing to take risks. So that when suddenly the communication sort of wants to go somewhere, you don't hold it back. So I think the communication's supremely important. That's the whole point of the music. It's not the whole point, because personally, I'm communicating to myself, and among the players too, but the whole point is communication of some kind.

I What should the musician do who's anxiety is manageable on occasions but on other occasions is immobilizing?

R I can just speak for myself. I think what I did when I was first learning (Viola de Gamba) and this is the case, was to make sure that if I was going to play in public, that I
was absolutely prepared in every way because it was a relatively new instrument and I didn't have the reflexes to sort of fudge things in the way that you can when some things happen with an instrument you know very well and you're on stage. I made it my business only to play very easy pieces, comparatively, and also to learn it absolutely by heart so that I didn't have to worry about my eyes losing the place as I went from this music stand to my fingers, and you're not supposed to look but, anyway, I looked at my fingers, and just to make sure I was doing the right thing. But just basically so that I had enough latitude on stage to be able to cope with things that could come up. And I think that's what I would suggest to anyone who wants to perform but either hasn't done a lot, or is not sure of themself, that they absolutely, absolutely, absolutely prepare everything. That's very good advice for all musicians and in fact most of the best professionals do do that. The really big concert artists don't have a tour until they've got the pieces so, so well done and they'll tour with it, you know, they'll play it in 50 different places so that they absolutely know, exactly what's going to happen. Even then, the unexpected is always going to happen because you ......, but at least they know the piece sufficiently that they're comfortable with it, and I think that's always the aim, whatever level you're at. But if you do know that things can desert you, you have to have something that you can fudge on until, or make do on, until you can get back to, til you can sort of pull yourself back into the right frame of mind to continue.

I And so, continuing from that question, what should performing musicians ought to do who's experience of anxiety is so crippling that this physiological and psychological affects become neurotic?

R I think, if the anxiety is so crippling then there may be very big reasons underneath that. The person may not believe that they should be doing music at all. They may be trying to undermine themselves, so they can say, "See, I told you so." Sometimes failure is more comfortable to accept even though it's nasty, than the risk. In that case, I would suggest professional help because I have known someone like that and I played in a group with him, and twice we got to the stage where the group was getting quite good and he sort of undermined the whole group and then he left. It was as if, at a certain point of success,
he was scared that it had to be it. And whenever we played there was always this danger that he was going to break down and he did, and yet he didn't stop playing and I think there was this belief that he was a musician. And because I have had similar experiences myself, I do think that, yes, he probably is a musician, but all of the, for whatever reason in his background, maybe lack of parental support or very often one parent says, "You absolutely mustn't do it" so there's no, there's no recognition of this person being a musician, for whatever reason. I think that the clue has to be in the person's self-perception and identity. I think they have to confront very deeply the causes of why they get this paralysis. You can do it in lots of ways, I think what I tried to do was to do it by proving to myself that I could be a musician and that was all I needed to do. I guess, I'm not obsessive enough to let it be completely crippling, but it took a lot of years and a lot of resolve on my part to say, "Yes, you are a musician, you do have talent, you are as good as all these friends of mine that I can see, here, what are they doing playing and you sitting here?" And a lot of getting absolutely sick at heart at myself and hating myself. It took a lot of resolve to keep on. I think my method was to prove to myself that it could be done. But it was done in very slow and painful stages and that's still going on. I think that maybe we never completely leave our demons, that you have one or two really bad things and it sort of pulls you down again, not right to where you were, but it pulls you down a bit.

I think that if someone really, really wants to be a musician, I suspect that they are deep down musicians however bad they might be, and that there may be some things that they just have to work at it. I suppose I was lucky in that when I was at music school there was a companion violinist who was considerable older than me, but he couldn't count. He was a lovely player but he could not count but he worked at it and he got a job in one of the London symphony orchestras. I guess I have seen people who have achieved this. Also I think my experience as a teacher has helped me and that I think it's who didn't grasp the concept of a piece for a year and suddenly the penny dropped and they realised where one piece ended and the next began, and then they were away, playing cockily. Or, I've seen kids who couldn't even read, and who's teacher said "They can't do anything else," but they learned to play the violin. I think - I've taught kids to play a very difficult instrument
where the motor skills for one hand is so different from the motor skills of the other hand, and I think all sorts of people master it, that I think that in itself is an incentive to coping with any problems.

I guess, my own experience with the viole probably also supports that, in that when I started to play the instrument I took it seriously when my son was born because then I had time to practice. I was at home quite a bit and I started teaching myself the bass viole which is the more played of all of the sizes. And you can get more jobs if you play the bass viole. And at first I could not play the damn thing, it was so big my fingers felt that they were breaking. But I did tell myself off a lot, saying that when I first started playing chord guitar I knew it was impossible to get a chord, and suddenly after a few months I was getting G-major chords, and switching and changing chords and I thought, if I could play the guitar, there hardly any difference with this instrument. I would just work out a method of gradually playing each damned note until there wasn't hesitation between one note and the next. I guess, in terms of being scared, I guess my faith is in - there must be a way to work out this awful thing and I think that's probably been kind of a basic philosophy with me. I guess because of that I think I've got probably a faith in most other people too, that if they're willing to work at it they can overcome it.

I Alright. Have you got anything else you'd like to add? My questions are over.

R One thing that I find very interesting is that at a certain point, after you've done, after I've gone through all this business of learning the piece inside out, to play it, and play it in a concert, there are times when there is something that you know may or may not work. Or, for example, I started playing with wonderful violinist who occasionally played with our group in the summers who was very, very good and very demanding and liked to play hard stuff. And I realised after one concert we did with him how much I was loving the element of risk. And I think maybe that is the point at which I kind of realised that, "Yes, maybe I am a musician after all," in that, I didn't just kind of play the easy stuff, but I did work at the hard stuff, knew that what I couldn't manage I could do something, I could, you kind of change it on the spot so that you can get through it somehow.
Occasionally a passage is very difficult, you do something that's going to let you through without letting too many people know that you've done it. You know, the people who really know the piece inside out might know but you're saving the piece. You're not cheating in that sense but what I found was that when - I mean it's so funny because what you do is you get yourself a talking to, and you're approaching something and if you start to feel scared, you either relax and you think of the audience and love them or else you say, "Play the fucker." And you just play it and you go for it and it's like you're really giving yourself a hard talking to but it's exhilarating because you kind of, it's like leaping the high jump but it's such a wonderful feeling. Maybe it's what runners get with the adrenaline, but it's just the most incredible feeling to do that. And it's not risk for its own sake, but you suddenly get this music. And so I guess that is not the only compensation for playing but it's actually one of the more astonishing ones that relatively late in life I've had.

The other thing was I never, ever got trained to be a soloist. And because my own training was so haphazard I went to school where the teaching was free, it was paid for by the local council. And because of that they got what teachers were employed in the school system, and I realised I had 8 violin teachers between the ages of 7-18. And they would come and go. Some would completely try and change my technique again or correct it, maybe I didn't have a good technique but. I had, I can remember, of those teacher, 2 who were very good indeed. The best one of all who was a Hungarian concert violinist and brilliant, gave me so much support. But she got sick because she was trying to teach and have her professional career and she left after a year and a half and I was left all on my own to do the exam at the end. And years later she actually apologized when I went backstage to say hello to her. She felt guilty about it for years and years that she felt she'd really let me down. I hadn't even felt let down, but I think that that was quite significant in my feeling that a) I had to spend my whole career working out for myself what was necessary because I didn't, I think I've always felt that mentors weren't going to stay. I think it's undermined relationships I've had with real mentors, people who would have been willing to be mentors such as this woman in Seattle who I think at the time would have loved to have had other people to play with and would have been prepared to kind of give encouragement in order to form a group. She's since done it with other people here so I
know that, in a sense, I've kind of let her down by not quite believing at the time that I could come up to that standard or not taking advantage of it but I think it's a habit of thinking I've had. But what I realised when I took one workshop with one of the most brilliant people in mediaeval performance was that he talked about how people who play early music instruments often are people who begin as second rate and switch to these thinking they're going to be easier. Well, I didn't, I just liked the music. But it is true that these people aren't interested in history as much as in, and they're not necessarily trained as soloists. What he said is you have to think like a soloist. And from the hint that he dropped in one six week course, I realised that people were trained as soloists. In addition I did spend one, at the time I thought useless year, specializing in piano at UBC. I first came to UBC to specialize in piano in the performance program. By then I'd worked my piano up enough to do that. There the teacher had, she was one of the best teachers, and she almost only had piano performance majors. And what we would do was we'd gather and we'd practise performing to each other and what she would do is people who were doing really big performances, she'd make them play their whole recital and then she'd say, "Okay, now play it all over again" right there on the spot. And the idea was she said, "You'll never feel better than you feel now going into that performance, you've still got to kind of get it out of you" and I think that even now, and I went on the piano that I realised you need a huge and huge amount of energy. It's like playing a soccer match. You really have to summon your energy from somewhere anywhere which is why you swear at yourself or give yourself talking to on stage but you can't start feeling sorry for yourself because you don't have the leisure of a latitude. But I think that it's been harder for me because I only had little hints of that here and there. And also by watching other much better, younger players than myself and how they go about things. You know, I've learned a lot, late in life, realizing what I want to do and I think what happens is if you have that energy and you have it trained when you're younger that you just don't have quite as many of the fears and anxieties. Because what you do is you get taught to play with your anxieties so that you have an opportunity to learn for yourself "How do I learn to cope when all hells breaking lose and I've lost my place and I've landed in the wrong note or I'm playing out of tune.”
I At what point do you learn or you said that you get taught to handle it. Are you talking about in age or in a process there?

R Both. I think as in age some people may be have a maturity to learn to live with their nerves, even when then they're very young, even before they're teenagers. In my experience, I don't think it's ever too soon to teach people that if they make a mistake in a concert it's no big deal. That what we will do is learn how to practise next time so that a) they might not make the mistake but, b) if it happens, what to do if it's happening at the time. I don't think it's ever too early to make them feel that it's okay, to kind of, to feel nervous, that there are ways to deal with it. I don't think anybody told me that there were ways to deal with it, until quite late, until very, very late. Certainly, the teacher that, the viole teacher that thus encouraged me, she does that with people. She tells them how to play because very many early music instrumentalists have come from other instruments and they haven't had the experience. But I don't think it's ever too early. You don't want to panic them either, but you don't want them to feel discouraged because it's a normal process to feel, when you put yourself on the spot and you're the focus of attention that you can handle the situation. It's all about control and self-control of being comfortable with yourself. What they do in performance schools is they have the kids play and play and play so much that you know, you're nervous, but you get used to feeling that way and so that you don't fear nervousness, you just say, "Oh my goodness, why am I feeling this nervous, I'd better do something about it."

I So action, responding to it confidently is part of the process then.

R Yes, learning to recognized what your own symptoms are, learning to find techniques for your own symptoms because everyone has different symptoms. Some people sweat on the strings, some people's hands go freezing cold, some people cough or their throats go dry.

I What I was going to ask, much earlier, you mentioned about being put off by mannerisms. Do you see any connection between anxiety and mannerisms?
Yes, I think there is one. I'm sure there is one. And I think, you know, some of the mannerisms are ritual, as a way of, what's the word, you go through this process, a) to give yourself time on stage to get used to being on stage, it's like a ritual you go through and it's conscious and it's unconscious. I can tell you what sub-conscious rituals are, there's one professional violinist and everyone knows her because she's played the world over, and when she tunes her violin, she turns and swings back and forth and back and forth and back forth, and she's not really even tuning because she doesn't really go up to being in tune, she goes back and forth, sort of going eheheheheh. I once remarked to a fellow player about this and he said, "Oh yes, she does that to sort of buy time on stage to relax herself" and it's something you can do. And tuning very often is a sign a) of panic or b) of saying, I want time. And that's conscious. Very often when I play viole, if I'm on the wrong kind of seat, my leg goes completely numb and so I will tune and all the time I'm tuning, I'm kind of wiggling my toes to get the feeling back so I can hold the wretched instrument through the next movement and feel my legs still. So you do things like that. But I think there are certain other rituals that people do, maybe it's a sort of comfort or an assurance, like pushing their glasses up on their nose, shaking their bow hand, who knows what. I think that's probably a way of releasing nervous tension that they either don't know about. And I think some of the mannerisms are possibly that, a way they're body is finding some way of getting rid of this awful tension.

Okay. That's been wonderful, thank you very much.

3rd Interview
Male: Forty years old.

So which areas of music have you played in?
R Live music, original, pop music, I guess.

I And how long have you been performing?

R I haven't for a few years but about 15.

I Okay, did you experience performance anxiety in that time?

R Pretty much every night.

I Can you describe first what the psychological effects were?

R Well, it's just a real, almost nauseous feeling and sweaty, tense, just those kind of snappy kind of responses just before performance.

I Do you mean, you were, when you say snappy, do you mean that you were snappy with your friends?

R Yeah. With my band mates.

I Did that lead to tension between you?

R Oh, for sure.

I How did they respond?

R Well, some of them were going through the same thing but not as intense, they were very understanding.

I Okay, yeah there's a kind of camaraderie?
Yeah.

Those were the psychological, what about the physical feelings?

Well, feeling like butterflies in the stomach, nausea.

Can you remember how far ahead of time you began to feel that way?

Oh, just when I would enter the premises where we were going to play, like an hour before.

So it didn't build up on you, as - if you had a performance a week ahead, it wasn't - make you anxious in between.

Depended on the venue I guess. How many people were going to be there?

Oh, okay. So the size of the venue had an effect on -

Oh for sure, I think. The more people, the more intimidating it was.

Approximately how old were you during this period.

I guess 22 to 37 or 38.

Wow. So you perform regularly then.

Yeah.

And all that time it was difficult.

Oh yeah.
I  Did it ever get better? Did you ever -

R  It got more tolerable but it was always the same.

I  It was always there?

R  Yeah.

I  Did you ever resort to official medication?

R  No.

I  Did you see a doctor or a therapist or anything?

R  No.

I  Did you ever consider quitting as a result of that?

R  Oh yeah.

I  And is that what made you quit in the end, do you think?

R  No, I think more just the tiredness of trying to do it for so many years and not getting to the place where there was some comfort and income involved in it.

I  Right. So if you had been "more successful" you might have been more willing to -

R  Oh for sure. I would've continued.

I  Okay. Did you use any particular methods to alleviate the anxiety?
R Drank beer and smoked pot.

I And how successful were those things?

R Well, it never vanished but I guess I got up on stage.

I Right. A general psychological profile of yourself - would you describe yourself as - or how would you describe yourself?

R I'm pretty comfortable with myself.

I Would you describe yourself that way then?

R Not as much so but in my everyday dealings with people, this kind of thing didn't occur. It's the performance that brought along this kind of -

I Did it trouble you personally, I mean did you question yourself during that time?

R Well for sure. We were purveying our own music so a lot of it I think had to do with that too. A lot more anxiety involved in putting - foisting your own creation on people.

I Exactly, yes, because presumably you were being judged on your own creative abilities.

R Yeah. So it was just more so -

I More on the line. Can you imagine what your experience as a musician would've been like if you didn't experience performance anxiety?

R Probably would've been a lot more fun.
More fun, okay.

It was fun, otherwise I wouldn't have continued to do it but it would've probably been more enjoyable if I didn't have that kind of thing to deal with as well.

Did it affect your family life?

Not the anxiety. The playing of music did.

That's right, the profession. Committing yourself to being a professional.

Yeah.

What prevented you from going to seek help? Do you have any particular feelings about psychological assistance, therapy and so on?

I figure it's to provide you with insights into yourself, and I think I had enough insight into why I was that way that I could deal with it.

Okay. Have you got any advice for a musician whose anxiety is manageable on occasions but on other occasions is debilitating. What would you say to someone like that?

Just keep at it. And hopefully you'll have some understanding players to play with you.

Would you see any relationship between the way maturity or self-understanding and coping?

I think it must come with time, like exposure, over exposure to that kind of thing probably helps. Because I recently started playing, about 3 years ago, I played with an
man that was really extremely talented. Lots of great songs, good voice and really good singing presence, you know, and he screwed himself up every time. He couldn't get on stage, he would create conditions that were impossible to meet and he just wouldn't. So I don't know if age has anything to do with it as much as exposure to that phenomena of being on stage and having people sort of watching you.

I How old is this person?

R He's my age.

I Oh, so he was very experienced.

R But he hadn't been on stage before.

I Oh really. Okay. Did you remain in the profession or seek a career outside of these?

R Yes I did. I sucked. I went to another career. I continued to play guitar and continued to create music but basically for myself.

I Right. Okay.

4th Interview

Male: Mid-forties.

I How long have you been performing?

R About 24-25 years.
I What instruments do you play?

R Well, a number of instruments. Piano was my first instrument, and then I took up recorder and so, I would say most of my public performing was done on the recorder but I have, I have performed on the piano, and the organ sometimes, and flute—and I also sing. So I've sung in the opera chorus, I sung in choirs, I just don't do solo things.

I Okay, I'd like to return to that point, about your singing in a minute. Did you experience anxiety or performance anxiety in that time?

R Yes.

I Okay. Can you give me some basic idea of both there's a mental reaction and a physical reaction; could you help me understand?

R Well, I think the first time I really noticed it was when I was about 18 or 19, I can't remember exactly when, my teacher, my piano teacher, suggested that I take part in the Kiwanis Music Festival in Winnipeg and I played a Bach prelude and fugue and, for some reason, I was surprised about it at the time, I was very nervous about it. About a week before the performance actually took place, I couldn't eat, so mostly this hits me physically so I don't—in fact it was very odd because I don't worry about it, I don't think about it, I didn't fret about it or anything, I just couldn't eat, so, and I felt sick to my stomach most of the time for about a week before the performance, so.

I May I ask, did you then, feel the physical reaction before you recognized it mentally?

R I'm not sure. I knew that the reason that I was feeling like that was that this performance was coming down, but I don't think at any time, I didn't, you know, I didn't stay up awake or anything like that at night worrying about it, it didn't prey on my mind particularly, it just made me feel sick and not wanting to eat, so that's basically how it
affected me.

I And as you got closer to the performance, did it subside or increase?

R It got worse.

I And what was the performance like?

R Well, actually, well, I didn't do too badly. I actually had a memory lapse and I had to look at my music at one point because I couldn't remember how, how one of the pieces went, but, as a whole, I mean, I wasn't, it didn't go brilliantly, but it actually went okay and the instant I played I was better. So, that's been, that's basically the way it's worked.

I Yes, that's a very familiar scenario amongst professionals--the worst part is just prior--once they've started it's okay.

R It's never, it's never been as bad as that since, that was the worst. And actually, oddly enough, the second worst case I had, sort of, of performance anxiety was when I taught a course, nothing to do with music, at Langara College, again, I was having trouble, I couldn't eat and I was feeling sick to my stomach for close to, well, three or four days before the course started. And I, that was only about four or five years ago. And, but, anyway, that's, that's not, that--well, in its way that's performance--I always think of teaching as a sort or performance

I Absolutely, you have to be on, don't you?

R And in that case, so at that point I'd heard from a number of musician friends about beta blockers and so, that's why I mentioned it to you earlier. But I had, I went to my doctor and told him what was up and he just instantly said "Oh well, that's what...
I: What did he give you, do you remember?

R: I don't remember the exact medication, no. Um, and it worked. I took one or two of them and after that, of course, once I started doing it, then I was fine.

I: Okay. Did you ever feel the, the implied guilt that seems to go around with beta blockers in some circles, that you weren't strong enough as a musician, that there was something sort of ....... wrong.

R: Well, since I wasn't doing a music performance it wasn't bad but, no I don't think I felt guilty about it, I just thought it was something that, you know, would - well I knew from talking to other people who had taken them that it just makes you feel better ..... 

I: Not ...... high pressure from your colleagues?

R: Ah, I wasn't - I didn't tell a lot of people, no I guess I told people. No I didn't.

I: What about - there's a - one of the familiar symptoms is that you sense a slight sense of disassociation, that you're not quite there. Did that not happen?

R: No.

I: Ok. Did you ever consider quitting during that period when you were really suffering?

R: Well, I guess I'm not a good, in a way I never actually worked professionally, so in a sense there wasn't the pressure of having to go on. But no, I just kept on doing it. Well, in fact, I performed for a long time, but I have to say that - I guess the other thing I should've mentioned is that I didn't always get those anxiety attacks, or not anxiety attacks, but I mean those performance anxiety feelings like sickness, every time. Only solo
situations. In a group, like in small group, say, the ones that I'd be doing with - ....... - you get a little nervous. But I never felt sick before them. So that's why it never really bothered me. But anything that I - where I was a soloist, that definitely did cause problems. But in a small group it would cause slight feelings of anxiousness but nothing more than butterflies, or so called butterflies.

I What if you were to turn that around to recognize that within these butterflies there's an energy that is enhancing and creative.

R In a sense, yeah. I know a lot of people say that they wouldn't want to go on if they didn't sort of feel the butterflies. I never really felt like that. But it was something I could always deal with quite easily, and I knew they'd go away as I started to play anyways so.

I Would you think of yourself as a perfectionist?

R I am a bit of a perfectionist, I'm not sure if it applies to music. But - no, in fact, it probably doesn't, in a lot of ways - well yeah, in a sense. I know you're not going to attain perfection, but still you want to do the absolute best that you can.

I Would you see any connection between the anxiety and the .... -

R No. I don't think so.

I Singing. Did you ever feel or do you feel performance anxiety when you sing?

R Again, in a solo situation, when I had to audition for the opera chorus, you had to go in and sing two songs solo, and I'm not use to singing solo, never have been. That caused a slight anxiety but not -

I Did you take anything?
R  No I didn't. I didn't even know about them at that point. And I didn't - it wasn't bad enough that I even would've taken them but I did, that was probably - I would say slight, not bad at all. I guess partly because it wasn't a performance in the sense that there wasn't an audience there at the time. There was only the few people that were involved in the opera company.

I  Does that make a difference?

R  Yeah, I think the more - I always think of it really as just the fear of appearing before a group, you know, public speaking. Probably one of the worst I had was one time when I had to get up and give a speech while I was in university, and that was probably one of the worst performance anxiety things that I had.

I  What - in your own words, then, what is going on at that moment? If you were to think about yourself, what would you say was happening to you, psychologically?

R  I'm not really sure. But I always just think of it as the fear of appearing before a group of people.

I  Could we extend that and think of something like failure, fear of failure, fear of success, sabotaging yourself, those kind of psycho things.

R  Yeah, I guess it's probably more fear of failure, more fear of making a fool of yourself, I suppose, is the most operative thing.

I  You said you sought professional help at some point.

R  Well, I just went to my doctor. But at that point, in a way I knew, I knew about beta blockers, and I knew doctors were fairly easy prescribing them, so I just basically went to my doctor and said, this is the situation and I was going to suggest beta blockers but he jumped right in and suggested it first, so -
I Did you ever think of going through and getting, kind of psychotherapy? Was that part of the consciousness.

R No. No. Partly I think because, if I think about it now, I didn't think of it at the time, I mean it didn't even cross my mind at the time, but I suppose, if I'd been trying to make my living at it, and doing it professionally, and it was always like that, I might have considered that. But because I wasn't doing it professionally, I wasn't making my living at it, and the kind of situations I was mostly involved in didn't affect me much - it wasn't something that I felt was necessary to go any distance with. You know, as I say, if I'd been trying to make a living as a solo performer, and had felt the way I did every single time, you know, I did that first time then I would've been in trouble and I would've tried to do something about it, but it was never that bad again.

I Did you actually imagine yourself as a pro?

R No, no. I never actually did.

I Oh I see. There wasn't a conflict there between goals and attainment of them, and that kind of thing.

R No. I always thought of myself - I mean what I was originally going for was more in the teaching line with some performing. I was never planning on -

I Is that what you do now?

R No, actually, now I'm a librarian so it's something completely different.

I ......Did you see any reason that you might turn to alternatives such as meditation or perhaps alcohol. Do you think there are any kind of paliatives that would alleviate the pain of performing anxiety beyond medication.
R No. I didn't - well, actually I had a friend who was really into meditation but it never sounded to me like anything I wanted to do. I tried - I never wanted to take a drink, I never wanted to try alcohol before performing because I was always afraid that that would have some affect on the performance. So I - I remember the time that I had a bit of a performance anxiety before public speaking, I had a small drink before that just to see if it would help and it didn't much so -

I It didn't bolster your confidence?

R You know, it's not even - it's funny it wasn't even a case of lack of confidence, in a way, I knew I could do it. It's just, for some reason, it's just always effected me physically, it just would make me feel sick.

I Okay. Could you elaborate a little bit more on - when you say feel sick - would you mind going a little bit further into physical response.

R Yeah. It's hard. It was mostly, I would say, an inability to eat. That is my - I just didn't get hungry - not even digest it - I just didn't want to stick food in my mouth. It was that I felt that I was going to throw it up or anything like that, I just felt a complete disinclination to eat. I guess there was a - I'm trying to remember, I suppose, there was probably a bit of a feeling that I might - it might make me sick to my stomach. But it wasn't that I was particularly feeling sick to my stomach, although at the time, before the course that I taught, I did really feel - I was getting pains in my stomach at times. That's what it was. It's just mostly physical and the odd thing was that it would do that even though, as I say, I wasn't particularly dwelling on it in my mind. It wasn't something that I was thinking about all the time. In fact, I hardly thought about it at all.

I Okay. Is there anything more you could say about the beta blockers, I'm really quite interested about that, in what they actually did for you.

R I was amazed by them because they didn't seem to do anything but stop the
physical ailment - you know, like the fact that I was feeling that pain in my stomach and feeling somewhat nauseous.

I And that went away?

R Just went away, no problems. And it didn't, as far as I could tell, it had no other effects at all. I didn't feel - I just felt normal. Just the way you do when you're not nervous about something.

I Wow. How soon before the performance did you take that?

R Well, I think I took one - again, I guess I took one probably a few days before and then maybe another one -

I When you were advised to take one?

R Yeah, the doctor just said, "Don't take more than two," well in fact he said, "Just take half a pill." And they're tiny anyway. He said, "Take one, or take half, and if that doesn't seem to help take the other half but don't do much more than that." But he said most people find that that helps. I just found that half a pill would be enough to alleviate the symptoms. And so I think - and you have to remember this five or six years ago - but I think I probably took about 2 or 3 pills in the 4 or 5 days before the course actually started. One pill the day the course started, the day of the course, and one pill the next time I taught and that was it. After that I was okay.

I And your friends or your colleagues that you spoke to, do they - they did the same thing?

R Yeah, well, I can only remember one I know who just started taking - he just regularly - took and as far as I know still take beta blockers anytime he performs. I guess he was the one who made me think that it was probably okay because he said it had no
other - with him too, it had no other effects that he could ever see, it just stopped him from feeling that physical sickness.

I Right. Okay.

R I guess I heard that other people were taking them but he was the only one - there's just this one person was the only one I ever talked too about it.

I Okay. Is there any connection between performance anxiety as you experienced it and the way you felt about yourself? Did you see any connection? Did you perceive that during the anxiety you felt more or less about yourself? What was your psychological state like?

R I'm not sure I can remember. I remember thinking it was a bit silly but I don't think I was particularly - I was just more exasperated at myself for reacting that way but not overly so.

I You went hard on yourself then, you didn't see it as a reflection of you.

R No. I don't think so, I mean, somewhat of course, I think anything you get up to, you feel like that to a certain extent but I've never particularly - well, - no. I don't think I felt that it was something that I could, say, get annoyed at myself for thinking I was being particularly stupid about. It just - and I guess I have to say - any time I start something new or a least especially back then when I was younger, anytime I started something new I had somewhat the same reaction the first - the first year I started university I went through the same thing, not feeling too well for about a week and then once I was use to it I was fine. It was just something I was kind of use to and I knew I'd go through it. And luckily I don't do that anymore.

I So it's something like a comfort level that you need, to feel at ease with yourself.
Probably. Yeah. That's actually - I'd agree with that, that once I get - well, back then, once I got into - if I was getting into a new situation that I'd be somewhat nervous about it. Although, again, I wouldn't be dwelling on it, it wasn't something I stayed up dwelling on my mind, stayed up all night about it or anything. I just knew that I'd sort of go through this sort of physical feeling.

Does it in any way - do you think that in any way that it communicates either on a psychic level or physical level with your colleagues?

No. Actually, I don't think so. Because people usually say I don't look nervous, so when I say I feel nervous, they say, "Oh, you don't look nervous."

Would you say musicians are generally supportive of one another in that -

Oh very.

They understand.

Everyone's been through it. And the other thing is that everyone knows that people go through it, people have different ways of - like some people get very quiet before a performance, some people get very talkative before a performance, and some people kind of sit in a corner and do nothing and other people run around. So everyone just knows that that's how you work off your nerves or whatever.

Do you miss performing?

Not really, no. Well, I still do it occasionally, I mean people will ask me to play the piano and I'll do it. No.

I'm just about done. Thank you.