

**DEVELOPING ARTISTIC IDENTITY
IN A POST-SECONDARY MUSICAL THEATRE PROGRAM**

by

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Abstract

This qualitative multiple-case study examined the pedagogical role that performance arts training played in the emergence of students' mature artistic identities. As one of many instructors in the musical theatre program of a post-secondary college, the author fulfilled both the roles of researcher and studio music teacher. Multiple learning contexts were observed for eight first-year students; these contexts included the regimens in various artistic classrooms and in the vocal studio. The data comprised field observations from studio and classroom settings, individual interviews with eight students from the vocal studio, and audio recordings from their studio sessions. Data analysis revealed that the students' construction of identity was positively impacted by: the "triple-threat" program components, the unique dyad relationship between the vocal studio teacher and her students, and the rigorous, professional training the students underwent. A study of the interactions amongst the disciplines of music, dance, and drama exhibited several implications in relation to the students' acute identity experiences. Recommendations for improved musical theatre curricula centred on improved integration of the three disciplines, enhanced studio time, and greater skill development in the studio. Suggestions for future research in performance arts education were also offered.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my brother, *Matthew*, who will forever be my favourite triple-threat performer.

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Chapter One

Introduction

*“It takes two of us.
You came through when the journey was rough.
It took you. It took two of us.
It takes care. It takes patience and fear and despair to change.
Though you swear to change.
Who can tell if you do?
It takes two.”*

-Stephen Sondheim

Preface

Musical theatre is a unique art form that combines the disciplines of music, theatre, and dance. In the formal study of this artistic medium at a tertiary level of performance, students are expected to achieve a high degree of competency in each of these disciplines and demonstrate an ability to integrate them effectively in practice. The level of student success or talent is dependent on their meeting these performance expectations and often has a direct impact on the nature of artistic sensibility and identity that is formed. As part of their training, students experience tiered lessons in each of the discipline areas with the aim of improving and solidifying skills, technique, and artistry.

My personal experience as an artist has allowed me many opportunities for involvement with musical theatre training and performance in a variety of roles that include performer, director, and teacher. Hence, I have a deeply vested interest in and passion for both this performance arts medium and my research in this area, which encompasses an exploration of the inner workings of a musical theatre program. Much of the training in the disciplines of dance, drama, and music that I had in my adolescent years was in preparation for enrollment in a post-secondary program in musical theatre. My aspirations to become a “triple-threat” performer with

regular appearances on the Broadway stage were central to my developing artistic identity. However, when it finally came time to decide on a career plan, my love for teaching music outweighed my desire to be a full-time performer. Thus, I went on to pursue formal study and training in music education and eventually followed a career path that led me directly back to the field of musical theatre.

As a former student and now a teacher within a studio music context, I am most interested in examining the development of my students' identity in these one-on-one settings. By gaining a greater perspective regarding the students' learning experiences in this musical theatre program, and further within the studio itself, I will have a deeper understanding of how their training has affected their growth as artists.

After spending many years in the dyad relationship that exists between teacher and student in the studio-music instruction setting, I believe that it is important to account for my experience as a student and explain how that evolved into my role as a teacher. At the age of six, I was enrolled in piano and vocal lessons to further explore my innate love for music and performing. My first musical experience in the dyad relationship, which lasted into my early teenage years, was laden with high expectations of competitive performance. Initially, I fed off the intense pressure involved in this studio-music instruction experience and continuously strived to meet the performance standards imposed on me with much independent practice and dedication. During this period, I gained many of the fundamental skills and much of the musical knowledge that would later benefit me greatly in my career as a teacher in the dyad. However, by placing extrinsic rewards, such as the first place in the music competition or the high standing in the Royal Conservatory examination, before the intrinsic experience, I began to feel I was missing out on an enriching artistic experience.

As I matured as a person and musician, I realized that the student-teacher dynamic was detrimental to me as a young, aspiring artist. I wanted to challenge myself to grow in ways that were no longer offered with this type of studio instruction. At this point in my development, it

appeared to me that the personal musical choices I made would be deeper if I were able to understand the framework of another teacher (Upitis, 1990). While I had grown significantly during my period of study in the music studio, my teacher was not willing to develop or personalize her instruction beyond the curriculum of the conservatory. Thus, the dynamic of the dyad relationship was no longer working, and in that sense it became an inhibiting factor to my ability to explore and express myself as a musician. While it seemed like an obvious time for change, it was difficult to imagine working with another person in that same intensely personal and deeply connected manner. In her book, *This Too Is Music*, Upitis (1990) remembers having to leave a dyad relationship and documents her struggle to find another studio teacher: “One of the hardships of moving [to another city] was giving up a piano teacher of whom I was very fond and facing the difficult task of finding another” (p. 130). Detaching myself from my first dyad relationship was one of the most challenging periods of time in my adolescent years. The rapport we had built over many years together was a struggle for both my teacher and myself to let go of in the best interest of my development as an artist. To this day, a streak of competitiveness and nerves still rises up in me whenever I recall those competitions and exams—and my studio teacher who by pushing me, in the end pushed me away.

The subsequent dyad relationship ended up being equally powerful and long lasting. The teacher I worked with in the vocal studio throughout high school was inspiring and influential in a highly positive way. This dyad relationship, unlike my first studio experience, invited collaboration between student and teacher; together we made decisions about the curricula for my lessons, basing those decisions on my interests and needs as an aspiring musician. Hence, many opportunities were provided to learn musical theatre and jazz repertoire. While this curriculum also included, in part, a continuation of my formal studies with the Royal Conservatory and participation in local music festivals, the teacher’s perspective on and support for these aspects of my study were entirely different than in my previous experience. Because of the tremendous encouragement I received as a student, I was finally able to enjoy the performances and

examinations because the focus became more about the process of learning and growing and less about the outcome of performance.

The teaching and learning strategies offered by my teacher allowed me to engage in the process of making music, and gradually this enabled me to identify myself as a musician, even without the first-place prize. To this day, I still am in contact with my vocal teacher, as she has had a tremendous impact on my life even after I left home for university. The respect and appreciation that I have for my voice teacher is long lasting, as we have a special bond that only we understand. Upitis (1990) writes about the idea of teachers as mentors, that is, teachers who fulfill a role beyond teaching. The teachers who are mentors, according to Upitis, are the individuals who “guided, counseled, inspired, and took a personal interest in [their students’] overall development” (p. 130). In her recollection of her studio experience and the dyad relationship, Upitis suggests why it is probable that students remember these studio teaching and learning moments [so] vividly: “Some of our memories of those teachers, no doubt, became somewhat romanticized, but we can often recall incidents with amazing clarity, probably because they were in some sense pivotal to our thinking and personal growth” (p. 130). The process of working with my high school vocal teacher in the studio transformed me as a singer and as a person: I became more comfortable and confident as an individual and as an artist, which led me towards my goal of becoming a music teacher.

To achieve this goal I continued my study of voice in university and throughout the beginning stages of my first teaching job. The teacher-student relationship that I had at that point in my life with my most recent studio voice teacher was yet again unique and influential. We spent the majority of our lesson time on vocal technique aimed at getting my instrument to work more functionally, after much teaching and singing where my chest voice had dominated my sound. These lessons presented the biggest challenges mentally, emotionally, and physically because as a singer I had to retrain and develop new ways of learning and thinking.

While this was an arduous journey, it was very worthwhile, as it significantly enhanced my understanding of the vocal mechanism and vocal pedagogy. While the other dyad relationships had situated me as a student, this dyad seemed to allow me to grow as a teacher in training for vocal instruction as well. This studio music instruction experience challenged me to work through specific vocal struggles and to explore an approach to vocal training that placed functional singing before aesthetics. Eventually, with my teacher as mentor, I was able to grasp that I would have more artistic potential and opportunity for creative expression once I gained a clearer conception of the inner workings of the instrument. Once I came to this realization, I felt that I was fully integrated—body and mind—to the artistic experience as a singer as I had never felt any work to be as rewarding and life altering as in this studio.

All of the music teachers I have worked with in a studio setting have affected me as a musician and a human being. In one of her books, Upitis (1990) described a similar impact that the relationship with her studio teacher, Mrs. Ferguson, had on her in a profoundly emotional and altruistic fashion. One day in her office, Upitis read aloud to me some passages of her book that she thought would be relevant to this study. As my thesis supervisor, she fully recognized the significance of the findings of my study to the world of academia and beyond. Because she had been a music student and studio teacher, she had experienced directly the phenomenon of the dyad relationship. Thus, we were both in agreement in terms of the view we held that there was much value to researching the undeniably life-altering dynamic between teacher and student in the music studio setting.

As Rena Upitis shared stories with me about her time with Mrs. Ferguson, tears streamed down her cheeks, and the most genuine look of admiration draped over her face. These memories depicted a series of lessons that seemed to be part of the essence of the person that she had become, that formed a central part of her identity. When I sat down at my desk, to complete the writing of this research study, I read through the entire chapter that Upitis had written regarding her dyad relationship with Mrs. Ferguson. I was brought to tears with the culminating statement

that depicted the relationship that she had with her teacher as being at the core of the musical experience: “This too is music,” (p. 137) she wrote, capturing the essence of the close relationship that bonded teacher and student together in the dyad and that lived on forever in her heart and mind. Uptis regarded Mrs. Ferguson as “a superb teacher, a patient craftsman, a skilled technician, a fine musician, and in time, a valued colleague and friend” (p. 131). Their special bond transcended many other student-teacher relationships, as she was taught through Mrs. Ferguson’s example to live and breathe the music; a lesson that resonated eternally for her (p. 132). I, too, could relate to these profound sentiments because of my experience in dyad relationships in the music studio; it is certainly a relationship like no other.

My artistic identity constantly evolved as a result of the various dyad interactions that I experienced in the music studio. The way I teach in the studio today is a result of the experiences that I have had and the journey I have taken in my musical life. I believe that the teaching and learning dynamics in the studio lessons have allowed me to uncover my true self as an artist. The vocal instruction has provided me with an opportunity to have a voice: expressing myself in a way that matters and is honored by both teacher and student. As a teacher, my intention is to work collaboratively with students in attempt to honor their individual voices and help facilitate their realization of themselves as artists.

The degree to which one-on-one vocal lessons enhance student training and inform identity speaks volumes about the complexities of the studio experience for teaching and learning music. If we consider the voice to be an extension of the person, it holds that growing vocally is just as trying an experience as growing physically and emotionally. There are many phases to developing as a singer, and even more as an artist. Therefore, the voice, which is the instrument of study in the music studio context, is inextricably connected to who we are and to our identity as artists. The study of voice led me on a path towards self-discovery, where I have become more fully aware of myself as an artist. As a teacher in the studio setting, the journey has been ongoing, which perhaps is one of the reasons that it is difficult to express my thoughts about my own

identity as an artist, as I feel that my identity is continuously changing with each new experience that I encounter. The dialectic that exists in teaching and learning within the dyad relationship creates an interactive process that allows me to learn from my students, just as they are able to learn from me. While this journey has been transforming, one constant has been my deeply entrenched and ethereal connection to music. It is this unwavering passion that has led me to my teaching self and to the music studio, the place where this momentous journey began in the first place. As Fried (1995) declared in his preface on the passion involved in teaching:

To be a passionate teacher is to be someone in love with a field of knowledge, deeply stirred by issues and ideas that challenge our world, drawn to the dilemmas and potentials of the young people who come into each class each day—or captivated by all of these (as cited in Sarason, 1999).

My passion for music education has inspired me to uncover the unique nature of studio music instruction through my teaching and my research in this study. The studio experience has played such an influential role in my own development as an artist that I feel it is worthwhile to study and document the role it played in my students' lives. Thus, a broader understanding of and appreciation for the importance of studio music instruction in the context of a musical theatre program will be gained.

Purpose

The rigorous training involved in a post-secondary musical theatre program requires students to participate intensely in the three discipline areas of dance, theatre, and music. Many students enter into the program making initial identity claims about their strongest discipline in the field; however, they must strengthen their abilities in all three disciplines with the goal of identifying themselves as “triple-threat” performers. This thesis examines the development of artistic identity, specifically how it is formed by the one-on-one studio music instruction and the classroom instruction that students receive as part of their musical theatre training.

Artistic identity in this musical theatre context refers to how the students see themselves as performer-artists and how this self-identification affects and is affected by their learning experience. The *development of artistic identity* refers to a process of self-actualization that students undergo while receiving instruction. In his study of musical experience, Maslow (1968) defined self-actualization as a pathway to self-discovery; he argued that students, with an enhanced understanding of self, discover their identities through means of “[their] impulse voices, via [their] ability to listen to [their] own guts, and to their reactions and to what is going on inside of [them]” (p. 169). Maslow’s theory can be applied to this study: as students’ identities are shaped through the artistic experiences they encounter, their awareness of self is heightened. This process of self-actualization and self-description can be realized through students’ individual attitudes and perceptions about their learning, as well as through their experiences and actions in their ongoing journey of creating artistic work in the musical theatre program. There are many facets of identity to be considered in this artistic context, including the personal, social, cognitive, and emotional aspects of development in both solo and ensemble roles.

This thesis will examine the nature of artistic endeavours within the music theatre program, namely in classroom music, acting, and dancing classes. With the examination of these various components of the program, the evolution of artistic identity for each student will be further illuminated in the context of their triple-threat training. As an extension of the findings, the development of artistic identity in the dyad relationship between teacher and student in the music studio setting will be explored. The discussion of the vocal instruction will provide a greater understanding of the role and influence of these artistic learning experiences on identity formation.

Research Questions

In the examination of the development of artistic identity, my overall research question is: In what ways do the various learning contexts in a musical theatre program contribute to the

formation of students' artistic identity? To that end, I also explore the following questions: How do students perceive that their self-identity has changed as a result of their experiences in the musical theatre program? What learning experiences do the students identify that carry over from one teaching context to another? How does the training in the various classes and disciplines interact as students develop their artistic identities?

Rationale

My primary goal as researcher is to increase the scope of understanding on musical theatre training. By presenting the significant impact of studio and classroom experience on musical theatre students in a Canadian institution, a greater awareness of curriculum and instruction will be gained. In the process of examining students' artistic experiences in multiple learning settings, I aim to focus on the development of their self-perceptions, examining the factors from the studio and classroom settings that significantly affect their growth and maturation as individual performer-artists. In addition, this research is being completed with the intent of illuminating the dyad relationship in the studio music setting from both sides of the dyad, that is, from the teacher and student perspectives. Due to a dearth of pertinent qualitative research on the educational dynamic of teaching and learning in studio music instruction, I am interested in contributing a comprehensive view of the vocal training component of a musical theatre program.

Many of the issues involved in this research revolve around identity as manifested through musical study and performance. Therefore, the scope and depth of the literature examined in this area provides a theoretical framework that aligns with the nature of my study. The literature described in the next chapter provides a means for focusing and guiding the analysis of the data, and it alerted me to the complexities that exist in conducting research of this kind. The inherently personal qualities of my work, namely identity construction and development, are highly individualized and guided by particular issues within the field of music education and performance. Thus, the theoretical framework is embedded in the literature and has been

strategically placed in an integrated manner to parallel the intricate and multi-layered dimensions of the nature and impact of the artistic experience being studied.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

*“Art isn’t easy
Every minor detail is a major decision
Have to keep things in scale,
Have to hold to your vision.”*

-Stephen Sondheim

The extant literature featured in the first part of this chapter has been selected to highlight the artistic experience and training involved in a performance arts context. A clear discussion of the nature and benefits of arts education is outlined, leading into the specific areas of musical theatre training and studio music instruction. Both fundamental and ancillary aspects of performance arts education are discussed here with an aim of enhancing understanding and providing a rich context for my research study.

Various perspectives on the topic of identity are explored in the second section of this chapter. The formation and development of identity is introduced with a view to frame the issues of identity that have commonly arisen in the field of musical theatre performance. Namely, performer identities and triple-threat identities are examined to illustrate some of the major themes that warrant further research. This section of the literature concludes with a brief overview of singer identity, which is pertinent to creating a context for studying identity as it relates to vocal music instruction in the studio.

The teaching and learning dynamic of studio music instruction is explored further in the third section with a focus on the dyad relationship between teacher and student and the process of personalized instruction that occurs within the dyad. In the final section, there is an overview of scholarly studies in the area of studio music instruction presented and the proposed outcomes for this study on performance arts are introduced.

Instruction in the Performance Arts

Performing Arts Education

“Performance can travel and change. It is the most dynamic of arts, as change is the very core of its form” (McMahon, 1995, p. 131). The act of performance seeks to connect the performer directly with the innately complex nature of the lived human experience in a sensual and visceral manner. According to McMahon (1995), “performance brings us back into a more radical sense of ‘play,’ arranging the elements of reality in a flux where permanence is questioned, and the human presence is the most essential product” (p. 131).

Involvement in the performance arts holds the potential for performers to actualize their authentic individuality and to connect powerfully to their performance identities. Frith (1996) noted that in the process of discovering the various elements of the performer’s self-identity, the performance personality is appropriated by the performance space and culture (as cited in MacDonald, Hargreaves & Meill, 2002). Many of the aspects of performance that can be learned and trained in performance arts settings contribute to the complexity of the development of the performer’s personality and identity (Davidson as cited in MacDonald, Hargreaves & Meill, 2002). Being involved in the performing arts allows performers to unleash themselves from their inhibitions, get in touch with their vulnerabilities, and express their inner selves artistically. Thus, getting in touch intimately with the authentic artistic self is central to the study and engagement of performance arts.

The type of instruction offered in the performance arts, specifically in a musical theatre context, involves student participation in a series of courses that aim to increase and develop skills and mindsets for the practical application of knowledge. This embodiment of knowledge, which is focused on training in the disciplines of music, dance, and drama, consists of a combination of classroom and studio instruction (Alt, 2004). While many musical theatre

programs are delivered primarily in a segmented manner by discipline, there are often courses within the curriculum that serve to holistically challenge the aspiring triple-threat performer.

In the performing arts context of my research, an integrated curriculum presents itself most clearly through the culminating process of preparing a musical theatre performance product: a live performance of each of the artistic disciplines on stage. In this program, students are often provided with opportunities to integrate all three disciplines together simultaneously in informal and formal performance settings. These integrated challenges, in both rehearsal and performance, serve as an introduction for the first-year students to the large-scale musicals they will be involved in during the second and third years of their program. Beyond these musical productions, the compartmentalized nature of their musical theatre training requires students to synthesize their artistic ideas and build on aspects of each artistic experience to enhance their learning.

In the performance arts, students become immersed in an intensified training regime that requires them to participate physically, mentally, and emotionally in a naturalistic setting—the rehearsal—that leads to a stage performance. Therefore, the process and various stages of developing artistic skills require students to strive towards professionalism and consistency in the output of their artistic work. Instruction in the performance arts encourages students to frame each training session as a performance opportunity in order to achieve their goals. Valuing the rehearsal process and the inherent performance qualities of those teaching and learning moments is essential in the effective practice of performance arts. Mindful practice of the arts will enable students to develop their professional identity as artist-performers, as they foster a mindset of preparedness, confidence, and competence. As much of the training involved in these performing arts contributes significantly to shaping and challenging perceptions, ideas, and creative thought, through such training students are on their way to becoming independent artists; namely expressive, imaginative, and grounded individuals deeply committed to living out their artistic endeavours.

According to Seidel (2002), the various performing arts express with many elements, namely aspects of “visual representation, sound, language, movement, and feeling” (p. 977). Beyond these basic elements, the performance arts offer students an outlet for experiencing a creative process as they participate and engage in the making of a meaningful work of art. This constructive outlet allows students to embrace a pragmatic stance to their learning and to react to the personal, social, and cultural dimensions of their lives. McMahon (1995) supports the notion that the performance arts should aim to encourage artists in training to explore and experience the conceptual in balance. He states: “It is critical that students are given creative tools and techniques that are malleable and applicable for [balancing] that future. We are not just training artists, but citizens who need new ways to respond and react to culture” (p. 127). A performing arts education has several positive effects and implications for both the individual and society. According to Seidel (2002), involvement in the arts increases and improves “social interaction, interpersonal development, and collaborative work” (p. 982). The artistic community that is created in this educational process inspires developing artists to be thoughtful, compassionate, and co-operative individuals. With the moral and character education that is embedded in the curriculum and developed as a member of the performing arts community, students are provided with many opportunities to develop excellent leadership qualities, self-discipline, and self-esteem (Seidel, 2002). The skills and attributes gained in the performing arts are transferable; these artistic experiences prepare students for many facets of their future personal and professional lives, whether they be in musical theatre performance or otherwise. Reimer (2004) supports this claim, as he proposes that “the arts are the means by which humans can actively explore and experience the unbounded richness of human subjective possibilities” (as cited in Eisner, 1999, p. 145).

Students are taught to think creatively (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996) and critically (Woodford, 1989) in the performing arts, and are often acutely aware of the important role that arts and culture play in 21st century society. The performance arts espouse an inherently strong potential

for influence and change. The artist, through instruction and involvement with various artistic mediums, can uncover the powerful nature of performance. A heightened sense of artistic awareness and sensibility is created in this process, which involves interplay with the artist, who is both being shaped by and influencing culture, while attempting to portray a sense of self through their artistic creation. The social environment of the performing arts arena, alongside the cultural underpinnings of each musical performance, creates a complex context from within which the identity of each individual performer is influenced and shaped (Frith, 1996). By juxtaposing the larger-than-life world of musical theatre performance and the complex demands of the artist's real world of ongoing training and competition, a sense of the profound depth and fascinating nature of the professional musical theatre culture is revealed.

The Music Studio Experience

The study of music in a studio context is an ubiquitous practice that stems from a Western tradition, although it has maintained a presence in several non-Western cultures in slightly different forms (Davidson & Jordan, 2007; Kennell, 2002). In this tradition, music making in a studio takes place in a one-on-one situational context in which a complex and interactive dyad relationship between student and teacher is formed. This type of musical learning, whether it is situated in a domestic setting or in a conservatory, has been considered to be an institution for the teaching and learning of a variety of musical instruments for centuries (Davidson & Jordan, 2007). In most arts programs, studio teaching is “at the heart of the curriculum” (Harwood, 2007) as this type of instructional setting allows for a problem-based approach to creating, exploring, and producing artistic works.

A model of cognitive and behavioural apprenticeship is used to describe the dynamics of a typical studio lesson, whereby the expert teacher of exemplary skill and artistry uses strategies such as modeling and providing discriminate feedback to develop the musical concepts and skills of the novice learner. Other metaphors have also been proposed to represent this dyad

relationship, such as a master-apprentice model and a parent-child model (Davidson & Jordan, 2007; Kennell, 1992; Schön, 1987). These metaphors emphasize that this dyad is a powerful and influential relationship between teacher and student. Davidson and Jordan (2007) point out that “these dyad relationships also have an inevitable personal investment, and an intense and personal relationship can be inspiring” (p. 732). Harwood (2007) explains further that the “learning-by-doing” experiences that are enacted with the teachers, who are mentors and coaches for the students, are naturally developed in the studio setting and inspire “close personal relationships” (p. 320). Teachers often serve as role models for their students in these contexts and have the potential to contribute greatly to enhancing or inhibiting a student’s musical identity; a student may construct a musical identity on the basis of the intense relationship created within the dyad. The degree to which this dyad works interactively can often dictate whether a student continues his or her study with that specific teacher, with the instrument, or with music altogether (Davidson & Jordan, 2007). The concentrated dyad relationship, however, is not the only approach to learning a musical instrument that is plausible within these private educational institutions: small-group instruction has a long history in the field and offers a viable alternative to the one-on-one context for instrument learning.

Master Classes

Often, the musical instruction within an institutional setting will extend to master classes of performance, which provide group scenarios averaging eight to ten students at a time in focused learning. Group learning can also involve teachers working with learners in groups as a primary means of instruction. For example, the Suzuki method encourages a group dynamic that includes participation by the teacher with a student and a group of his or her peers with an extension to the student’s family (Davidson & Jordan, 2007). This type of format allows students an increased level of opportunity for socialization and enables them to learn vicariously from the experiences and practices of their peers; in addition, a direct support system is in place because of the high

degree of parental involvement. Shared group experiences, however, can result in a much slower learning process, and the level of detail attainable in the teacher-student dyad is not often possible in this type of setting (Davidson & Jordan, 2007; Schön, 1987). An ongoing master class in performance or the formation of an ensemble, composed of the students from the dyad work seem to be ideal ways of reaping the benefits of both dyad and group learning contexts. Striking a fine balance between dyad and group lessons has the potential to be enriching, motivating, and rewarding for both students and teachers.

Music Theatre Training

“Music theatre is possibly the fastest growing area of professional performance in the arts in colleges across the [Western] nation” (Alt, 2004, p. 393). Instead of re-inventing the ideological wheel focused on teaching Western art music in college and university music departments all across North America, the academic world has slowly, and with some resistance, begun to incorporate popular and world music into the curricula. As individual courses were introduced on unique topics such as the Broadway musical, the demand for the study of popular forms became more widely accepted as worthy programs of study within the academic institution (Alt, 2004). With a growing demand for musical theatre training and the evolution of the musical as a mainstream form of entertainment, it was inevitable that entire diploma and degree programs would be conceptualized and implemented in response to the popularized art form.

The specialized training offered in a musical theatre program encompasses a wide range of courses in the discipline areas of dance, drama, and music. Music theatre curricula vary from college to college, depending on the emphasis of the artistic disciplines within each department within the academic institution (Alt, 2004). Aspiring triple-threat performers often enter into this performing arts arena to gain the skills and the experience necessary to work in the professional theatre world. Training for careers on the Broadway stage, summer stock, and cruise ships, students in most programs spend three or four years developing and honing their performance

skills in preparation for a life filled with ongoing auditions, tours, and performances. To build the kind of stamina that is required to maintain this artistic existence and lifestyle, Alt (2004) suggests that musical theatre training requires “a careful balancing of the essential ingredients that will produce performers who can sing, act, and dance at a competitive level in the professional marketplace” (p. 390).

“Musical theatre and opera necessitate an integration of music and theatre perspectives” (Melton, 2003, xi). The integration of the whole instrument, namely the body, mind, emotions, face, and voice, must be synchronized and aligned in the performance approach of a true triple-threat performer (Balk, 1991). The cross-curricular objectives that exist between discipline training in the musical theatre realm are not often explored to the extent possible as a result of over-specialization and compartmentalization of subject areas in the academy (Melton, 2003; Harwood, 2007). The complicated task of responding to the demands of all three disciplines simultaneously has often led to the neglect of balanced musical theatre program training. In order to liberate the triple threat, exercises and skills should be intentionally planned and incorporated in the curricula in order for synthesis and multidimensional learning to take place. Balk (1991) suggests that a course of action be taken to improve the process of collaboration and unification in course component offerings in musical theatre training. Balk goes on to state that “the goal of every [music theatre] training program should be to enable the performer to execute any action desired and to make sense out of that action physically, psychologically, and musically” (p. 34). Musical theatre training offered should not isolate the elements, but instead aim to unify and relate each of the discipline areas in order to develop the various dimensions of the triple-threat performer in a manner that is true to the art form itself.

With this background in mind, I believed that the curricula design and learning environments at the musical theatre college program where I was teaching warranted careful examination. Ideally, part of the purpose of this research study was to be introduced to each facet

of the students' training, in an attempt to conceptualize ways in which the studio and classroom learning could be fused together into one synergistic experience.

Students experience vocal training as an integral part of their musical theatre study. In assessing the general quality and nature of vocal training, Alt (2004) designed and conducted a series of informal surveys, in which recent musical theatre graduates were rated on the quality of their voice training in relation to musical areas that were deemed crucial for successful careers in music theatre. Professional directors and conductors in the professional industry completed the survey. Results from the survey concluded that the vocal training involved in musical theatre training programs had adequately prepared singers for the demands of the performance arena (Alt, 2004). Respondents of the survey concluded that the rated music theatre students were skilled in "transitioning in and out of belt voice, the development of a workable range, and the ability to sing in a variety of popular/musical theatre styles (Alt, 2004, p. 389). According to Alt (2004), the area of study that needs further reinforcement in the vocal studio is the development of musicianship skills through the building of musical literacy and ear training. While many programs offer separate courses in these areas, it is essential that such skills be further integrated into the studio setting to prepare the triple-threat performer more effectively for the demands of learning music independently and expediently for their fast-paced auditions and careers. I conclude that the development of musicianship, sight reading, and music theory skills, as well as reinforcing musical knowledge gained from core classes in these areas will provide students with a competitive edge in the industry and with the necessary skills to become competent and confident singers, performers, and artists.

Identity Theory

Construction and Development

The formation and development of artistic identity is a self-reflexive process, which involves inter-connectedness with one's mind, spirit, and body, and a high degree of both internal

and external self-awareness. The ability to reflect, perceive, evaluate, plan, and to regard oneself in a particular manner illustrates a level of conscientiousness that exists with respect to a person's existence (Burke & Stets, 2003). In social constructionist terms, the self has the potential to constantly change from situation to situation whilst embedded in social and cultural contexts (MacDonald, Hargreaves, & Meill, 2002). While many individuals embrace qualities of themselves that are more continuous and coherent, there are life events that have a graduated effect on the development of self. Burr (1995) argues that, in the construction of our identity, "we have a number of selves that are equally real" (p. 91 as cited in MacDonald, Hargreaves, & Meill). The consistent feelings of self that are achieved through repetition and through patterns from the basis of our memories of constructive events leave lasting impressions on our sense of self (MacDonald, Hargreaves, & Meill). This manifestation of self is projected beyond a fixed notion of identity, as the individual is able to realize that "each truth about [myself] is a construction of the moment, true only for a given time and within certain relationships" (Gergen, 1991, p.16). Thus, this process of self-actualization is negotiated through multiple perceptions of oneself and works as a dynamic system of development.

The nature of an artistic journey involves the construction and negotiation of identity in the act and practice of artistic and performance endeavours. The core of this development involves what Burke and Stets (2003) describe as being "the categorization of the self as an occupant of a role, and incorporating, into the self, the meanings and expectations associated with the role and its performance" (p. 139). An artistic role is often negotiated and defined in relation to others in a social dynamic. This sociological perspective of identity formation is in keeping with the concept that the emerging self is both individual and social in nature (Burke & Stets, 2003). Thus, in the interactive process of teaching and learning in both the studio and classroom settings, students will find that the continual dialogue and action has an impact on the emergence of their artistic identity. To illustrate this point, Burke and Stets (2003) suggest that as an individual's self-identification emerges, it involves the merger of perspectives of self and others.

This convergence with others, specifically within a dyad relationship, would be influential for both participants involved. The creative collaborative process involved in the development of artistic performances presents an inevitable impact between teacher and student in the cumulative and multi-faceted construction of their identities.

Performing Identities

Performing arts students have the challenge of continuously negotiating their roles and identity within the personal and professional frameworks that are imposed upon them. To a great degree, these students will often categorize themselves in relation to the accepted conventions and terms of their training experience within the program. Thus, the triple-threat identity notion emerges from categorization conventions within the field of musical theatre. The training involved in a musical theatre program encourages students to develop multiple conceptualizations of themselves as performer-artists. This notion of the overall self as being organized into multiple identities, each of which is tied to aspects of the social structure, is emphasized and supported by the nature of the artistic experiences in acting, singing, and dancing. These artists have an identity, an “internalized positional designation” (Stryker, 1980, p. 60 as cited in Burke & Stets, 2003), and are able to organize these different role identities in a “hierarchy of prominence,” in a manner that reflects an individual’s “ideal self” (McCall & Simmons, 1978, p.74). The ways that students choose to depict themselves as artists is central to the management of multiple role identities from each area of the program experience. The prominence of identity in performance situations is dependent upon various factors within the teaching and learning environment. Conscious and sub-conscious choices that students make in rehearsal, for example, allow them to negotiate these multiple performance roles. According to McCall and Simmons (1978), the factors that affect identity formation include the following: “support from others for an identity, a commitment to the identity, and the reception of extrinsic and intrinsic rewards from the identity” (p. 11).

As part of the musical experience, students often engage in their insider world (Hargreaves & Marshall, 2003; Roberts, 1993), which allows for an understanding of students' musical behaviour from an internal perspective of their experiences rather than from a traditional view of their outward skills and abilities. The students' application of this internal perspective brings greater focus to the ongoing process of identity construction and maintenance within each lesson. It also allows for the interaction of identity through negotiation between student and teacher. According to O'Neill (2002), a fluid and constantly evolving nature of identity is often developed through dialogue and interaction with others (as cited in MacDonald, Hargreaves, & Miell, 2002, p. 16). A close examination of this interactive teaching and learning context has the potential to provide clear explanations concerning how various artistic identity frameworks expand and develop for each student throughout this specialized learning process in a multi-disciplinary program.

Triple-Threat Identity

Musical theatre students are continuously redefining themselves within the framework or context that is provided for them by the institution itself. The ultimate and common goal of achieving the status of a triple-threat performer complicates matters of identity with the compartmentalized study of the three disciplines. On this matter, Woods (1979) has suggested that "pupils are engaged in a continual battle for who they are and who they are to become, while forces of the institutionalization work to deprive them of their individuality and into a mould that accords with the teachers' ideal models" (as cited in Roberts, 1993, p. 2). In my proposal of a new pedagogical model that encourages and supports artistic integrity and personal expression in the studio and the program, the building of balanced student-teacher relationships is essential. Ideally within this model, students would be taught in a contextualized and integrated manner with the aim of fostering individualism through a collaborative, creative forum between student and teacher.

In a study by Roberts (1998), the role identity of voice majors in several university settings was analysed to uncover distinct aspects of the self-identification of singers. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to illuminate the construction of the singers' identity within a music-school social context. Various idiosyncrasies of each of the singers were examined in-depth to elucidate the characteristics and self-descriptions that were commonly shared and experienced among the students (Roberts, 1998, p. 193).

According to McCall and Simmons (1978), role identity involves the student's perception of reality and represents an imaginative view of self-conception: the act of being an occupant of that position (as cited in Roberts, 1998, p. 195). A most poignant example of the complex nature of identity for a singer is captured by the accounts of one of the singers from the Roberts study who notes:

I think that what it comes down to is that your voice is attached to you; you can't ever put it away. So singers tend to get this kind of involvement with their instrument, and it becomes kind of like an attachment (Roberts, 1998, p. 193).

This close and direct physical connection to our instruments as singers only seems to heighten the personalization and the multiplicity of identity. Frith (1996) supports this notion as he suggests that singers deal with various roles on stage in the popular tradition of performance: "the 'character' of the person singing the song; their role as 'stars' with all the accompanying stage etiquette; and the more stable personal traits and characteristics normally associated with their personality" (Frith, 1996, p. 111). The performance context and the audience can greatly impact the development of the emergent performer identity. An artist's identity is informed by and in constant negotiation with their idealized or imaginative view of themselves, that which has been imposed upon them by cultural and societal expectations. The degree to which they can fulfill these roles in reality is central to their identity development as performer-artists.

The fascination with celebrity—becoming famous or being a star—is an impetus that many performer-artists aspire to achieve. In the construction of identity in the Roberts study of vocal students, the status of an accomplished singer-performer was perpetuated. Roberts (1998) pointed out common themes that presented themselves consistently that were symbolic of this fantasized identity stance. For example, such symbolic artefacts were scarves and musical scores. According to Roberts, some of the observed music students adorned the scarves to distinguish themselves amongst other music students, to highlight their identity as singers, and to assert their position as rising stars in training (Roberts, 1998, p. 196). The musical scores served as indicators of the level of musical performance and were often carried as props to demonstrate the serious study and learning of the musical repertoire (p. 196). The multiplicity of identities evolved as the students themselves transformed as human beings and as artists.

Whether the self-images of these artists are grounded in reality or imagination, there is a deep, personal connection that exists in the act of performing on various levels: emotionally, cognitively, physically, and spiritually. In a study by Joyce (1993), this intense internal and ethereal experience with the arts is documented in the transformative act of singing in the lives of several women. She describes:

[Singing] induces a state of physical arousal and sensitivity. It encourages playfulness and can shift emotional states. It engenders creativity because songs involve metaphor and other forms of poetic language. (as cited in Patteson, 1999, p. 13).

This notion of transformation emphasizes the idea of the process-journey singers take in the act of engaging in their artistic world, in an attempt to define and discover their unique portraiture and thumbprint as performer-artists. As the identity perpetually changes for the women through the experience of singing, I am clearly reminded of my great desire to interpret and monitor this shifting act in the music studio and musical theatre program.

The Process of Teaching and Learning

The Music Studio Dynamic

“Studio instruction in music offers a convenient albeit problematic laboratory to study reflection in action” (Schön as cited in Kennell, 2002, p. 253). In a studio context, the teacher’s knowledge of the student’s ability is highly complex and detailed. At each pedagogical moment within a lesson, teachers can choose from a plethora of strategies and techniques to encourage their students’ development of artistic sensibilities and technical prowess. Equally as reflective and evolutionary to the lesson design itself is students’ developing image of themselves as artists and performers within each of these pedagogical moments. The need for researchers to systematically examine the interactive nature of the studio lesson is immense. For this study, through a series of variables such as student motivation, teacher personality, and educational environment (Davidson & Jordan, 2007; Kennell, 2002; Schmidt, 1992), I conducted an internal examination that was centered on some of these noteworthy issues. My research study aimed to further the understanding within the field by outlining the components that were deemed essential for developing artistic identity in a music studio learning context.

The task of coaching in a studio music setting or master class in performance is multi-fold for both teacher and student. Schön explains that the coaching of each student demands the careful creation of an environment conducive to learning, the creative tailoring of designs and descriptions that meet individual student’s needs, and the thoughtful setting and solving of substantive problems in performance (Schön, 1987, p. 182). The nuances involved in the process of teaching and learning in a studio music session are revealed in his account of a session between music teacher, Franz, and his student, Amnon. In Schön’s description of this lesson, the teaching and learning process is highlighted to demonstrate the high degree of personalized and reflective coaching involved and the wide variety of interventions that are made between teacher and student. Schön writes:

In all such instances, Franz reflects-in-action in relation to the particular weaknesses he finds in Amnon's performance, leaving its strengths untouched or merely appreciated. A different student with a different mix of strengths and weaknesses might have elicited very different responses (1987, p. 202).

A problem-based approach is inherent to the rehearsal process involved in the studio lesson. The unique features of music instruction involved in studio work enable the student to "master the specific repertoire or techniques and display continued advancement in their execution and artistry" (Harwood, 2007). Individualized interaction and assessment of studio work allow for the students' personal perspectives to resonate; this dynamic flows between student and teacher in the midst of making interpretative and mindful musical choices in artistic work.

The Dyad Relationship

There is still much to be discovered regarding the nature of the learning experience in a studio teaching institution and the degree to which the studio context can effectively provide the type of environment that encourages and develops creative thought and expression in artistic endeavours. An aspect worth pursuing further is the relationship between the types of learning experiences offered by the teacher in the studio context and the potential for shaping the student's artistic identity. In this research study, I intended to uncover the characteristics of the dyad relationship as my topic partially revolves around the pivotal dynamic that is formed between teacher and student in the music studio. In a discussion of the intense nature of the dyad relationship, Davidson and Burland (2006) argued that the degree of support shown by the teacher is central to the development of identity in the student (as cited in Davidson & Jordan, p. 732). The construction and maintenance of these identities, thus, were influenced and formed greatly by the context of the learning experience and by the nature of the dyad relationship between student and teacher.

Relationship building between student and teacher is central to the formation of identity in the studio lesson. The dyad relationship dynamic has the potential to directly impact

artistic identity because of the complex layering and conflicting elements of the variety of experiences that are compounded in these teaching and learning moments. For example, the level of cognitive processing involved in modeling and imitation from teacher to student in the performing arts contributes to the construction of artistic identity during these musical sessions. Artistic identity develops in a fluid manner as the teacher builds from lesson to lesson, providing the student with several opportunities to strengthen and build the musical skills necessary to make artistic interpretative decisions independently. Thus, the nature and selection of the artistic models and imitative musical examples selected by the instructor have a tremendous effect on the way that student crafts and transforms himself or herself through artistic practice.

Schön provides a concrete example of the complexity of the dyad dynamic and the artistic impact that effective performance modeling and design can have on student learning and identity. In a master class of performance, Schön's (1987) work uses rote learning to exemplify the cognitive apprenticeship that occurs between teacher and student in the studio instruction context. Interventions throughout the studio lessons emphasize the various levels of process and product in studio teaching: first is the teaching of the lesson; then comes the sequential extraction of the elements involved the teaching process itself. A studio lesson is described by Schön as being about "more than the performance of the piece at hand." The demonstrations and descriptions of the teacher delineate "a particular way of designing a coherent performance" of one particular piece of repertoire in order to "communicate what it would be like to design a coherent performance of other pieces, trying, through this one well-crafted experience, to help the student build capacity for further designing" (1987, p. 208).

The fluidity of artistic identity can be built through these types of sessions that foster creative and critical thought. When a strong rapport is established between student and teacher, the student is able to engage in interpretative, open, subjective problem solving in an interactive manner with the teacher. In such a relationship, the teacher takes on the role of mentor and systematically guides the student to construct and solve issues of interpretation

and technical practice for themselves. This carefully constructed design provides for future potential artistic designs and interpretations to be made independently by the student, which opens up the possibilities for personal and professional identities to merge and develop in the studio context. Therefore, the one-on-one music lesson becomes more than just about developing the musical repertoire. A cognitive apprenticeship between teacher and student represents the development of the person, the artist, and the dialectical nature of the evolving identities in both student and teacher in the dyad.

Studies of Studio Music Instruction

There is a lack of scholarly literature on the topic of musical knowledge as applied in practical contexts, most specifically in the studio context. One aspect of this gap that is worth pursuing is the nature of the teaching process in the dyad relationship, wherein the teacher specifically tailors the design of the instructional sequence to individual student's needs and interests; a design that is malleable during the music session itself. On the topic of obtaining reliable results concerning specific aspects of applied studio music instruction, Duke and Madsen (1991) concluded that "assembling a precise view of the *process* of music performance instruction, one that may serve not only as a tool for evaluation but also as a source of meaningful prescriptive information as well, is an ongoing challenge" (as cited in Duke & Simmons, 2006, p. 8).

A study by Duke and Simmons (2006) provided narrative descriptions of observed private instrumental music lessons in an attempt to categorize the interactions between teacher and student. In the process of categorization, the researchers identified as precisely as possible the various teaching strategies that were consistently effective in dyad work in several studios. The purpose of the study was to identify common elements of instruction by expert-artist teachers in music studio settings, looking specifically to "classify the behaviour of expert teachers that may define the nature of their expertise" (2006, p. 9). Duke and Simmons made elemental choices

dependent upon the teacher's discernment of the student's performances; this discernment required the teacher to use multi-media performances. These multi-media performances included such strategies as demonstrating, talking, and gesturing and were used to concretize abstract concepts so that the student could achieve the teacher's expected standard of performance. This process of teaching and learning involved ongoing and reflective decision making on the part of these instructors and reveals what Kennell (1992) describes as "the subtlety and richness of pedagogical improvisation in the applied music lesson" (p. 15).

The students involved in Duke and Simmons study were at a near professional level of playing and ranged in age and experience from high school students to doctoral candidates. Several variables were applied to the study, such as student age and experience, teacher personality, and instruction in different domains (winds, strings, piano). However, the primary focus of the study was to observe the attributes and behaviours of the teachers and their instructional approaches as they related directly to "effecting positive change in students' performances" (Duke & Simmons, 2006, p. 10). This effectiveness was further defined in the results of the study as "the improvements [the researchers] observed in [the] students' playing in the moment" (Duke & Simmons, 2006, p. 10). The researchers were not explicit in stating how many lessons or how many different levels of students, both in age and experience, were represented and observed in the sample. This information would have been useful to discern whether the findings were consistently common in the study's identification of elements across the variables in the private lessons. The researchers used purposeful sampling in their selection of the three artist-teachers for this study; all of them were considered at the top of their profession.

Approximately 25 out of 30 hours of video recorded private lessons taught by the three artist-teachers were observed and analysed collaboratively between the two researchers. Informal observations were captured by video footage from each teacher's respective domestic setting and were used to examine instruction delivered by the three subjects: the artist-teachers, namely the pianist Nelita True, the violist Donald McInnes, and the oboist Richard Killmer. Also listed in the

method of this study were detailed biographies of each of the artist-teachers, providing details about their professional achievements and academic credentials. The researchers claim that they began their observation of the data with no systemized structure; instead, they watched video recordings of the private lessons and came up with a consensus language to describe the aspects of teaching that occurred consistently in nearly all the lessons taught by the three teachers (Duke & Simmons, 2006). The lack of low-inference descriptors, with the emphasis placed on the abstract language of the researchers, decreased the overall validity of the study.

The analysis of the recorded data of music lessons revealed 19 common elements, which after extensive discussion and review, were categorized into three broad areas: goals and expectations, effecting change, and conveying information (Duke & Simmons, 2006). As part of the analysis, the researchers acknowledged that the majority of the descriptions were based on direct observations of events, while inferences were made about the teachers' thinking based on observable behaviours by the respective teachers (Duke & Simmons, 2006). From these observations, the researchers concluded that these artist-teachers use these elements consistently because they represent "the highest form of instructional skill in music" (Duke & Simmons, 2006, p. 16). In addition, the authors suggest that the strategies used by these artist-teachers were the most efficient and effective means for learning music in this context.

A study by Reid (2001) focused on students' experience and conception of their own musical learning. The study used purposeful sampling of students enrolled in either vocal or instrumental private music lessons at a tertiary level of performance. Contrary to a majority of research in music education, which emphasizes observation of lessons and performances as a means to evaluate learning outcomes, Reid takes an alternative approach in this study to describe students' conceptions of musical learning using a phenomenographic methodology. She described the essence of a phenomenographic approach, which is "to discover the qualitatively different ways that people are aware of, and give meaning to, their experience of a particular phenomenon" (p. 26). This qualitative methodology enabled the researcher to gain further insight into the

process of musical learning itself with the aid of rich verbal descriptions from each of the students. With these descriptions regarding comprehension of their own learning experiences, Reid categorized various components into a hierarchical framework. This framework aligned with learning outcomes for each student in an attempt to answer the question: “How do music students understand their learning contexts?”

Reid’s study reports on the variation that exists in the students’ conceptualization of musical learning in studio lessons using an interview-based case study approach to discover various categories of experiential learning to the intended outcomes. As Reid suggests, the phenomenographic methodology facilitated “the description of the object of study through an emphasis on describing the variation in the meaning that is found in the participants’ experience of the phenomenon” (2001, p. 27). Students expressed their internal experience with the phenomena at the data collection stage of the research.

Data were collected through a series of in-depth open-ended interviews to generate responses that featured the essence of the students’ learning experiences from the studio context. The participants, 14 students, were specifically selected in order to maximize the variation and were chosen to participate in the research by their studio teachers. Since the research methodology demanded a maximum variation amongst the participants, a wide range of vocal and instrumental disciplines, a variety of musical styles, and an array of student learning styles were represented.

After gathering the data, Reid categorized students’ experiences of learning instrumental and vocal music into five different levels: Level 1, learning an instrument; Level 2, learning an instrument and some musical elements; Level 3, learning musical meaning; Level 4, learning to communicate musical meaning; Level 5, learning to express personal meaning. Data from every level featured extracts from verbatim accounts that presented the students’ perspectives on the music-studio learning context. The different categories were developed along with the description level characteristics used to define each category. As part of the interpretation of this data and

inherent within the methodology of the study itself, Reid then examined the variation that exists between each of these created categories and found that “the difference and the commonality of the students’ experiences were related to and informed by each student’s understanding of their intended goal or the outcome of the experience” (p. 37). The alignment between the intended goal and students’ understanding was exemplified in the findings: There was a relationship between the lower level order perspectives of students whose goals were set on scoring a high mark in an exam situation; A higher level of conceptual student learning involved the attainment of a meaningful, personal performance with an aesthetic dimension (Reid, 2001).

Learning through Experience

Studio learning involves direct experience in an authentic real-world environment, where students participate in a type of instruction that has been designed to mimic the nature of performance training for the professional musician. Singers train throughout their careers in the studio by engaging in a series of lessons that situate their knowledge. According to Hansman (2001), situated learning is shaped by “the nature of interactions among learners, the tools they use within these interactions, the activity itself, and the social context in which the activity takes place” (p. 45). The learning that takes place in the music studio is gained through the musical activities and teacher-student interactions, all of which are considered to be products of musical theatre industry expectations, and the values and norms of the culture (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Vocal instruction in the studio allows the singer to continuously derive and test knowledge out of a process that is grounded in the experiences of the learner (Kolb, 1984). A theory of experiential learning is central to understanding the process of active interactions between teacher and student in what is described by Jacobson (1996) as “the context of practice...characterized by the modeling of both mastery of practice and the process of gaining mastery” (as cited in Hansman, 2001, p. 46). This situated view of the studio lesson is integrally intertwined with the real learning

experience of practising and performing with the goal of becoming a virtuoso performer—and in the case of specialized musical theatre training, a triple-threat performer.

According to Beard and Wilson (2006), “experience is a meaningful engagement with the environment in which we use our previous knowledge (itself built from experience) to bring new meaning to an interaction” (p. 21). The inner world of artists and their socio-cultural environment is actively engaged in a sense-making process that reflects and evolves into new and transformative experiences for the learners (Beard & Wilson, 2006). This context-based learning process involves “doing the task in order to learn it” (Hansman, 2001, p. 46). Knowledge becomes embodied through authentic activity and, in the case of a musical theatre program, aligns itself with the normative practices of the professional musical theatre industry. In the studio context of this research study, embodied learning translates to musical learning and understanding that is based on bodily experiences. This notion of bodily knowing, according to Stubley (1999), refers to “the sense through which we know ourselves as a whole, which is the backdrop for all of our (musical) knowing and sense of self” (as cited in Juntanen & Hyvonen, 2004, p. 201).

A collaborative artistic process between teacher and student is typically developed in the studio music instructional context. This authentic domain inherently involves interplay between the master teacher and his or her student apprentice. The construction of knowledge through new experiences for the teacher and student involves, as Rogoff (1990) points out, “shared problem solving—with an active learner participating in culturally organized activity with a more skilled partner” (p. 39). Rogoff goes on to explain that this social interaction is “central to the process of learning through apprenticeship” (p. 39). Cognitive apprenticeships support student learning through authentic work in domain activity, with the students honing their skills through direct involvement, acquisition, and practice of the craft (Brown, Collins & Duguid, 1989). Lave (1988) suggests that “apprentices learn to think, argue, act, and interact in increasingly knowledgeable ways with people who do something well, by doing it with them as legitimate, peripheral participants” (p. 2). These habits of mind are acquired through the complex environments of

enculturation and suggest “a paradigm of situated modeling, coaching, and fading whereby teachers promote learning (Collins, Brown, & Newman as cited in Brown et al., 1989, p. 18). Teachers model strategies to complete an authentic task for their students, and support as they make attempts to perform these tasks themselves. The kinesthetic-based learning becomes increasingly complex and inseparable from experience as the student builds on their prior knowledge in an attempt to assimilate and accommodate new information (Piaget, 1950 as cited in Beard & Wilson, 2006). “Apprenticeships provide the beginner with access to both the overt aspects of the skill and the more hidden inner processes of thought” (Rogoff, 1990, p. 40).

Cognitive modelling and scaffolding take place in studio music instruction through a process of demonstration and imitation on the part of the master teacher in order to “approximate the real experience” for the student apprentice (Hansman, 2001, p. 47). “In the fading process, scaffolding and other support gradually decrease as the learners’ abilities increase” (Hansman, 2001, p. 47). Finally, as the learning process progresses, students are encouraged to continue to practise and create artistic pieces on an independent basis, becoming self-directed learners (Brown, et al., 1989; Hansman, 2001). In the world of studio music instruction, cognitive apprenticeships clearly frame the nature of the training and practice for the individual singer within the musical theatre performance community. The integrative experiences, as situated in the studio, help to promote the transfer, synthesis, and application of musical knowledge as a tool for subsequent performance situations for aspiring young artists.

The Future of Research in the Field of Studio Music Instruction

The literature examined described various aspects of studio music teaching in an attempt to contribute meaningful and informed perspectives that build on existing knowledge from research on studio music instruction. Kennell (2002) advocated for the development and the securing of theoretical frameworks within the qualitative realm of study to improve ways of observing and measuring data on this topic. Those in the professional community of musicians have long

resisted a systematic approach to research, while scholars have argued for the benefits of studying studio instruction empirically (Kennell, 2002; Schmidt, 1992). However, new members of the performance community who are involved in both publishing and performing recognize the importance of relating theory to practice. Some examined studies made attempts to empirically study specific aspects of studio instruction. Although the study by Duke and Simmons (2006) demonstrated several inconsistencies and problematic issues in its design, nevertheless it contained several important implications for future practice and study in music studios. Reid's research (2001), which looked at students' conceptualization of their own learning in the music studio, presented important and insightful findings for both theory and practice, but would have benefited from a more reflexive and systematic approach. The study by Reid concluded that musicianship and artistic sensibilities develop at a higher and more meaningful level when the musical content is presented in a contextualized manner in the studio setting.

While several interesting perspectives were presented in dealing with certain aspects of teaching and learning in the studio context in the studies presented, the need to incorporate multi-method strategies into the research to enhance design validity and credibility still remains. In order to augment a study's trustworthiness and the further extension of its findings to the field of music studio research, it is essential to conceive beyond a performance paradigm when assessing the nature of the musical learning experience. In my research, I considered the artistic pedagogy being implemented in the studio and program settings to examine the role of artistic development in process and performance. Music educators and researchers should continue to frame and answer their important questions with a higher standard of research in mind in order to generate findings that will extend useful contributions to both theory and practice.

The present study sought to examine several important questions that remain unanswered in the field of musical theatre and, more specifically, in the area of studio music instruction. The analysis of the data collected from multi-method strategies offered insights for programming, teaching practice, and pedagogy in the field of musical theatre; all of which are featured in

Chapter 4. The nature of the process and performance experience is outlined in Chapter 5, in an effort to illuminate the interaction of the program components. Even further, a greater understanding of the learning experience offered through studio music instruction, which was an integral part of the vocal training in the examined musical theatre program, is highlighted in Chapters 6 and 7 to increase both awareness and understanding about this institution for music teaching and learning. Lastly, to demonstrate the impact of this performance arts context on the development of artistic identity, Chapter 8 concludes with an overview of how the students were affected by their musical theatre training.

Chapter Three

Methodology

*“There’s no business like show business, like no business I know
Everything about it is appealing...”*

*There’s no people like show people
They smile when they are low...*

Let’s go on with the show.”

-Irving Berlin

This chapter begins with an examination of the nature of qualitative research and moves on to an exploration of multiple case studies as an appropriate method for inquiry. Subsequently, the qualitative design is delineated with a research plan that details the approach and issues surrounding the collection and analysis of data. The significance and limitations of the study are outlined in the concluding section, with the intended purpose of methodologically framing the scope and implications of the research.

Rationale for a Qualitative Approach

The goal of qualitative research is to capture holistically the multiple realities of the participants and their worlds, striving for a depth of understanding that is embedded in a rich context. According to Peshkin (1988), qualitative researchers aim “to diminish subjectivity that interferes with comprehension and to exploit subjectivity for deeper interpretation” (as cited in Bresler & Stake, 1992, p. 86). In a quest for answers regarding the human experience and its meaning, qualitative researchers take note of and reveal the value-laden inquiry that is inherently involved in their work. Distinctly unique to successful qualitative research are the inherently subjective humanistic perspectives that are presented. These perspectives are presented in balance

with informed and accurate interpretations within specific situational constraints that serve to enhance the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the work (Bresler & Stake, 1992; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Erickson, 1986). In an effort to add knowledge about a particular situation or concept to the field, qualitative researchers often portray the phenomenon of study in a multi-dimensional manner to offer a comprehensive view of the concept or experience. For the significant reasons detailed above, I specifically chose a qualitative approach for my study. This approach allowed me to gain a better understanding of the complex behaviors and experiences of my students. The participant descriptions of these experiences enabled me to explore and interpret these human intricacies qualitatively to uncover the intrinsic nature of the students' artistic journey towards development.

As Patton (2002) points out, qualitative study is similar to a documentary film in the sense that it captures a "fluid sense of development, movement, and change" (p. 54). This notion of development parallels the dynamic that is inherently fundamental to the change that takes place in each of the study's participants throughout the course of their artistic training. "Change is a natural, expected, and inevitable part of human experience, and documenting change is a natural, expected, and intrinsic part of fieldwork" (Patton, 2002, p. 54). The careful tracking, dialogue, and observation completed by the researcher are of the utmost importance in gaining descriptions and understanding of the essence of the student experience (Creswell, 1998). To achieve these objectives, Bresler and Stake (1992) point out that "the aim [of qualitative research] is to construct a clearer experiential memory and to help people obtain a more sophisticated account of things" (p. 76). Giving voice to a study's participants in a way that honours contextual epistemology allows the researcher to discover these important artistic experiences authentically, though vicariously. It is this kind of research, rooted in human construction, that reminds us of the transcendental nature of qualitative work and of the reason why, as researchers, we chose to travel this path in the first place.

The Design of the Study

Multiple Case Study

“In a case study design, the data focuses on *one* phenomenon, which the researcher selects to understand in depth” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p. 316). According to Yin (1994), the primary focus in a case study is the case itself, as opposed to the methods by which the case operates (as cited in Stake, 2006, p. 2). In order to generate a clear picture of the case through the examination of how it functions in its activities, Stake states: “A qualitative understanding of cases requires experiencing the activity of the case as it occurs in its contexts and in its particular situations” (2006, p. 2). A descriptive exploratory approach with the studied case enabled me to comprehensively discover and develop concepts and experiences with the selected phenomenon of study.

Weinstein and Weinstein (1991) compare a qualitative design to a bricolage, that is, "a pieced-together, finely-knit set of practices that provide solutions to a problem in a concrete situation. This solution is an emergent construction" (as cited in Denzin, 1994, p.17). The design of a case study is emergent and spiral in nature as the “process of purposeful sampling, data collection, and partial data analysis are simultaneous and intertwined rather than discrete sequential steps (McMillan & Schumaker, 2006, p. 317). This interactive engagement on the part of the researcher supports the notion that the researcher must become immersed throughout the process of studying the case situation in order to be “living the data” (Patton, 2002, p. 65). In this way, the researcher can flesh out the significant details of participant stories of those “living the case” (Stake, 2000, p. 445).

Comprehending the complexities of artistic identity and the dynamics of the artistic experiences of college musical theatre students requires a high degree of researcher immersion in the qualitative field. Presenting the cases of the participants collectively seems to be the most effective way of representing each individual’s case to the extent that the redundancies and

variations of the individual case remain important, while the potential to theorize about the larger collection of cases is possible (Stake, 2000; Yin, 1994). In my study, the collective case revolves around theorizing about artistic identity in multiple contexts. Case studies allowed for the intimate study of particular human endeavours with the intent of painting a unique portrait for each case of study. As an extension of the instrumental case study, the collective case study approach centers itself around the researcher's pursuit of the participants' experiential knowledge based on an interactivity that exists with these experiences. According to Stake, "boundedness and activity patterns are useful concepts for specifying the case" (2000, p. 444). Therefore, as a researcher, I specifically chose to limit my study and investigation to one phenomenon in particular, namely the impact of the various aspects of the musical theatre program experience on students' identity development.

Phenomenological Orientation

"Phenomenological research is the study of essences" (Van Manen, 1990 as cited in Patton, 2002, p. 106). This methodological orientation uses specific, visceral, thick descriptions with importance placed on the human perception of the way things appear in experience or consciousness. According to Creswell (1998): "The phenomenological study focuses not on the life of an individual but rather on a concept or phenomenon, and [it] seeks to understand the meanings of individuals about this phenomenon" (p. 38). When presenting participant perspectives in a variety of learning contexts, it is essential that the researcher demonstrates "empathic neutrality" (Patton, 2002) to establish a true sense of the nature of the participants' experience. In order to achieve empathic neutrality, Patton (2002) advises that in-depth interviews be conducted with people who have had first-hand experience with the phenomenon of interest. Also, incorporating participant observation and in-depth interviewing techniques into the study enabled me to gain a greater understanding and deeper accessibility to the essence of the shared artistic experience, which resonates with the philosophical underpinnings of phenomenology.

Context

The study took place at a college located in a small city in southeastern Ontario, Canada with a program focus in performing arts. This college program, which is in its fourth year since inception, is a three-year diploma program that requires students to train and perform in all three areas of dance, drama, and music. This site emerged as an opportunity for study because of the researcher's involvement with the college prior to beginning the research. This college program serves as an opportunistic sample (Patton, 2002) as the researcher was involved on site as a part-time teacher for musical theatre. As one of several teachers in the music department of this three-tiered discipline program, my teaching responsibilities include one-on-one instruction of voice to all of the first-year female musical theatre students. With an intended focus on teaching vocal technique in these studio sessions, I try to ensure that students are given opportunities to apply and extend technical concepts into the context of the musical theatre repertoire they are studying and preparing for other discipline areas and music classes in the program.

Participant Sampling

According to Creswell (1998), Patton (1990), Vaughan, (1992), and Yin (1994), “understanding the critical phenomena depends on choosing the cases well” (as cited in Stake, 2006, p. 23). Selecting samples that are likely to provide substantive knowledge on the phenomena is key to successfully gaining an understanding of the topic of study. It is important to select participant cases that present a diversification within the complexities of the situations studied, while still maintaining a sense of unification through a concept or experience to bind the multi-case phenomena together (Stake, 2006). In the process of selecting diverse individuals to act as participants in this study, I made sure to choose students with a variety of strengths, interests, personalities, and goals— all elements that play into and inform their identities. These unique and varied participant characteristics are unified by the fact that they are all students in one specific musical theatre program.

For this study, I purposefully recruited participants from my own voice studio, which is part of the applied musical theatre program at the local college. This was done because I expected that each informant would illuminate much insight regarding the phenomenon, offering rich information on the topic of study (Patton, 2002). In addition, all of these students were required to meet a certain number of criteria in order to participate in the study. This criterion selection (Patton, 2002) allowed for quality assurance and consistency in specific aspects of the participants across the cases of the study. All of the students were selected based on the fact that, at the beginning of the school year, they were self-declared artists in one specific discipline area within a multi-disciplinary program context. Based on this initial self-identification, I anticipated that selecting eight students (40% of the all-female students in my music studio) would be a representative sample for this study. Since all of the students in my studio are female, the sample only included females. The students were between the ages of 18 to 25 years old.

As their music teacher, my students view me as a person of authority. Thus, a power relationship exists between the students and myself. Due to this pre-existing power relationship, there was the possibility that students' responses may be influenced by my dual role of teacher-researcher. I believed the nature of this power relationship, however, would not pose any significant difficulty with regard to the usefulness or authenticity of the collected data because both studio lessons and interviews were open and inviting interactions where the students were not being graded. Further, the dynamic of this teacher-student relationship allows for a deeper understanding of the students' responses because of the commonly shared artistic experiences in the studio, despite the power relationship.

To recruit students for this study, I provided each of the eight students from my studio with a formal recruitment letter, which can be found in Appendix A. Students were selected on the aforementioned criteria, specifically requiring that they had been a part of my all-female studio and self-identified most strongly in one of the discipline areas of the musical theatre program. Each of the selected participants for the study received a prepared letter of information regarding

the study and a consent form to sign in order to participate (See Appendices B & C). Once a list of possible student participants was generated for the case study, each person was approached individually with the recruitment documents pertaining to their potential involvement.

Each selected student was carefully monitored throughout the term in all aspects of this program as part of this study. There was a major advantage to completing research in this particular institution because of the pre-established relationship and rapport that already existed between the student sample and myself. The selected site had also been chosen based on the fact that the viewpoints of these students could be studied effectively and efficiently within the framework of the proposed research questions.

Data Gathering

Interviews, field observations, field notes, studio recordings, photo documentation, and artifacts were used to gather data for this study (See Appendix H). By using multiple data sources, I was able to verify my findings through a process of cross-checking (Patton, 2002) and “criss-crossed” reflection (Stake, 2000, p. 450). While the interviews served as a primary data source for the study, I ensured credibility for the results by “thoroughly triangulating the descriptions and interpretations, not just in a single step but continuously throughout the period of study” (Stake, 2000, p. 443). As I described the data source, I indicated how each source was gathered and how the overall connection between data sources increased the trustworthiness of the study. This process allowed for confirmation between the various sources of data and contributed to optimizing the understanding of the context of study.

The research was cleared by the Education Research Ethics Board, (EREB) and the General Research Ethics Board, (GREB) at Queen’s University in mid-January, initiating the beginning stages of data gathering. The information letters and consent forms were distributed immediately after the formal documentation was received by EREB and GREB and were returned later that same day from each of the eight participants. The collection of data commenced on January 21,

2008, and took place over a ten-week period until April 2008. All participants were assured that both the data collected and the results of the study would remain confidential and would be reported anonymously, using pseudonyms for participant and site names.

The Pilot Interviews

The first pilot interview took place on February 26, 2008 with a musical theatre student from my studio at the college who was not involved in the main part of the study. This pilot interview served as a practice run for the interviewer and provided a means of assessing the types of answers that would be elicited from the prepared interview questions (Appendix D). Following the pilot interview and transcription of the data, the interview questions were revised. For example, the original data set did not generate narrative responses regarding the artistic experience; there was much ancillary data about the skills and performance aspects of studio music and musical theatre; and there was little substantive information about the respondee's process work, identity, and development as an artist.

The researcher met with the supervisory committee and revised the interview questions for a second pilot interview. For instance, one of the newly formulated questions required students to explore a moment that was challenging for them in the music studio; as a follow-up, students were probed about how they were able to grow or change from the experience. A complete list of the new interview questions and probes can be found in Appendix G.

An additional pilot interview was conducted on March 24th, 2008 with another student from the college not involved in the main part of the study; the aim was to ensure that the new questions and planned probes would yield participant responses that would be significant for the purposes of the research. Indeed, the new questions proved to be precisely what was necessary to elicit the rich narrative responses that had been hoped for, and the interviewee provided enlightening perspectives on the topic of study.

Informed consent was obtained for the two students who were involved only in the pilot interviews; these two students also received recruitment and information letters prior to their participation (See Appendices B & C).

The Interview

The interview provides an outlet for the expression of multiple perceptions, opinions, and ideas in regard to the phenomenon of the study. According to Fontana and Frey, an individual interview between participant and researcher can serve as an “active interaction between two people leading to negotiated, contextually based results” (2000, p. 646). Kvale (1996) also highlights the interchange that takes place in an interview setting and the sense of interdependence that is thus created with his appropriate naming of this data collection strategy as “InterViews” (as cited in Patton, 2002, p. 374). This underlying notion of *process* is essential in the interview format, with the view that communication is interconnected and flowing continuously between researcher and participant (Patton, 2002). Depending on the degree to which the prepared text of questions is structured, the interview has great potential to evolve in a dialogic fashion between researcher and participant, resulting in rich verbatim accounts and a heightened sense of understanding of the participant experience.

The interview as a means of collecting data is regarded as being most effective for obtaining observations that the researcher could not make directly, and for assisting in interpretation of the studied situation (Bresler & Stake, 1992). To this end, it made sense to have used interviews for my study in order to elicit participant responses that accurately and authentically portrayed their individual artistic experiences in a performance arts setting. In this case, the pre-existing rapport that existed between teacher and student was central to creating a more open and relaxed forum between researcher and participant throughout the interview session.

Interviews as a Primary Data Source

I conducted semi-structured interviews as my primary data source. This reflexive approach, which alternated between questions from the researcher's/teacher's perspective to accounts of the students' perspective, provided a foundational view for both practice and theory through the incorporation of personal experiences and various areas of research explored. The interview process required 30-45 minutes for each of the eight participants and took place in a location of the participant's choice near the end of the second academic term in early April, following the two pilot interviews. A series of open-ended interview questions were explored on the topic of the interviewees' developing artistic identity, the process of teaching and learning in the studio setting, and the nature of the students' experiences within a musical theatre program. A list of the interview questions and interview probes can be found in Appendix D.

Sharing Stories

In order to complete an inductive analysis of interview data, it is essential that throughout the data-collection phase, the researcher is able to enter into the participants' realm of experience, their 'insider' world. According to Patton, this process, which is developmental in nature, begins with the assumption that "the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit" (2002, p. 341). Patton goes on to explain that researchers interview to discover and gather the stories of the participants. Therefore, by completing an interview with my own students in a musical theatre program context, there is great potential to capture meaningful narratives of their training as aspiring artists. Ted Chamberlin, who is a professor at the University of Toronto, once said that universities revolve around the telling of stories: "The old stories we call *teaching* and the new stories *research*" (as cited in Upitis, 1999, p. 219). This demonstrates that the information gained from interviews in the process of completing qualitative research provides the content for the sharing of these new, enriching, human tales.

Interviews allow the participants to share their stories on a continuum that extends from open exploratory conversations to pre-determined, structured, single-question formats. Moreover, in any type of interview the opportunity exists to gain insight into the feelings, experiences, opinions, and knowledge of the participant based on the questions that are being asked. The semi-structured, open-ended interview format included in my study proved to be an effective way of accessing the participants' perspectives in regards to the development of their individual artistic identity. Based on the results of the initial pilot interview, however, the researcher realized the importance of balancing that type of question with direct, straightforward, and even pedantic questions in order to fully access the participants' story.

By being asked a variety of questions, which begin broadly and then transition into "local perceptions and categorizations of experience" (Johnson & Weller, 2002, p. 497), the interviewed participants have the opportunity to gain more confidence and get comfortable discussing the topic at hand before delving into the more detailed and challenging questions. Various open-ended questions were carefully sequenced in the interview, leading to inspired, rich responses. The use of "projective aids or devices" (Johnson & Weller, 2002, p. 510), such as photographs and musical repertoire, served as examples of the visual elicitation approaches that were used in the interview. These approaches were used to assist participants in recalling, focusing, and exploring their specific artistic memories in a vivid and descriptive manner. These combined approaches generated data that aligned with the central research questions of the study.

Photo Documentation

Photo documentation was used as a primary elicitation technique during the interview process. The participants were requested to select several photographs of themselves in a performance arts setting, with the stipulation that at least one or two be recent. The photographs served as visual cues to aid in the process of conjuring up vivid memories and rich narratives of the participants' prior performance experiences and artistic impressions of themselves.

Studio Audio Recordings and Studio Field Notes

The analyzed data collected from these interviews were triangulated with field notes and audio recordings gathered from the studio lessons. Studio field notes and recordings allowed for a deeper understanding of the dynamic in the music studio setting. Every participant in the study had two 15-minute studio lessons per week as part of their training in the musical theatre program. Audio recordings of the lessons were used as artifacts and already existed as a component of the practice and study of music in the studio. Therefore, the students were already accustomed to the recording devices and were less likely to act differently as a result. Recordings were collected consistently on a weekly basis and assisted in the verification and interpretation of the interviews and field observation data during the analysis phase. All audio files were recorded using Garage Band software and were stored on a secure laptop computer.

Immediately following the lesson, I jotted my impressions and observations into my field notes journal. The field notes were divided into “observations” and “interpretations.” These recorded events and insights were used to assist the researcher in the process of analysis to authentically enhance and contextualize the student experiences. Patton (2002) emphasizes the importance of notating situational events using the “native language” (p. 289) of the program being studied in fieldwork. He explains, “the field notes and reports of the observer should include exact language used by the participants to communicate the flavor and meaning [of the program]” (p. 289). Along with the participants’ stories about their studio music experience, the researcher had the opportunity to select narratives about the students’ identity development, and highlight them with concrete examples excerpted directly from the content of the studio lesson. Once again, this comparison between sources of data helped to yield trustworthy results.

Document Analysis

Hodder (2000) states that material evidence or artifacts from participants may provide “deeper insights into the internal meanings according to which people lived their lives” (p. 710).

In this study, artifacts provided much insight into the components of the students' lived experience. Various documents that represent different facets of the artistic experience, including the musical repertoire and audition forms, were incorporated into the study as another strategy to generate rich and informative data. The music repertoire studied by each participant was used in the interview process and was collected for further analysis. This artifact was used to reveal the personal artistic choices that had been made by each of the participants, based on the fact that their musical scores were self-selected. Occasionally these artistic decisions were made through an interactive dialogue between studio teacher and student, but most often the musical selections were choices made independently by the student.

In addition to the musical repertoire, descriptive audition forms that included participants' background information and previous performance experiences were incorporated into the data-collection process. These documents assisted in the verification of the students' initial self-identification as an artist and highlighted their goals and explanations for auditioning for the musical theatre program in the first place.

Classroom Field Observations

Observation has often been characterized as "the fundamental base of all research methods" (Adler & Adler, as cited in Angrosino, p. 729). The notion of naturalistic observation in fieldwork is considered to be "part of a methodological spectrum" that will serve as "the most powerful source of validation" (Adler & Adler, as cited in Angrosino, p. 730). Observation became the most feasible way by which I could accomplish the task of capturing each individual's negotiation of her triple-threat identity. Following the typology devised by Gold (1958), I consider my role to be that of "observer-participant," to the extent that my focus was to collect data that authentically represented the participants' experience in a non-intrusive manner from within their learning environment (as cited in Angrosino, 2005). By situating myself in an inconspicuous location in the classrooms of study, I feel that I was able to achieve this to the

extent possible while simultaneously affirming or developing a “membership identity” (Angrosino, 2005, p. 733).

The real-world observation that took place through naturalistic inquiry in this qualitative study is an appropriate technique, as it was made with a conscious attempt to encapsulate the unique experiences of the students in the music studio and various classroom settings. The exploration of these artistic experiences requires that the method allow for “inquiry into selected issues in great depth with careful attention to depth, context, and nuance” (Patton, 2002, p. 227). Thus, an in-depth, introspective look at the phenomenon by student and teacher alike was essential to uncovering the highly individualized emotional, social, cognitive, and sensory dimensions of artistic identity in each observable case in the studio and classroom contexts.

Careful preparation is required on the part of the researcher before entrance into the field in order to yield authentic and accurate data. According to Patton, this kind of preparation has “mental, physical, intellectual, and psychological dimensions” (2002, p. 261) for the observer. Systematic observation and note taking requires the establishment of specific goals and a clear framework from which to focus observation. With a clear vision and methodology regarding the parameters of the study, the researcher has the opportunity to open his or her mind’s eye to notice and describe events that vary from a pre-established paradigm. It is essential to keep in mind, however, that field observers have “selective perception” (Patton, 2002, p. 264) in performing the art of observation and that by including and identifying interpretations, a more comprehensive view can be achieved.

In order to enhance the trustworthiness of the current study and to provide a more comprehensive view of the artistic experience, I observed several other music classes that were part of the program curriculum. The classroom sessions ranged from 1 ½ -2 hours in duration and included a master class in performance and choral singing classes. Periodically throughout the term, I attended a minimum of two class sessions for each of the named music classes, all of which involved the eight students from the participant sample from my studio. In addition, I

observed several classes from the other two disciplines in the program: dance and drama; these classes included the following courses: voice and speech, acting through song, modern dance, and dance production. I attended a minimum of two sessions per discipline, once again with focused observation on the eight-student sample from the studio-teaching context. As a researcher, I entered the field with the intent to illuminate the triple-threat notion in multiple contexts; with that focus in mind, I was better able to effectively target my observations. These observations primarily aimed at gaining insight in regard to the following aspects of classroom instruction: the artistic activities experienced by each of the participants, the type of dynamic created in the classroom environment for learning and creating artistic works, the nature of the dialogue between teacher and student, and the central themes and/or objectives of each of the classes as it related to developing artistry in a performance setting. The instructors of each of these classes had been provided with a letter of information regarding the purpose of the study and the proposed focus for the classroom observations (See Appendix E). A consent form (Appendix F) was signed by each of them prior to beginning of these field observations.

The various data sources collected for this study interface in a manner that ensured trustworthiness. Data gathered from the interviews provided open responses regarding the artistic experiences of the participants and were supported by the recordings and field notes that were collected. These field notes and recordings from studio and classroom sessions supplemented and further authenticated the context of the narrative accounts from the individual interviews. In addition, observations captured the evolutionary nature of development because each participant's progress was tracked over an extended period of time. To ensure consistency in the data, the field observations were gathered to provide detailed evidence that corroborated the interview data and broadened the researcher's perspective. The documents collected served to confirm the background and artistic histories of each of the participants and helped to verify the nature of the changes that had taken place in the individual as a result of their training in both the music studio and the musical theatre program. As the researcher, I made a conscious effort to give

participants the opportunity to link photographs and self-selected repertoire to the stories they told in interviews as means of eliciting further data regarding the observed experiences in the studio and the classroom. Interactively, these data sources contributed to an enhanced portrait of the artistic experience offered in the musical theatre program.

The cross-validation across the several collected data sources enabled the researcher in this case to compare between participant cases, verify consistencies, and ensure regularities in the data. In preparation for data analysis, the researcher carefully selected “trustworthy evidence for pattern seeking by qualitatively assessing solicited versus unsolicited data, subtle influences among the people in the setting, and specific versus vague statements” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p. 374). With the tremendous amount of data collected, the researcher had the task of thoughtfully sifting through the data in a cyclical manner to represent and integrate the findings authentically from the various angles and perspectives of the numerous data sources, thus increasing trustworthiness.

Data Analysis

“Data analysis is an art form” (Bresler & Stake, 1992, p. 85). Mastering this art form requires sense-making efforts and careful deliberation on the part of the researcher in the selection of participant stories that reveal the integrity and complexity of each individual case. By ensuring that the purpose guides the analysis, the researcher will be better able to sift through the “mountain of data” (Patton, 2002, p. 440) to uncover which data is most meaningful way as the researcher considers the contextualized gestalt of the study. According to Goetz and LeCompte (1984): “The researcher selects the most revealing instances, identifies vignettes, and composes narratives from day to day, then uses an even smaller selection of them in the final presentation” (as cited in Bresler & Stake, 2002, p. 85). The ultimate choice of what is to be reported is evolving and emergent, similar to the design of qualitative research itself (Bresler & Stake, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002).

Coding and Organization of Data

Once the data had been collected, a thorough analysis of the content was completed and organized thematically using qualitative software. The qualitative software *ATLAS.ti*, was used to facilitate the coding, categorization, and analysis of the data from the transcribed interviews, recorded studio and classroom sessions, and field notes journal. This process of importing text and audio files into organized and thematic codes allowed for increased clarity and focus prior to beginning the analytic work. The analysis of the data permitted the identification of significant themes that were discovered through a cyclic and on-going reflection by the researcher, which ultimately involved “searching, marking up, linking, reorganizing, representing and storing reflections, ideas, and theorizing” (Weitzman, 2000, p. 806). The emerging and recurring themes were then systematically coded to accurately identify the processes involved in studio instruction and their relationship to the development of artistic identity.

I began the coding with several pre-determined codes from the literature, as well as some from my own experience with the subject matter (such as repertoire, physical environment, and instructional methods). Following this initial step, I conducted a process of open-coding based on the text from the transcribed notes to identify recurring patterns and themes in the experiences of the participants. I closely examined these patterns, themes, and interrelationships through a process of exploration and confirmation, which resulted in a creative synthesis of the findings with authentic verbatim accounts. Finally, I labeled the data using the coding schema that is included in Appendix I.

This process of coding and organizing data involved a second reader, who was also a Master’s student at Queen’s University. She had experience in the field of musical theatre and was conducting her own study in this area of research; in addition, she had coding experience and had followed the various stages of my research from the beginning of this study. The second reader assisted in the open coding of data using the aforementioned qualitative software and provided insight regarding the organization of the data. To increase the inter-rater reliability for

the study, she double-checked my previous coding of the interview transcripts. She familiarized herself with the coded data, and confirmed and enhanced the codes by making refinements in the transcripts on *Atlas.TI*. This process involved discussion and review of data between researcher and reader. A point of saturation was reached after the second reader read four of the eight interview transcripts because her coding became congruent with the choices I had made as primary researcher.

Cross-Case Analysis

As the researcher, I intended to capture the unique details and special attributes of a single case. As a grand strategy for analysis, Stake suggests that researchers set up a case dialectic; he describes this procedure as being “rhetorical and adversarial” to the extent that “attention to the local situations and attention to the phenomenon as a whole contend with each other for emphasis” (2006, p. 46). Keeping this strategy in mind, I assessed and analyzed each individual case and then merged the findings back and forth in a dialectic fashion to tease out the significant themes.

Once the data were analyzed to a high degree through a process of both inductive analysis and deductive analysis (Patton, 2002), I wove verbatim accounts through the fabric of the results with the intent of answering some of the major questions that have been posed in the literature and to provide insights for use in the field. Since I identified conceptual issues of research interest prior to entering the field, “induction and deduction [were] in constant dialogue” (Erickson, 1986, p. 121). The qualitative inquiry involved in the analytical process demanded that I juxtapose events and characters from the field with the established and structured frameworks from the literature. By engaging in the continuous act of case analysis, I made a conscious attempt to extend the findings so that they could contribute significantly to broadening the scope of music education research.

Ensuring Trustworthiness

In this study, the triangulation of the data, which included field observations of the music theatre classroom settings, studio recordings, and field notes, increased the reliability and trustworthiness of the study as a whole to the extent possible. Triangulation is a routine act that involves an effort on the part of the researcher to confirm the findings by means of “checking [the] data against multiple sources and methods” (Bresler & Stake, 1992, p. 79). While collecting various sources of data, I reached a point of saturation, which served to emphasize the consistently identifiable themes and to confirm the significant patterns that were worthy of being reported. When organizing the data, I ensured that each source was subjected to a rigorous analytic process that helped to verify the findings, both the sum and its parts, to support the thick descriptions and informed interpretations.

During my thorough and systematic approach to the analysis, the components of the studio experience that affect artistic identity were categorized and synthesized in an attempt to shed light on this area of research in a practical and theoretical manner. This systematic process involved the following steps: generating data, drawing links, extracting themes from the data using qualitative software, thoroughly comparing and contrasting the results with the existing scholarly literature on the topic, and reporting the implications for future research and practice based on the final results of the study.

Voice and Reflexivity

Upon further reflection on the purpose and nature of a study, I examined its inherent weaknesses and assumptions in order to carefully select and plan a research design, a design that would enhance both validity and reflexivity to the extent possible. In this particular study, conducting interviews with the students provided an excellent means of gathering their direct thoughts on the development of their artistic identity in the studio and classroom settings. However, this strategy in and of itself did not provide a sufficient and accurate representation of

the artistic experience or the students' conception of their artistic identity. Thus, in order to enhance validity, several other strategies were applied throughout the data-collection process, strategies such as quoting participant language, incorporating multi-method strategies, completing member checking, using mechanically recorded data, and reporting negative or discrepant data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006; Patton, 2002).

In this case, the data were reported with verbatim accounts to provide rich, narrative documentation of the phenomena, using direct quotations that incorporated participant language and low-inference descriptors. These literal portrayals of the musical theatre program and the teaching and learning experience of each participant were consistent throughout the triangulated data collection and data analysis. These multi-method strategies included the following: individual interviews; field observations of other classes in music, dance and drama taught by various instructors; and mechanically audio-recorded data. Each of these additional strategies enhanced credibility and validity in the study because data were corroborated with the various inquiry techniques. Member checking, which involved having the participants review their transcripts to confirm meanings and observations, was also an informal and ongoing part of this entire process; it served to present the most authentic accounts of the data in the results (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Any negative or discrepant data generated in the findings was reported and included in the results. By acknowledging any unique cases that arose, the validity and authenticity of the study was increased significantly.

Role of the Researcher

In a qualitative study, the researcher serves as the primary instrument of the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, Patton, 2002). This concept of "self as instrument" (Eisner, 1991, p. 33) refers to the researcher's abilities to make sense of the subtleties of the situational context under study. The researcher has a difficult task in balancing his or her multiple identities; personal, professional, and academic responsibilities are constantly shifting throughout the entire

research process. In negotiating these multiple roles, the researcher must continuously reflect on their momentary position in the studied setting. For example, in the studio sessions with my students I was most aware of my role as voice teacher because I had obligations to the college and to my students to fully engage in that capacity. Immediately following each of the studio lessons, I allotted time specifically to allow for the transition from the role of teacher to the role of researcher. I used short periods of time between lessons to record field notes, which included descriptions and observations from the lesson, and to mentally prepare myself to transition back again to my role as teacher. According to Patton (2002), prior to entering the field, the researcher should carefully consider the degree of participation and the tension that exists between the researcher's insider and outsider perspectives (p. 331). Continual reflection-in-action on the part of the researcher is essential in their engagement in the field. Patton suggests that a reflective stance "inside and outside the phenomenon of interest" is critical as it "crowns fieldwork with reflexivity and makes the observer the observed— even if only by oneself" (2002, p. 329).

Any study involving humans as subjects is inherently subjective. It is recognized that the role of the researcher is closely connected to the field of study and to the participants at a personal and professional level. By intentionally incorporating the researcher's individual stance and perspectives on the topic of study, the overall context for the research becomes further clarified in a process of posing reflexive questions. With a rigorous process of reflexive questioning of self, of the participants, and of the situation being studied, predispositions and researcher bias can be minimized (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p. 327; Patton, 2002, p. 66). As the researcher, it is essential for me to acknowledge any subjectivity in the research and to take it into account as it is being conducted at every stage of the experimental design. In this particular study, a series of strategies was used to ensure that reflexivity and credibility were enhanced. I had a peer debriefer, a field log, and a record of ethical considerations, which served as strategies to obtain valid data and enhance reflexivity in this study. Throughout this reflexive inquiry process, it was essential to find my own voice as researcher and to authentically communicate my experiential

awareness and understanding of self at every stage of the research (Patton, 2002, p. 65). The ultimate goal for my research was to increase and extend the level of understanding, appreciation, and perspective regarding the nature and value of artistic experiences in the context of the musical theatre program, in a trustworthy, neutral, and credible manner.

Chapter Four

Program Components

*“To feel the rhythm of life,
To feel the powerful beat,
To feel the tingle in your fingers,
To feel the tingles in your feet.”*

-Dorothy Fields

The purpose of this chapter is to provide rich contextualized portraits of various courses within the musical theatre program. An understanding of the nature of the artistic experiences offered to the students in the program will provide an enhanced perspective for examining the impact that these components have on the development of artistic identity. The chapter begins with an overview of the program requirements, which is followed by narrative accounts of the dynamics and events that take place in each of the discipline areas: the music, drama, and dance curricula. The third section features field observations from the classroom with a focus on the following courses: Choral Music, Master Class in Vocal Performance, Modern Dance, Dance Production, Acting through Song, and Voice and Speech. This chapter provides a view inside each of these classrooms, highlighting the artistic experience that informs the students' growth as artists and collectively impacts their vocal training in the music studio setting. Lastly, six major themes are summarized, which outline the relationship between the learning experiences from one teaching context to another. In this case, the data from the interviews and field observations led to an itemized list, illustrating the teaching and learning connection between studio and classroom settings.

Program Outline

The program outline for the first-year musical theatre program required students to enroll in the following weekly classes:

- History of Musical Theatre
- Music Theory
- Master Class in Vocal Performance
- Jazz Dance
- Acting
- Improvisation
- Ballet
- Voice and Speech
- Choral Music
- Anatomy
- Scene Study
- Text Study
- Modern Dance
- Strength Training
- Acting through Song
- Dance Production

In addition to all of these classes, the students were required to attend a half-hour studio tutorial in Repertoire and another half an hour session in Vocal Technique that was broken down into two fifteen-minute sessions per week.

Students were expected to be in the above classes, one-on-one studio lessons, dance mentoring classes, and rehearsals for a total of over 40 hours per week. As the program demanded quite a heavy dance component, the acting training followed closely behind in terms of hours, and the musical training in close third. While completing the researcher's study, many students provided their opinions regarding the format of the program, the types of courses offered, their attempts to find a balance between the disciplines, and the challenges they faced in negotiating the various parts of their training to make it work best for them.

In their first year in the program, students prepare and perform in a song-and-dance revue, which allows them the opportunity to be introduced to the local community in a large theatre venue. By the second and third years of the program, students are expected to prepare and participate in full-length musicals, which provides them with an opportunity to integrate their knowledge and skills from each different class in dance, drama, and music into one cohesive triple-threat performance. Putting on a show involves much rehearsal and several performances as

part of the curriculum requirements. These types of experiences are irreplaceable in terms of preparing students for the professional industry, as they provide an authentic context from which students can grow as artists and transfer what they learned directly into their careers. The entire musical theatre program, both staff and students, deem these performances to be invaluable to their training experience. Each musical theatre performance served as an outlet for pinnacle moments of growth and formation for the artists within their academic school year.

Program Pedagogy

Some of the courses offered within the program suggested that they would inherently be integrated classes; for example, Acting through Song, Dance Production, and Performance Class. However, in some of these cases, the teaching style, philosophy, or implementation of the course content did not always necessarily align with an integrated curriculum. For example, on occasion in Acting through Song, there were moments when the students were specifically encouraged to forget about singing, their technique, and the notes in their repertoire, in order to engage in the acting component of the song. This was evidenced with the teacher statement about the student performances he was seeing: “I’m glad we’re not concentrating on the notes” (CO; AS; PD1; 13:13) and “Don’t even think about singing...don’t even try to sing” (CO; AS; PD1; 85:85). These types of statements became part of the pedagogical process in this class when students seemed to be simultaneously bombarded with too many objectives; the teacher encouraged them to focus on the acting first and to disregard the musical aspects of the performance. This approach allowed students to free themselves from the hyper analysis going in their heads that seemingly consumed their performance, and enabled them to master a few elements in isolation before integrating all of the disciplines.

Other parts of the program that were intentionally compartmentalized in order to develop a certain degree of skill and acuity appeared in areas such as vocal technique lessons in the music studio. Once again, this confirmed that although the course may have been intentionally placed as

a compartmentalized course within the curricula, nevertheless it could still be delivered in an integrated manner. For example, vocal instruction in my music studio integrated the concepts of technique, repertoire, and musicianship. As the studio teacher, I attempted to guide students towards reconciliation of the comments they had received from all of their music classes, to ensure that their understanding of terminology and concepts was clear. The audio recordings of each of my studio sessions confirmed that I asked the students about their performances in master class on an ongoing basis; this dialogue allowed an opportunity for open discussion regarding the feedback that had been received in other music classes. These teaching and learning moments provided an opportunity for the students to develop further on the basis of their process and performance experiences. With an aim to improving areas of their vocal technique and performance, students sought out clarification and guidance, especially when working intensely on mastering one particular piece of musical repertoire. For instance, there were several occasions in the studio when I assisted students in balancing the many perspectives, interpretations, and vocal approaches that were being presented as viable options by a variety of their teachers. As I modeled these artistic practices for the students, they began to make more informed and suitable decisions for themselves in the studio and in the classroom settings (AR; PD22; 9:9).

Music Training

Choral Music Class

I observed choral music classes on two separate occasions, February 11th and March 17th; both classes took place on Mondays from 3:30–5:00 p.m. The choral class was part of the applied musical theatre program at the college. In an attempt to illuminate the nature of the artistic experience that the student participants were involved in, I focused on the routines of the educational environment. My observations detailed the routines involved in the teaching and learning of one piece of musical repertoire, a medley from the musical *Les Miserables*. I realized the impact that these various artistic experiences had on student behavior, both verbal and non-verbal, by explaining the common themes that emerged from the lessons.

The Setting

The observation for this part of the study took place in the music room, which was one of many classrooms in a long wing dedicated to the musical theatre program. The emerald green walls of the classroom paled in comparison to the one wall of full-length windows from which bright beams of yellow and white light poured and spilled across onto the tiled floor. Multi-level risers covered with thick, slightly darker green carpet were designated as the student area and were set up with plastic burgundy chairs and lined with metal black music stands. The black grand piano was positioned at the front of the classroom, directly beside where the teacher/conductor stood in the centre of the classroom. The conductor had an especially wide music stand, where several musical scores lay piled and strewn about, along with a thin baton. The classroom had minimal furniture beyond these instructional tools: a standing mirror and a table in one of the corners at the front of the room, from which I made the majority of my observations. At one point during the lesson, however, I sat as a participant-observer in the middle row between the soprano and alto sections and participated in the singing of various sections of the piece.

Chorus Lines of Singers

At the time of the research reported here, the first year choral class contained 22 females and 10 males. From my vantage point in the far corner of the room, I noticed the students enter the classroom sporadically either in pairs or trios, finding their assigned seats immediately. The front two rows were comprised of females, who were further divided by their singing parts; altos were on the right and sopranos on the left from the conductor's viewpoint. The men filled all of the seats in the back row with tenors on the left side and basses on the right.

All the students were seated facing the front of the classroom where the conductor/ teacher stood, except for one student who forgot her music and instead faced inward to the person beside her, leaning in to see the musical scores. These two students, who both participated in the interview portion of the study, sat at the end of the row in the alto section; they talked continuously with each other throughout the entire class, whispering into one another's ear, were quite fidgety in their seats, and showed general disinterest by their flat facial expressions and occasional blank stares. They looked around, often did not even sing with reference to the score, and never took notes that were given by the teacher. Even when other sections were rehearsing and singing, these two students were not paying attention, but were immersed in their own conversation, which seemed to be more social than scholastic in nature. They were only engaged when singing and seemed to exaggerate the dramatic content of the text; they acted and came to life in the character of the musical text during their moments of rehearsed song making and then reverted immediately to their original behaviour orientation the moment the music stopped.

Similar to the aforementioned students, several other pairs carried on conversations. However, many of their conversations seemed to relate more to the lesson content, as they occasionally pointed out and referenced parts of their scores as they interacted with each other. These students asked clarifying questions, either by blurting out questions or raising their hands, which indicated they were engaged. Unlike the aforementioned students, many of the students scribbled notes in their score— either musical terms that were given to them or other descriptions

of how to interpret and/or perform certain parts of the score. Along with the sounds of pencils scratching against the paper, one could clearly hear the tape recorders being turned on and off—a tool that each of the students used in order to learn their vocal parts independently.

Singing in Parts: A Rehearsal in Stages

Students performed a range of musical tasks throughout the class. The teacher began work on each of the different sections of the music in a systematic manner. The rehearsal pattern that was representative of the learning and teaching process involved throughout both choral classes is accounted for below:

The conductor says: “Sopranos let’s get you fixed up first. Do you want to hear it first?” The students shake their heads and a few respond “no” verbally. The conductor gives them an upbeat pattern in the tempo of the piece, and the sopranos sing through a small section of the piece. “Sopranos, it didn’t sound like there was any problem there.” The conductor turns to the alto section and exclaims: “Okay altos,” and gives a conducting cue to start. The students start singing once the pianist plunks out a starting note. The altos struggle with the notes and rhythms of the line. The section ends and the conductor says: “Do you have your recorders? I think you’re going to want to record this.” The altos get their recorders out and press record, and the pianist plunks out their part loudly. Once the section is finished, the conductor turns to the accompanist and says: “It’s cool— it’s like medieval counterpoint. Okay altos, let’s go again” (CO; CC; PD28; 78:83).

The altos repeated the passage several times until the notes and rhythms were secured. Then the conductor moved on to teach the tenor and bass parts in a similar sequence of events. His verbalized expectation was that the students would practise their parts outside of class, separate from the choral context. During the moments when specific sections of the choir were learning their parts, others acted in a variety of musical and non-musical ways. Some students followed along with the music tracing the score with their fingers, listened, tapped their feet, and moved to the music, which clearly illustrated that they were still engaged in the musical learning. Some students were not so attentive: they drank beverages, wrapped scarves around their necks, took notes, talked, and ate snacks. While the teacher did not stop these non-musical activities from

happening even once, other students were distracted and yelled out “Be quiet,” and “Shhhh” (CO; CC; PD28; 12:12)) to the disturbers.

While the majority of the lesson was teacher directed and autocratic in terms of the artistic interpretative decisions being made, many students flourished in this style and artistically expressed themselves by means of the vocal performance opportunities given within the class. When they were not performing, many students remained unfocused. The students seemed to perceive themselves as individual artists, rather than as an ensemble of blended voices. Each student’s voice was unique. It was most noticeable that every student fully engaged dramatically, vocally, and through movement when they were participating. Rather than a blended choral sound, one could identify many individual vocal colors, textures, and layers.

The teacher focused primarily on the performance aspects of the class, as students appeared more interested in this area and less concerned with the technical and musical concepts for the most part. The teacher seemed aware of this to some degree, as he directed the majority of his complex musical and technical comments towards the accompanist without further explanation. Often when he cued the students to stop singing, he immediately turned to the accompanist and started having a conversation, instead of addressing the students. Each time this happened, the students started talking and the classroom dynamic became chaotic. The minimal variety of rehearsal techniques used, combined with a teaching sequence that focused on a collaborative team-teaching approach, did not always translate directly to the students and seemed to inhibit their artistic growth to some degree. However, the opportunity to self-monitor and work cooperatively with other artists-in-training appeared to be a worthwhile educational experience in the students’ development as triple-threat performer-artists. Also, the basic musical skills and knowledge gained in this class were fundamental to the students’ growth as musicians. Students had much to learn from the teacher/ conductor and the accompanist, as they both consistently demonstrated a high degree of competence in terms of their musicianship.

A Master Class in Vocal Performance

The master classes in performance were held in the same setting as the choral music instruction. In addition to the original set-up for the choral classroom, there was a table off to one side where the instructor sat, listened, and worked. Each student who performed stood up and posed into position at the front of the classroom, ready to workshop his or her prepared repertoire in front of an audience of their colleagues. The first-year class was split into two different groups to accommodate the large number of individual performances that were to be completed throughout the term: In addition to much vocal solo performance work, students were required to sing several duets or trios as part of the course curricula. I observed two master classes in performance, with each session lasting from 8:30 am until 12:30 pm on February 28th and March 27th respectively.

The sequence of events in this class presented as part of a deeply engrained routine for each student. The performer introduced him or herself, the piece of music that he or she was to sing, and the musical theatre score from which it was excerpted. At the end of the vocal performance, the performer acknowledged the accompanist, and bowed to the audience who applauded and cheered. Finally, the process of receiving feedback, both general and specific, from the teacher and accompanist occurred. At this point in the class, there were opportunities for the student and teacher to dialogue briefly and to work through some of the musical, staging, and technical issues of the performance. This feedback was tested out in a performance that followed directly after this expedient interaction, when the student presented either a section of the piece or the piece in its entirety depending on the context. In addition to the support and feedback from the teacher and accompanist, the student audience was very attentive to the performer and responded by clapping and occasionally giving positive remarks.

As part of their performances, the students would prepare their costumes, props, and extras; they would plan out their acting for the scene; and they would choreograph the musical numbers entirely by themselves. In all cases, the degree of integration of their singing, dancing, and acting

was completely dependent upon the piece of repertoire they had selected, the musical style, character, and context, and most important, their own artistic interpretations. In the context of these class performances, there tended not to be a lot of discussion regarding the artistic choices that were made by the performers; instead, the focus was more directly related to the singing, with emphasis placed on making interpretative decisions with the text and the musical aspects of the performance. Occasional references were made to the acting and movement choices in relation to how the vocal component of the performance was affected. The teacher's critiques to elements of the students' vocal performances included the following points: text, stance, phrasing, projection, vocal colour, facial expression, musical influences, performance space, musical style and tempo, rhythm and pitch accuracy, positioning of body, pronunciation of text, collaboration and precision between accompanist and singer, and clarification of the nature of the character. While not all of these elements would be mentioned after each performance, the teacher would aim to improve on several objectives when working through the piece for a second time.

While most of the students demonstrated some element of vocal technique or musicianship that needed further development, the teacher was always supportive and encouraging about the performance from the outset. From that point, he would delve into the areas that could be improved as he guided the student through the workshop section of the master class. In every performance case that was observed for this study, improvement occurred consistently on the basis of the process that included the initial performance, feedback provided by the instructor and the accompanist, and the final performance to re-work and enhance the presentation.

This master class allowed the students from my studio to get a different perspective from another teacher. Throughout this rehearsal process, they would be presented with some overlapping and some entirely new ideas, which they would have to reconcile. Ultimately, having different instructors within each discipline area required the students to make independent, thoughtful artistic choices about how they would make all of the varied input work for them.

These artistic judgments seemed to present one of the biggest challenges, according to student statements I recorded. The following excerpt from an interview is representative of the student dilemma.

Interviewer: What is your opinion of being assigned to different instructors for various aspects of your musical study?

Interviewee: Umm...it's good in the sense that you can get different opinions...But at the same time...you don't know when to use those different opinions...because you don't know what's the right answer.

You alluded to this issue earlier in master class versus studio learning...so have you tried to integrate the different opinions so far? How have you made that work for you so far?

There are some things that you can use both of the advice...And some of them I have had to pick, and I've just used my own judgment.

So in that sense do you feel differently as an artist having to make those artistic choices for yourself?

Yeah, I feel in control of my performance more... 'Cause I get to choose (CO; VS; PD17; 427:453).

In the end, the students seemed to grow artistically the most through balancing their teachers' perspectives with their own personal style. Each performance in the master class was shaped dramatically from the students' previous experiences in all areas of the program. As the school year progressed, students drew upon each of these performances and were better able to handle the integration of the three disciplines much more easily than they were at the beginning of the school year.

Observation of a Powerful Performance

In one of the master classes in performance that I observed, a duet was performed by two of the students I subsequently interviewed. The duet dealt with the topic of child abuse and was excerpted from a new musical entitled "Spring Awakening" (CO; MC; PD6; 10:21). The two

women were dressed in revealing nightgowns. At the outset of the piece, one student stood while the other student lay sprawled supine across a bench with her head hanging down off one end toward the audience. With only simple movements throughout, the two students delivered an incredibly moving rendition of this song. It literally sent shivers through me because the message of the song was so powerful and haunting, and the students' performance captured all of these elements brilliantly.

This improved rendition came about after an initial run-through that had seemed a little flat and unconnected. After the students had completed their first performance, the teacher asked the students what they were singing about and suggested they put themselves in the characters' shoes and try to empathize with the characters' situations. In addition, they were given a few vocal suggestions to experiment with their second performance. In the second rendition, these suggestions were incorporated so fully that one of the singers started to cry as she experienced the text and music so deeply. She sang through the entire song with her partner on stage through the tears and rage that she felt, having fully actualized the live performance moment. The students communicated a message so powerful that, at the end of the performance, everyone in the room was left awestruck and speechless. This example depicts that the students' journey to get to this place in their artistic development came as a result of both the process and the performance.

Collaboration

Collaboration is an integral part of the master class dynamic. Students collaborate with their accompanist in the performance itself, then with the master class teacher and the accompanist in the revision and experimentation process, and then again with the accompanist in the final performance. Even further collaboration occurred in one of the classes that I observed, as the master class teacher posed questions in my direction and actually had me participate in the class. This led to a team-teaching approach on a few subsequent occasions, which evolved naturally from the strong artistic sense that we both held about collaborating with one another to achieve

the optimal result. As my role shifted towards participant (rather than just researcher) at several points throughout the class, I thought that it was essential to allow that role change to evolve organically, as it was clearly an inherent part of the class' artistic dynamic. From my perspective, it was a thrilling process to be part of, and provided students with a verbalized demonstration of how two perspectives of the same context can be negotiated and reconciled.

Dance Training

Modern Dance

My observations of the modern dance classes took place on March 27th and April 10th from 1:30–5:30 pm. The dance studio had mirrors along three walls and windows along the fourth; the hardwood floor supported several ballet barres that were lined up near the windows; and a sound system was set up at the front corner of the room. My role as researcher placed me at the side of the room in one of the several spectators' chairs. The students entered the classroom sporadically and sat down to stretch and to put on their foot undies¹ (CO; MD; PD27; 8:8). Once attendance had been taken, and a few minutes of informal chat between teacher and the students ensued, the class began dancing to upbeat music. The musical styles that were selected for the class ranged from African music to jazz and gospel, and the a cappella sound of the claves.² Overlaying the African musical recording in the first exercise, the teacher played claves in a triplet rhythm to drive the pulse forward, and the students completed a contemporary movement sequence that served as a warm up. This sequence, clearly previously learned, seemed routine, since the students were able to dance the correct steps immediately following the teacher's announcement of the exercise. The class proceeded in a routine fashion throughout, sequence-by-sequence, developing and integrating more concepts. This spiraling of objectives progressed until by the end

¹ "Foot undies" are dance accessories that were worn to provide greater traction on the dance floor.

² Claves are a percussion instrument (idiophone). When struck together, this pair of thick dowels, traditionally made of wood, makes a bright clicking sound.

of the class, the dances became much more involved in terms of choreography, co-ordination, and length.

Stretching Themselves

Before they began the more intricate dances, students participated in a series of theraband³ exercises, which served to strengthen their core oblique muscles, stretch their flexibility levels, and practise their breathing. The theraband exercises transitioned into various yoga positions, which were integrated sequences like downward dog with an arching back, strength training, and rolling (CO; MD; PD27; 51:52). All of these individual positions had been taught and warmed up throughout the class, and the instructor demonstrated and talked the students through the sequence for the first time. She then talked them through the second time, which after a few minutes morphed into a sequence of upward and downward leg lifts. She pointed out that these movements were all yoga inspired and part of the warm up to increase their flexibility and strength. This part of the class allowed the teacher an opportunity to work one-on-one with students; she circulated around the room and corrected their positions by gently giving them physical direction and asking them to sense and memorize the corrected body positioning.

Sequential Steps

The teaching and learning process that was consistently observable in this classroom context began with the teacher demonstrating the dance sequence. While dancing, she would also count out the beats of the music in groups of eight-beat phrases. Typically, she would demonstrate at least twice for the students, and then they were expected to dance through the sequence themselves. During these initial demonstrations, some students would try to dance through simultaneously with her and reinforce the steps that way, others would stand on the spot and mark the dance, while a few students would simply stand on the spot and watch her carefully before

³ A theraband is a stretchable rubber band that creates added resistance to simple exercises.

performing the movement. As the students were given several opportunities to try out the dance sequence, the teacher would constantly yell out feedback and reminders over top of the music playing. Often the sequence was rehearsed up to six or seven times with the intent that the students would engrain the steps in their bodies and minds through experience and repetition. By the end of each series of movement, it became clear that students were increasingly confident and clear about the sequences they were dancing.

The class moved onto the most complicated sequence. The teacher started this process by explaining as she danced it several times. As she started the music, she admitted to the class that she was nervous because she had just made up the movements on the spot. The teacher displayed artistic creativity and improvisation as part of the lesson, and at times, it led to some general confusion for the students. As students moved through the sequence, gradually adding a little bit more of the dance each time through, they raised several questions and the teacher answered them in an open and occasionally chaotic forum. A combination of dancing the sequence through in its entirety and occasionally marking it after several repetitions occurred during this rehearsal process. Several requests were made by students to continuously repeat the movements at a slower tempo; one participant from the interviews asked the teacher to “do it half time, so I can see your feet” (CO; MD; PD27; 61:62). Due to the intricacy of the dance, at times the coordination needed to be mastered at times by isolating the elements. Once the students had reinforced the steps and they felt more comfortable with the dance sequence, they talked less and danced more. At this stage, once there was more focus, the teacher encouraged the students to use similar types of movements for their own creations. Using the same music and experimenting with different modern movements, the students explored the space in a process of developing their own choreography.

Dance Production

In their song and dance revue, I observed the process and performance products that were associated with the class entitled “Dance Production” on April 4th from 10:30–12:00 am and again on the evening of March 7th from 8:00–10:15 pm. In this class students were given some opportunities to integrate disciplines, most specifically in the areas of dancing and singing. This class was held in the same dance studio as the modern dance class. However, instead of splitting the students into two sections, as had been done for their modern dance class, all thirty-four students were taught dance production in this relatively small space. This made it seem quite chaotic at times, especially since many of the students talked in between the dance sequences, and the space became overly crowded when everyone participated simultaneously. Despite this, the students accomplished several artistic objectives during the class, as they seemed to feed off the high energy in the room.

A Fusion of Styles

The instructor assigned the students a beginning dance sequence, a fusion of warm-ups that integrated ballet, jazz, and modern dance positions and movements. She then requested that half the students remain on stage, while the other half observe from the front of the class, serving as an audience. She gave the two groups of students the exact same exercise and asked them to “rip it apart” (CO; DP; PD3; 38:39). With this direction, she described in further detail that she would like the students to create a two-minute long improvisation with the same musical piece from the opening portion of the class, using viable movement choices from the first sequence. The teacher then proceeded to say: “Just do the steps randomly” (CO; DP; PD3; 38:39), encouraging them to complete the sequence in an order of their choice and in a manner that was inspired by the music. After the first group had an opportunity to explore within this framework, with the second group as the audience, the roles were reversed. When the second group started their dance, they seemed to be completing the steps too randomly, which led the teacher to remark: “Don’t forget the

movement” (CO; DP; PD3; 48:49). Students in the second group seemed to be doing less of the choreographed steps from the original fusion of dance styles and more mainstream dance movements.

Dream Work

The next exercise became more of an in-class project, as the majority of the class time was spent to complete it. Half of the student group formed a cluster around the instructor and were designated by the teacher as the “air supply” (CO; DP; PD3; 52:52). She whispered instructions to them, purposefully preventing the other group from hearing the directions being given. Once the “air supply” group had heard their instructions, they went off into different parts of the room; some lay down on the floor, while the others walked amongst them. The music that was used for this section of the class was from a film soundtrack, and it had a lyrical and spiritual quality with a text that spoke of poverty and social justice. The students were using many of the same dance elements from the first sequence, but this time exploring various levels, interactions with their peers, and dimensions of character. When the other group was given an opportunity to complete the same exercise, the teacher gave the directions aloud since the first group was already aware of the way that the artistic piece was to develop. The teacher announced that “there are certain people who are to help people up from the ground” (CO; DP; PD3; 52:53), and they served as their air supply. Essentially, the concept seemed to be based on the idea of helping one another and feeling connected through the text and interpretative movement, which seemed to resonate with the message of satisfying basic human needs.

Many of the students described this modern dance exercise as being “freeing,” and “amazing” as they “felt everybody’s energy” (CO; DP; PD3; 61:62) after each of the completed performances. The students were so enthusiastic and energized by their artistic dance creation set to this powerful piece of music that they pleaded with the teacher to be able to complete it again with the entire class. The teacher agreed, but before they created another rendition, she suggested

that they try making it as “internal as possible” (CO; DP; PD3; 63:63). She explained that this was a “lyrical assignment moment” and encouraged them to “go with the way [the singer] is phrasing it, the way she’s singing” (CO; DP; PD3; 65:66). For this final performance, they turned off the overhead lights and used a spotlight to help create a more striking mood. The instructor watched the students’ artistic creation, as she stood on a chair, observing their performance from above. Following this performance, the students and teacher dialogued about the exercise, and all seemed to concur that it was an excellent exercise in trust and co-operative learning. To solidify the experience, the teacher commented: “We all had a purpose” (CO; DP; PD3; 76:76), and repeated what had been her mantra throughout the year: “Team work is the dream work” (CO; DP; PD3; 77:77).

Song and Dance

In the song and dance revue, the students integrated singing and dancing in a lengthy production number that involved all of the first-year students. This performance number had been rehearsed over a period of several months and featured a modern piece that contained simple harmonies and several unison singing parts, as well as fairly simple dance movements. These elements occurred simultaneously, and the students performed with much confidence with only a few occasional disconnects from the breath in their sound that were audible and noticeable to me in the audience. Overall, the performance was extremely well executed, and it was exciting to see the students so energized and engaged on stage. In this revue, they were clearly given an incredible opportunity to develop their artistry and expand their identity as triple-threat performers.

Drama Training

Dramatic Space: The Setting

I observed two Acting through Song classes in the drama classroom on February 28th from 1:30–5:30 pm and on March 20th from 1:30–5:30 p.m. This setting was split into two distinct sections by its distinguishing physical characteristics. On one side of the room was the stage area, which was slightly elevated from the other part of the classroom and was covered with subtle, grey-coloured carpet; curtains surrounded this performance space, and track lighting was set up on the ceiling and directed towards the stage area. The other half of the room was tiled in a cold colour, and provided space for a piano, a few costume and prop boxes, several chairs for the audience that neatly lined the back wall of the classroom. It was a generous space for the purposes of the classes and afforded the performer and teacher plenty of room to work through and test out several viable artistic interpretations, most specifically the one-on-one work that was completed in this teaching and learning context.

Acting Through Song

“You can’t sing anything if you can’t feel [what] your character is feeling” (CO; AS; PD1; 10:10). This opening statement by the teacher represents the premise that was fundamental for participating in the “Acting Through Song” classes. In this classroom context, students were constantly being challenged to physically, mentally, and emotionally become their character and to fully realize and embrace the performance moment. The teacher encouraged his students to draw upon their own personal experiences in life to better connect their body, emotions, and performance into one cohesive unit. To achieve this objective, the teacher suggested that the students “understand the core that [the song] hits and be able to play through it” (CO; AS; PD1; 7:7) and “work with what the composers have given you” (CO; AS; PD1; 96:96). He continuously discouraged students from “acting the song” or “singing it beautifully,” as he felt that would inhibit them from fully engaging in the character and the art. For example, he would

often chant out: “You’re performing the song, and you don’t want to be caught working or be caught performing” (CO; AS; PD1; 76:76). He demonstrated a strong commitment to having the students create authentic situations that were larger than life. This stance was central to his philosophy, that is, the musical theatre experience for audience and performer should be grandiose, yet true. He vigorously pleaded with the students to “love the art in you, not the you in the art” (CO; AS; PD1; 66:66).

A typical sequence in each of the classroom performances was set up to mimic an audition experience. Students would come in, introduce themselves formally, and greet the teacher who sat in the corner of the room. They would walk in with an abundance of confidence, go over to their accompanist with their sheet music, and talk through their music with her to establish musical tempo and form. The students would then take their position in the performance space, introduce themselves to the audition panel, and give the name of the piece and musical from which it was excerpted. This was followed by the student’s performance. Afterwards, they would show their appreciation towards the teacher, who would role-play as the auditioning panel member, by saying a simple “thank you.” Carrying on the formal audition simulation, the students would exit the room and return to their seats in the audience to get a little feedback from their teacher and no response from the audience, being true to auditioning form.

Throughout this process of self-discovery and artistic development, which took place in a variety of scenarios, the teacher reminded the students that they needed to “see what [they were] singing about” (CO; AS; PD1; 26:27). By challenging them to visualize and describe their text, he constantly reminded them to think through the *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and *how* questions that pertained to the character of the musical repertoire. From there he probed the students for responses to these questions and requested that they experiment with the physical space, with props, and with different visual conceptions of the situation.

Developing Character

The following sequence illustrated the process that occurred while the teacher worked through a song with one of the students from my studio (from the interview portion of the study). The student performed her song, and then the teacher stood up from his seat, grabbed a pile of papers from a filing cabinet, and flung the sheets high up into the air. As everyone watched them slowly fall to the floor, the teacher asked the student to “pick up the pieces of her life.” The teacher used these strewn pieces of paper to represent the different parts of her life and by extension, the character’s life. As she sang through a second rendition of the same piece, the teacher intermittently shouted out directions such as: “Everything in the song has a different value, different weight” (CO; AS; PD1; 54:54); “You have to play the stakes,” (CO; AS; PD1; 55:55); and “The audience wants to see you take the journey—every song is a journey” (CO; AS; PD1; 56:57). Although her character slowly began to emerge more clearly, the performer seemed to be a little frustrated. The teacher stopped her, and, standing right in front of her, he asked: “What are the stakes in the song for the character?” (CO; AS; PD1; 59:60). As she thought through some of these important questions, she was increasingly aware of the major artistic choices that she was making, which was evidenced by the new dimensions of her performance. She was then given another opportunity to further explore the implications that these artistic choices would have in practice. Through this experience, both she and her teacher agreed that she was closer to grasping the reality for that character. There was a definite sense that this piece was still a work in progress. The teacher encouraged the students to always have several pieces in their repertoire that they were continuously developing.

Conceptualizing each performance as a constantly evolving journey seemed to have had a tremendous impact on these students as artists in training. They demonstrated time and time again that they were willing to participate in these sessions, often exposing their vulnerabilities and stretching their artistic imaginations and boundaries. On several occasions when I was observing, I witnessed significant improvements in the students in terms of taking risks, freeing themselves

up to different possibilities, and expanding their dramatic framework. When these moments occurred, often the students became quite emotional; several times they broke down in tears as a result of self-discovery or connection to the character they were portraying. When students were working through a song, the teacher often commented that it was effective and interesting because “the character took on levels” (CO; AS; PD1; 74:74), and he encouraged them to explore this further and “feel the character’s truth” (CO; AS; PD1; 89:90).

In order to uncover the character’s truth, the teacher reminded the students to keep their work “as simple as the text,” and in doing so they would “feel more like a real character... a real person” (CO; AS; PD1; 97:98). In this rehearsal process, with the emphasis placed on the delivery of the character, the musical aspects of the performance were often compartmentalized for a period of time. Occasionally, when the students were working through a piece, the teacher would have the accompanist play the music, while the student would have to act (not sing) through the underlying bass line. Developing instincts was central to this activity: the students were urged to trust their intrinsic nature and to take the journey as actors. In order to achieve this objective, the teacher suggested many times that he wanted students to release themselves from the singing and from the music. He explained to students that they’ve “gotta get stuff out of the way so that we can play” (CO; AS; PD1; 78:78). In this statement, he referred specifically to their prior master class and studio instruction and the fact that the mindsets and lessons in music that they had developed there were getting in the way of the performances in the context of his class. Other comments he made that reinforced the compartmentalization of his objectives included: “I’m glad we’re not concentrating on the notes” (CO; AS; PD1; 13:13); “You’re trying to sing again...the audience connection gets lost” (CO; AS; PD1; 72:72); and “Don’t even think about singing; don’t even try to sing” (CO; AS; PD1; 85:85). The teacher sensed that the students felt overwhelmed when trying to work through several aspects for several disciplines all at once. Therefore, he focused on tackling the dramatic aspects of the musical theatre performance by encouraging the students to isolate the various elements.

By the time of my observations in late March, the students had begun to integrate some of the components from the various disciplines in the program. At this point in the term, the teacher had taken a different stance on the objectives of the class because he felt that it was essential that students be developing their skills in an integrated manner to increase their abilities as triple-threat performers. The teacher spoke to the students about the fact that they were still compartmentalizing the program for themselves way too much; he advised them to start connecting everything they had learned from their master class and studio sessions, and he said to them: “Take it with you” (CO; AS; PD1; 13:13). This shift in paradigm, from a compartmentalized approach to a more integrated curriculum, set a higher standard for the students to aspire to as they were now expected to transfer their learning from other settings within the program context into the performances for the Acting Through Song class. These high expectations held by the teacher impacted the students tremendously, as they grew and developed with the constant challenges presented to them.

Voice and Speech

As the Voice and Speech class’ students made their way to the carpeted section of the room, they seemed to gravitate towards each other in little clusters within a circle. The class began in this circle formation, where students would “check in” (CO; VS; PD17; 7:7) with one another and with their teacher. With some lying down, some sitting up straight, basically any position that they felt comfortable in, the students and teacher began a process of dialoging back and forth about how they felt, where they were holding that feeling in their body, and why they felt that way. For example, one student said she felt stressed and was holding that stress in her neck, while another student said that her feet and shins were sore from dance class (CO; VS; PD17; 10:11). As the conversation passed around the circle, with everybody listened intently to the person sharing, the dialogue occasionally evolved into a collective sharing of thoughts on a topic that was initiated by the ‘designated voice.’ The teacher gave each student a voice, that is, an

opportunity to speak their mind on various issues that pertained to their personal and professional lives, and they were encouraged to explain how the issues impacted their work as artists.

As the students took turns offering their perspectives and feelings around the circle, they introduced themselves and conversed with their peers and their teacher who provided many insights into the professional world. The teacher shared several narratives from her own experiences, as she was an artist who maintained an active career in the industry. On one of the days when I observed the class, the teacher commented that she felt like she was in “some sort of a professional theatre circle” (CO; VS; PD17; 17:18), as the students continuously complained that they were overworked and overtired. The teacher encouraged the students to appreciate the present moment, as they all seemed so stressed and overwhelmed, which was creating a negative vibe in the circle. The teacher described her own position as a working artist to give them some perspective, which she hoped would help them cope when they encountered these difficult moments again: “I work eighteen hours a day, and I often ask myself: ‘Is there anything that I’m doing that I wouldn’t want to be doing?’” (CO; VS; PD17; 26:26). She emphasized that students should “seize the moment...to survive the exhaustion and stress” (CO; VS; PD17; 26:26) and related this to something that she told herself when she started to feel overwhelmed, which was to “remember that at least I’m not fucking working in a factory” (CO; VS; PD17; 26:26). By appreciating the here and now as an artist, the teacher was able to express herself openly, characterizing positive thinking as necessary to the survival of the artist. Throughout the class, the teacher offered many inspirational comments, modeling the messages that she offered through her own professional demeanor.

Warming Up

In the first active exercise, the students were encouraged to explore their space, dimension, and shape. The teacher asked the them to “find a neutral spot on the floor to stand” (CO; VS; PD17; 44:45), and further instructed them to “stand with ‘actor feet,’ eyes on the horizon, and [to]

give [themselves] a big stretch and a big yawn...release the knees, release the sphincters, feel the openness” (CO; VS; PD17; 44:45). From this open, relaxed position, she requested that they start a gentle hum and begin to sculpt the air with their body movements. She went on to explain that she needed the students to start with “gentle harmonics going on in the core...playful” (CO; VS; PD17; 67:68). The students became more in tune with one another during the course of this exercise and were directed by the teacher to “be aware of what’s going on as a group” and to “merge together in energy” (CO; VS; PD17; 79:88). As the students merged in and out, with the intent to “find moments of complete stillness and then begin again” (CO; VS; PD17; 79:88), they progressed through stages of increased awareness through movement, voice, and group dynamics.

As the students explored the space, experimenting with group and solo dynamics, they ended up gravitating into a group again. At this point, the instructor encouraged them to feel the “group impulse” (CO; VS; PD17; 76:76) and to “sense the web” (CO; VS; PD17; 72:72). A web-like interconnectivity developed as the teacher guided the students through the creative process with carefully paced comments. At this point, the students’ humming faded out and the tempo for the development of the artistic movement was established through the teacher’s vocal commands. In order to achieve this high level of dynamism between students, she reinforced along the way that the goal was to “never know who’s following and who’s leading” (CO; VS; PD17; 74:75). From this close group position, the students instinctually began to hum again and then spread out; they gradually found their way back into a tighter formation with a cohesive group motion, at which point they were told that “touch is allowed...surprise yourself with it and be inspired by it” (CO; VS; PD17; 79:88). The students interactively created an artistic moment that involved collaboration with heightened senses and instincts as they became more aware of themselves and those around them. In the final lyrical product of their work, the students clustered into the largest formation yet, where there was a great deal of arm and torso movement and abstract shaping of their bodies in a slow and fluid motion, accompanied by a series of vocal harmonics. The students

were entirely engaged through this focus exercise, which seemed to achieve several objectives, one of which was to integrate several aspects of the three disciplines studied in this program.

Being Neutral

In terms of integrating concepts from other disciplines, there was a definite sense in this particular class that thoughtful integration had been established throughout by the teacher. In many cases, it seemed to naturally evolve based on the insightful observations of the teacher and on the activities she created. This integration was most evident in another exercise where each of the students was required to individually perform their “neutral positions” (CO; VS; PD17; 106:106). Being neutral involved a deep awareness of the body position and an attempt at achieving interconnectivity amongst different parts of the body. In this exercise, the students wore masks that accented the movement, which was standing up from a reclining position, and then lowering back down in one flowing, seamless motion. Essentially, the idea was to “maintain neutral throughout the movement and positioning of the body” (CO; VS; PD17; 107:107). Letting go of inhibitions, getting rid of habits, listening to the body, and displaying a sense of assurance on stage were central to success with this activity. When one of the participants performed her neutral position, the teacher commented afterwards that “engaging the core is different than holding the core” (CO; VS; PD17; 167:167); she further explained that sometimes for a flexible person, more can be done by relaxing those muscles than by pushing. She related this concept to her student’s dance training, and they dialogued for several minutes and connected the importance of physicality to the deeply personal conversation that they had had at the beginning of the class in the circle. In this brief dialogue, the student pointed out a connection that she experienced during her exercises, which was the breathing exercise she had learned from the music studio. She exclaimed: “This has been exactly what we’ve been working on in the music studio” (CO; VS; PD17; 167:167).

There was a strong impression that the Voice and Speech class provided a solid foundation for all of the students' courses. The skills and mindsets gained in this classroom environment were geared to the triple-threat performer. For example, when asked whether there had been opportunities to combine the three disciplines this year, one student immediately recalled exercises from the Voice and Speech class. The following account from an interview highlights the open vocal channel that she felt connected to the body and mind work.

In our Voice and Speech class, our instructor talks a lot about how you have to have that open vocal channel no matter what you're doing. We have done some...exercises in which our bodies are put in compromised positions, and we have to continue with a hum or vowel [in order to] keep our voices opened and engaged while our body is solid on the outside" (CO; VS; PD17; 126:127).

In this way, some of the artistic experiences from Voice and Speech class were applicable to other classroom and studio settings in the musical theatre program.

Summary

I completed observations of six classes in the musical theatre program, and they provided a rich, more meaningful context for my in-depth study of the artistic training the students were offered. In each case, there were integrated components to help strengthen the students' abilities in all three disciplines. While the integrated curricula varied in degrees from classroom to classroom, the triple-threat notion was consistently threaded through both the instructional approach and the nature of the artistic experience. Every instructor had a perspective to offer that had been grounded in professional experiences. Each classroom experience was deemed by staff and students alike to be integral to the growth and development of these young artists. The words and actions of the classroom instructors had a tremendous impact on the development of their students' skills and the manner in which they perceived themselves in relation to their progress.

The students identified at least six themes that carried over from their studio learning to the classroom. The following were the main themes that emerged from the field observations and the one-on-one interviews:

- (1) The concepts of breathing from the studio setting helped them tremendously by increasing their confidence levels and were both transferred into various classroom settings;
- (2) In the studio, the students were encouraged to take risks and free their voices. This translated into their performance settings, as they felt vocally assured to explore their range in front of people after having had the opportunity to try it first one-on-one;
- (3) A mind-and-body connection was practised through visualization and direct experience in the studio, and this connection was reinforced further in the classes through exercises that were applied to the workshop dynamic of artistic training;
- (4) Critical and creative thinking was developed through dialogue and demonstrations between teacher and student in the studio. This was aligned with the teaching sequences in the other courses, specifically Master Class and Acting Through Song class, where interaction and conversation regarding performance was central to artistic growth;
- (5) A collaborative spirit was developed and supported in the studio and in classroom contexts; and finally,
- (6) Process work was central to the formation of artists in the studio and the same was true in each of the classes: rehearsal time was valued, as it shaped the artist and served as the basis for their learning experience.

I concluded that the classroom courses offered in the program complemented the studio sessions. Learning experiences in the classroom reinforced technique and artistry and expanded the range of possibilities for the students in the studio, greatly impacting their development. When delivered in combination, the first-year courses effectively prepared students for careers as triple-threat performers.

Chapter Five

Process and Performance

*“Bit by bit, putting it together.
Piece by piece, working out the vision night and day.
All it takes is time and perseverance
And a little luck along the way.”*

-Stephen Sondheim

The process work involved in musical development has often been neglected when assessing the quality, type, and nature of musical experience. Instead, measurable performance outcomes have taken precedence over the rehearsal process (Duke & Madsen, 1991). This chapter seeks to provide a balanced perspective of both process and performance components. Discussion of the process includes characteristics of rehearsals, practice, discipline, and goals. Each of these thematic topics is discussed in reference to the impact that process-oriented experiences have on the development of identity. The journey that students in this study embarked upon was found to be central to the formation of their self-image and realization as young artists.

Performance participation was an essential and cumulative aspect of this program, which was geared towards musical theatre performance. As students prepared for the many performances, both informal and formal in nature, they had throughout the school year, there was a clarity associated with the direction they took in this process. Many students were enrolled in the program because, first and foremost, they wanted to perform; therefore, these momentous occasions were highly revered for a multitude of reasons. The impetus to perform, the feeling of being part of a performance, and the changes that came about as a result of the performance experience are some of the aspects explored in-depth in this chapter. Major issues in the field of musical theatre performance are discussed, such as overcoming nerves, taking risks, and preparing for professional auditions and a performance career. Finally, the impact that peak

performances had on the students' evolving sense of identity is revealed from both studio and classroom learning experiences.

Process Work: “The Journey”

“Get into your process...who you are and how you work.”

(CO; AS; PD1; 45:45)

Fundamentally, the rehearsal process provided this study's students with an opportunity to develop a stronger sense of self. Delving into this process was constantly fostered by many of the teachers, as they guided their students towards self-actualization on this journey. In regard to rehearsal and the work in the classroom, a teacher remarked that “every song is a journey” (CO; AS; PD1; 57:57), and he perceived this type of work as being difficult and all-consuming for the student when one is true to the performing art. Process work demands patience, commitment, and perseverance on the part of both student and teacher. In my studio lessons, I often emphasized that students needed to have short-term and long-term goals, with the view that they should not expect to be better singers immediately. This sentiment was captured when I explained that “none of these things are going to happen overnight...it's a process” (AR; PD22; 222:222).

For some students, immersing themselves in the process of creating or participating in a performance art was an arduous task. When they became consumed by measurable outcomes, such as their class evaluations, or were experiencing difficulty with expressing themselves openly in a rehearsal context, the teacher played an essential role by focusing their creative energies into the present moment of the process. One instructor spent considerable time at various points in the class discouraging students from focusing entirely on evaluation. Instead, the students were encouraged to consider the artistic experience that they were having as part of a long process of training toward a career in the performance arts (CO; VS; PD17; 279:279). She emphasized this process by calling out such advice as: “You're competing with yourself as an artist...[you] need to be gentle with yourself. Allow yourself to fuck up royally” (CO; VS; PD17; 219:222). These

phrases promoted artistic thought and removed inner doubt. She commented: “Do the best you can—give yourself permission to explore” (CO; VS; PD17; 219:222), and “There is no perfection in creation” (CO; VS; PD17; 219:222).

In the music studio setting, I allotted time for the students to immerse themselves in the process of actualizing, justifying, and comprehending the reasons for the interpretative choices they were making. The first example below from the studio was excerpted from the audio recordings I’d captured because it revealed the critical thinking process that was practised and encouraged. I recorded the following:

We talk about ‘how did it feel?’ I often request students to verbalize what they experienced, how it sounded to them, and what worked and what didn’t, and I have them try it again so that they can focus on critically thinking and answering some of these questions (AR; P22; 18:18).

A similar sequence was captured in another recording of the music lessons that highlighted the methodical demonstration involved in building musical literacy. The studio field notes confirmed these findings. The systematic approach involved in teacher modeling was evident in the following passage from my notes:

My student and I look at a sight-singing exercise with dominant 7ths. She talks to me about how she practised and the steps she took. We work through it systematically looking for rhythmic and melodic patterns and repetition in the exercise. I ask her specific questions and demonstrate/model the thought process for sight-singing. She sings through step by step (SO; PD11; 47:47).

An aspect that emerged from the data on studio music instruction and the dyad relationship in chapter six was the personal process that was geared specifically to the individual student’s needs. This theme also arose when discussing the various elements involved in process work during the interviews. The following student statement reinforces these points, as she compared the differences between the process work in studio and classroom instruction:

The process is a lot different because [the teacher] actually gets to know people as performers and what they need to improve on and what they need to work on (I; A; PD7; 298:298).

As students progressed as a result of the process work, a tremendously important part of the experience was their actualization as artists. A teacher from the program shared her own perspective with students regarding the journey toward self-realization:

It's all about the stuff we know and the stuff we don't know—realizing the lesson ourselves as actors and having teachers point out and/or notice things—this all occurs during the process (CO; VS; PD17; 133:134).

A student from the program detailed her experience with making mistakes in process work and how it led her toward a deeper and more grounded view of herself as a person and an artist. She explained her growth as part of this process:

I've been in classes where I've got so frustrated I just start crying...and in other classes I'm just so happy like I did a split or something....And so I've grown a lot because I've learned that it's okay not to be perfect....I'm just happier with who I am as a person (I; C; PD18; 473:473).

This student's truly significant accounting of her recognition and acceptance of herself as a developing artist illustrates the ongoing work that epitomizes process.

Some of the most poignant data on the artistic learning processes were elicited through interview questions that asked for responses about the rehearsal and eventual performances of musical repertoire. The account that was most worthy of note was captured in the upcoming student narrative, which extensively detailed the process involved in learning and singing in an ensemble number. Being in this musical trio stretched the student artistically, as the repertoire demanded extremely complex elements of music, extensive part-singing, and an integrated performance; as well, it provided an intimidating situation for the performer in front of an unfamiliar audience, with a different accompanist. The student detailed the great deal of practice

and discipline involved in achieving many of these goals and in putting everything together, and she explained the lessons she learned along the way.

Can you take me through the significant learning process that you have experienced with a song—from the beginning stages through to your most recent performance of it?

I was asked to do a trio, and it's a three-part harmony song called "You Could Drive A Person Crazy" from *Company*. Not only had I never heard the song before, but they got me to sing the middle part. In choir, I sing 2nd soprano, which is usually melody with a few notes changed at the end of each line. So singing the middle part in a three-part harmony, which I've never done before was incredibly difficult. And the chords in the song were very strange, so each part on its own sounded odd and kind of ugly...

It's Sondheim right?

Oh yeah, and Sondheim's a big fat jerk, in the best possible way though 'cause that's the thing, I love his music. He's just really difficult and the song is very fast and very upbeat. So you kind of had to get it or it didn't sound right at all. We learned our parts, and then we started singing them together, and the morning before we performed we got together and put some basic movement with it and everything and we were nailing the harmonies like hard core and we were so happy. Then we got into master class and we just flubbed the whole thing. It sounded awful and we all knew it and were so disappointed 'cause we had worked really hard and it just didn't click. I think we were nervous, and I was in a class that I don't normally perform in because master class is split into two, but I was performing it in [the other] class. The beat should have been faster, [but] our accompanist always slowed it down, and the song is supposed to be very up-tempo. Once we went over a couple of the parts they were better, but I think we all needed to hammer the parts into our brains even more, so that even under pressure and in a nerve-racking situation we could get them without thinking about them. I think the nerves just got to us and it didn't go over so well.

How did this process change you as a person and a performer?

I definitely got a sense of how much work has to go into a piece like this and how even though we worked really hard on it we could have worked ten times harder. It also showed me how little actual time we had to spend on it. We're all very dedicated students, and I think if we'd had more time or less projects to focus on it could have been ten times better. But with the kind of workload that we had, it just didn't come together as quickly as we needed it to. We should have also practised in front of people to get a sense of how our nerves were going to affect our harmonies (I; M; PD19; 152:164).

Prompted by the same questions, another student's answers illuminated the impact of process work on her development. She spoke of her development in terms of building musical skills, and she detailed each essential step in her learning sequence. She reflected how she arrived at a moment of self-realization about her singing habits and how her identification as a singer and a musician changed as a result of the progress she had made through this journey. Comments from her interview transcript are excerpted below.

Can you take me through the significant learning process that you have experienced with one of the songs—from the beginning stages through to your most recent performance of it?

“See I’m smiling” is probably a good one for that ‘cause I’ve worked on it a lot. I listened to the recording, and I learned it from the recording. That was fine for a lot of these parts until I got to this fast part...on the recording she just talks this whole page and half. She just speaks all that, so I had never heard anybody sing this, so I had to figure that out. I got my roommate to plunk out my notes...And the tempo I started at for this part was [sings through and taps along how she thought it went at an andante and then she tapped and sang through the actual tempo, which was more like vivace]; there’s all these crazy time signatures. Up until this song, I’d sung songs that I knew to hear really well, I’d listened to a million times so it’s easier. This [piece of musical repertoire] has so many crazy sharps and flats, and key signatures, time signature changes. It was just a lot of work.

So, how did this process change you as a person and a performer?

I had that big, developing great moment...with that E [which is a really high note in my vocal range]. I really realized I’m the kind of the person that you can tell me something and tell me something, but I have to learn the hard way all the time, so unless I experience it, it doesn’t mean anything to me. But I was in Acting through Song singing this...I sounded like a great singer to me.

Were you able to see yourself differently after rehearsing and/ or performing any of these pieces?

Oh, totally. I invest a lot in each of them, you know, especially with this one. This was the first time I learned a song without having heard it. So this was actually like really learning music for me, so again I felt more like I was on the path to becoming a singer. Every song teaches me something (I; P; PD20; 421:432).

Rehearsals

*“All they ever want is repetition,
All they really like is what they know.
You gotta keep a link with your tradition
Got to learn to trust your intuition.”*

-Stephen Sondheim

Another topic that was consistent throughout the course of the study was the value of rehearsing. Often teachers framed rehearsals as being compulsory to growing as an artist and to creating a quality performance product. The rehearsal process involved mindful repetition, as featured in the following account: “Instead of just stopping and moving on, we try to work on it until I actually get it” (I; J; PD2; 459:460).

Another perspective on rehearsals showed that preparation in rehearsal was essential to being prepared for a performance. Differences between rehearsal and performance emerged in this next statement of a student who regarded rehearsal as foundational to success as a performer-artist:

Well, if you look at the difference between the two [rehearsal vs. performance], I always feel like I do it better in rehearsal. So it lets me know that in order to make my performances good, then I have to really, really, really work in rehearsals. If I’m going to do a good performance, I have to have a really good rehearsal (I; A; PD7; 266:266).

Another student concurred with this stance on rehearsals, explaining that they were both a key to her development and also a most exciting and interesting part of the artistic experience. With much enthusiasm, she exclaimed: “I love sitting in rehearsals” (I; P; PD20; 302:302). She went on to explain the depth of this passion, stating that “I love the rehearsal process almost even more than the show” (I; P; PD20; 468:468). When asked what she enjoys about the rehearsal process, she responded expressively, “When you’re in rehearsal, you have all of this energy coming from

all these other people with you and it's just so much fun" (I; P; PD20; 468:468). Further, she mentioned that what was most inspiring about rehearsals was the triple-threat training practice that was authentic to the real-world context of the professional artists. Her enthusiasm for rehearsing is evident in the following account:

It's so focused, so I need to be in there and be focused on making this dance and this song and this acting all fit [with] this director's view, and that's what we have to do in the real-world, so it's amazing practice and it feels so good (I; P; PD20; 468:468).

Resoundingly clear throughout the data was the importance that rehearsals played both in the development of the students' artistic work and also in the shaping of their artistic identity. They thrived on the process work that most often resulted in positive artistic and personal change.

Practice Requires Discipline

In order to ensure that development was ongoing, students were constantly encouraged to be self-motivated in their practice sessions in order to meet the demands of course work and to mature and develop as artists. Eventually, the students' desire to make the most out of their artistic experiences replaced the external motivation and this internalization led to increased quality in their work. Independent practice was a major theme that often appeared in the students' references to being prepared and progressing as artists. One student explained, "When I practice by myself things seem to work a lot better than they do in front of people" (I; L; PD4; 575:575). Some of their statements demonstrated that, based on their experiences, the process of practising enhanced and secured their performance skills. Students became more focused and motivated once they discovered for themselves the usefulness and necessity of practising their performing art. For example, one student said: "Practising just makes me feel better" (I; P; PD20; 110:110), while another student mentioned: "I [practise] all the time; I'm in the whisper rooms at least once a day for like an hour" (I; P; PD20; 113:114).

The practice routine became a habitual and inherent part of the development process for these students. As a studio teacher, I often pointed it out when I noticed that students had practised an assigned aspect of their work; this encouragement was referenced throughout my studio field notes. As part of this process, I would suggest specific techniques, warm-ups, and sections of the repertoire to be practised individually before our next music lesson together. This type of feedback, which encouraged process work, was exemplified in the following passage that I notated from a studio session: “I gave her a few suggestions of things to practise and think about over the week to help reduce some of her anxiety in this area” (SO; PD11; 11:12). In addition, we discussed and worked through exercises that would help the students vocally when they were plagued by illness because, despite feeling sick, students were generally expected to persevere and perform. As one teacher mentioned: “As artists, we can’t be sick” (CO; VS; PD17; 156:157). To help with this pseudo-professional type of challenge that students faced, I would provide alternative suggestions for the approach and performance of their work. My studio notes reflected this situation: “I suggest ways of practising when the voice isn’t 100% because of illness” (AR; PD22: 175:175). I observed a similar strategy in the Master Class in Performance setting, when students who were vocally tired or actually ill were directed to develop a “Plan B” that could be implemented for situations when they were feeling under the weather.

When asked about what specific skills and attributes she hoped to gain as a student in this music theatre program, one student responded that she would like to have “more discipline” (I; J; PD2; 29:31). Several of the participants voiced their perspective about the strong work ethic and discipline that was required in the performing arts field. One student account conveyed the constant nature of the work completed as a part of the training; she stated “I’m a hard worker. I’m always on the go; I’m always working; you’ll never catch me like not working” (I; C; PD18; 507:507). Another passage revealed professional and artistic growth as the student recognized that her craft was not going to be just fun and games, but instead would involve difficult stages and much hard work: “I lost the joy of singing for a while because it had become work, and it had

never been work before [because] I always really enjoyed it” (I; M; PD19; 48:48). Her self-realization came when she recognized that this training process had changed her as an artist, as expressed in the following statement: “It was actually hard work, and I think that definitely changed me as an artist to realize that my craft wasn’t just going to come easy, that I was going to actually have to work towards it” (I; M; PD19; 52:52). Finally, the following passage relates to an event in the studio, when the student felt that because she was challenged with various difficult tasks she was motivated to practise and to progress. Her increased level of discipline and motivation led her towards improving as an artist, which emerged from the data below:

If nothing else—and I do get a lot of else out of it—[the studio lessons] keep me thinking, and when you gave me the exercises that I found really challenging, I didn’t just leave the tutorial and go: “Oh well, I don’t have to worry about that ‘til next week.” I kept listening to [my recording of the lesson] and I kept trying [the exercise] on my own. I think because I have somebody there that’s always going to check up with my progress, it keeps me motivated to keep myself working, to use more of my own time to improve, instead of just letting it go once I leave the tutorial session (I; M; PD19; 178:178).

Practice and discipline went hand in hand, as practice most often occurred as a result of discipline on the students’ part. A disciplined approach to practice helped students achieve a greater degree of self-awareness, as well as personal and artistic fulfillment.

Goals

Formal training in the program involved goal setting, which was an integral part in the process of development for the young artists striving to improve their craft. In the interviews, I questioned the students about the goals they had set for themselves, both short term and long term. Their responses revealed a range of skills and mindsets they would attempt to attain during their training. Some of the discussed topics demonstrated more general objectives, such as increased comfort, confidence, inner strength, and knowledge. One student mentioned that her goals were to “overcome the...nervous parts, so that I don’t have to deal with that and [can] just

work on what's more important, instead of dealing with the nerves all the time" (I; L; PD4; 15:15) and to have "a better understanding overall" (I; L; PD4; 18:19). Two other students shared similar goals in that one wanted to "just be more comfortable on the stage" (I; C; PD18; 43:43) and the other aimed to "have more confidence in [her] singing" (I; M; PD19; 11:11). Yet another student pointed out that she wanted to "develop a thicker skin" (I; P; PD20; 25:25).

More specific goals were also part of the content from the interviews. These goals dealt with a spectrum of student created pursuits, as part of the process towards becoming better performer-artists. For example, the deeply emotional, even desperate, intentions of a student who wanted to become a virtuosic singer more than anything in the world were presented in the data. Her passionate gestures paired with powerful words conveyed her commitment and internalization of this mission to improve and attain these goals. She emoted: "[Singing is] really becoming the thing that I want the *most* in the world. Beyond money or love or anything [crescendos], I want to be a god damn good singer!" (I; P; PD20; 102:102).

The final theme that was process oriented and emerged from the data was the notion of attaining triple-threat status. Within that realm, students detailed specifically about how they would achieve that pursuit. They emphasized that integrating concepts of dance, drama, and music together would help them become good performers. Their intentions were illustrated in the following two student accounts: "I would like to become a more well-rounded performer, so that I can be a triple threat. I'd like to be able to even out my performance a bit so that I can do a bit of everything (I; A; PD7; 28:28); and "I really want to learn how to become a serious performer and become the best actor, singer, dancer that I can be" (I; M; PD19; 19:19). Another student's statement captured a similar sentiment in this regard. She explained:

[My goal is] having aspects of acting in my music, [and] having aspects of acting in my dance as well because that's always a tricky part to do. It's not just singing the notes; it's having the emotion behind it. That'd be a REALLY big thing that I'd like to gain (I; R; PD5; 19:19).

Once again, the process of gaining these skills and mindsets as aspiring triple-threat performers required that teachers were motivating and encouraging students to have long-term goals that were professionally based. For example, one of the acting teachers stressed that “[students’] goals should be Stratford and Shaw, not smaller theatres where they don’t take things seriously” (CO; AS; PD1; 67:67). Aiming for quality work, during and after their involvement in the musical theatre program, demanded that students set high expectations and endeavour to excel in all three disciplines on a consistent basis in the process.

Performance

Peak experiences in performance

Performance work was framed through a conception of experience that American psychologist and philosopher Abraham Maslow (1968) termed as a “peak experience,” which he described as self-validating, self-justifying moments with their own intrinsic value. Certainly many of the performance moments that students described from their training were recalled in a manner that provided them with a heightened sense of artistry and self-understanding.

Photographs that students brought into the interviews were aimed at encapsulating images and memories from a performing arts context. One student shared a photograph from the recent song and dance revue in which she performed, as it represented a peak experience that she had on centre stage. She explained: “I chose this photo because I had connected [it] to really good memories of performing” (AR; PD25; 44:44). The picture showed her in make-up and a costume, posed on a chair, with an exaggerated expression on her face. The photo captured her in mid-performance and it was clear that she was fully immersed in the performance moment. When she studied the picture even closer, she remarked: “I didn’t know that’s how it came across at all. I love looking at it because [I’m] actually on stage in my favorite performance ever” (I; P; PD20; 44:44).

Various students experienced an increased level of assuredness because of their dedication to performance and the personal connection that they tied to the experience itself. The following accounts support these aspects of performance that impacted students in a significant manner: “I have a lot more courage to perform and more respect for myself. [After the performance,] I believed more in myself that I could do it” (I; R; PD5; 160:161); “I put a lot of emotion into my performing because I love doing it so much; so I put myself into it” (I; A; PD7; 7:7); and “I feel in control of my performance more” (I; J; PD2; 447:448).

The answers to additional questions about peak experiences in performance included student responses that revealed what they thought to be imperative for preparation as triple-threat performers. One student spoke to the general performance skills that were necessary, even beyond the basic integration of the three discipline areas; she said, “Bringing it all together into a performance is so much more than dancing and singing and acting. You know you need to have on-stage skills” (I; P; PD20; 25:25). Another student had some difficulty putting all of the elements together, as she tried to master her vocal technique in the performance process; she explained her situation, “I have really good performance skills and like acting through song skills, but I had a hard time using them because I would be listening to myself and trying to sing” (I; P; PD20; 267:267). The same student emphasized the importance of being able to let go in the performance moment and to sing and dance through acting. She felt that it was the emotive quality of the character that made the triple-threat performance effective and interesting. Her statement reinforced this point:

Singing and dancing is to act. If I stand stone face[d] and [just] sing the notes and the rhythms, nobody cares. Nobody’s going to listen, and it’s not even going to sound good. It sounds alright, I guess, but not good. [People] don’t really care to listen (I; P; PD20; 378:378).

All of the statements illustrated assertions on the students’ part about what they felt was key to having a balanced performance. Students regarded these performance experiences as being

integral to their artistic development; the performance experiences were equated with a feeling of preparedness for a career as an artist in musical theatre. Students certainly identified their position as triple-threat performers more readily in the context of peak performance moments.

Professionalism – Preparing for Auditions and a Career in Performance

In the Acting through Song class, students experienced mock auditions as they participated in performance activities. On these occasions, the teacher suggested that students “just walk in with confidence” (CO; AS; PD1; 18:18), and he reinforced “there has to be an awareness of the family of artists in Canada the pros, the best, and an awareness of the standards of performance” (CO; AS; PD1; 68:68). The data revealed that students reveled in any opportunity to gain exposure to the professional standards and expectations of the industry. One student statement captured this sentiment, as she emphatically stated: “I really want to find out what it is like out there in the business” (I; M; PD19; 19:19). An aura of professionalism was consistently demonstrated by teachers in all of the classes that were observed in this program. These models of professionalism and the demands of the industry were introduced to students in each unique learning context. Students shared several moments of enlightenment, attributing these moments directly to their training experiences at the college. For instance, one student claimed, “I’m being put in a theatre. I feel more professional” (I; C; PD18; 149:149). A similar sentiment was captured by another student, who commented, “I didn’t know anything about this business at all and now coming in here, I feel I’ve learned so much” (I; J; PD2; 296:296). Yet another study participant felt more professional in various aspects of the program; she explained, “In dancing, I feel really professional [and] as if I have “proper attitude.” In acting, I’m trying to learn how to dress” (I; C; PD18; 426:426).

Lastly, great professional aspirations were omnipresent in the following narrative account that delved into the thrill of performance. One student spoke candidly about the inspiring challenges of stage performance and how this type of artistic experience was the ultimate reality,

as she compared live theatre to the superficiality of movies and television. A sense of continual growth was at the root of this student's passion for performance. Her statement is a fitting conclusion to this section of the chapter because it epitomizes many of the students' comments about the meaningful peak experiences in performance they had encountered in this program. The participant explained:

When I was really young and I first started acting, I was going to be a rich and famous movie star, but learning more about the industry and movie and television versus stage acting I know now that I would *much* rather be a stage performer. I *love* the live audience, and I think for me there's no greater thrill than getting in front of a live audience and feeling their reaction. It's *so* unforgiving but in the best possible way, so you have to be the best possible performer that you can be every single night that you perform rather than the fakeness of movie and television acting, where you might have a great moment and they captured that great moment but how many times did it take before you could hit that [performance level]. You could do it as many times as you want. Theatre will never be perfect, and you will always be trying to get the *best* performance you can (I; M; PD18; 199:199).

Overcoming Nerves

"I was really eager, and I wasn't really nervous at all 'cause it's really cool because you're working with professionals" (I; R; PD5; 147:147).

This opening statement captured a unique case on the topic of nerves. This student's excitement about working with professionals enabled her to avoid nervousness when performing. Most students, however, named several situations in which their nerves affected their performances, and they explained how they learned to cope. For example, one student was consumed by her inner thoughts; she revealed that she was concerned about what others would be thinking about her as she performed. She described her nervous state in the account below:

So when I perform in front of people [I wonder] "Oh what are they thinking? Oh, my goodness. Oh my goodness they hate me." That's just what goes through my head. So I'm always nervous in front of people (I; C; PD18; 55:55).

Another student agreed that it was difficult not to get nervous when performing in front of people. She admitted: “When I’m in front of people, I’m so nervous” (I; P; PD20; 47:47). Nerves were an issue for a third student, who referred to this aspect of performance as being a deterrent from progressing. She explained:

Definitely to calm my nerves when I am performing is a huge thing for me. I think confidence [is] too because I think that if I had that I would be a lot further along than I am (I; L; PD4; 11:11).

In the song and dance revue, one student recalled feeling nervous before her entrance on stage. She explained: “[Because of] a little bit of nervousness backstage we had to do something to preoccupy ourselves, so that we didn’t get too worked up about the show—or I did anyway” (I; A; PD7; 60:60). Having the support of her friends seemed to help ease some of these nerves, and she explained that this major performance was not as overwhelming as other performances she had completed. She said:

I was feeling nervous, but I wasn’t even as nervous as I would get for a master class for some reason. Just having some of those people there was enough to ease the nerves a little bit (I; A; PD7; 74:74).

The next series of student accounts deal with the impact that nerves had on the performing experience from a vocal quality standpoint. This vocal issue had to do with releasing tension and projecting the voice. One student felt vocally held back because of nerves, as she explained:

When I get nervous or I’m in a performance situation or sometimes I’m just not in the right mood, my voice just, I’m trying really hard, and I just, I won’t like let it escape. You know what I mean? I won’t open my mouth for a while and let it escape for a while. So it’s been a huge thing for me just trying to overcome that (I; P; PD20; 419:419).

Later in the interview, she spoke of her ability to overcome nerves, demonstrating her development as a performer, as she expressed herself more openly and freely. “I’m always nervous, but I’m a lot less nervous now. My nerves used to inhibit my ability to sing before” (I;

P; PD20; 312:313). Other students escaped nerves when they deeply immersed themselves in the performance experience and took on the character's identity. One student explained: "When I'm acting in front of people I have no problem, but when I'm up there singing as myself, I tend to get really nervous, and it affects the quality of my voice" (I; M; PD19; 11:11). Another participant's account supported how being fully engaged in the artistic experience often counteracted personal inhibitions; she said: "Rather than worrying about how I sounded and what I looked like when I was up there, I felt like I was IN the song instead of singing someone else's song" (I; A; PD7; 227:227).

Taking risks

When making reference to the performance stage, the teacher from the Voice and Speech class remarked that "it's a vulnerable place up there" (CO; VS; PD17; 102:102). She proceeded to advise the students: "You are stripped naked and vulnerable as an artist" and "[you must] allow yourself the opportunity to go there. Sometimes you bomb and sometimes you nail it. It is most glorious when you can forgive yourself for both" (CO; VS; PD17; 223:223). Another classroom teacher concurred with this message, as he emphasized that performing was all about "opening ourselves up" (CO; AS; PD1; 8:8) and that "there are risks being taken" (CO; AS; PD1; 24:25) when one performs well on stage.

It became evident throughout this research study, that students were being encouraged to take risks in a variety of settings in the program. In their Acting through Song class, the teacher told them: "You have to trust your instincts and go for it" (CO; AS; PD1; 75:75). In Voice and Speech class, the students were told to "take risks" (CO; VS; PD17; 270:270) and were given a Buddhist image of a wave to imagine, as it would reinforce that they should be "letting go" (CO; VS; PD17; 175:175). In the music studio, my field notes revealed that students were also encouraged in this context to "let go" and "take a risk" (SO; PD10; 65:69). Finally, with the specific notes I made about one student from the music studio, I noted: "She still needs

encouragement to take risks and to stretch herself artistically from her comfort zone” (SO; PD10; 111:111).

These various encouragements to take risks seemed to have a tremendous impact on the artistic growth of the students. One student described her experience: “[It is] a big risk because you could sound completely wrong, and it could sound not like what the people want to hear” (I; C; PD18; 382:382). She later realized that she had developed significantly; she remarked: “I’d be so shy and stuff, and now I’m more confident, and I just let go, and I don’t care [what people think]” (I; C; PD18; 426:426). Another student’s realization exemplified that taking a risk in performance would open up opportunities for personal growth and enlightening learning experiences.

I just realized that I’m too uptight. I [knew] I need[ed] to do something, to take a risk, [say]...“Good singers could do that, so just do it” (I; P; PD20; 443:443).

Summary

In light of the data, the rehearsal process can be summarized as being inherently linked to and involved in the performance product, both directly and indirectly. That is, even in the live performance itself there is a semblance of a process that exists when a performer is able to reflect and be present in the moment, learning from the actions and reactions that play out. Successful performance situations were consistently attributed to high quality rehearsals, as they provided the students with a level of preparedness, thoughtfulness, and engagement in the artistic work that they would not have experienced otherwise. Overall, many artistic leaps were made as students had revelations about their abilities and skills, developed a deeper appreciation for the intrinsic values embodied in each practice, and gained a greater awareness of their intentions for training as an artist in the first place.

As the students realized their potential in each case, their level of cognizance was increased because the experience provided an outlet for uncovering their own personal truth as artists. The

peak experiences that these students encountered could also be regarded as episodes of artistic identity, moments in which they were able to attain their most authentic artistic selves by unleashing the essence of who they were in performance. On this point, Maslow (1968) wrote: “In moments like this we feel more powerful than usual and experience unusual focus, joy, intensity, creativity; in other words [we become] more fully human” (p. 72). Essentially, both process and performance in the context of this musical theatre program offered these moments and enriched the students’ artistic lives.

Chapter Six

Studio Music Instruction and the Dyad Relationship

“There’s so much stuff that happens in that room...”

(I; C; PD18; 241:241)

In this chapter, I examine several dimensions of studio music instruction and the dyad relationship between teacher and student. I begin with an overview of significant challenges and events that the students experienced as part of their learning in the studio. I then discuss the key components in the music studio that impacted the students’ artistic development, such topics as teacher encouragement and support, as well as personalized instruction, all of which were integral to the dynamic of the dyad relationship. I conclude the chapter with a description of the rich context for cognitive apprenticeship, which was characterized by an experiential approach to learning in this instructional setting.

Six major theme areas are featured in this section of the study on studio music instruction and the dyad relationship. As noted in the methodology, I initially chose the themes based on my reading of the literature and from my personal experience. Additional themes presented themselves from the raw data after I completed several analytical passes using *Atlas.TI* software with the pre-determined themes. Through a process of combining pre-existing codes with open codes, the next stage of analysis began in Atlas.TI; this subsequent stage involved super coding and finding co-occurrences within the data, that is, interrelationships between the various sources of themed data. This process revealed many connections between themes within a broader, overriding topic such as studio music instruction or the dyad relationship. Most strikingly, a sense of comfort was threaded throughout the students’ accounts, with much importance placed on receiving personalized instruction. Both of these factors were presented as central to the students’ success and were consistently linked to teacher support and encouragement as well. On several

occasions, experiential learning was connected to the theme of personalized instruction, as many lessons and teaching strategies catered to individual learning styles and needs. Also, any challenges that the students experienced in the studio were related to all of the aforementioned themes. In the cases where students encountered a struggle, often the various aspects of studio music instruction and the dyad relationship served as catalysts for positive change, and as a result, students overcame their struggles and developed artistically in the music studio.

Studio Music Instruction

Many complex dimensions exist in the studio environment, and they have been vividly captured in the participant accounts. One of the most prominent themes that emerged consistently from these accounts in regard to the studio music instruction experience was the idea that students felt comfortable to sing and to be themselves in this setting. For example, one student commented that “[studio music instruction] is more personal and [the lessons] make [singing] more comfortable” (I; J; PD2; 508:508), while another student said: “I feel really comfortable in there; I think that’s the biggest thing. The comfort that I feel in there allows me to be more open” (I; L; PD4; 519:519). This high level of comfort was also credited in students’ responses with their ability to achieve a better vocal sound. The comments “I’m more comfortable singing out loud” (I; P; PD20; 358:358), and “I feel really comfortable around you as a person, so it’s so easy for me to relax and get the best sound out of myself that I possibly can” (I; M; PD19; 117:118) illustrate this point. The high level of comfort that was experienced in the studio setting provided an engaging and inviting learning environment, where students felt they were able to develop as artists.

Studio vs. Classroom Instruction

During data analysis, it became evident that another consistent theme was that students viewed the one-on-one music instruction in the studio to be markedly different from classroom

instruction in several ways. This difference was portrayed by one student's comment about the personal nature and the increased comfort level experienced in one-on-one instruction; she explained that the studio setting "is more personal, and that just makes it more comfortable [because] you're not trying to impress a bunch of people. It's just you and that person there in the room" (I; J; PD2; 508:509). Specific needs were dealt with more effectively in the studio for another participant, who revealed in the interviews that she felt more at ease to take risks in this setting:

I feel like in the one on one I'm able to fail in front of you, whereas in a group thing it's much harder to do that. And I don't feel embarrassed about asking questions or not understanding. I'm able to tell you that I don't get it, and you're able to figure out some way that I can walk away knowing that I've understood (I; L; PD4; 599:599).

She also noted, "My specific needs or issues are addressed more so [in the studio] than in a group" (I; L; PD4; 389:390).

The learning process in studio music instruction was distinguished from classroom instruction in the following participant account. Individualized assessment and strategies utilized in studio learning for each student-performer highlighted the considerable progress made in this educational context.

I think the type of work and the learning process [in the studio] is a lot different because [the instructor] actually gets to know people as performers and what they need to improve on and what they need to work on. So the progress, I think would be a lot better. Whereas, in a class [the student] might get a comment or something every once and a while, [in the studio] we have things every week that we can work on (I; A; PD7; 297:298).

Overall, the differences noted in each of the students' accounts suggested that the experience in the studio was more comfortable because they felt it was more personal working one-on-one than in the classroom. In addition, the student responses alluded to a more expedient, effective, and efficient manner of learning in the studio setting. The music studio was regarded highly as a place

where students felt free to venture outside of their comfort zone to improve specific, artistic objectives, progressing at a pace that worked best for them, whereas the classroom was described as being a generalized and a somewhat inhibiting locale for learning. The importance of studio music instruction as a uniquely personal learning experience was encapsulated in the following participant account:

I think the personal time together is *really* important because [the teachers] have a lot of students especially in first year that I'm in. If I'm doing well in another class, I don't always feel that I get the praise that I deserve, and if I'm doing poorly, I don't always feel that I get the help that I deserve or that I'm paying for or that I require to get better. But with one-on-one time, not only do I get the personal time that I need to become better at what I'm doing, but I find that because [student and teacher] have a chance to get to know each other, you are able to focus on my strengths and weaknesses *way* better than if I had fifteen other people in there with me and everything had to be generalized. [In a big class] I may not be at the same level as somebody else, there so [the teacher] is either working too slow to challenge or too fast, so that I feel like I'm failing or falling behind (I; M; PD19; 205:205).

Challenges and Change in the Studio

Despite their high level of comfort in the music studio, my students also encountered various learning challenges as part of their training, especially at the outset of their first year in the musical theatre program. For some, the studio music instruction experience was entirely new to them, and as a result the learning curve was steep and daunting. Several students described their feelings of being discouraged and overwhelmed. One student stated that she was “discouraged because [she] didn't know what [she] was doing and had never ever been...so picked apart before” (I; J; PD2; 199:200); another commented: “It was new, and it just felt really overwhelming sometimes, but that's because there were so many things, and I didn't know where to start” (I; A; PD7; 193:193). As these students became more familiar with the type of instruction in the music studio, they were better able to benefit from the experiences being offered as part of their training.

Although the entirely new style of learning and field of knowledge was almost overwhelming, through perseverance and commitment to their goals, the students were able to come to a realization about how they could make the studio music lessons work best for them. Overcoming their struggles in the music studio increased their level of confidence and their motivation to advance in this area of their training program. One student recounted her challenges in the studio early on in the school year and the gradual development that followed:

I think at the beginning of the school year I really didn't have a clue. I felt that I didn't understand anything and that I didn't have the proper quality or the proper experience because I'd never had vocal lessons before. I felt that every time [the teacher] changed an exercise or that every time [the teacher] moved onto something else, that it was because I wasn't doing well with the previous one or that I wasn't picking up on things fast enough. But now I just realize that it's because we have to cover so much in such a short amount of time, and that if one thing isn't working for me, then you find something else that is or you find something better to suit my voice. I think now I have a lot more confidence in myself, especially when it comes to tutorials. I realize that you weren't judging me, you were just trying to find the best thing for me. But I think that took me a while to figure out (I; M; PD19; 114:114).

Another student recalled feeling fragile at the outset and becoming increasingly excited as the term progressed. She said:

I think I was really almost fragile in the beginning because everything seemed so overwhelming. So every time there was something else added to what I had to work on, I felt like I was failing. It was new, and it just felt really overwhelming sometimes, but that's just because there were so many things, and I didn't know where to start. As I started to see improvement and once I really started to understand what I was doing, then I was able to work on things. Now I get really excited to come to my lessons. I'm excited because I feel like I'm making progress, and I feel like I have specific things to work on—goals (I; A; PD7; 193:193).

From these struggles in the music studio, a consistent theme of personal and musical growth emerged as a result of students' overcoming their challenges.

The Dyad Relationship

The unique one-on-one relationship between student and teacher in the studio, which Kennell (1992) refers to as the dyad relationship, was a major theme in this study. The dynamic created in each dyad relationship had a tremendous impact on the artistic experience for each of the students. One student regarded this powerful dyad as a friendship between student and teacher, rooted in the desire to help each other's progress; she said: "There's more of a friendship there I think. Both teacher and student want to help each other to get somewhere. I let you know when I'm having trouble and what I can do to help it and what you can do to help, too, so that we both progress" (I; R; P5; 227:227). According to another participant, there was an instinctive quality between teacher and student in the dyad that was created because of the connection made in the teaching and learning process in the studio. This close connection was exemplified with her comment regarding this dyad phenomenon: "I think, because of the one-on-one time, [we] get a chance to know each other a bit better, to understand each other, so that I know—sometimes just by looking at you—what it is that you're about to tell me" (I; A; P7; 302:302).

There was a clear sense from the data that the dyad is a caring relationship, wherein the teacher gets to know the students on a personal level. This close dynamic was captured in the following student account: "You do take the time to get to know me as a person; you ask me how my week was. [I] can tell you take the time to listen and you do care" (I; S; PD21; 214:214). Images regarding the dyad served as vivid illustrations of the nature of the dyad relationship and the manner in which it evolved. The following picture conjured up by a student depicted the dyad as a concurrent dynamic between two people working together:

A lot of teacher relationships are like "this is what the teacher wants how are you going to get it." But [in] our relationship, we work *together*. I feel like there's a real synchronicity. I just really feel we meet in the middle like working with a scene partner or a dance partner (I; P; PD20; 508:508).

In each case the dyad was depicted in a positive manner, with an element of co-operative learning that was fostered as part of the teaching and learning process in the studio. One student described the dyad dynamic as “a conversation” (I; P; PD20; 207:207), and went on to explain: “It feels more like a collaboration than a lot of my other student-teacher relationships” (I; P; PD20; 516:516). There most definitely was a sense from the data that the teacher’s working one-on-one to meet the individual’s specific needs was central to the dyad relationship. This notion of personalized instruction resonated clearly throughout much of the gathered data. The following student statement portrayed the degree to which she felt that such instruction personally addressed her needs and issues.

There are different things being done with every different person, [this] means, I know, that the stuff that I’m learning is directly applicable to what I need to be working on, rather than just [part of] a standardized lesson [where] everyone does the same things, regardless of what their needs are (I; A; PD7; 302:302).

In a similar vein, another participant revealed she also experienced a very individualized lesson rather than standardized objectives and that her individualized training benefited her vocal development. She explained:

I find that you always know *exactly* what to focus on to get the best results out of my voice. I find that rather than being very general and looking at everybody as a whole, you really do work with people individually. And I know that the personal attention to *my* voice specifically helped *a lot* (I; M; PD19; 64:64).

An additional component of this personalized instruction was the detailed coaching that took place in the studio lessons. One student noted that “knowing that somebody was actually monitoring [her] specifically” led to an improvement in her singing and performance. She acknowledged that this personal attention to detail “really did change the way [she] actually started breathing in [her] singing” (I; M; PD19; 36:36). It is this type of individual attention and one-on-one instruction that was a fundamental part of studio music, and its benefits were

reinforced further with another student's perspective of the studio time. She said: "You take time to understand my voice, you record it. Sometimes I see you, and you close your eyes and just listen to me, and I can tell you're giving me your full undivided attention" (I; S; PD21; 214:214).

In addition, the teaching and learning approach varied from student to student in the studio. These differences between students were aspects in this instructional setting that were recognized and accommodated by the teacher: the studio field notes often made reference to individual approaches that were developed specifically for the learning styles of each student. One student especially noticed this aspect of personalized delivery of the curriculum and pointed out that it impacted her singing positively: "You picked up on the fact that I'm really good at physical things. They really help my singing" (I; P; PD20; 29:29).

The student-teacher interactions in this intimate setting allowed for concentrated efforts, a heightened level of awareness and participation, and a deeper intuition from both sides of the dyad. In the data, each dyad was presented as a unique unit, functioning in a manner that best suited both individuals. One student's perception of the unique dynamic that she experienced within the dyad relationship suggested that no two dyads were alike. She explained: "I feel like we meet in the middle. I think I'm working for you really hard, so you work for me really hard and vice-versa. I think if I [were] somebody else, it wouldn't be that situation; or even if I was lazy, it wouldn't be that situation" (I; P; PD20; 203:203).

Although several common themes emerged in this section regarding the dynamic between student and teacher, it seems apparent that this relationship is a most complex and distinct one, which only student and teacher can fully comprehend.

Encouragement and Support

An important aspect of working in the dyad relationship in the music studio was the degree of reassurance that the students received. The study revealed teaching and learning moments that were positive and productive as a result of the encouragement and support provided by the

teacher. One participant, recalling being emboldened to persevere, recounted: “You’ve just encouraged me, and that helped a lot more [than] somebody being like ‘Can you just get it right!’” (I; J; PD2;180:180). Another participant related to a similar kind of learning experience in her recollection of the studio sessions. She was reminded of the role the teacher played and commented: “You were encouraging, so it was a lot easier” (I; R; PD5; 41:41). In yet another instance, a student experienced support in the studio and emphasized that working together with a teacher who possessed certain characteristics was related to the encouragement she felt. These defining aspects of assurance focused around her interactions with the studio teacher. She recalled teacher personality traits, such as understanding, a non-judgmental approach, and a positive demeanor, attributing these qualities to an overall feeling of elation in the studio. She described:

I always feel encouraged and supported when I have my tutorials with you. I find that we work really well together, and that if I’m having an off day that you understand and don’t judge me for it, and if I’m having a great day you always make sure that I know that you’re proud that I’ve accomplished something that day (I; M; PD19; 174:174).

Encouragement seemed to be necessary to help the students maintain focus and to keep students motivated when working on technical aspects of the lesson. Based on the responses, it appeared that teacher stimulus was central to student success. This theme was prominent in the stories that students shared regarding their learning process in the music studio. One student’s account revealed: “Whenever I mess up, you just keep going over it with me, and that encourages me, and finally I’ll be able to get it” (I; J; PD2; 455:460). Another student’s account demonstrated that when mistakes were made, the teacher’s persistent support prevailed; she said: “Whenever I screw up, if I make a little mistake or something, you’ll [say], ‘That’s alright we’ll go back.’ You won’t give up, if I can’t get it right away” (I; C; PD18; 525:526).

In addition to advocating for the development of vocal technique, students experienced encouragement from their teacher to broaden their musical repertoire. The following account illustrates one student’s perception of the teacher’s role in the studio as it pertained to the positive

reinforcement she received with repertoire. From this perspective, the feedback that the student received when the teacher noticed improvements in her performance was regarded as most important for her continual development as a singer. The student told of this supportive process:

When we work on different repertoire, you tell me to take things with me and work on them and then come back. I feel like when I do come back and you can tell that I have worked on them, you always encourage me by telling me that you've noticed or by telling me that there's stuff that I still need to work on" (I; A; PD7; 262:262).

Coaching repertoire in the vocal technique lessons was a personal choice for each teacher as it was not considered to be an obligation in the musical theatre program. Since this was the case, one student in particular applauded the fact that there was time allotted within our studio lessons to do just that. Her responses supported the fact she viewed this aspect of studio instruction as a sign of teacher support: "Just the fact that you help me out with my repertoire [makes me] feel like you want me to go far" (I; C; PD18; 493:493).

Another idea that stemmed from the main theme was the notion that teacher personality played a factor in the support and encouragement that the students acknowledged. For example, a participant mentioned that, "It's a lot easier to work with someone who's friendly. It has just encouraged me a lot more to want to do better" (I; J; PD2; 308:308). Other data concurred with the idea that nurturing was most meaningful and helpful to the students when they were challenged to persevere with the combination of persistence on the part of the teacher and commitment on the part of the student. For example, one student stated, "If we're in the middle of an exercise, and you let us know when it's good, but you [also] let us know when it's off too. When it's good, you make sure that we know; it's like positive reinforcement" (I; L; PD4; 534:535). Another student agreed and she described how the positive feedback and constructive criticism provided by the teacher served as an impetus for her progress, "You're very positive, and when I do well, you're always giving me compliments and constructive criticism, and you've told me that I've been progressing" (I; S; PD21; 195:195). Finally, mutual respect between

teacher and student paired with a straightforward approach created a supportive environment according to the following student's account; this student also revealed that all of these factors directly contributed to the pace and level of progression she had made in studio music instruction.

She commented:

I feel like you really respect the work I do, so that makes me accomplish more, faster. I found it to be a really supportive environment because you give me a lot of feedback. A lot of teachers don't, [but] you're always like "this part, this part." I know you're not bullshitting me when you say it's good because you wouldn't do that. When it's not good you say, "Do it again and again and again" until it is good (I; P; PD20; 464:464).

The studio teacher's ongoing feedback and detailed observations appeared to be directly associated with support and encouragement for many of the students. As the data suggests in the majority of the narratives, the high expectations held by the studio teacher for the students was essential to their development as singers and artists. Both a high level of respect and an honest rapport between teacher and student in the dyad were portrayed in each account. This support and encouragement was a necessary and fundamental component in the music studio, and was central to the formation of a dyad relationship that fostered artistic blossoming.

Experiential Learning: A Cognitive Apprenticeship

"Unless I experience it, it doesn't mean anything to me."

(I; P; PD20; 426:427)

This opening quotation depicted the importance a student placed on learning through experience in the studio. Further, the data suggested there was a definite preference among the students for engaging in the learning process in a kinesthetic manner; for example, one student said, "The way that I've been learning, [is] my kind of learning style—kinesthetic" (I; J; PD2; 308:308). Yet another participant emphasized that the learning in the studio required "just kind of putting everything that I've learned into action" (I; L; PD4; 81:81). The opportunities provided to

engage in experiential learning were viewed by the students as being much more useful and effective in studio music instruction. This was certainly the case for one student, who explained: “I just know I’m getting better, and I’m only getting better by doing it” (I; P; PD20; 293:294). Another student, who suggested that her performance was enhanced as a result of direct experience, claimed: “As a performer, I want to *do* so that I can portray it better” (I; R; PD5; 223:223).

An embodiment of knowledge involved students doing an assigned task in order to learn from the experience. This process of increasing their skill set and developing new habits of mind occurred through a cognitive apprenticeship between teacher and student. These cognitive apprenticeships involve coaching, demonstrating, and mentoring on the part of the teacher (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989). The following narrative account illustrated each of the cognitive aspects that contributed to the process of students situating their knowledge in the studio music lesson. The student explained how she worked closely with the recordings of exercises and with the demonstrations on piano and voice; she continued her explanation with further detail about how she learned from these musical devices through experience. Recalling the action of repeating the musical exercises, she commented:

Just recording [the exercise] was a huge help; also you played it for me quite a few times, and when I got stuck, having you sing it for me was really helpful. On piano, I don’t always have the ear to pick up the exact notes, so having someone with singing ability [made it] easier [for me] to imitate the voice (I; M; PD19; 90:90).

Shared problem solving was evidenced by the following two student accounts, which explain the systematic process involved in experiential learning moments in the studio. One participant mentioned: “We just went over it and over it and over it until I got it. [The teacher] broke it down into parts and I sang through it” (I; S; PD21; 125:126); the other student noticed that “it really helped to have a recording of the vocal exercise on my recorder, and then singing it over and over and over again in the studio” (I; M; PD19; 86:86). A strong sense emerged from the data that

much rehearsal was involved in the learning process between the master teacher and the student apprentice in the studio. Rehearsal required the students to engage in higher-order thinking to capture the complex demonstrations of the teacher. Vocal mastery was gained in the studio through the cognitive apprenticeship that was fostered: direct experience invoked the students' mind, body, and spirit in collaborative music making.

According to another student, who self-identified as a kinesthetic learner, this consistent experiential learning process was made easier through a sequence that involved the teacher demonstrating vocally with the student listening, and then the student imitating the teacher. She claimed, "You were always very positive, and if I wasn't able to get it, it really always helped that you would demonstrate and then I'd follow. I [learned] by hearing it and then doing [it]" (I; L; PD4; 87:87). The activities in the music studio were based on the opportunities that were provided to learn through experience and were associated with the positive reinforcement from the teacher.

Through a process of scaffolding and modeling by the teacher, the students' experience became situated in the context of the studio lesson. From listening to and observing the master teacher's performances, the apprentice students were able to increase their skills and knowledge through a process that required them to participate in the activity itself in an authentic context (Hansman, 2001). The dyad relationship in the music studio offered this authentic training setting for the aspiring triple-threat performers. Purposeful practice of these internal thought processes enabled the students to become more independent with their learning. The fading process was an integral part of the cognitive apprenticeship dynamic in the lesson (Hansman, 2001), and as evidenced by the students' shared insights. As their skills increased, they became more confident and competent, and less dependent on the teacher. This theme of independent learning is illustrated in the following three student accounts: "You've always shown me ways to work on it so that I can do it by myself" (I; A; PD7; 185:185); "You gave me little visual things to help me, and now I can go off on my own and do it. You just taught me what's right and how to use it" (I;

C; PD18; 399:399); and “I can improve on my own rather than having to have someone with me all of the time. It makes me more independent and makes me aware of things that I need to be doing” (I; A; PD7; 185:185).

The incorporation of learning and teaching strategies that encouraged students to become self-directed learners (Brown et al., 1989; Hansman, 2001), and an approach that fostered their ability to transfer knowledge into a real-world context was key in these studio music sessions. A teacher from one of the classes said something that was most poignant in this regard: “Muscle memory gets into cellular memory” (CO; VS; PD17; 144:145). Because of the amount of practical and physical work that was completed in this program, the internalization of what was learned became deeply entrenched in the students’ core.

Summary

The findings illustrate how studio music differs from group instruction by revealing the elements that were significant to the students’ experience in this studio instructional context. Studio music instruction was viewed as a uniquely engaging artistic experience because of a) the sense of comfort and security the students felt, b) the personalized instruction for each student, c) the high degree of encouragement and support provided by the teacher, d) the dynamic of the one-on-one dyad relationship, e) the complex cognitive interactions involved in the apprenticeship between student and teacher, and f) the process of learning by experience. Each of the main themes presented in this chapter were groundbreaking in the field because of the interconnectivity that existed between all of the aforementioned elements listed above from the students’ studio music instruction experience. There was a definite sense that the various dimensions of studio music instruction and the dyad relationship were integral to the shaping of the artistic identity of these students. These perspectives are best represented by the final participant account on this topic:

[The studio is] not a tough place to come to, it's calming. I want to be there. I want to show up to our lessons because I know you have something to give me and I want to take that away. I learn really quickly when we have technique. I never thought that I could learn that quickly, so now I see that I can pick up stuff a lot quicker if we just do it (I; R; PD5; 157:157).

Chapter Seven

Vocal Instruction

*“Noting every song but in addition,
Harmonizing each negotiation,
Balancing the part that’s all musician
With the part that’s strictly presentation,
Balancing the money with the mission
Till you have the perfect orchestration,
Even if you do have the suspicion
That it’s taking all your concentration.”*

-Stephen Sondheim

In this chapter, I explore three facets of vocal instruction that were encountered by my students in the studio. These specific elements, technique, repertoire, and musicianship, can be considered central to the studio music instruction experience, as they have had a direct impact on the students’ artistic development. For this reason, I felt that it was essential to devote a chapter of this work towards the various issues that surround the three areas of vocal instruction. By sharing the students’ perspectives, a greater potential exists for grasping the inherently personal qualities of the vocal experience and for enhancing one’s understanding of the artistic internalization that often occurs as a result of participating in various activities in the vocal music studio.

Vocal Technique

The following excerpt is taken from an interview I conducted with one of my students in which she shared an itemized list from the “singing journal” she had created. The journal was not a required part of any of the courses she was taking in the musical theatre program, but served simply as a learning resource that she compiled for herself as the school year progressed. This list of terms and concepts, which she had developed in her learning from the studio and from her own

independent practice, powerfully demonstrates the wide range of topics that students deal with in vocal instruction, specifically in the area of technique. The student read aloud the following:

I like made a list “how to sing” [laughs and shows me a part of her journal], and this is what I’ve learned so far about how to sing [lists off the different items on her list]:

- Breathe
- No glottal attacks, but that was back in [first term]
- Vertical singing
- Consonants
- Scales as warm-ups
- Pick a scale that starts a few notes below where [the high] notes [I need to sing are] in the middle of the scale
- Breathe into vowel spaces
- Mix
- Rhythm
- Centre of pitches
- Sing into resonators
- If it’s a vowel you need a glottal
- Relax the jaw
- Think opera
- Pucker
- Catch breaths

Are the majority of these terms or concepts from studio learning?

Yeah, and some of it is my personal work too, for when I’m practising on my own, these things really help (I; P; PD20; 132:136).

The vocal instruction offered in the music studio is fairly extensive in each year of the musical theatre program. The one-on-one training in voice deals with many facets of the instrument in preparation for independent learning and practice throughout the students’ time at the college and beyond.

Functional Voice Training

The theme of functional singing technique was encapsulated in statements made by students regarding the effect that proper vowels, breath, and posture had on the sound quality they were able to produce. According to Cornelius Reid, a highly regarded vocal pedagogue and teacher, “functional voice training is founded on the belief that a correct technique must be an extension

of free organic movement” (1999, preface). In his book *Voice: Psyche and Soma*, he continued on this train of thought, as he described that “correct muscular coordination is synonymous with correct technique and makes the art of singing possible” (1999, preface). Reid’s teachings served as the basis for the vocal work completed in one of my aforementioned dyad experiences. The exposure I had to the process of restructuring vocal function became grounded through my direct experience with concepts related to various scientifically investigated areas of the voice: principally based on acoustics, anatomy, physics, and physiology (1999, p. 3).

Reid’s written work presented vocal pedagogy in a practical way that eventually proved useful for my own teaching purposes. One concept in particular that remained engrained in my mind in regard to functional voice training included three main points for singers to ponder: Vowels, Intensity, Pitch. According to Reid, through the use of specifically arranged patterns of vowels, intensity, and pitch, vocal musculatures respond reflexively (1999, p. 2). The vocal exercises based on Reid’s conception of functionality served as an excellent foundation for my students’ initial exposure to the complexities of vocal technique.

One of my student’s accounts focused primarily on the vowel work in her recollection of how she improved vocally. She stated:

You’ll tell me the way I stand really affects how I sing like [imitates me] “Don’t put your head down” and like vowel position and you’ve helped me a lot with that. You’re like the vowel queen [both laugh]. You’re probably the only person that tells me to think about “*Vowels*” (I; C; PD18; 418:418).

A second participant’s account aligned with these concepts as she described singing with added ease because of the improved technique. She said: “I feel [that], with the proper breath and the proper vowel, I’m able to sing this song through with much more ease” (I; L; PD4; 165:165). Their exploration of various vowel sounds and combinations and other aspects of technical work in the studio appeared to have enabled the vocal students to free their sound and sing more

effortlessly. As a result, students developed a greater ability to sustain notes and an awareness of the importance of vowel shape and formation.

Similarly, in working with different resonances in the voice, such as chest, head, and nasal resonances, the students' revealed a deeper understanding and conception of these aspects of their instrument from the studio sessions. A changed perception of her vocal sound led one student to appreciate the quality of her mixed voice as she continued to explore the new timbre and colors in this vocal register. She explained her shifting perception in the account below:

At first I didn't like the sound of my mix. I [would think] "It's ugly," but I'm really starting to enjoy it. It's easier to sing [now]. It's not as hard [as before]. At first I [thought] "Ugh this [mix] sucks. I don't like the sound of my voice." But I'm starting to enjoy [my sound] more. It is a lot easier [to sing] and [the mix] does get better as you build [the voice] (I; S; PD21; 52:52).

Exploring the tonal qualities of the voice through various ratios of registration and intensity was an entirely new concept for some of the students. The student quoted above acknowledged: "You helped me a lot with my mix and my head voice¹, because I came here knowing nothing about all that stuff" (I; C; PD18; 277:277). Other students had been introduced to mixing² vocal registers in their prior vocal training, but the present studio experience developed the mixed registration in a manner that was more understandable than their previous studio music experience. One student discovered that as a result of breath, the concept finally 'clicked' for her:

My teacher back home was always trying to develop my mix, but I just never understood what it was; I never got it. But the way you taught me with the breath, it just clicked. Putting that breathy quality into [the sound], I [now] know exactly what to do when I need my mix (I; S; PD21; 57:57).

¹ Head voice is a part of the vocal range, often characterized by a particular vocal resonance quality distinguished from the chest register.

² "Mixing' refers to any strategy a singer might use to minimize either the timbral or volume differences between the vocal registers" (Kayes, 2004, p.129).

Overall, there was a sense from the data that the students regarded their technique as being an essential part of a productive vocal experience. This stance was evident in the next account, which focused on the student's perception of what had been taught from the standpoint of functional singing. The student commented: "Well, you've taught me all of the techniques and proper stuff. Everything that's good; everything that's bad" (I; C; PD18; 399:399). In another participant statement, the student said she felt cared for in the studio because of the functional singing that was practiced: "I'm being taken care of: in repertoire and technique we're never doing anything to harm my vocal cords or never pushing too hard, which is good" (I; R; PD5; 193:194).

Technique was an integral part of the vocal instruction taught in the studio. It offered students an opportunity to gain an understanding of their instrument and the capabilities of their vocal mechanism. When they had more knowledge in the area of singing, the other aspects of their program were strengthened by the quality, consistency, and functionality of the voice. Without a good grasp of vocal technique, the students were left to struggle in their artistic delivery and expression, as their vocal instruments inhibited them. This had major implications not only for their development as singers but also for their formation of identity as artists.

Range

Vocal range was a common theme that emerged from data for this study. A musical range for a singer's instrument refers to the distance between the lowest and the highest note that can be comfortably vocalized. Whether from the perspective of desiring a larger vocal range or of having achieved that as a result of their vocal instruction in the studio, students felt that range was an important part of their development as singers. The following two accounts reinforce the students' desire to stretch their vocal range: "I'd like to increase my range" (I; A; PD7; 18:19); and "I like to think that I can sing different types of music rather than just certain types, like JUST soprano or JUST alto stuff" (I; A; PD7; 11:11). Many students demonstrated an awareness

of their expanding range, such as the following student, who expressed: “Now I have the potential to be a soprano or a mezzo: I have a larger range” (I; S; PD21; 69:69). The implications of possessing a large vocal range became clear to two students, who were able to broaden their repertoire as a result. One student stated that: “Knowing that I’m able to go as low as I am, I totally notice a difference even in the repertoire. The songs that I sing I am able to access that [range] a lot more” (I; L; PD4; 67:67), while the other student pointed out that “[Her] range has increased significantly since the beginning of the year, and things that were a stretch for [her] before or [were] a real challenge have come much easier, especially since we’ve started working on the breathing techniques” (I; M; PD19; 56:56). There was a general consensus in the students’ statements that extending their vocal range had created more artistic freedom and expanded their potential as singers, as it gave them a larger palette of repertoire from which to draw.

Belting

According to Kayes (2004), ‘belting’ can be considered to be an additional vocal register, similar to the concept of falsetto, head, and chest registers. Belting is an elevated emotional state of singing, which involves the singer’s larynx being manipulated into a high position to create an elevated speaking quality in the vocal sound. There are many risks associated with this type of training for a young singer, such as damage to the vocal cords due to overuse and/or misuse, and it is not a technique that is encouraged by many teachers until their students have mastered a ‘legitimate’ vocal quality. In musical theatre, a legitimate vocal quality refers to “a style of singing that is more classical” (Kayes, 2004, p. 191). In my singing studio, I encourage students to develop an intensified chest register sound as it does not constrict the vocal sound and create unwanted tension in their singing in the way that belting often does. Instead of teaching belt technique, I encourage the intensifying of the vocal sound with a stabilization of the larynx in a

low and relaxed position in the chest register. This will establish a legitimate vocal sound that will be functional and sustainable for these performers throughout their professional careers.

The term belting was commonly used amongst the students as they worked on repertoire that had been labeled as “belter songs.” Because of this, students often identified themselves in relation to this voice classification and referred to themselves as being “belters” or otherwise. In our vocal studio setting they were being taught to create belty tones as an alternative technique. This was achieved by shortening the vowel space and experimenting with a timbral quality that was similar to that achieved with belting, specifically a brighter, brassier sound.

One student shared her prior experience of belting, the damaging effects it had on her voice, and her eventual recognition of a healthier approach to singing; her statements referred to her work in the studio with one specific piece of repertoire. When asked to describe an aspect of performance that she had struggled with in the studio, she told a story about her experiences with “The Wizard and I” from the musical “Wicked.” She said: “I remember, I came to you, and I belted it, and I cracked” (I; C; PD18; 410:410). According to this student, her vocal difficulties were evident after she had belted over an extended period of time. She explained: “I got the effects of belting after a couple of weeks because my throat was going out. It was really hoarse-y, and I wasn’t sick” (I; C; PD18; 414:414). After experiencing such vocal discomfort, she explained that she and her teacher in the studio agreed on a plan: “We came to the decision that [I’m] not going to belt it but [we’d] work on fixing it and making it healthy” (I; C; PD18; 414:414). This entire process directed her towards a realization that her perspective was changing from her original stance that everything needed to be sung loudly and belted. Her recognition of the full extent of her vocal range and registers was expressed in the following account, where she had clearly learned an important lesson in vocal production and healthy singing and had evolved as a singer:

I came [into this program] thinking: “You need to be loud; you need to be louder; they need to hear you,” but I’m naturally loud, so it’s not like I have to like yell my songs out to everyone. I just would belt everything. And now there’s no point, because I’ve sung mixed and head voice songs, and I’ve heard great [compliments] about it (I; C; PD18; 79:79).

Similarly, the following statement supported the theme of belting and illustrated the students’ evolution as singers as they made healthier and sound musical choices. For example, one student said: “There’s quite a bit of belting, so I wanted to make sure that I was doing it in a healthy way” (I; A; PD7; 219:219). The student comments demonstrated a broadening of perspective on belting and represented an increased degree of concern and desire to sing in a functional manner. There was evidence that the students’ priority was to achieve a dynamic and legitimate sound. Supporting this point, a student remembered a time in the studio when breathy exercises helped her achieve a more legitimate sound, a sound she perceived as being better than her belt sound. She detailed this eye-opening experience with the following story: “One day when we were doing breathy exercises and then we did a piece of music, ...“Astonishing,” and I used my mix instead of my belt, and it sounded so much better” (I; S; PD21; 73:73). Yet another student explained her shift in placing functionality before aesthetics when it came to singing. In place of her belt voice, which seemed to be aggravating and stressing her vocal cords, she worked consistently to intensify her chest voice sound and to connect more deeply with the breath. These changes made all the difference for her as was evidenced in the following account:

“I’ve been working on [“Gimme, Gimme”] since the beginning, and in the beginning I was all over the piece. I used my belt, now [I use] my chest voice...and [before] my throat would have hurt after [belting]. It just [didn’t] sound as good because I didn’t know how to breathe. But now that I know, it’s changed my chest voice, and my throat never hurts after I sing it and I can sing it, more than once and it still sounds good (I; J; PD2; 381:381).

As result of this experience in the studio, the student later admitted in the interview that her self-identity had changed: “I don’t see myself as just a belter anymore” (I; S; PD21; 81:81).

Breathing

“The way we breathe has a profound effect on the sounds we produce, and cultural ideals and musical/theatrical styles strongly affect the breathing pattern of professional singers and actors throughout the world” (Melton, 2003, p. 8). Integrating the breath with the voice is an essential part of singing technique and the Western training for triple-threat performers. Without relaxed breath flow and support, voice production is compromised, making it difficult for the singer to create healthy and vibrant vocal sounds. Thus, much time is spent in studio music instruction on achieving the optimal inhalation and exhalation, good posture and body alignment, and the efficient usage of the breath when phonating. Although breathing is essential to singing, working through exercises and teaching concepts of breath requires much patience on the part of both teacher and student. It is a long process that presented challenges for many of the students in my voice studio; for example, one student explained that the biggest struggle was “just not being able to breathe” (I; J; PD2; 188:188). The struggle to breathe in an optimal manner for singing was also captured in the following student account: “When we started doing [breathing exercises] in technique I became light headed and dizzy because my whole body wasn’t used to that type of breathing to have the best sound, and that was a huge challenge” (I; M; PD19; 69:69).

Reflection upon many of these difficulties led students to various detailed explanations of how they were able to improve their breathing through a series of technical exercises that were conducted as part of vocal instruction in the music studio. These improvements were apparent in many narrative accounts provided by the vocal students. For instance, one student pointed out, “A lot of the exercises we’ve been doing now have to do with my breathing; [they’ve] definitely helped me practice that and get better with it” (I; J; PD2; 55:55). Breathing exercises were a consistent and routine part of every student’s lesson, verified by extensive studio field notes taken by the researcher. This vocal aspect of singing was supported further in repertoire according to another student who said, “We just did a bunch of exercises to help [breathing], and then we went directly into the repertoire and that helped” (I; J; PD2; 280:280).

By participating in studio sessions where breath was considered to be the foundation for singing, students' level of consciousness regarding the role of breathing was raised. That became clear when they were given the opportunity to share their perspectives on this topic in the interviews. For example, one student explained that her vocal sound was transformed as a result of working on various breathing techniques; she described her transition from faking the breathing to mastering it:

I think I always sort of faked my way through the breathing. I could make it seem like I was taking the deep breaths so I wasn't actually supporting as well as I could. Now that I know the actual feeling and [know] that somebody was actually monitoring me, specifically, I think it really did change the way I actually started breathing in my singing (I; M; PD19; 36:36).

For another student, enhanced vocal tone and confidence in the vocal sound resulted from improved breathing technique, she explained, "There's just more confidence behind it [her sound]. There's better tone. I have better breathing [now]. When I started, I probably didn't even have breathing, I don't even know where I was breathing from [she laughs]" (I; R; PD5; 139:139). These stories illuminate the importance of breath on the students' singing. The data showed that an increased level of technical acuity in the area of breathing enabled the singers to connect to the core of their vocal sound, stay grounded and aligned with their body and voice, and gain confidence and more positive images of themselves as singers.

A greater degree of awareness, understanding, and competency in the area of breathing came as a result of many teaching and learning strategies. Most often students attributed their development in this area of technique to the teaching and learning strategies from the music studio. This was another thematic element that was consistently evident in several student statements. In one, a student mentioned a time when I brought in a plastic Hoberman¹ sphere,

¹ A hoberman sphere is made up of many interconnected levers that form a sphere-shaped object that can be manually expanded and contracted by pulling and pushing on the levers.

which was used to help her sense openness and fullness of breath as she expanded it in her hands while breathing simultaneously. With this visualization in her mind's eye, she described the following teaching and learning moment in relation to how it helped her better understand breathing. She stated, "That time you used that ball thing that you pull apart. [Because of it] I understood breathing, how necessary breathing is, and how it helps" (I; L; PD4; 59:59). A second narrative presented an image that the student had found helpful for engaging the lower abdominal and intercostals muscles when breathing. The integral role that diaphragmatic breathing plays was described as follows:

It's a big thing in singing, breath[ing] from the diaphragm, [whereas] I'm used to [breathing] from up here [puts her hand on upper part of her chest], not down here [diaphragm]. So you told me one thing today, [something] like "Keep it around your belt." You said something like that, and that helped a lot (I; C; PD18; 395:395).

Another student account listed numerous strategies that I introduced for improving breath control and support. The student recalled her ability to understand breathing better:

We tried it in numerous different ways. We had the one where I was sitting on the chair bent over when I was holding my own stomach to feel the breath intake. We had the one where you put your hand on my stomach so that I could feel it. We also tried breathing it in through the mouth instead of the nose, which I think changed my whole sound completely because I'm used to breathing through my nose; I've always been a nose breather. Just a few suggestions made it a lot easier for me to understand what it was that you were asking of me (I; M; PD19; 73:73).

These teaching and learning lessons were depicted consistently as invaluable when it came to breathing. As a result of vocal instruction, students realized that "it's important to sing with your diaphragm" (I; C; PD18; 447:447). In order to feel a deep breath being taken, I gave them several physical and verbal reminders. In the following student account, these reminders reinforced deep and relaxed breathing, as opposed to the shallow breathing that had been habitual.

A lot of times, for some reason, when I breathe my stomach goes in instead of out. I don't know why I do that, but with you putting your hand on my stomach and telling me that I'm breathing too shallow, or that you can hear my breath [because it's] too loud, that helps me a lot (I; A; PD7; 101:101).

Breathing from the diaphragm and connecting the voice to the breath enabled one student to discover, "I don't get as dizzy...when I'm singing because of the breathing" (I; J; PD2; 161:165), and another student to open up her sound as a result of a more engaged and deeper breath. When asked specifically what helped her achieve a better vocal sound, she described her thoughtful breath preparation: "Not breathing from my chest because that's how I usually breathed, and [instead], breathing through the vowel" (I; J; PD2; 59:59).

The students' awareness of breath was heightened as a result of their vocal instruction in the music studio, and they were able to transfer that technique into other classes in the musical theatre program context. For instance, one student recalled a moment of breath self-monitoring in master class, "Even today in master class, I noticed myself putting my hand on my stomach and making sure that I was [breathing] properly" (I; L; PD4; 77:77). Another student applied her skills and was mindful about breathing in her performance and choral class; she described her experience in the account below:

The cup thing I always think about. Sometimes I'll be in performance class and I'm like [puts her hand on her belly button area], "*Cup! Cup!*" [we both laugh], or even in choir I'll have my hand there sometimes because I can't always hold the note for as long as I need to. I do think about [breathing] (I; C; PD18; 341:341).

When asked what teaching and learning strategies played a role in her development as a performer, a student replied, "Breathing, breathing, breathing, breathing, breathing. That would be the *biggest* thing...[It is] in everything I do" (I; R; PD5; 50:50). As she explained further, she referred to her triple-threat stance, "[When] I dance, I hold my breath because I get nervous. [When] I act, I hold my breath. [Also,] in singing. [However,] if I drop in, and I'm calm [and] I'm breathing, then technique is there" (I; R; PD5; 50:50).

Vocal Repertoire

Selecting Repertoire

Students were given the opportunity to choose their own repertoire for their performance classes in the musical theatre program context of this study. Much was gleaned from examining the narratives that emerged regarding their thought process involved in self-selecting music. One of the main themes that became obvious through careful examination of the data was the idea that the students chose repertoire in order to fulfill various technical objectives with their voice. The following quotation supports the notion that repertoire was selected to expand the student's vocal range, "A lot of pieces like "Nothing" and like my song "Gimme, Gimme,"...they have low range and high range, and I have trouble switching, so I wanted to work on that" (I; J; PD2; 377:377). Another student chose repertoire for similar reasons; she wanted to develop her vocal range and her character acting. She commented that "it's a really funny song but it also deals with a lot of my higher range which was a challenge for me at the time. I still had a lot of fun with it because I had a lot of character and it was very uptight, and it also makes a great audition piece because it's really short" (I; M; PD19; 142:142).

Repertoire: Developing an Artistic Landscape

In the context of the above statements, range meant vocal range, in the technical sense of how many notes were comfortable to sing, whereas the perspective presented below deals with the concept of range as being a diverse selection of musical styles and choices in the repertoire. From this vantage point, one student noted, "A lot of the songs [that I chose], it was mostly because I wanted to develop a range" (I; C; PD18; 451:451)... "I have such a wide range of songs and stuff I can do now. I don't just have to pick certain musicals that are strong and big energy ones; I can do soft little pretty ones now" (I; C; PD18; 460; 460). Two other students' statements captured similar sentiments, as they explained that their repertoire choices were based on their desire to challenge themselves with a wide range of musical material.

A lot of the songs that I chose are very different from each other. I started out with a certain style, and every couple of weeks when we chose a new song. I tried to pick things that are really different, just to challenge myself and see if I can do different types of material. Some of them are really slow and pretty ballads, and some of them are up-tempo. Some of them are just really fun songs, but challenging for me (I; A; PD7; 215:215).

I wanted to pick songs in repertoire that I could keep for auditions [where] I could show off different ranges. So I sang “Now That I’ve Seen Her” that shows almost all of my range, and I sang “But Not For Me” from *Girl Crazy* (I; C; PD18; 451:451).

Musical pieces were chosen because the students thought that the repertoire would make for good audition material. Some students chose songs because they simply enjoyed a musical or artistic aspect; for example, one student claimed: “I chose “Gorgeous,” which is a really upbeat song, very character oriented; she’s very *big*, [and] it’s just a fun piece for me to do” (I; J; PD2; 356:356); another student noted: “A lot of the songs I’ve sung this year, I’ve chosen for acting purposes, because of acting through song [class]. [I’ve chosen] things that have emotional meat to them” (I; P; PD20; 401:401). There were a plethora of artistic and personal reasons for selecting the repertoire, as evidenced in the students’ statements. It was pointed out by yet another student, that she wanted to work on more than belter roles, singing a more varied repertoire and “not just belting songs” (I; C; PD18; 67:67).

The students clearly articulated the role that repertoire choice played in their development as singers and artists. For example, one student commented that towards the end of the school year, she was challenging herself and picking repertoire that was unusual for her:

At the beginning, I chose songs that I was really familiar with for my comfort level. Then after that, I chose songs that I knew would be in my range and that I could sing with more ease, I guess. But towards the end, I was picking things that would be a challenge and would be out of my box (I; L; PD4; 431:431).

Another student narrative revealed that she had developed to a point with her vocal technique where she was able to sing repertoire that she never imagined she could. Her perspective was depicted in the following account:

I sang “The Suns Whose Rays are All Ablaze” from the Mikado, and that was my first mix-head voice song. So ever since then, I’ve become more comfortable with my mix and head. I never thought I could sing that type of song (I; C; PD18; 451:451).

A shift in self-identification as a singer was evident in the next excerpt from an interview with a participant who worked on developing the low end of her vocal range in the studio. Her viable and instinctual musical choices changed as a result. She explained: “With the lower register stuff, I found myself looking at repertoire that was a lot more on the low end. Usually I’m much more drawn to higher stuff” (I; L; PD4; 72:73).

Another student provided evidence of artistic development by monitoring her progress through a process of revisiting certain songs in her repertoire. By engaging in this process, she realized that she was able to do things vocally that she had never achieved before. She described:

I think the best way that I had to see my progress was when I started picking out certain songs in my repertoire that I had sung over the past year and went back and revisited some. All of a sudden, I was doing things that I was never able to do before (I; M; PD19; 56:56).

As students philosophized about their experiences with repertoire in the studio sessions, it was clear from the data that their artistic identity was being shaped as a result of the vocal instruction. In addition, from their consistent accounts of feeling more comfortable, and of progressing in various areas of technique and musicality, it was clear that these artistic experiences in the studio were profound for the students. The degree of growth that occurred in the vocal studio was considerable, influencing the students’ artistic decisions and artistic image. The following account on this topic provides a summary of all of the individual themes that have been mentioned regarding musical repertoire in this section of the chapter. Clearly demonstrated in this

account is the inherent interconnectedness of musical interpretation, musical style, musical repertoire, and musical identity:

Because we're allowed to choose our own repertoire it helps a great deal in maintaining our own personal style because I'm able to choose songs that speak to me personally. Then we work on what I choose in repertoire and in [technique] tutorial. I get the sense that I still have control over the kinds of things that I'm performing, and then I'm able to challenge myself if I want something that will be a little bit harder for me, or I'm able to choose something that I really know I'll be able to enjoy (I; M; PD19; 166:167).

Critical Thinking in the Studio: Applying Technique in Repertoire

In the studio setting, problem solving and critical thinking were central to the process of applying vocal technique into the context of musical repertoire. Students often commented that various musical and extra-musical objectives were introduced when repertoire was incorporated into the music lesson sequence. For example, one student stated: "When I bring repertoire in, we work on it in terms of how it should sound vocally" (I; A; PD7; 96:96), while a second student's perspective revealed: "When we work on rep, we focus on [the] words" (I; P; PD20; 374:374). Another student's comments portrayed additional aspects that were included in the studio lessons, such as musical phrasing and interpretation:

When we go through rep, you [as the teacher], don't just concentrate on the notes, like you do a lot, but you...always add the comments, [such as] "Sing the phrases musically" and "What are you thinking about at this point?" So you're also reminding me of that (I; S; PD21; 156:156).

These critical thinking moments required students to synthesize various aspects of vocal instruction, namely technique, repertoire, and musical objectives. Approached in a systematic manner, the students found this process helpful for reinforcement of vocal technique in the context of repertoire. For example, when asked directly how she felt about having repertoire in her vocal technique lessons, a student shared her contentment over having the opportunity to apply her knowledge in several contexts:

It's good because I have you right before I have rep, so it's fresh. I can take something from what we just did technique-wise and put it into what I'm going to learn in rep, so it's good to have. I'm glad there's rep in our technique lessons (I; R; PD5; 118:118).

Another student's comments exemplified the application of technique into repertoire and performance. She spoke enthusiastically when she described this process:

[Studio sessions] have definitely helped me. I'll go home now, and I'll do certain exercises to learn certain kinds of music and that helped me a lot. Then [it] makes me more confident with the piece, and then I'm able to get my character. All in all, it just helps my performance (I; J; PD2; 284:284).

Application of vocal technique occurred in a third instance for a student who referred to a transfer of knowledge into the text of the repertoire. The details of this teaching and learning process were provided with the following student account, "You used what you were teaching me in my vocalise...and in my technique, and you applied [it] to my text and then you explained it really well. So I was able to bring what I learned from my technique into my actual rep" (I; S; PD21; 89:89). Another student experienced some difficulty in combining technique into her repertoire. She claimed that concentrating on several objectives simultaneously, led her to forget some of the vocal technique when she tried putting it together. She explained, "Sometimes when we're doing exercises, it's easier to concentrate on my technique and the way that I'm supposed to be doing things, but once we're doing repertoire, sometimes it seems I forget those things" (I; A; PD7; 169:169). When asked how she was able to overcome this obstacle, she replied that "we work on it as a whole, and then we break it down." She commented that this process in the studio was what helped "make it a lot easier" because she was able to "remember to do it" (I; A; PD7; 169:169). That is, by working on specific sections of the musical repertoire, she argued that she retained more of her technique than she would have just singing through the entire piece.

Musicianship

Many students commented that their understanding of technique and performance of repertoire were enhanced because of teaching and learning moments in the studio that involved building musicianship. Most of these occurrences required students to apply their knowledge of music theory and to increase their level of sight-reading and ear-training skills. The nature of the activities and the methodical approach towards integrating these aspects in the music studio caused students to feel more like singers and musicians.

Musicality

Studio field notes that I took as part of the data collection process confirmed the fact that teaching the students to sing and perform musically in the studio was a major part of the learning experience. As I felt it was an essential part of their training, I ensured that both technical exercises and repertoire requirements were completed by the students, with the intent of their developing a heightened sense of musicality. This was most often achieved through demonstrations, discussions, and visualizations of the music on the part of the teacher and through functional listening and literacy on the part of the student. This first student account below depicts a moment in the studio when theoretical knowledge enhanced her vocal technique and informed her musical choices. She stated, “I know now where the notes are on the staff. It kind of helps me to know that...one note is more of a note that should be mixed, while [another] note [is] more in my head voice” (I; L; PD4; 313:314). Another student’s perspective coincided with the position that technical exercises achieved several musical objectives at once. The student discussed the various dimensions of the exercises from the music studio lessons, when she stated, “Even when we’re doing the exercises, you make sure that I know when I am making things too “notey,” that I know that I am able to fix pitch and...phrasing. I get it now” (I; L; PD4; 499:499).

A taxonomy of musical objectives, aimed at developing musicality, made one student feel smarter after participating in several vocal exercises. This increased sense of musicianship is

shown in her following statement, “The scales and the legato [exercise] they made me feel smarter now about music. [In] every lesson, I have learned something about music” (I; S; PD21; 139:139). This artistic and musical growth was most evident as a result of studio music instruction.

Sight-Singing

On various occasions in the music studio, sight-reading exercises and vocalises were presented for students to work through in order to improve their musical literacy. Alt (2004) was an advocate for incorporating sight-reading in the musical theatre context; he maintained a strong belief that reading music was an essential part of the training for any triple-threat performer. I concur with his opinion on this matter and incorporate his advice into my music studio setting. Thus, my students were exposed to sight-singing exercises, which many described as challenging. However, through a systematic process of rehearsal of each of the musical elements, students were eventually able to grasp some of the concepts and, in turn, develop their sight-reading abilities. The following two accounts depict the process of teaching and learning described above:

The other day when we did the scale things, when I looked at it, I [thought] “There’s no way that I can ever do that” and then it’s a lot easier than I thought. The way you described it, you did it so well, and then it kind of clicked (I; S; PD21; 29:29).

We also did a couple of [sight-singing] exercises a while ago where you didn’t play it for me ahead of time. I found it pretty difficult. With the sight-singing, just by working on it, well we did the same exercises several times, I think they were getting better. Just recognizing the different intervals and what they sounded like, it became more familiar (I; R; PD5; 161:161).

The most significant data that emerged on this topic demonstrated the stance that Alt (2003) had taken in regard to the importance of having sight-reading skills in the musical theatre industry.

After working on many exercises in the music studio, a student articulated that as a result, she had developed sight-singing abilities. Her feeling of being well-prepared was made clear in her

following statement: “I know that if I was ever in a situation [where] I had to sight-read a piece, I could recognize some things on the page now” (I; L; PD4; 293:293).

Ear Training

When asked about a challenge in the music studio with musicianship, a student responded that she struggled with minor scales. She said: “When you first gave me the paper with chromatic scales and major and minor, [I found it hard] to change to the minor and...to hear that switch” (I; S; PD21; 122:122) Her narrative, supported by the content of the studio field notes, revealed that studio time had been spent on developing her ability to read, sing, and hear the differences among chromatic, major, and minor scales. Developing a physical sense and an acute aural awareness of the variation between semitones and whole tones in different patterns and combinations was considered essential to the students’ training from the studio teacher’s perspective.

While many of the students in the program already had an excellent ear for learning new repertoire, as they had been reliant on their ears to learn music, many aural exercises were introduced to challenge them further in this area. For the most part, the students were proficient with exercises that involved imitating me in audio singing and clapping. Moreover, when it came to more technical exercises, such as the aforementioned scales, and the whole tone scale, arpeggiated figures, and other more complex melodic patterns, the students found many to be an excellent means for developing their musical ears even further. Along with the collected notes from the studio, this claim is supported by the following student account, which illustrated growth in her musicianship, specifically in ear training. As the student was able to triumph over her struggles with a newly learned scale, she recollects:

In ear training, I had to learn the chromatic scale and hear every semitone and stuff, and I struggled with it because I only knew major scale. Well, now I know two, but I came in only knowing major scale and I was just used to that. Then I had to not only think, but [also] hear [in] ear training. I struggled with that for a bit, but I got it. I worked hard at it (I; C; PD18; 407:407).

Summary

From these experiences, it appears that teaching and learning in the vocal studio has many complex layers that contribute to the students' artistic growth. Many students claimed their perceptions of themselves changed as they progressed through various stages of functional voice training in the studio setting. Becoming singers and musicians was part of this shifting formation of identity, as students described vividly and in detail how the elements of technique informed their artistic experience.

Both mindful and physical aspects of singing had been cultivated through the studio vocal instruction experience, as shown in the accounts of the students in this program. There was a definite sense that the content in these studio lessons integrated concepts with the elements of technique, repertoire, and musicianship. As students persevered through these integrated vocal and musical challenges, they became better prepared for the performance elements required of them in their other classes in the musical theatre program.

The music studio sessions appeared to have offered students an opportunity to develop necessary skills and mindsets that greatly strengthened their view of themselves as aspiring singers. The students' desire for ongoing development and learning within the realm of their vocal instruction emerged from much of the data. It was this passion for vocal art and for their craft that seemed to drive these students to be more thoughtful, knowledgeable, skilled, and confident artists. Studio music instruction was characterized throughout as a main outlet through which students achieved these goals as artists. As they strived toward their dreams of becoming triple-threat performers, they had a strong belief that the artistic and musical experiences offered in the studio setting were invaluable in helping them get there.

Chapter Eight

The Implications of Identity Development

*“Dot by dot, building up the image.
Shot by shot, keeping at a distance doesn’t pay.
Still if you remember your objective,
Not give all your privacy away.
A little bit of hype can be effective,
As long as you can keep it in perspective.
Even when you get some recognition
Everything you do you still audition.”*

-Stephen Sondheim

I return now to the main research question of the study and describe how the musical theatre program contributed to the artistic identity of the participants. In this chapter, I draw together the findings of the previous chapters through the student-performers’ descriptions and imagery regarding the intricacies of their identity development. Through a process of self-realization, students undergo transformative moments in their artistic training that lead them towards self-identifying as singers in the music studio and as triple-threat performers in the context of the program. The development of their artistic identities is clearly presented as the students share their stories, which highlight various learning opportunities that allowed them to exercise their creativity and express their individuality.

Identity Construction and Development

Self-Descriptions

In the interviews for this study, students were given ample opportunity to describe themselves in a performance-arts context. These self-descriptions provided an excellent starting point for the study of identity construction and development. As the students worked through their ideas about who they were and what was important to them as artists, they came closer to understanding their true identities. One student explained that she had a flair for improvisation on

the stage, saying: “I’m really good with keeping things fresh. I’m really impulsive on stage” (I; P; PD20; 9:9). She then proceeded to identify herself as “a really good performer” (I; P; PD20; 5:5). Another student’s description detailed her strong work ethic and passion about the musical theatre industry; as well, she pointed out her desire to continue developing as a performer-artist. She said:

I’m a hard worker. I’m always on the go. I’m always working. You’ll never catch me not working. I’m very passionate about the industry, and I want to keep learning. I want to know as much as I can about the industry (I; C; PD18; 507:507).

The following comments represent additional student descriptions that fit into the performance arts context, offering clear self-depictions that were thematically consistent with the development of artistic identity. As the students identified themselves near the end of their first year of training, they revealed, with much conviction, a strong sense of their performing strengths. One student recalled, “When I do go up and perform, I’ve been told that I’m a good storyteller” (I; P; PD20; 3:3), while another student explained that she could “capture the audience [and] draw them in” (I; A; PD7; 8:8). A third student revealed that she was vibrant when she performed. She said: “I’ve been told on stage there’s so much presence, and it’s open [and] full of energy” (I; C; PD18; 35:35). A fourth student’s account provided an affirmative portrayal of herself in performance. She pronounced, “I’m very confident [and] I tend to influence the people around me in a positive manner. I find myself to be a very uplifting person, and people get energy from just being around me” (I; M; PD19; 7:7).

Self-Images

It also became clear in the interview process that students were bombarded by expectations and images from the industry, media, and society. Outward appearance was a topic that was raised on several occasions by students, as they described their desire to be the stereotypically

gorgeous performer. The following statement supports this notion, “I’d like to be the stereotypical little, thin, pretty performer with perfect hair and everything” (I; C; PD18; 43:43). Another student spoke of her desire to achieve a similar image and of feeling overwhelmed as she realized that relaxing her body, specifically her lower abdomen while she sang, changed her idealized image. Eventually, this self-imposed, idealized physical image of a singer lost precedence to her desire to identify herself with the vocal sounds of a legitimate singer. She explained:

At first I felt overwhelmed. I was like “I look fat when I sing,” and I was like “Is this supposed to happen?” [We both laugh] All singers are pretty and skinny. I don’t know, it was just weird, but then I realized that [the technique] really helped me (I; J; PD2; 51:51).

Photographs of the students were especially helpful in eliciting specific descriptions of how they truly perceived themselves, allowing them to describe the defining characteristics of performance moments in each of the photographic images. Many of the student responses on this topic stemmed from the photo exercise. To begin with, one of the students admitted that the image in the photograph of her performing in the song and dance revue did not match her feelings about and perception of herself at that time. She commented, “It’s so funny to look at the picture because I don’t even see myself” (I; P; PD20; 44:44). She elaborated further regarding the distinction between the photographic image and the reality that was taking place inside her body and mind at the time of the performance. She explained how she was able to create the illusion that she was in her element on stage, disguising the nervousness that she felt as a first-time performer. Her identity stance was captured in the following passage:

This image shows that I may be a total stress case and work too hard and get all stressed out for no good reason, but it’s nice that I still can pull it together and perform. When I look at this picture, [I think:] “Wow, she doesn’t look nervous, she looks like she’s in her element there,” which I’m *not*. That was [my] first time singing a solo (I; P; PD20; 63:63).

The next image of another student highlighted through the photographs was a head-shot picture, which would typically be used for the purpose of a professional audition. Looking at this photograph, the student described a more mature and sophisticated version of herself than in some of the other photos she showed me that she felt portrayed her as more playful and less serious. Most of the photos that she compared to her head-shot were taken prior to her entering the program. The description she provided shows a shift in her self-image as a result of her training in the musical theatre program. The development of her image as an artist evolved with a broader perspective. Her more mature self-perception was accompanied by her conviction to play a more diverse range of roles. As we studied the photograph together, she outlined the main features:

I was going for a lot more of a sexy, sophisticated, mature, “choose me” kind of photo, whereas a lot of the other ones show me in a humorous light. When I go to an audition, they’re going to get the fun, humorous part of my character, but this [photo] shows that I can play roles that are more serious and that I can play attractive, mature roles as well. [The auditioning panel will] see me as a serious performer, and not just as someone who is there to have fun (I; M; PD19; 57:57).

Self-Realization

Who am I anyway? Am I my resumé?

-Edward Kleban

From the interviews, I heard about tremendous moments of self-realization from each of the students, as they acknowledged central facets of their character. It became clear that as they actualized their position in a performance context, they were increasingly astute about the labels they gave themselves; industry labels, such as “triple-threat,” marked the progress they had made and placed them according to the standards of the musical theatre profession. This thematic element of self-actualization was captured in many profound student statements. One student stated: “As an artist, you have to be confident about yourself; you have to like yourself” (I; C; PD18; 473:473). This powerful perspective set up a theme of the artist-in-training connecting

with the person-in-training; that is, the lived artistic experiences helped form the identity of students, both professionally and personally. These two aspects of self were interconnected in a manner that revealed students' experienced moments of self-realization as part of their training. This self-awareness involved the development of the students' abilities and mindsets in a holistic manner, which was demonstrated in the following passage:

I feel like there's more to being a triple-threat than just acting, singing, dancing. I feel like you have to be an all-around person. You have to know about your world; you have to know about people in your life; you have to know about people that are not in your life; you have to know about different countries. If you know more about your life and you know more about your world, [performing] is going to come so naturally to you because you just have that in your life to look at (I; R; PD5; 215:215).

A depth of character and a greater degree of understanding of self developed through the experience of working with musical repertoire. A student revealed how this process enhanced her sense of self, saying: "That's the thing about all of these different songs. I have a little bit of all of [them] in me, so it just helps me to find different things in myself" (I; A; PD7; 235:235).

Self-actualization involved recognition by each of the performers of how their strengths and weaknesses related to their perceptions about who they were as performers. These informed student responses shed light on the internal dialogue that was conjured up in their minds in relation to the artistic programming that guided them towards these realizations. The following student accounts highlight the self-identification process in the performance context and illustrate moments of personal reflection about what they had learned. It was clear that the training impacted the way they perceived themselves. Their heightened sense of cognitive, emotional, and physical self-awareness is what is revealed in the following passages of data: "I think one of my greatest strengths is probably my passion... When I'm doing anything that involves performance, there's nothing else that I'd rather be doing at the time" (I; M; PD19; 2:3); and "It's weird because I fear the failure, not being able to do really well. But that doesn't make sense because if I went for it, it could have worked out" (I; L; PD4; 566:567).

The students confronted the cognitive structures within themselves as they magnified the inner workings of their thought processes and revealed the impetus for becoming artists. In one particular account, the student acknowledged the intense pressure she was placing on herself that was making it difficult for her to identify as a good singer. She also pointed out a clear differentiation between others' positive perceptions of her vocal performance work and her own ideas of the vocal experience. This personal viewpoint of the experience provided insight into her high standards, as she encountered a moment of artistic truth; she stated:

We put so much pressure on ourselves, and I'm aware that I'm doing it to myself you know. I'm doing good work and people never give me anything but praise here, all the teachers, but I always feel bad about my singing. [So] when something happens with singing that's good for me, I'm ecstatic (I; P; PD20; 86:86).

When asked about how her training experience changed her, the student answered, "It's made me this person who is crazy about wanting to be a good singer. [Before,] I wasn't like that, but [now], I just want to be the good singer" (I; P; PD20; 298:298). Another student showed that she felt a similar way, claiming that she had arrived as a musician during a studio music session experience. While working on several pieces of musical repertoire, she rationalized why the artistic experience was important to the development of her musical identity. Even more, she realized the impetus for involvement with this performance art as both a career and a way of life. She explained this stance in the following account:

[I realize] that I can be in this career, that I can do musical theatre. There's something about [those] song[s], "I Dreamed a Dream" [and] "Strangers of the Rain." Those are the kind of songs that make you actually want to get up and do this everyday. I don't know if it's just the beautiful lyrics or what it [is], but everyone needs to hear [these songs], everyone should feel this rush (I; R; PD5; 58:58).

Self-Transformation

“The only constant is change.”

(AR; PD20; 123:123)

Students actively transformed themselves on a continual basis in the program through the various roles and identities that they undertook. The student passage below presents an impending sense of change and transformation. Her development occurred as a result of the artistic lessons that she participated in, and inspired a sense of wonder, as the student grasped the limitless possibilities that existed for her.

I feel like there's hope that I can get better because I have things to work on, whereas before I just knew I wasn't doing everything correctly, but I didn't know what to do or what I was doing wrong or how to fix it. So it just feels like now I'll probably be able to sing different types of songs that I couldn't sing before (I; L; PD4; 105:105).

This idea of development and self-transformation in the musical theatre context was also reinforced by several other student responses, such as, “I think some of the exercises actually humbled me a bit. [I've come] to appreciate some of the more difficult aspects of being a performer” (I; M; PD19; 94:94); “I guess you could say that I'm definitely becoming a more self-trained kind of person” (I; J; PD2; 26:27); and “I feel so much more professional” (I; C; PD18; 426:426). Other participants in the study felt that the artistic training had expanded their horizons and had given them more versatility as performers. One of them mentioned, “I think I'm more versatile now in roles that I can play” (I; L; PD4; 370; 370); while another student's perspective aligned closely: “I felt like I had more diversity, more versatility” (I; C; PD18; 460:460).

As students listed off various artistic experiences, they portrayed the impact on their development as artists. For example, one student pointed out, “I have a great sense of accomplishment now” (I; M; PD19; 60:60), and another student was so moved that she exclaimed: “I started to cry because I just couldn't believe how I changed” (I; J; PD2; 71:71).

These transformative moments were noteworthy for the students because the artistic experiences in the musical theatre program and, more specifically, the music studio had changed them for the better. Self-transformation emerged thematically as many students emphasized the progress they had made over the course of the year and how that impacted the way they felt as artists. One student said that while the learning was still ongoing, her progress had made her feel better about herself; she explained: “It’s still really challenging, but I think that’s good because I’m still learning you know. And I think because I’ve struggled, the steps and progress that I’m making now feel a lot better” (I; L; PD4; 601:603). An additional perspective of progress was demonstrated in another student’s comment:

I feel really good. Usually I’m really tired after Tuesday because it’s such a long day for me, but I feel accomplished. I feel like I’ve progressed a lot. I’ve made a to-do list, and I feel like I’ve slowly taken things off of it. My body really hurts, but I feel good. I’m in a good place (CO; VS; M; PD17; 136:137).

A third account of a student’s progress in the music studio setting revealed continual development, as she commented on the momentum of growth that had been created. This student stated:

Improving vocally obviously motivates me. I haven’t really been stuck in a rut yet. I’ve had times at home where I’ve progressed and then all of a sudden I get stuck, and I feel like I can’t progress, but I haven’t done that here. It seems I’ve been continually growing (I; S; PD21; 199:199).

A participant attributed a higher level of confidence to her progress as an artist. She stated, “Just knowing that I’m progressing and doing better and stuff, I feel better about myself and I feel more confident” (I; C; PD18; 422:422). Confidence was increased for many students and was directly associated with transforming their self-perceptions. For instance, one of the students talked about the effect that this newly found confidence had on her identity as a performer-artist. When asked how her training had shaped her identity she replied, “I [have] more confidence of course, and the

confidence has just completely changed my performance and my character” (I; J; PD2; 385:385). Other aspiring performer-artists found their development was most noticeable in terms of their voice and cited examples of how these changes became obvious to them. Three comments demonstrate a pattern of growth amongst students through their candid acknowledgement of artistic progress, “I think if I was to go back and sing with my old vocal coach, I think she’d really be surprised to see...especially with my projection just how much that has improved alone. I think she’d be really surprised” (I; L; PD4; 344:344); “My singing has grown A LOT” (I; M; PD19; 190:190); and “I think people who are interested in my voice...I think people will see that I have better control of my voice as a musician” (I; C; PD18; 430:430). The transformation of another student centred on her affirmations that she had evolved into a person who was more confident with her work ethic on many levels; she asserted, “I’ve become *way* more confident in my work ethic and abilities, and I know that I’m good to work with” (I; P; PD20; 187:187). Overall, an enhanced understanding of the construction and development of identity was gained, as students assessed themselves and reflected on the artistic events that had shaped who they were; uncovering the lessons that led them to personal and professional enlightenment.

Performance Identities

“Music and rhythm and dancing are excellent ways of moving toward the discovering of identity.”

(Maslow, 1968, p. 75)

Identity as a Singer

As students negotiated their roles in the performance context, multiple identities emerged. Most captivating about this identity stance was the apparent evolution that took place due to the participants’ involvement in studio music instruction: some students came in identifying as singers and realized they still had a lot to learn in that regard, while others came in not identifying as singers and added that identity. There was a sense from the data that students had much to

learn in order for them to readily self-identify as singers. For example, one student commented that even though she came to the program as a singer, there was much to be gained from studio lessons. She said: “I came here as a singer, so I thought I knew it all, but I didn’t [laughs]” (I; C; PD18; 63:63). Another student, who identified herself initially as a singer coming into the program, also noted the necessity of the vocal component in her artistic training regime. She supported the notion that she had much room for vocal development, and she recognized that her experience had altered her original self-identification as a trained singer. This perspective is presented in the following passage:

I think there should *totally* be more music. We need to have more singing. I don’t know if it evens out more into second and third year because I’m not there yet but I know [that] being in first year coming in as a singer—or thinking I’m coming in as a singer—it’s totally difficult for me to pick up technique. For someone to not come in as a singer, I don’t know how they’re doing it (I; R; PD5; 182:182).

Another student regarded the studio time as a time to focus on becoming a singer. She explained: “Because I can act, I came here as an actor, and I think what I really needed to work on was vocal quality more than anything, and your tutorials were a time where I could just focus on that” (I; M; PD19; 110:110). Finally, another student described how she identified herself as a singer only since she had gained vocal experience through studio music instruction. She confirmed this idea, when she noted, “I would have never considered myself as a singer if it weren’t for the studio music training” (I; P; PD20; 489:489).

A particularly significant journey towards developing an identity as a singer was chronicled through the data gathering process. One student’s case was unique as it was the first time she had ever taken studio music lessons. From her first-time experience, she had many insights to share about how her vocal training related to the artistic manner in which she perceived herself. She started telling her story with a photographic image of herself taken in the college’s annual song and dance revue: “Well, this was the first time that I was ever a singer” (I; P; PD20; 52:52). She

continued on to say: “I’ve become a lot more confident in my ability to work at something, especially to sing” (I; P; PD20; 187:187). Mapping out her singing journey, she imploded with energy when asked about the role that studio music instruction had played in shaping her identity: “[Studio music sessions] do make me feel like a better singer! So that boosts my confidence, of course” (I; P; PD20; 102:103). Her passionate convictions illustrated her intensity and desire, which was solely directed at achieving her goals as a singer. The participant noted that even more than attaining an identity as a triple-threat performer, she wanted to be identified as a virtuostic singer: “Of course I want to be a better dancer and a better actress, but I really just want to be a magnificent singer” (I; P; PD20; 21:21). This student’s incessant desire to become a good singer appeared in other segments of her story of vocal development, as she cited her constant personal dissatisfaction with her vocal ability. She acknowledged the self-scrutiny that she associated with her performance, when she stated the following:

I’m just always so disappointed. Not really disappointed [but] I just want to be so much better than I am. So it’s really hard for me to accept that where I am is okay; because it’s okay, it’s not the end of the world, and I’m not a terrible singer (I; P; PD20; 211:211).

Navigating her way through a process of self-actualization, she conceded that despite her impossibly high standards, she was still making progress. The following account unveiled the embodiment of experienced, igniting moments of self-reflection and self-realization. First, she revealed: “There are times when I go back and sing something [I sang] a while ago, and when I do that I always feel good about myself because I’m [aware] that sounds so much better than it did a while ago” (I; P; PD20; 159:159). Then, she emphasized her developing identity stance:

I don’t see myself as a good singer right now, but every time that I improve. I feel I’m closer to that. So I have this big aim to be a good singer. I was here, and now I’m here [shows a continuum with her hands that maps out a distance of progress achieved]. I was really far, and now I’m sort of far, and every time I do feel a little bit accomplished because I’ve come closer to my goal (I; P; PD20; 290:290).

Pondering the experiences she encountered during her training in the musical theatre program, this student acknowledged the connection between studio music instruction and developing a stronger sense of self. As a result of studio music instruction, she was able to embrace her evolving identity as a singer as she grew closer to a more authentic, true image.

I think those lessons have made me see myself more as a singer, so I'm more comfortable singing out loud, I'm more comfortable to sing and to sing in choir even and to sing in master class. We do a lot of singing so being in there and working on it has just made me see myself more as a singer and less like an imposter (I; P; PD20; 358:358).

This part of the student's story concluded with a significant moment of realization, when she identified herself as a "singer in training." Continuous growth and development as a singer was central to this designation, and it grounded her conception of identity as ongoing. With the training goal of achieving a professional standard of vocal performance, the student embraced this gradual process of development as a singer and revealed her unwavering commitment to her craft, as she stated, "I still don't see myself as a singer, but I see myself as someone who's working towards being a singer, so a singer in training" (I; P; PD20; 489:489).

Identity as a Triple-Threat Performer

*"Broadway Baby,
Learning how to sing and dance,
Waiting for that one big chance,
To be in a show."*

-Stephen Sondheim

When I questioned the students about their initial self-identification as they entered into the program, many of them revealed that they felt strongest in one of the three discipline areas. Their ordered answers illustrated an imbalance in their training and experience prior to registering in the program. Hence, the basis for their enrolling in the musical theatre program was to gain exposure to all three disciplines in an effort to acquire a competitive level of skill in each focus

area. In regards to their initial identification as artists, there were those who prioritized their strengths, such as one student who listed herself as a “singer, actor, dancer” (I; A; PD7; 282:282). Another student was quick to identify herself as an actor first and foremost: “When I came here I was definitely an actor first, a singer second, and a dancer not at all” (I; M; PD19; 190:190). Yet another student, who identified herself as a singer first, pointed out that she was accepted into the program because of her vocal abilities: “I never was an actor or dancer before I got here. I knew that they picked me based on my voice” (I; C; PD18; 103:103).

There were narrative accounts that deviated slightly from the pattern that evolved in many of the other students’ initial self-identifications; that is, despite their prior formal training in a particular area, students’ conception of their self-identity shifted to other disciplines once they began training in the musical theatre context. One participant, in particular, explained she had more training in acting prior to coming to the college program, but seemed to identify more strongly with her skills as a dancer. She revealed this opinion when she remarked: “I guess my biggest strength within musical theatre would be dancing” (I; J; PD2; 15:15), and added: “I think I’m better at dancing, but I’ve had more training in acting” (I; J; PD2; 19:19). Finally, another informant asserted that she had a long-standing identity as a dancer, but reasoned that this conception had shifted towards acting, as she believed that this identity stance enhanced her artistic sensibility. Her viewpoint is encapsulated in the following statement:

I’m definitely a dancer first because I’ve been dancing since I was four. But I’m going to start calling myself an actor first because there’s this whole theory [that] you have to act to do anything: you have to act to sing, and you have to act to dance. I have most training in dance, that’s my strength, but I’m going to start being an actor, dancer, singer (I; P; PD20; 117:17).

Several students claimed that they had a long and winding road to travel before reaching their final destination of attaining the status of a triple-threat performer. The data alluded to the fact that students found a triple-threat designation to be both threatening and overwhelming. Also, there was much evidence supporting the idea that students regarded this triple-threat notion as the

ultimate artistic challenge in both the context of the musical theatre program and in the professional realm. For example, the following three students clearly identified themselves as far removed from a triple-threat identity at this point in their artistic development. They expressed: “I don’t feel I’m a triple-threat; I don’t even feel like I’m a musician yet. I don’t even want to call myself a singer because I know I’m not one yet (I; S; PD21; 207:207); “Knowing what I know now, and seeing the progress of the people around me, I see that I have a LONG way to go before I could consider myself a triple-threat” (I; M; PD19; 194:194); and “I feel my dance is bringing me down; I need to work on that a lot. I don’t feel like a triple-threat at this point” (I; A; PD7; 278:279).

Despite these students’ comments, which demonstrated that they clearly did not identify themselves at this point in the training as triple-threat performers, there was a definite sense that they believed the instruction in the musical theatre program was helping them develop further. In relation to this identity stance, one student commented that she was closer to becoming a triple-threat. “I’d say I’m on my way in all aspects,” (I; P; PD20; 485:485) she explained, and she attributed this development to “the studio training and most specifically our tutorials [in vocal technique], [which] have boosted [my singing] almost up to where my dancing and acting are” (I; P; PD20; 489:489). Another student agreed that every discipline had improved as a result of the program training; she pointed out that “[her] dancing has improved the most because it was atrocious, and now it’s decent [laughs]. I think everything’s improved, just to varying degrees” (I; A; PD7; 286:286). Lastly, another participant emphasized that she was further ahead as a triple-threat performer because of her training in her first year of the program. She said: “[If I were] to describe myself in relation to being a triple threat, I’m ten times closer than I was eight months ago” (I; C; PD19; 194:194).

While many of the students framed their level of performance in a triple-threat context, their performance identities were often formed into an emergent identity as artists in training. This fluid identity was saturated with an internal and external negotiation of the ideal performance

self, coupled with the multiple realities that existed in their day-to-day process and rehearsal work. It was through an arduous training process that students uncovered true constructions of their identity on their journey towards becoming triple-threat performers. These moments of realization had an impact on how they chose to self-identify. For example, one student aimed to develop as a triple threat because she felt it would afford her more opportunities in the professional world of performance. She described this triple-threat position as advantageous, and regarded it to be a motivating factor. She stated:

It [becoming a triple threat] motivates me a lot more because I know that if I go to an audition, I have different things that I can do. So they're not gonna hear me sing, or see me do a monologue and then find out that I can't dance. So [being a triple threat], it just opens up a lot more doors; there's a lot more opportunities I think (I; A; PD7; 290:290).

Another student concurred with the idea that she would have a greater variety of options as performer with skills in the discipline areas of drama, dance, and music. Her thoughts were summarized in the following account:

Well, first I'd love to be in musical theatre, but if that doesn't work out I'd like to do at least one of the three aspects. There's so much in this program that one can aspire to. [In terms of other programs], there's *just* acting courses, there's *just* singing courses...but if you do [a program] with all three then you have a lot more chance of getting out there (I; J; PD2; 504:504).

There was a general consensus amongst the students that achieving a triple-threat identity status would be the most significant challenge they would face during their study at the college. For example, one student acknowledged this challenge when she said: "Our teachers are teaching us to be triple-threats and an all-round performer" (I; R; PD5; 170:170). Another student expanded on this idea, as she explained in intricate detail what she personally found to be most difficult about the triple-threat training experience:

This one [integrating the disciplines] has been difficult...because as a triple-threat you have to learn to do all three things all at once. So you have to take

the information you learned as a singer and as a dancer [and integrate breathing techniques]. As an actor you can breathe however you want, so it's really the singing and dancing that you have to compromise one way or another. In dance you learn to hold everything a certain way, and it's always very controlled and very solid; in singing, you need to be fluid and have the 'deep breath' and that sort of flow [within] your body. So singing while dancing becomes a challenge because you need to have that fluidity in your voice while you keep your body solid and together. It's very difficult, and we'll see how that goes with the musical production next year (I; M; PD19; 129:130).

Even though these challenges were presented, several students seemed energized by them and driven to take advantage of every learning experience to improve. While this next student felt that the triple-threat idea was daunting, her determination to be identified as a triple-threat performer in the industry seemed to surpass her fear of not measuring up in all three areas. She revealed:

It's kind of scary, like the triple-threat idea, having to be all good at all three because coming into it I was kind of just an actress. I think, knowing the business I want to be in is a triple-threat business, it does push me to pay attention in each class and get the most I can out of each class because three years is not really long. I'm already done first year (I; L; PD4; 583:583).

The development of a greater degree of awareness about the long-term process required to become a triple-threat performer was thematically evident throughout this study. There was a true sense that the students grasped the intensely involved routine that they needed to establish in order to be prepared for the professional world.

A Fantasized Identity Stance: "Broadway Baby"

*"One!
Singular sensation, every little step she takes.
One!
Thrilling combination, every move that she makes."*

-Edward Kleban

A common theme that appeared consistently in the study was the students' aspiration to make it big on the Broadway stage. This fantasized identity stance was portrayed in the series of student

perspectives: “I want to go to Broadway” (I; M; PD19; 199:199); “I don’t know if everyone has this, but my biggest dream is be in tours, like Broadway” (I; C; PD18; 521:521); and “I definitely want to do Broadway. I would *love* to be the star of a big, big show” (I; M; PD19; 199; 199).

Stemming from this Broadway theme was a student’s supplementary perspective on this topic, as she pointed out that students were reminded to be realistic when setting their goals. She argued that despite this guidance, striving towards Broadway was still a major focus and impetus for all of the students in the program; she said: “You know, they really try to discourage those kind of thoughts here, but it’s what we all want” (I; M; PD20; 498:498). In addition to her dreams of the Broadway stage, another student included other professional aspirations in a Canadian context; she stated her long-terms goals in the following account:

I do really want to be in musicals. I really want to be a singer in musicals. I’d love to work for Mirvish and Stratford and Shaw, all those places and Broadway (I; P; PD20; 494:495).

Finally, the ultimate fantasized identity stance was captured in the next account, which focused on performing as a triple threat. Whether it be Broadway or not, this student was willing to perform in many venues, as long as she was practising her craft in a way that enabled her to enjoy her pursuits and be challenged artistically. When asked where her ideal place to perform would be, she responded:

Places where people will like see you and see you act, even on a cruise ship, even...anywhere I can [be] a triple threat [where] I can sing, dance, act, and I get paid, and people enjoy, then I don’t really care. I really want to do all three aspects when I leave here (I; C; PD18; 521:521).

Identity as an Artist

Developing artistry was all encompassing for the students, which meant that for many the aforementioned performance identities were added into the creation of their authentic self. The dimensions of building an artistic identity, which typically involved the convergence of multiple

roles that each student played, were nothing short of complex in nature. One student voiced her opinion about these complexities, which were a part of the constant negotiation and maintenance of her artistic identity. She admitted it was difficult to retain her true identity when the expectations of others were being imposed upon her. She said:

I felt like if I tried to please everyone, I [would lose] myself, and if I tried to please any one person, the other teachers would be upset. If I tried to do my own thing, I felt like I wasn't learning anything. So I definitely struggled with trying to balance all the information that I'd been getting whilst maintaining my own personal identity as a performer (I; M; PD19; 98:98).

This same student later revealed in the interview that by the end of her first year in the program she had reconciled the various perspectives in a manner that honoured her personal identity. Her act of synthesizing the various aspects of her performance training aligned with a message she had heard from one of the teachers, which was: "As an artist, you have a responsibility to be authentic to yourself" (CO; VS; PD17; 261:261).

The artistic struggles outlined in the student accounts were a fundamental element in the process of finding a functional balance between personal and professional identity in artistic endeavours. As one student said: "We're an interesting species of people. Artists are one of the hardest-working people out there; we put ourselves through the ringer" (CO; VS; PD17; 151:151). For many of the young artists in this study, persistence was an inherent quality in their development; they were consistently eager to learn and grow. These qualities were regularly documented in the studio field notes and captured in several audio recordings. In one instance, a student revealed her strong sense of self and ambition as an aspiring young artist:

I definitely have my own style because I've been doing this [theatre] for a really long time. I love character pieces; I love anything where I get to be completely different from who I am as a person. I love anything that's challenging: when something doesn't come easily for me is when I really want to do it because I think that one of the most important things as a performer is to keep growing. So I would describe myself as ambitious (I; M; PD19; 186:186).

Creativity and Expression

Many outlets were provided through which students could express themselves in this musical theatre program. Several activities and lessons encouraged students to experiment, invent, and create. The educational environment in various settings fostered this type of learning, as it provided students with an open, supportive, and engaging artistic environment. The various program components, both classroom and studio instruction, offered opportunities for artistic freedom. In these settings, many of the teachers continuously encouraged students to make independent, thoughtful, artistic choices about their process and performance work. In the data, expressing oneself freely became a consistent pattern and it was represented in a variety of comments made by classroom teachers: “Let all that is created within you and outside of you emerge” (CO; VS; PD17; 51:52); “Go right into your feeling nature” (CO; VS; PD17; 57:57); and “Allow for ultimate creativity” (CO; VS; PD17; 51:52).

Students were often given instructions in their classes to initially focus on the internalization of ideas and emotions, with the eventual aim of projecting these thoughts and feelings externally, in a manner that was genuine and grounded in truth. Teachers encouraged students to achieve this state of being by conveying messages, such as: “There is a need to be opening ourselves up” (CO; AS; PD1; 8:8), and “It [their work] has to be honest, it has to be true” (CO; AS; PD1; 9:9). The students were told not to “become automated in the way [they] learn” (CO; AS; PD1; 46:46), as it was explained that “each line [of text] has to come from within” (CO; AS; PD1; 77:77). Teachers assisted students to create a deep connection between their internal and external creative urges. These classroom lessons served as essential foundations to the development of the artist-performers, as the students were increasingly self-aware and more in tune with their potential for artistic expression.

Studio music instruction provided students with a creative outlet for development as artists. There was a clear pattern in the data that suggested that students learned how to more easily convey their artistic selves vocally through study and training. For instance, one student spoke of

the artistic freedom that she experienced when working on repertoire in the studio: “When I bring in rep you’re like, ‘What’s the feeling of this song? How do you tell the story? What tempo do you like?’ You allow freedom; you’re not like, ‘We’re going to do the song like this’” (I; S; PD21; 187:187). Another student pointed out that studio music instruction had “made it a lot easier to sing and just be free with it” (I; J; PD2; 409:409). A third student’s comment fit into a similar vein, as she suggested that her developed vocal sound had helped her express herself artistically. This student divulged: “[Studio music instruction] just makes me sound better, so it’s changed the way I create music because I’m a better singer than I was” (I; P; PD20; 294:294). Lastly, another participant pointed out that working with various dynamic levels and colours provided a larger palette to draw upon when creating her artistic works. She explained the basis of these essential artistic lessons from the music studio in the following way:

I think because we focused a lot on vocal dynamics, it’s created a lot more levels in my acting....I realized that when we’re doing acting exercises, it’s not always just the acting: if it’s a sad song, I can also mimic my voice softer, or bring my voice more internal. Also, when my master class teacher started talking about colours I had no idea what he was talking about, but through your tutorials I learned there’s a different color quality to each type of vocal technique. Playing with the vowel sounds, you can get a different quality out of each vowel (I; M; PD19; 122:122).

Revisiting the Research Questions

This chapter gathers together many phases of the students’ artistic journey. The individuals in this musical theatre program were challenged to continually adjust their identity in the various performance roles in which they engaged. As Mead (1934), wrote in *Individual and the Social Self*, “The unit of existence is the act” (p. 4). He emphasized that, “selves, minds, and our knowledge about all matters of fact all emerge from acts that are experienced” (p. 4). This case study was supported by the participants who painted a clear picture, through their narrative accounts, of the deeply entrenched artistic sensibility they had gained through the experiences

from classroom and studio settings. These artistic experiences dramatically impacted their identity as up-and-coming performers.

While this abstract concept of identity was most difficult to capture, the straightforward images, descriptions, and moments of realization the students shared illuminated a perspective on the development of their artistic identity. Many of these enlightening passages from the students' experience, provided a more in-depth understanding of the degree and the manner, in which the multiple teaching and learning moments shaped these identities. Overall, there was a definite trend in the data that showed that students embraced their evolving identities as performers.

Most illuminating were the findings on students' conception of themselves as triple-threat performers. It became clear that the most significant impact of their training was the opening of their minds and bodies to reality: the demands of the profession. It was clear from the students' profound statements regarding the triple-threat notion, that they had a deeply embedded level of self-awareness regarding the challenges and changes that process work in the performance arts presented. On the basis of this identity stance, one can begin to understand the essence of artistry, which, for these students, is that a continual state of growth is required to reach any artistic destination of their choice. What it truly means to be an artist is development of an open and imaginative state of mind that is life long. Thus, an evolving artistic identity stance reigned, as creative expression was imprinted through pragmatic approaches, leaving the student with an identity position that balanced functionality with fantasy.

This multiple case study has come full circle as I revisit the initial research questions in the final summary of the results. Findings and interpretations in each of the themed chapters illuminated the research questions with an informed perspective on the fundamental issues, patterns, and relationships that arose during the course of the study. In answering these key questions, it was essential to have a grounded theoretical approach in (a) the area of identity development as it relates to performance arts, (b) context-based learning that occurs as part of authentic learning experiences, and (c) the dynamics and components of studio and classroom

instruction in musical theatre training. These fundamental frameworks provided a structural guideline from which many other interesting findings were formed on the topic of artistic identity in this rich arts-based context.

The four research questions are now restated. Firstly, in what ways do the various learning contexts in a musical theatre program contribute to the formation of artistic identity? From the analysis and synthesis of the data, I concluded that the musical theatre experience played an important role in the formation of artistic identity. The ways in which this was accomplished were outlined systematically in the chapters that featured the results from the data. An overview from each of these themed chapters shows that the students experienced an overall increasing sense of confidence, and it developed directly as a result of the foundational and personalized instruction offered in the studio and classroom settings. Their newly discovered confidence impacted the students' image of themselves as both artists and human beings. This heightened sense of self-awareness led students towards a greater level of skill, knowledge, and artistic sensibility in the various discipline areas of the program.

The data revealed several components of the musical theatre experience that were essential to the development of the students' artistic identity. Primarily, the opportunity to work in the dyad relationship in a studio setting was a means for each individual to uncover her true artistic identity. Within this unique teaching and learning dynamic, students were given opportunities to unleash their creative and critical thoughts. In a similar way, some of the experiences in the drama and music classrooms provided personalized instruction that contributed to the students' artistic growth. What resulted from these opportunities were learning experiences that nurtured the negotiation of the students' various performing roles and identities.

In the interviews, students mentioned time and time again the important role that teacher encouragement played in their attempts to discover their artistic potential. In the midst of students' episodes of artistic struggle to develop a positive and true identity, a strong sense of teacher support was fully necessary. Another important factor in their artistic identity

development was the feeling of ease that came as a result of being familiar with the instructor during studio music lessons. Because of the intimate nature of the dyad relationship, students opened themselves up to taking risks, and they described reaching peak moments of self-realization as a result. These experiences helped students to determine what was important to them as artists and how they could make informed interpretative choices. These advancements through their embodied experiences were central to the shaping of their identity and the direction they would pursue as artists.

The second research question was: How do students perceive that their self-identity has changed as a result of their experiences in the musical theatre program? As a result of their training period, the students began to readily identify themselves within the performance arts context. In the studio instructional setting, many students identified themselves most specifically as singers. On the basis of this self-identification, they were able to extend their identity stance toward a conception of themselves as triple-threat performers in the context of the full program. My detailed observations of the studio and classroom lessons resulted in a clear picture of the fantasized identity stance that was adopted by the majority of the students; that is, they wanted to be stars on the Broadway stage.

Students attributed their process of self-actualization to the musical theatre learning experience, as shown in their accounts that expressed how moments of reflection-in-action shaped the way they perceived themselves. In most cases, students viewed themselves as improved artists-in-training. Acutely aware of their constantly shifting identity, students credited the transient nature of their self-identity to the multiple learning experiences in the program. Their higher degree of self-awareness led them to negotiate their identity within a more complex framework; that is, students achieved greater breadth and depth in their realization of their artistic selves.

The third research question was: What learning experiences do the students identify that carry over from one teaching context to another? The students provided a multitude of examples

from occasions when they discovered that their skills and knowledge were transferable from the studio context to the program context. In many instances, students spoke of the reassurance that the one-on-one music lessons afforded them, explaining that this type of instruction helped them prepare for performance work in front of their colleagues and other teachers in various classroom situations. Students also recalled specific moments when their studio learning—mindsets, approaches, and tools—prepared them to independently tackle major technical and musical challenges. Thus, the synthesis and application of many of the studio learning experiences were integrated in a cross-curricular manner.

Lastly, in terms of the final research question, the study also shed light on the question of how the training in various classes and disciplines interacted as students developed artistic identities. My observations confirmed that students' images were shaped profoundly by the performance work that they completed in classroom settings in dance, drama, and music. They would often regard the process and performance work in multiple contexts as a source of inspiration because it contributed greatly to their heightened sense of artistic identity. In the interviews and in the music studio setting, students would share with me the feedback they had received and the memorable performance moments they had experienced. No matter whether this classroom feedback and performance experience was positive or negative, students were able to more clearly ascertain and characterize the image of themselves that had emerged. I realized that students' descriptions of themselves as artists were enhanced because of these performance moments; specifically, these experiences provided them with constructive criticism that would help them refine their craft. Process and performance work in the classroom settings was regarded as essential to the students' development as artists as it afforded them the opportunity to practice their craft in a responsive and supportive environment.

As their levels of musicality and technicality improved, students aimed towards mastering the artistic objectives that had been set out for them and gained a greater desire to integrate the various disciplines of the program. Most students became keenly aware of their internal

experience as artists and were able to fully realize their long-term aspirations of triple-threat status in the musical theatre industry. This desire to be versatile performers manifested itself by their increased interest in ensuring that their fundamental vocal technique was in place. The studio vocal lessons became central to the development of the students' artistic identity because they recognized through direct experience from other classes and disciplines in the program, that the studio work was invaluable to their growth as artists.

As the school year progressed, students prepared more intricately integrated performances with increased proficiency. Fulfilling the demands from each of the disciplines in the program eventually led the students to realize their unwavering commitment to the consistent attainment of a mastery level of performance. As well, their need to accomplish this integrated goal was founded in their belief that maximizing their potential would best ensure their path towards becoming an employable triple-threat performer. These profound realizations inspired the students to accept and embrace the rigorous training as up-and-coming artists. Perhaps the most significant aspect from the studio and classroom lessons that resonated most with the students was to be dedicated to the development of their craft. Students desired toward this identification in multiple disciplines because they strongly believed that it would eventually lead them to a more meaningful, artistic existence.

Future Research

This study has shed much light on studio music instruction within the context of a three-year musical theatre program, framing the artistic experience with clarity and accuracy. Since many of the artistic experiences offered in musical theatre programs are primarily grounded in practical pursuits rather than academia, currently there is a lack of scholarly work. An authentic examination of multiple learning contexts has been presented in an attempt to measure the quality, nature, and type of artistic instruction, especially considering there has been a paucity of systematic studies in this area of research.

Based on the conclusive findings, a continued demand remains for research and program evaluation of post-secondary musical theatre training. More specifically, the development of a detailed paradigm for teaching and learning in vocal studio instruction is deserving of further research. After completing this research study on this topic, I believe there is a residual sense that curricular and theoretical knowledge should be further integrated into the program areas.

As I proceeded through my research work regarding musical theatre programming, several major questions came to mind; I realized that many of these questions extended far beyond the scope of this initial research about studio music instruction. Posing such potential questions became part of my thought process, as I tried to fully grasp where the study findings were situated; that is, how they worked towards the development of a greater understanding of the pedagogy involved in studio music instruction within musical theatre programs. With the complexity of adding “identity” into this examination, it was most evident that the development of the students’ artistic identity was closely, if not directly, affected by the way in which the program curriculum was designed and delivered. Thus, the following set of questions is presented to serve as a starting point for future research in this area of music education: (a) How does the design and implementation of the curriculum in a musical theatre program affect the formation and development of artistic identity? (b) How does studio and classroom instruction in this musical theatre program interact in a manner that encourages an ongoing process of artistic freedom, skill acquisition, and identity development? (c) How might the disciplines of dance, drama, and music in a musical theatre program be most effectively integrated in the classroom instruction and the studio instruction offered to students?

Programmatic Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, I now make two major recommendations for implementation into future musical theatre programs. The first of these recommendations centres on the communication amongst departments in the areas of dance, drama, and music. Had it not

been for the cross-department visitations I made in order to research this study, there would not have been any formal opportunities for me in my role as a studio music teacher to meet many of the other faculty members in the program, let alone to co-ordinate curricula. I recommend open and ongoing communication between all studio and classroom teachers, in order to ensure that objectives of the musical theatre program are fulfilled in a cross-curricular manner. While this integration did occur occasionally, as was evident from the data, this natural evolution of aligned pedagogical practice and content was certainly not mandated by the administration or intentional and planned out in advance. If courses were more carefully planned with a unified educational philosophy, the program would benefit through cohesive and clarified content, implementation, and evaluation. Although it is essential that the artist-teachers be given the opportunity to flourish, using their own unique teaching styles, a stronger team-approach within each department and at the program level would assist in improving the quality and nature of the delivery of the musical theatre program.

The second recommendation involves the studio coaching component of the program. Currently at the college, where this study took place, the studio lessons that students receive are compartmentalized into two streams: vocal technique and vocal repertoire. While this curricular set-up works well for scheduling purposes, and in some cases for rehearsal of the repertoire, it became clear from student responses and from my own observations and experience in the field that studio lesson time would be more effective if the vocal technique and vocal repertoire were integrated and contextualized. I recommend that teachers of vocal technique incorporate into their lessons opportunities for students to develop their musicianship skills and interpretive skills through various means, such as working on the musical repertoire. Because students reported that vocal technique was most meaningful when applied in a context that is practical and purposeful for them, namely the process and performance of their musical pieces, it became quite obvious to me that this component should be compulsory and not be viewed by either teacher or students as

optional. Ideally, the scheduling of the same instructor for both aspects of a student's studio instruction would be beneficial for both the consistency and monitoring of the student's progress.

The challenge of incorporating several objectives into each lesson, of course, places a demand on time the teacher's and students' time. Currently the time factor remains one of the main reasons for the number and type of studio lessons that are offered; the other primary reason is the budget constraints faced by the college. If the college administration were able to spend time observing the complexities that surround artistic development of this nature, it is possible that multiple reasons would surface to justify the inclusion of more studio training for their aspiring triple-threat performers.

Concluding Comments

The musical theatre program contributed in significant ways to developing the students' artistic identity and many of the abilities necessary for a career in the musical theatre industry. Students regarded studio music instruction as integral to their development as artists, as they learned to be less inhibited and more able to explore the full range of their potential and possibility in this setting. The program curriculum for the first-year students proved to be an extremely effective and comprehensive way of developing the students' artistic identity. In terms of shaping the identity of these impressionable artists, it was the various triple-threat components of the musical theatre program experience that mattered, and in studio music instruction it was the dyad relationship that mattered.

A central implication of the research is that studio music instruction provides a unique teaching and learning dynamic, one that cannot be paralleled in the classroom contexts of the program; nevertheless, it is one that complements the classroom instruction. Studio instruction offers students the opportunity to work one-on-one with teachers who provide valuable musical knowledge and who act as pedagogical practitioners for students' individual needs and interests. These close-knit dyad relationships are pivotal in the formation and development of various

aspects of the students' artistry. By working in such a personalized manner with each student, studio teachers have many opportunities to focus on technical and musical objectives, which greatly affect the students' identity construction. With this in mind, it became clear that the nature of this artistic experience is irreplaceable in terms of what can be accomplished during the studio music sessions.

An inextricable link between the artists and their voices was an element that arose as truly unique to studio instruction. The students' self-descriptions emphasized the direct impact that their vocal training had on the way they viewed themselves during the course of their studio instruction. In particular, this dimension of the kinesthetic 'body as instrument' vocal experience sets the study apart from any other study that has examined the studio teaching and learning of instruments. Thus, vocal music instruction in the studio can be best understood as an amalgamation of the voice and the person because the students developed their minds, their bodies, and their identities when they engaged in their art of vocalizing and music-making.

This research indicated that students knew they wouldn't all end up on Broadway. Over time, they came to appreciate that they were developing both the skills and attitudes needed to prepare them for a wide variety of careers. When students arrived to the program, many were overconfident in some areas and under-confident in others. Their training in the program's various contexts brought both equilibrium and the understanding that the road to becoming a true artist is long and complex. The personalized nature of the program and the one-on-one attention made it possible for students to more fully realize their potential in light of their current strengths and weaknesses. Ultimately, the research showed that the program was not just about the art making but about crucial ancillary outcomes as well, such as developing a sense of discernment that could be applied far beyond the theatre arts program. Surely these are admirable outcomes from taking part in the program: undoubtedly this is the kind of experience that educators should strive to provide to the students they teach.

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Appendix A – Recruitment Letter

Dear first year musical theatre students,

I am presently involved in the preparation stages of a research project that will attempt to examine the ongoing development of artistic identity in the context of studio music instruction. This letter is being sent to you on behalf of myself, the researcher, to inform you about the project and to request your participation. Detailed information about the project and other information for participants will also be provided once you have indicated further interest to proceed to the next stage.

If you are interested in participating in the study, please read and review the letter of information that is provided. If you decide to participate, please respond in person to the researcher by January 25, 2008. Following your consideration to participate in the study, there will be a consent form that requires your signature in order to proceed. This consent form can be obtained from and submitted directly to the researcher. After this form has been received, the study will commence.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. For those of you who choose not to participate in this study, thank you in advance for your co-operation in taking the time to read this letter. For those who do choose to participate, your time, effort, and contributions will be most appreciated throughout the research study.

Meagan Troop

Appendix B – Letter of Information

Title: The Development of Artistic Identity in the Music Studio

I am writing to request your participation in research aimed at studio music instruction in a post-secondary musical theatre program. The ultimate goal of my research is to help close the gap that exists in the literature on identity development in a music studio context. I am a graduate student, at the master's level, in the Faculty of Education, Queen's University. This research has been cleared by the Queen's University General Research Ethics Board, and also by the program leaders in the music department at St. Lawrence College. Permission from the program leaders at St. Lawrence College, in the musical theatre department, has also been attained to complete this study.

In this part of the research, I wish to document the views of first-year musical theatre students about their learning experiences in classroom and one-on-one studio music contexts to examine the nature and impact that these experiences have on the formation of artistic identity. To do this, I am planning to conduct several individual interviews, and I am inviting you to participate in one of them. I will lead the questioning, which will be audio recorded for data collection purposes. In addition to the recorded interview sessions, I will be analyzing data from the recorded studio lessons as an additional source of information for the study.

I will conduct the interviews at a time that is convenient for each participant involved. The location will be chosen by the participant. The interviews will be approximately 30 to 45 minutes in duration, and I will record the data on audiotape. The interview notes will be written up and maintained as a computer file; the taped interview will be transcribed, and then the audiotapes will be destroyed. None of the data will contain your name or the identity of your place of study. As part of my regular teaching, I will be watching my students in their lessons and recording my observations in a field notes journal. I will be recording the studio sessions, which is already part of the practice, and I intend to use these studio recordings to obtain data. The place of study will be identified using general terms only. Data will be secured in a locked office, and confidentiality is guaranteed to the extent possible.

I do not foresee risks in your participation in this research. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are not obliged to answer any questions that you find objectionable, and you are assured that no information collected will be reported to anyone who is in authority over you. You are free to withdraw from the study at any point, and you may request removal of all or part of your data.

This research may result in publication of various types, including journal articles, professional publications, newsletters, books, and instructional materials for schools. Your name will not be attached to any form of data you provide; neither will the name of your place of study be known to anyone tabulating or analyzing the data, nor will these appear in any publication created as a result of this research.

If the data are made available to other researchers for secondary analysis, your identity will never be disclosed.

Should further information be required before you can make a decision about participation, please feel free to e-mail me at 6mact@queensu.ca or contact my supervisor, Rena Upitis at Queen's University, Faculty of Education at (613) 533-6212, or by e-mail at upitir@queensu.ca.

For questions, concerns, or complaints about the research ethics of this study, contact the Education Research Ethics Board, (EREB) at ereb@queensu.ca or the chair of the General Research Ethics Board, (GREB), Dr. Steve Leighton (613) 533-6000 Ext. 77034 (greb.chair@queensu.ca).

Sincerely,

Meagan Troop

Appendix C – Consent Form

For Meagan Troop
The Development of Artistic Identity in the Music Studio

- I agree to participate in the study entitled “The Development of Artistic Identity in the Music Studio,” conducted through the Faculty of Education at Queen’s University.
- I have read and retained a copy of the Letter of Information, and the purpose of the study has been explained to my satisfaction.
- I have had any questions answered to my satisfaction.
- I have been notified that my participation is voluntary, that I may withdraw at any point during the study, and that I may request the removal of all or part of my data without any consequences to myself.
- I have been told the steps that will be taken to ensure confidentiality of all information.
- I am agreeable to the fact that the researcher will use audio-taped data from the studio recording and the interview session
- Both the researcher and I will retain a copy of the signed consent form.
- I am aware that if I have any questions about this project, I can contact Meagan Troop by e-mail at 6mact@queensu.ca. I am also aware that for questions, concerns, or complaints about the research ethics of this study, I can contact the Education Research Ethics Board at ereb@queensu.ca or the chair of the General Research Ethics Board, Dr. Steve Leighton, at (613) 533-6000 Ext. 77034 (greb.chair@queensu.ca).

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THIS CONSENT FORM, AND I AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY.

Student’s Name (Please Print): _____

Signature of Student: _____

Date: _____ Telephone Number: _____

Please sign one copy of this consent form and return it to Meagan Troop. Retain the second copy for your records.

Appendix D - Sample Interview Questions

1. Describe one of your greatest strengths as a performer-artist. (Probe: Are there any others that come to mind?)
2. What aspects of yourself would you like to develop further as a performer-artist?
3. What specific attributes do you hope to gain as a student in this musical theatre program?
4. How have your previous experiences in musical theatre prepared you for this program?
5. Explain how your previous experience affects your present learning experience in studio music sessions.
6. Has your study of vocal technique and repertoire informed your study of acting? study of dancing? Describe how your musical study in the studio sessions has informed your study in these other disciplines.
7. Please describe the nature of a learning experience you have had in the music studio and/or program that you feel has allowed you an opportunity to exercise artistic freedom.
8. What is your opinion of being assigned to different studio instructors for various aspects of your musical study? (Probe: How has the assignment of different instructors affected your learning experience?)
9. How does the studio experience relate with performance classes? How does the studio experience relate with choral singing classes? How does the studio experience relate to music theory classes? (Probes: How might the studio experience relate more effectively with each other class? How do you suggest that these learning experiences be further integrated into the program?)
10. In what ways do you feel your learning is being encouraged in the studio setting? In the classroom setting?
11. How have you applied the skills and attributes you have developed from studio instruction into other areas within the program? (Probes: into various disciplines, into various contexts: social, musical, interpersonal etc.)
12. What aspects of the rehearsal process motivate you towards development as an artist in training?
13. Please share a memorable learning experience you have had in the music studio. How has this contributed to the shaping/ formation of your artistic image?
14. Who, among all of the performing artists you know, do you most aspire to be like?

15. How would you describe yourself personally? How would you describe yourself artistically?
16. What are your professional aspirations upon completion of this program? What do you seek to gain from this specialized training?
17. Is there anything that I should have asked you that I didn't think to ask?

Appendix E – Letter of Information

Title: The Development of Artistic Identity in the Music Studio

I am writing to request your participation, as a classroom instructor, in research aimed at studio music instruction in a post-secondary musical theatre program. The ultimate goal of my research is to help close the gap that exists in the literature on identity development in the music studio in the context of musical theatre training. I am a graduate student, at the master's level, in the Faculty of Education, Queen's University. This research has been cleared by the Queen's University General Research Ethics Board, and also by the program leaders in the music department at St. Lawrence College.

In this part of the research, I wish to document the views of eight first-year musical theatre students about their learning experiences in classroom and one-on-one studio music contexts to examine the impact that these experiences have had on the formation of artistic identities. For the purposes of the classroom observations, I will attend class sessions in the disciplines of drama, dance, and music in the musical theatre program. I will make observations with the intent of collecting and reporting data exclusively on the eight participants selected for the studio component of this study. Any discussion that pertains to the classroom experience or dynamic will be generalized, and the additional students in these classes will not be the focus during the data collection process.

I plan to take field notes throughout the various classroom sessions that I observe. These notes will be written up and maintained as a computer file. None of the data will contain names or identify the place of study; the place of study will be identified using general terms only. Data will be secured in a locked office, and confidentiality is guaranteed to the extent possible.

I do not foresee risks in your participation in this research. Your participation as an instructor is entirely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw from the study at any point.

This research may result in publication of various types, including journal articles, professional publications, newsletters, books, and instructional materials for schools. Your and your students' names will not be attached to any form of data you provide; neither will the identity of your place of study be known to anyone tabulating or analyzing the data, nor will these appear in any publication created as a result of this research.

If the data are made available to other researchers for secondary analysis, your identity will never be disclosed.

Should further information be required before you can make a decision about participation, please feel free to e-mail me at 6mact@queensu.ca or contact my supervisor, Rena Upitis, at Queen's University, Faculty of Education at (613) 533-6212, or at upitISR@queensu.ca.

For questions, concerns, or complaints about the research ethics of this study, contact the Education Research Ethics Board, (EREB) at ereb@queensu.ca or the chair of the General Research Ethics Board, (GREB), Dr. Steve Leighton, at (613) 533-6000 Ext. 77034 (greb.chair@queensu.ca).

Sincerely,

Meagan Troop

Appendix F – Consent Form

For Meagan Troop
The Development of Artistic Identity in the Music Studio

- As the instructor of the class, I agree to have my students participate in the study entitled “The Development of Artistic Identity in the Music Studio,” conducted through the Faculty of Education at Queen’s University.
- I am aware that general observation will be completed in my classroom setting and that the researcher will be taking field notes during these lessons.
- I have been informed that the observations of the eight participants selected for the studio component of this study will be the primary focus and will generate the only data used and reported for the purposes of this study.
- I am aware that other participating students in these classes will not be included in the data collection process and will not be identified at any time.
- I have read and retained a copy of the Letter of Information, and the purpose of the study has been explained to my satisfaction.
- I have had any questions answered to my satisfaction.
- I have been notified that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any point during the study.
- I have been told the steps that will be taken to ensure confidentiality of all information.
- Both the researcher and I will retain a copy of the signed consent form.
- I am aware that if I have any questions about this project, I can contact Meagan Troop by e-mail at 6mact@queensu.ca. I am also aware that for questions, concerns, or complaints about the research ethics of this study, I can contact the Education Research Ethics Board at ereb@queensu.ca or the chair of the General Research Ethics Board, Dr. Steve Leighton, at (613) 533-6000 Ext. 77034 (greb.chair@queensu.ca).

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THIS CONSENT FORM AND I AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY.

Instructor’s Name (Please Print): _____

Signature of Instructor: _____

Date: _____ Telephone Number: _____

Please sign one copy of this consent form and return it to Meagan Troop. Retain the second copy for your records.

Appendix G – Interview Questions

N.B. The following questions have yet to be ordered in sequence. This is a work in progress, based on the results of the initial pilot interview, and it will be discussed with the research committee prior to the completion of the second pilot interview.

Could you please describe a significant experience that you have had in the midst of a studio music lesson when you realized that you had arrived as a musician? OR...that changed your view of yourself as an artist?

Can you tell me about an “aha” moment when something just ‘clicked’ and you felt that you had made significant progress as a performer-artist?

Probes: What was it that clicked exactly? How has this progress affected the way you perceive yourself?

Can you please explore a moment that was challenging for you in the music studio and how you were able to grow or change because of it? What role did the studio teacher play in effecting this change in you?

Tell me about a time or point in your studio learning that you struggled with a concept or aspect of technique? musicianship? performance? and artistry?

How did you overcome these obstacles?

How did the studio experience enhance or inhibit the process of development during these difficult moments?

How did these experiences affect/ change your view of yourself as a performer?

Please give one specific example of an event in the music studio that really changed you in terms of how you felt/ saw yourself. More than one example would be great.

Probes: What was the instructor like in this moment?

How did you react to this change?

What teaching/ learning strategies initiated and/or played a part in this development? What other aspects of the session played a factor in this shift in how you felt/ saw yourself?

What inspired this development?

What aspects of studio music instruction have transformed the way you create music, sing, and express yourself artistically?

How have these studio music teaching/learning moments transformed who you are and how you perceive yourself as a performer-artist?

Can you please tell me about a time when you had an “epiphany” in the process of interacting with your teacher in the music studio?

Describe a moment that had a great impact on you in the studio (that was completely personal and internal and strikes you as being significant to your improvement as a performer-artist)

How would you describe the evolution of yourself as an artist in this setting from the beginning of the school year up until this moment?

What changes/ developments regarding your perception of yourself as a performer-artist have occurred in the studio music session within this time frame?

What element(s) from the music studio lessons have had a transformative effect on you as a performer?

Describe a specific event from the lessons when you noticed these elements effectuating a change in your performance and your self-concept?

Photo documentation:

Why did you choose this photo?

What is the significance of the photo in terms of your own identification as an artist?

What about this photo resonates so strongly with you?

Probe/ elaboration: ask students to point out things in the photo: defining characteristics of the image they have of themselves, the experience, what elements should I attend to as researcher. Have them point these out.

How do you now see yourself in this photo? What is most memorable to you regarding how you perceived yourself at the time it was taken?

Musical Repertoire:

Could you tell me some of the reasons that you chose the songs you did for performance classes this year?

What challenges did this repertoire present that you felt were integral to your development as a singer and artist?

Can you take me through the significant learning process that you have experienced with a song from the beginning stages through to your most recent performance of it?

How did this process change you as a person and a performer?

Were you able to see yourself differently after rehearsing and/ or performing any of these pieces?

Can you describe what those significant moments were like?

What was going through your mind and body throughout this journey; that is, how did these changes make you feel?

Was there a sensory dimension that presented itself during the peaks of these artistic experiences? If so, please describe further.

Were you able to engage and connect to the internal part of your being in this process of growing as an artist?

Appendix H – List of Data Collection

Pseudonyms

Maren
 Peggy
 Charlotte
 Andrea
 Sherry
 Joanne
 Reta
 Lexy

Interviews

- 1) Monday, March 31, 2008 -Charlotte
- 2) Monday, March 31, 2008-Peggy
- 3) Tuesday, April 1, 2008-Reta
- 4) Tuesday, April 1, 2008-Andrea
- 5) Monday, April 7, 2008-Joanne
- 6) Thursday, April 10, 2008-Lexy
- 7) Monday, April 14, 2008-Maren
- 8) Tuesday, April 15, 2008-Sherry

Classroom Observations

- 1) Choral classes - Feb 11, 2008 and March 17, 2008
- 2) Master Classes-Feb 28, 2008 and March 27, 2008
- 3) Voice & Speech- Feb 27, 2008 and March 26, 2008
- 4) Acting through Song-Feb 28, 2008 and March 20, 2008
- 5) Modern Dance- March 27, 2008 and April 10, 2008
- 6) Dance Production- March 7, 2008 and April 4, 2008

Music Studio Field Notes

Studio field notes were collected every Monday and Tuesday from January 2008-April 2008

Music Studio Recordings

Audio recordings were collected every Monday and Tuesday from January 2008-April 2008

Appendix I – Data Coding Schema

Interviews:

(I; A; PD7; 60:61)

I = indicates interview

A= represents participant’s pseudonym “Andrea”

PD7= primary document from Atlas.TI

60:61= lines from primary document analysis

Classroom Observations

(CO; MD; PD27; 5:5)

CO=classroom observation data

MD= stands for modern dance, represents the specific class name

PD27= primary document

5:5= lines from primary document analysis

Studio Field Notes

(SO; R; PD13; 45:47)

SO= Studio Observations

R= represents participant’s pseudonym “Rebecca”

PD13= primary document

45:47= lines from primary document analysis

Audio Recordings

(AR; PD20; 3:4)

AR= Audio Recordings

PD20= primary document number

3.4= lines from primary document analysis

Pseudonyms

M	Maren
P	Peggy
C	Charlotte
A	Andrea
S	Sherry
J	Joanne
R	Reta
L	Lexy

Appendix J – Sample Interview Transcript

March 31st Interview with Peggy (I; P; PD20)

Meagan: Describe one of your greatest strengths as a performer-artist.

Peggy: I'm a really good...performer...like I don't have the best singing technique I have really good dance technique but it's not you know there's going to be better dancers than me out there and I'm a pretty good actress but I think I'm really good at having stage presence.

Meagan: Are there any other strengths that come to mind?

Peggy: I'm really good with like...being keeping things fresh like I'm really impulsive on stage.

Meagan: Okay.

Peggy: so I kinda keep things alive and like I'm a good dancer I'm a good actress...umm and...yeah I have a really good work ethic so I think I'm really good to work with and I've actually I've always known that I was directable but ever since I came to this school... I've learned that I'm really super directable cause everybody's always like "Oh you're so good at like taking criticisms...and stuff" so...umm yeah I think those are some of my strengths as a performer.

M: Good. Umm. Would you have said that you would have identified yourself more as a dancer, actor, or singer first?

P: I'm definitely a dancer first cause I've been dancing since I was four...umm but I'm...going to start calling myself an actor first because there's this whole theory that like you have to act to do anything right you have to act to sing and you have to act to dance so...umm I have most training in dance...so that's my strength but I'm going to start being an actor, dancer, singer [laughs].

M: What aspects of yourself would you like to develop and/or improve further as a performer-artist?

P: I just want to be...like so badly a better singer [brings to tears to her eyes]...it's sooooo irritating sometimes...but uh ...yeah just...like of course I want to be a better dancer and a better actress...but I really just like want to be like a magnificent singer.

M: What specific skills and attributes do you hope to gain as a student in this musical theatre program?

P: Umm...well like mostly I'm here to improve my singing I thought actually that's wrong I thought that I was coming here to improve my singing which that's helping too but I've learned by being here that there's so much more...like bringing it all together into a performance is so much more than dancing and singing and acting...you know you need to have like... on stage skills...you know so... I really I would love to be a really reliable person to hire... like I'd like to come out this school...and the teachers tell directors out there that "this girl is gonna to do the work and she's gonna do it right and she's gonna be on time" I need to develop a thicker skin that's another thing [laughs] that's another attribute I'd love to have [both laugh] umm...I would also like to be a little less jealous of other people who are [laughs] good at things...especially good singers... and umm...yeah mostly I just really want to get my singing skills way up there.

M: Explain how your previous experience affects your present learning experience in studio music sessions.

P: Well...like with us between you and I like I find that...we've started like you picked up on the fact that I'm really good at physical...things right they really help my singing and that's I think because I've been dancing since I was four so I know how to think with my body.

M: Right.

P: So sometimes when someone says "visualize this in your vocal cords and blah blah blah blah" I'm like that doesn't really help me umm...but my dance training has made it so that if I...have a like a physical gesture like shaping vowels like we do like this or just like the bend on lip trills.

Yeah, do you think you are a kinesthetic learner?

Yeah.

Please give me one specific example of an event in the music studio that really changed you in terms of how you felt/ saw yourself.

There's...like I have those all the time [laughs].

Well don't feel limited to one...you can give me several examples if you'd like.

Even today like I found my voice opened up so much when I was relaxing here and in choir...

What do you mean by here?

Just below my ribs...

Okay.

Yeah...like I'm really good at relaxing the lower part of my stomach...umm but it's like my ribs.

The bottom end of the ribs.

Yeah that I'm always really holding tight because of my dance training.

Right.

But even today like when when I was really focusing but I always focus on here [puts on hand belly]...just by focusing a little bit higher...I found that I had way more breath control and thus could control my pitch like the last few notes better...and I was in choir...and I was doing that and...

You were being conscious of that.

I was breathing I was putting my hand into here and like trying to breathe into the lower end of my ribs because for some reason I'm designated as one of like four first sopranos in West Side Story so there's all of these like crazy high notes and I'm all like [laughs] and I usually kinda feel

like I sound flat but today I got right over top of them and I was like “I sound REALLY good” like and it’s because I’m learning how to relax my ribs and like some other things...the [taps on her leg] subdividing?

Mm-hmm.

When you taught me about that...that for some reason just helps my air flow keep going...I don’t know why...

Because it doesn’t feel like that long sustained note when you subdivide right?

Yeah...it’s like a million little notes [she sings a note and taps along on her leg] yeah...yeah...

Anything else that you can think of?

I feel a lot less like the soprano that I thought I was...in general just because I’m not hitting notes that I used to be able to hit and I don’t know and I kinda realized today that’s probably because I’ve I haven’t done rep soprano rep until just recently so I probably of course wouldn’t have developed those notes...you can’t just do it in tutorials.

Yeah I really do agree with you that it has everything to do with your repertoire choice.

So yeah so that’s sort of changed the way I saw myself. So maybe next year I will focus more on...like I want to be a soprano I don’t know why I just do...but I think this rib relaxing thing is going to make a big difference to that cause it did in choir today I was like singing and I’m like...what’s the highest? There’s a G...yeah there’s like three G’s and I felt like they were just floating out you know?

That’s awesome. So how did you react to this change? How did it make you feel?

Oh good REALLY good...yeah cause I like... it so...we put so much pressure on ourselves you know what I mean and I’m aware that I’m doing it to myself you know what I mean like I know I’m doing good work and people never give me anything but praise here all the teachers you know...but I always feel bad about my singing you know...soooo like...when something good happens with my singing when something happens that’s good enough for me in my singing...I’m like ecstatic!

Good. So what teaching/ learning strategies initiated and/or played a part in this development?

Well definitely the fact that you work with me a lot physically has like I wouldn’t have gotten this far without like without all of those physical gestures I’m a kinesthetic learner like you said and I don’t know if that I mean that obviously doesn’t work for everybody cause everybody’s not...

Right.

But we like talk about you...[both laugh] and uh like we all are like you do slightly different things with all of us so it’s like it’s like you really learned how to teach each one of us...you know what I mean?

Mm-hmm.

So that strategy really helped me like having like a gesture to sorta think about it.

What other aspects of the session played a factor in this shift or change in how you felt/ saw yourself?

Well like they do make me feel like a better singer so that boosts my confidence of course right and...and then it's...but like it's really becoming like the thing I want the MOST in the world like beyond money or love or like anything [crescendos] I want to be a god damn good singer! And like...so [sighs] I'm getting emotional now [she laughs through some tears].

It's okay.

Oh no...[starts crying] I'm sorry I've been so stressed out today's been so crazy...

And you've been going and going non-stop...

Yeah...[takes a deep breath] umm but yeah so it's just going and doing that like...practicing it just makes me feel better...you know.

And how often do you practice in a day?

All the time...I'm in the whisper rooms at least once a day for like an hour.

Wow...and you created your own singing journal this year?

Yeah and I have my own personal journal too cause I'm like a really big journaler.

Yeah.

I like made a list "how to sing" [laughs and shows me a part of her journal]...and this is what I've learned so far about how to sing [lists off the different items on her list].

Breathe

No glottal attacks, but that was back in the day

Vertical singing

Consonants

I find doing scales I said scales because I find that it's such a good warm-up because to do like scales works through like if I have to hit a certain note...what I do is like pick a scale that starts like a few notes below it where that notes in the middle of the scale and go through it like that.

Breathe into vowel spaces

Mix

Rhythm

Centre of pitches

Sing into resonators that's what we were working on today a lot that helped me a lot get it...I really liked that stuff

If it's a vowel you need a glottal

Relax the jaw

Punch out with your stomach on high notes but I don't know if that's really right not like punch out would you like force it out or like relax it?

You need to stay relaxed but engaged. [Interviewer demonstrates a proper inhalation and exhalation of breath and then sings a pitch] *Use breath while staying relaxed and flexible*

Yeah...okay

Think opera, pucker, catch breaths.

Are the majority of these terms or concepts from studio learning?

Yeah...and some of it is my personal work too for when I'm practicing on my own these things really help.

Okay good. Could you please describe a significant experience that you have had in the midst of a studio music lesson when you realized that you had arrived as a musician?

I felt really good about like I don't ever feel that way...but I felt really good singing when we were working on...[sings through part of the piece]...uhh... "Go Go Go Joseph!"

Oh right.

I don't know I felt like I was making well I just thought to myself I would have never sounded like this in September you know what I mean?

Right so you knew that there was a difference or a change.

Yeah...yeah and there are times when I like go back and sing something like a while ago... and when I do that I always feel good...about myself because I'm like that sounds so much better than it did a while ago.

Good. Describe a significant experience that you had in the midst of a studio lesson that changed your view of yourself as an artist?

[long pause] We've had so many lessons you know and like there all sort of like they're important to me all of them cause like...you're my first singing teacher...so you know I'm trying to make them like all really important...ummm [long pause] I can't really think of anything for that question.

Okay no problem maybe we can come back to it later on. Can you tell me about an "epiphany" when something just clicked and you felt that you had made significant progress as a performer-artist?

With the vowels...

Mm-hmm.

Whenever cause I have a like I have a really nasally voice and I'm from Newfoundland so I have a lot of like things to overcome [both laugh]...and I've got a tighter rib cage so...like with like vowel work...everything for me changed when I started to saying like just in like our tutorials like saying the vowel like ay and then like singing the vowel ay because I realized how close it is...and also a few days later when I still wasn't doing it right and you were like "Look in the mirror" and I looked at my face and I was like "ay"[spreads vowel and exaggerated face position and sings through the exercise] I still wasn't doing it right and I was doing all these crazy things

with my mouth and I was like “Oh she’s right” like I’m like making this way harder than it is and bringing all this like tension into my face you know?

Right.

And you know what’s funny is that I have TMJ so I have a really really bad really bad jaw.

Right.

But it’s gotten so much better...this year because of trying to relax my face for singing.

Good.

And I’m way more conscious to relax my jaw now because I know that I take when I’ve been singing I’ve been taking like a lot of tension into my face which doesn’t help the sound obviously.

Yeah. For sure. Good. So...how has this progress affected the way you perceive yourself?

I feel like...I’ve become a lot more confident in my ability to work at something...this year...especially to sing because...I just...I didn’t know now...I wasn’t sure when I was coming here if I’d be able to handle it like “Am I going to be able to do this?”...like I watched my friends go through Sheridan and like they were like just so busy all the time you know and I didn’t know if I was going to be able to do it but...I’ve become like way more confident in my like work ethic and abilities and I know that I’m good to work with and...and...like that makes me feel like I belong a lot more in the industry you know cause it’s a really social industry no matter what you do...you’re always working with people and so much of it is networking so...I think you know...I don’t think people would complain about having to work with me, which makes me feel good...the question is how do I perceive myself right?

Right.

Well if I’m in a good mood I’ll think I’m great at singing and if I’m in a bad mood I’ll think I’m bad at singing you know so...and some days I’m like “Oh I made so much progress” and then some days I’m like “Oh I’ve got so far to go” it’s just glass half empty glass half full stuff.

Right. Did any of these epiphany moments result from an interaction with your teacher in the music studio?

Yeah ALL of them [laughs].

All of them?

Yeah well you always tell me something and it changes the sound dramatically...like you have to be taught like you know what I mean?

Yes I do.

I feel like we meet in the middle like...like I think I’m working for you really hard so you work for me really hard and vice-versa you know like...I don’t know I think if I was somebody else it

wouldn't...or even if I was lazy that it wouldn't be the situation like...and we try things and I tell you if it's not work and you tell me if it's not working...

So it's like back and forth?

Yeah...it's like a conversation you know what I mean?

Definitely. Now I'd like to explore a moment that was challenging for you in the music studio. How you were able to grow or change because of it?

Like I'm just...always so disappointed...not really disappointed I just like I said I just want to be so much better than I am you know so it's really hard for me to accept that where I am is okay...you know cause it's okay it's not the end of the world and you know I'm not a terrible singer.

You're not even close.

Yeah...it's it's nothing is as dramatic as it is in my head it's just like...there's so many people in my year who are so GREAT at singing you know...so...like specific moments are like like I hated the loss of my upper range so whenever I like hear myself not singing a note high I hate that and I don't know how do I overcome it I just work harder...that's how I overcome everything if I'm like...if something goes wrong to try and fix it.

Do you think working harder in singing inhibits you as a singer?

I think it depends on the reason or where it's coming from...like if I...right now and I have like been this in the past like if I right now went into the whisper room right now and was like "I need to sing" it would be useless right? cause like I'm really wound up and I've just been working all day and stuff...and I know I do my best singing when I'm relaxed so...so sometimes you need to just take a break for sure but...but like generally I'll just attack the problem kinda head on.

Yeah good. Tell me about a time or point in your studio learning that you struggled with an aspect of technique?

Breath has been like a big problem...I thought it was due to lack shallow breathing but I'm pretty sure that it's due to the rib cage thing so I'm still struggling with that big time and I know that that's the key.

That's definitely the ticket [both laugh].