

Students' Perceptions of Music Learning and Imagery: Exploring and Documenting
Connections

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ABSTRACT

Storytelling, descriptors, and images, collectively presented as “imagery” or “extra-musical ideas” in this thesis, may be a helpful tool, contributing to the development of a grounded theory about how music learners conceptualize music while learning, performing, and listening to it. Since the pathway to achieving a musical performance is not necessarily specifiable, the use of imagery or extra-musical ideas may help to achieve what a specific technical recipe may not always be able to do. A considerable body of research exists on relationships among imagery, music, and education. Woody (2006) has examined how musicians translate imagery into specific musical plans through a quantitative study in which subjects were asked to play excerpts of music with corresponding images. Building on this work, the current study addresses the need for qualitative research that explores in more depth learners’ perspectives on the role of imagery in instrumental music learning. The purpose of this qualitative study was to determine the relationship between participants’ use of imagery and their understanding and interpretation of music. The two main research questions were 1) What is the nature of the relationship between students’ use of imagery and their understanding and execution of a piece of music? 2) Can visual imagery help to transition technical skills toward musical goals? More specifically, studied here was the impact of extra-musical ideas on undergraduate instrumental music majors during practice time. Methodology was ethnographic, and some convenience sampling was employed, as participants were drawn from three local universities. After the initial survey, participants were interviewed individually about prior experiences using imagery, as well as assigned a “homework” component in which participants were asked to actively employ imagery

while learning / practicing music. The follow-up interviews / demonstrations with each participant resulted in documenting and analyzing perceptions of how such approaches impacted the learning process for these individuals.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

At the time that I began my Master of Music Education degree, I had experienced sixteen years of piano instruction. In all these years, I was taught by different teachers with varying methods; however, once beginning studio instruction at the graduate level, I was exposed to several unfamiliar teaching approaches, one of which involves imagery, i.e., incorporating my instructors' suggested images into the musical score in order to facilitate musicality. As an educator and musician, I was intrigued by this approach and wanted not only to use it in my own playing, but also to find ways in which this might work for other music learners.

Rationale and Need for Study

Storytelling, descriptors, and images, collectively presented as “imagery” or “extra-musical ideas” in this thesis, may be a helpful tool, contributing to the development of a grounded theory about how music learners conceptualize music while learning, performing, and listening to it. Further exploration of this idea may give clarification to the gray, mysterious, and normally subjective question of how musicality might be achieved. A considerable body of research exists on relationships among imagery, music, and education. Musicologist Susan McClary argues that narrative is inherently connected to our understanding of music and has used stories or images to

explain various harmonies, themes, and melodies in a piece of music.¹ Lynn Rubright has recognized the relationship between imagery and education and has found that imagery can be at the foundation of many things studied or experienced to both enrich and enliven curriculum.² Music education scholar Robert Woody has examined how musicians translate imagery into specific musical plans through a quantitative study in which subjects were asked to play excerpts of music with corresponding images.³ Building on this work, the current study addresses the need for qualitative research that explores, in more depth, learners' perspectives on the role of imagery in instrumental music learning.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to determine some of the relationships among participants' use of imagery and their understanding and interpreting of music. The two main research questions were: 1) What is the nature of the relationship between a students' use of imagery and her understanding of a piece of music? and 2) Can visual imagery help to transition technical skills toward musical goals? A more specific channel of exploration was determining the ways in which calling to mind specific imagery impacted college-level instrumental music majors during private instruction and practice time. My hypothesis was that when a student learns a piece of music alongside an image

¹ Susan, McClary, "The Impromptu That Trod on a Loaf: Or How Music Tells Stories," *Narrative* 5, no. 1 (1997): 20.

² Lynn Rubright, *Beyond the Beanstalk Interdisciplinary Learning Through Storytelling* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1996), 17.

³ Robert H. Woody, "Cognitive Processing of Imagery-Based Instructions for Expressive Performance," *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 54 no. 2 (2006): 125.

or story of her own creation, a firmer understanding of the music may take place that might help with the student's musicality and interpretation.

Review of Literature

Substantial literature exists on imagery in music, imagery in education, and imagery in music education. I will build on this literature and synthesize it in order to highlight aspects of it that support the idea of visualizing specific imagery or creating a narrative in order to better facilitate musicality.

Imagery in Music

This first broad category encompasses composers, arrangers, musicologists, or analysts who use imagery in music. One genre with which this is done is programmatic music. Program music is defined as "...instrumental music written in association with a poem, a story, or some other literary source—or even just a highly suggestive word or two."⁴ Although program music existed before the Romantic Era, it became popular and important during the nineteenth century with the stress of transcending interdisciplinary boundaries. With the association of poetry and ideas, composers could make instrumental music feel even more expressive, which was a primary goal of the Romantic Era. An example of program music from this time is Berlioz's *Symphony Fantastique*. Berlioz's music tells the narrative of his love for Harriet Smithson and his subsequent emotional torment through the *idée fixe*, "...a musical idea that recurs obsessively within a work,

⁴ Joseph Kerman and Gary Tomlinson, *Listen* (9th ed. New York, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2019), 223.

thus recalling an associated idea.”⁵ Berlioz conceived this short musical theme as representing his love, transforming it to fit the mood and situation for each point in what became a musical story.⁶ For the premier of this symphony, Berlioz handed out programs containing his personal narrative, guiding the listener step by step through what was heard. This was new and unusual for the time and added a sense of meaning to the experience that audiences quickly embraced.⁷ The program in this setting is using narrative to heighten the audience’s listening experience much the way that narrative or imagery may heighten the instrumental musician’s playing experience.

Ballet music also comes with an assigned meaning or story, but is further combined with the physicality of dance.⁸ In the overture of Tchaikovsky’s *Romeo and Juliet*, for example, the composer followed the outline of Shakespeare’s original play, pairing his main themes with parts of the tragedy for the listener. Once apprised of this, the listener can hear the surging romantic strings melody as representing the love between Romeo and Juliet; the angry, agitated theme as the confrontation between the Montagues and the Capulets; and the hymn-like theme as the portrayal of the kind Friar Laurence.⁹ Another notable example is Igor Stravinsky’s *The Rite of Spring*. Stravinsky drew on his vast musical range in composing *The Rite of Spring*, which set to music the story of a primitive sacrificial rite in which a virgin dances herself to death before an idol of the ancient Slavic sun god. His deconstruction of Russian folk music into repeated,

⁵ Christopher H. Gibbs and Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music* (College ed. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 590.

⁶ Peter J. Burkholder, Donald Jay Grout and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music* (10th ed. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2019), 637.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*, 701.

⁹ Kerman and Tomlinson, *Listen*, 272.

fragmented motives show primitive rhythms and sexual energy that fit the story.¹⁰ Music with an accompanying story and visual narration in the genre of ballet help the viewer to follow particular ideas and character emotions. Likewise, imagery or extra-musical ideas may be used to help the instrumental student construct ideas and emotions that will aid in her learning and performance.

Of course, imagery can also precede music, as in the case of film music. Michael Fink, in his 1990 article, explains Aaron Copland's theorized five major purposes for music in motion pictures: music creates a more convincing atmosphere of time and place; it underlines psychological refinement through the use of leitmotifs; it serves as a kind of neutral background filler; it builds a sense of continuity; and it underpins the theatrical buildup of a scene and brings it to completion with a sense of finality.¹¹ All of these are ways in which music brings the story to life for the average viewer. Though the music in films is generally secondary to the narrative on screen, it nonetheless helps the viewer understand and interpret the plot. This supports the idea that imagery may help music students to create meaningful mental emotional connections with music that may assist them in creating performances that convey a greater sense of overall unity.

Beyond the story / music pairings suggested by composers to deepen emotional responses to narrative or enhance the music listening experience, "new" musicologists have shown that it is human nature to automatically pair music and extra-musical ideas. Though McClary does pair music and extra-musical ideas to reveal narratives, her

¹⁰ Ibid, 308.

¹¹ Michael Fink, "How Music Functions in Films," *American Music Teacher* 40, no. 2 (1990): 25; Aaron Copland, "Tip to Moviegoers: Take Off Those Earmuffs," *New York Times*, (November 1949): 28-32.

primary goal is to reveal opportunities for feminist criticism in the predominantly male field of musicology. She uncovers how cadences, tonalities, themes, and forms are charged with narratives of gender, politics, sexuality, and sexual activity that musicologists tend to ignore.¹² McClary urges readers to discard the idea that nineteenth century classical European music is "...pure, ineffable, and not concerned with mundane issues..." and, instead, to see how very risqué this music can be.¹³ McClary believes that this denial of meaning in instrumental music has prevented any attempt at feminist or any other sort of socially grounded criticism. She explores the ideas of gender, politics, sexuality, and desire in Bizet's 1875 opera, *Carmen*. Her argument is that the exotic and arousing music, as well as the exotic and arousing subject matter of the opera, prove that a nineteenth-century European classical composer like Bizet is doing quite the opposite of treating subject matter as purely platonic. McClary mocks those who believe European classical music has "...noble domains of imagination..." she posits that a piece like *Carmen* shows gender, race, and class identity in ways that "thrust" at the audience.¹⁴ McClary also analyzes the first movement of Tchaikovsky's *Fourth Symphony* to prove her point that even absolute music can have "...an ejaculatory quality, a titillating presentation of the feminine threat, and a violent closure..."¹⁵ McClary draws connections between this symphony and the musical themes and story line in *Carmen*. She explains that Tchaikovsky presents a protagonist who seems victimized by both sensual feminine entrapment and by patriarchal expectation, much like Don José in

¹² Susan McClary, "Sexual Politics in Classical Music," In *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality*, (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 9.

¹³ Ibid, 55.

¹⁴ Ibid, 57.

¹⁵ Ibid, 67.

Carmen. McClary takes this further by proposing that Tchaikovsky is, in fact, the protagonist: the movement narrates his struggles with homosexuality and the patriarchy forcing the norm of heterosexuality. McClary suggests that these two pieces demonstrate that no one wins within "...the structures of traditional modes of organizing gender and sexuality."¹⁶

Another example of McClary's narrative interpretation is Schubert's *Impromptu, Op. 90, No. 2 in E-flat Major*. Here she analyzes the tonal harmony and recognizes the piece's use of and departure from tonal harmony conventions. McClary offers multiple interpretations, including one reading that sees it as a narration of "...minimal infraction answered by incommensurate brutality."¹⁷ She identifies this particular theme as one used by Hans Christian Anderson in his fairy tale, "The Little Girl Who Trod on a Loaf." Though she believes both Schubert's piece and Anderson's tale tell similar stories, she admits that Schubert probably did not have this story as its program. This leads her to deconstruct Schubert's *Impromptu* even further. Her first interpretation is a biographical one, in which she explains that the narrative is, in fact, Schubert telling his own story of "...brief moments of pleasure which produce infection and eventually death."¹⁸ Her second interpretation is a historical one, in which Schubert's telling can be seen as a statement against a certain blind optimism associated with his historical location, "...enacting a moment of cultural crisis, as he publicly refuses the Enlightenment's ideologies."¹⁹ McClary argues that it is human nature to find, notice, or construct

¹⁶ Ibid, 79.

¹⁷ McClary, "The Impromptu," 20.

¹⁸ Ibid, 30.

¹⁹ Ibid.

narratives in music, whether or not the composer consciously strove for this result.²⁰ This research shows that the music student already has a natural inclination to create her own images or extra-musical ideas to construct meaning out of existing music. Perhaps McClary's narrative interpretation can serve as an example for the music student.

Marie-Laure Ryan also sees imagery in music by drawing connections between music and literature. Ryan addresses the interdisciplinary approach of linking instrumental music and narratives. She addresses some criteria where the two work together, but also finds ways in which this pairing falls short. Ryan acknowledges that instrumental music shares narrative features, but should not be thought of as a narrative. She states:

Because music, like narrative told in words, offers a formally patterned experiencing of time and instrumental music does this without the word building and populating that so readily absorb readers' attention, music offers to music theorists and narrative theorists a laboratory to explore the puzzle of how narratives communicate.²¹

She believes that when a composer shares a vision for a pairing of imagery / narrative with the music, the listener can create a shared sense of meaning associated with those musical sounds.

Like Ryan, Byron Almén studies narrative structures within music, which he differentiates from narrative structures present in literature and also in drama. He develops an operational definition of narrative first by explaining that there are characteristics of narrative that are specific to literature and those that are specific to music. He explains that in literature, the actions, character, and setting are described, with

²⁰ McClary, "Sexual Politics," 54-55.

²¹ Marie-Laure Ryan, *Narrative Across Media: The Languages of Storytelling* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 280.

the reader filling in the imaginative details. By contrast, he explains that in music, actions are displayed, but character, setting, and motive are indeterminate or must be supplemented in some manner. Applying the literature-specific characteristics to the music may result in musical aspects of the piece not being given enough attention, while others that have anything to do with narrative / literature are given too much emphasis.²² Almén argues that when linking narrative to music, one has to isolate the core properties that are common to all narrative media: temporality, hierarchy, conflict, and the observer's perspective.²³ By defining the core properties of narrative, the analyst is able to properly interpret the music.²⁴ McClary, Ryan and Almén contribute to the body of knowledge that explains the connection among extra-musical ideas and music. Though these examples are not in a classroom or private lesson setting, they offer evidence that narrative in music is not something new or foreign. Imagery or extra-musical ideas can help listeners, viewers, or analysts connect musical gestures to particular ideas, thus enhancing their listening experiences and making them more meaningful.

Imagery in Education

The second category that emerges from the research is imagery in education. Many general education teachers use imagery or the combination of imagery and music to enhance their general education classrooms. Rubright encourages imagery or storytelling in the general education setting and demonstrates how broadly imagery can

²² Byron Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008), 12.

²³ *Ibid*, 13.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 41.

be defined and interpreted, and how useful it is as both an art form and a teaching tool.²⁵ She maintains that stories can be at the foundation of many things studied or experienced to both enrich and enliven curriculum. Storytelling allows for the listeners to connect with and enter a story on a psychological, emotional and intellectual level while inspiring their imaginations.²⁶ Rubright talks of her experience training and working with teachers in classrooms throughout the United States and shares a number of findings. One of her most important discoveries is that storytelling assists students with interactive and collaborative learning in the general education classroom.²⁷ This approach may translate to the instrumental student creating stories alongside the music and playing with other students in chamber or ensemble settings.

There is also evidence of how the combination of imagery and music enhances the general education classroom. Alice Rusk outlines a study in Baltimore schools where a series of after-school meetings were planned to help beginning elementary school teachers prepare library and music activities. These meetings were co-taught by the music and library teachers. An example the two teachers gave was the fusion of the song “The Tiger” with the book *The Cat Who Thought He was a Tiger*. They found that the music aided student retention and enjoyment of the book.²⁸ A similar example of combined library and music activities is given by music educator Peter de Vries. This study revealed that music in storytelling sessions enhances interactive learning and keeps

²⁵ Rubright, *Beyond the Beanstalk*, 17.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid, 19.

²⁸ Alice C. Rusk, “Music and Stories Enrich a Curriculum,” *ALA Bulletin* 57, no. 2 (1963): 163.

students on task.²⁹ Another example of imagery and music at the elementary level can be seen by music therapist and educator Shelly Ringgenberg in her 2003 article. She incorporates music in the classroom through story songs. She explains that to create a story song, teachers begin by borrowing elements from already existing songs or stories. From here, teachers can take a familiar song and change the words to concepts the students are learning, take a familiar story and create a song that goes along with it, or compose their own song as a class.³⁰ Ringgenberg gives a number of tips for teachers, such as using familiar tunes and stories, directing these story song activities, selecting comfortable pitches for young children, and more. These examples show that the scaffolding of music and extra-musical ideas go naturally together in an elementary education setting and aid in student understanding of content.³¹ Because the scaffold of using music-to-narrative has proven value in the general education classroom, perhaps the scaffold of using narrative-to music may have similar value to the music student.

Imagery and music are also paired together in general education at the secondary level. Music educator Thomas Kite explores the possibility of connecting music with the humanities and vice versa in general education. Kite describes how students in his classroom were asked to look at different titles of programmatic pieces and pick one with no prior knowledge of the composer's intended story. From there, the students were to listen to the piece and come up with a story and corresponding images. While listening repeatedly, the students crafted their books with narratives and images / illustrations. This

²⁹ Peter A. de Vries, "Parental Perceptions of Music in Storytelling Sessions in a Public Library," *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 35, no. 5 (2008): 473.

³⁰ Shelly Ringgenberg "Music as a Teaching Tool: Creating Story Songs," *YC Young Children* 58, no. 5 (2003): 77.

³¹ *Ibid.*

process required students to be actively engaged in listening, imagination, story-writing, and illustrating.³² Findings suggest that the student-created stories better helped the students understand the music itself. As with the elementary education literature, this suggests the scaffolding of narrative-to-music may be of some significance to music students.

Imagery in Music Education

The final category, and the one of most interest to this study, that emerges from the literature is imagery in music education. In the field of music education, teachers often use imagery as a scaffold in order to enhance students' understanding of music. There is a need for such scaffolds according Mary Kennedy, who traces the history of creative music making, some of which involves imagery.³³ Though her research reveals some progress over the past 250 years, Kennedy believes that creative music making has not yet become mainstream and commonplace enough in school music programs throughout the United States.³⁴ She believes that if more steps are not taken to correct this, creative music making will remain on the fringes of education, only benefiting the few fortunate enough to receive it.³⁵ Using the scaffold of imagery in order to improve a student's understanding of a musical piece may be a step in the right direction. One study in which imagery is used to teach a piece of music is by piano teacher Bang Lang Do,

³² Ibid, 34.

³³ Mary A. Kennedy, "Creative Music Making since the Time of the Singing Schools: Fringe Benefits," *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education*, 21, no.2 (2000): 147.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid, 148.

who explores the idea of having students add an emotional memory to a piece of music on which they are working in order to commit it to their long-term memory.³⁶ Emotional memory can be achieved by creating meaningful stories, images, or narratives of emotions to accompany a piece. Her idea is that if piano students can create their own stories, it will be more meaningful to them, and, therefore, more memorable. In creating these meaningful stories, students can design an individualized map of the pieces. She gives questions that may help students imagine their own stories such as, “What is the main plot? What are the subplots? What is the motif for the protagonist, the hero, or the narrator?” Do asks fellow teachers and students to share their emotional maps of particular pieces in order to help and inspire those that are just starting to learn how to create their individualized maps.³⁷ Similarly, Claire Dooley Clark also uses extra-musical influences—including emotions—to help her elementary students play piano.³⁸ In her 2010 article, Clark explains that when teaching children piano, incorporating colors, shapes, numbers, the alphabet, transportation, animals, people, families, clothing, emotions, weather, holidays, movement, literature, and more often spark much musical creativity in young learners.³⁹ Helping children to create associations between music and these concrete, real-world ideas, as well as emotion, may help lay the foundation for them to create their own stories.

³⁶ Bang Lang Do, “Memorizing: The Webs We Weave,” *American Music Teacher* 65, no. 1 (2015): 21.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Claire Dooley Clark, “A Natural Link: The Piano Teacher and The Very Young Child,” *American Music Teacher* 60, no. 1 (2010): 22.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

Emotional connection through imagery / music pairing is also important to the work of Jennifer St. George, Allyson Holbrook, and Robert Cantwell. They argue that emotional narratives and connections have a role to play in instrumental students' experiences and long-term participation.⁴⁰ From their qualitative study, they discovered that the concept of affinity—the affective and subjective connection to music for an individual—has much control of the participants' enjoyment and motivation to learn.⁴¹ Further research of the relationship between emotions, imagery, and music can be seen by Robert Woody and Kimberly Burns. In their 2001 quantitative study, 533 college students enrolled in Music Appreciation or Music for Classroom Teachers courses answered questions about their musical backgrounds, preferences, and beliefs and then responded to four highly expressive classical music excerpts.⁴² Many of the responses were referential in nature and included images, personal memories, and feelings about their pieces. Woody and Burns found that past emotional experience with classical music stands as a reliable predictor of a subject's appreciation and willingness to listen to classical music.⁴³ The connections of emotions and extra-musical ideas to music is a common occurrence in listeners and players. These connections with music make it meaningful or valuable to students and bring about more enjoyment. These connections,

⁴⁰ Jennifer St. George, Allyson Holbrook, and Robert Cantwell, "Affinity for music: a study of the role of emotion in musical instrument learning," *International Journal of Music Education* 32 (2014): 264.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 267.

⁴² Robert H. Woody and Kimberly J. Burns, "Predicting Music Appreciation with Past Emotional Responses to Music," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 49, no. 1 (2001): 60.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 67.

which include imagery, may also prove important in the investigation of how musicality might be achieved on an instrument.

Creativity is also something that emerges from the fusion of music and narrative. Jana Fallin indicates how the sounds in children's books such as *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What do You See?* can come alive in a music classroom. These sounds can accompany the story, turn into music, or even be turned into a composition as the children progress musically.⁴⁴ Fallin believes the blend of children's literature with music is an effective combination that opens a door for interdisciplinary learning.⁴⁵ She found that literature within the elementary music curriculum can encourage creativity and also reinforce musical skills, reinforce music knowledge, enhance listening, enhance enjoyment, and expand multicultural awareness.⁴⁶

Jody Kerchner also explores student creativity in a 2000 study that had second and fifth grade students respond to musical examples. Over the course of two thirty-minute sessions, she had twelve students individually listen to an excerpt from the first movement of Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto No. 2 in F Major*. During the sessions, the students were asked to: provide a verbal account of the listening experience; create a visual representation—a drawn picture—of their listening experience, which they then verbally described; and provide a kinesthetic description of their music listening experience, which was recorded, and then verbally described by the students.⁴⁷ The

⁴⁴ Jana R. Fallin, "Children's Literature as a Springboard for Music," *Music Educators Journal* 81, no. 5 (1995): 27.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 24.

⁴⁷ Jody L. Kerchner, "Children's Verbal, Visual, and Kinesthetic Responses: Insight into Their Music Listening Experience," *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, no. 146 (2000): 31.

students' multisensory responses showed the need to allow multiple modes of response in the music classroom and ensemble setting.⁴⁸ Similarly, fusing multisensory responses with instrumental practice and performance may have a positive effect on students' expression and musicality.

An example of imagery in music education at the secondary level can be seen in Daniel Keown's use of film music in the classroom. He identifies film music as the "invisible art form."⁴⁹ He believes that in films, television, video games, and other media, music becomes secondary, since the viewers are not watching someone perform the music, but, instead, are paying close attention to the narrative portrayed on the screen. Keown's goal is to pair "invisible music" with the "visible music" already used in music education curricula so that "...meaningful learning opportunities can present themselves, instilling more rigor, depth, and impact for many students in today's society."⁵⁰ Keown presents a few ideas in which film music is used, apart from its intended film content, in the classroom to enrich music theory, composition, music history and give students extra-musical tools. One of his suggestions is using the score from the film *The Lord of the Rings* for theory and theme analysis. A second idea is using music from *E.T.* to question and discuss the composer's musical compositional decisions and patterns. Another idea he suggests is learning about the history of music used for movies and television series having to do with historical events such as World War II or the September 11 terrorist

⁴⁸ Ibid, 48.

⁴⁹ Daniel J. Keown, "Discovering the Lost Ark of Possibilities: Bringing Visibility to the Invisible Art Form of Film Music in Your Music Classroom," *Music Educators Journal* 101, no. 4 (2015): 70.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 71.

attacks.⁵¹ He suggests further ways to include film music in the music classroom, as well as providing a list of film music resources. Keown's ideas about film music in music education furthers the connection between music and extra-musical ideas, which may enrich an instrumental student's performance and aid with expression and musicality.

A discussion of the potential for imagery to aid in musicality in an ensemble setting can be seen by Leonard Tan. Tan's three-part theory involves teachers presenting musical concepts alongside imagery from the podium. One aspect of his theory reveals that teaching this way can create better musicians and enhance rehearsal experience.⁵² This idea may transfer well to the private teacher of the instrumental student. If a private instrumental instructor were to present concepts in this way, it could aid in the instrumental student's musicianship and practicing. Similarly, Sven Bjerstedt investigates the concept of imagery and metaphors enriching jazz improvisation education in his 2015 article. Through analyzing the results of a number of qualitative interviews, Bjerstedt gathers that storytelling and jazz improvisation have an important connection among musicians.⁵³ He suggests using such extra-musical storytelling techniques in jazz improvisation education. Using musical metaphors, or motor-affective metaphors in music education, is also an idea explored by Sybil Barten. She discusses the use of figurative language and how it is suited to communicating musical aesthetic

⁵¹ Ibid, 72.

⁵² Leonard Tan, "A Transcultural Theory of Thinking for Instrumental Music Education: Philosophical Insights from Confucius and Dewey," *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 24, no. 2 (2016): 162.

⁵³ Sven Bjerstedt, "Landscapes of musical metaphor and musical learning: the example of jazz education," *Music Education Research* 17, no. 4 (2015): 502.

experiences.⁵⁴ She gives examples of when musical metaphors have convinced students how to properly achieve the tone, color, or character, implied by a piece. She found these motor-affective metaphors take shape in three broad categories: movement and actions, attitudes and tendencies, and human and nonhuman acts. Barten gives multiple examples of applications for motor-affective references, such as ensemble rehearsals and classes in conducting, strings, and piano.⁵⁵ She concludes that metaphors can serve as a clear rhetorical function that helps students to accept the direction given. Metaphors do this in such a way that captures student imagination and makes the experience memorable. Barten encourages music teachers to take on the role of actors and find ways to speak to each students' imagination.⁵⁶ These motor-affective metaphors could be used specifically to address student expressivity and musicality in private instrumental lessons. Similarly, Deborah Sheldon explores metaphors or figurative language by way of a quantitative study. Her study focused on listeners' ability to identify nuances of musical expression using both figurative language and specific terminology. Results of the study show that listeners were successful at identifying broad realms of expression using both figurative language and specific terminology. One finding was that listeners chose more figurative statements rather than specific terminology. This suggests greater ambiguity of meaning for descriptions that are more figurative.⁵⁷ Sheldon concludes that figurative language can be a useful tool leading to understanding, performance skills, and feelings of fullness;

⁵⁴ Sybil S. Barten, "The Use of Motor-Affective Metaphors in Music Instruction," *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 32, no. 2 (1998): 89.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 94.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 95.

⁵⁷ Deborah A. Sheldon, "Listeners' Identification of Musical Expression through Figurative Language and Musical Terminology," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 52, no. 4 (2004): 357.

however, caution must be taken. Figurative language can be too vague, transferred incorrectly, and can become pointless if one is unfamiliar with the analogy being used. Sheldon believes that, if not used correctly, figurative language can hurt more than it can help.⁵⁸ She encourages teachers to prevent this from happening by guiding students through this process. Figurative language or imagery may affect the instrumental music student in much the same way; however, if guided properly by an instructor, perhaps figurative language can lead students to successful expressive attempts.

Evidence of imagery-based instruction can also be seen in a podcast assignment designed by Benjamin Bolden for post-secondary students. Bolden explains the assignment in which students responded to a piece of music by way of a three-to-five-minute podcast for which they provide a narrated commentary reflecting on the music and their personal relationship to it.⁵⁹ He explains how the use of a podcast affords the same kind of possibilities as a traditionally written research and reflective paper, but also gives the opportunity to communicate with and through music. The student commentaries contained imagery and referenced emotional feelings about a piece of music. This listening exercise could be used with an instrumental music student as a precursor to playing her instrument. Having to listen to the piece and think about one's personal relationship to it may inform musicality, expression, and ownership. Comparatively, Diana Blom also examines students' relations and connections to a piece of music in her 2006 article. Blom explores how vocal post-secondary music performers view performing and interpreting after being introduced to David Brackett's notion of musical

⁵⁸ Ibid, 367.

⁵⁹ Benjamin Bolden, "Learner-Created Podcasts: Students' Stories with Music," *Music Educators Journal* 100, no. 1 (2013): 75.

codes. Three of these codes—institutional factors, biographical contexts, and musical sounds—are specifically addressed. This project aimed to lead student performers to think about how they interpret pieces of music in their own performances, what they convey about themselves, about the songs, and how they feel through the performances.⁶⁰ It also aimed to give students a way to rethink and reinterpret a popular song learned from a recording. For post-secondary students of popular music, Brackett's codes offer a musicological frame within which the students can reflect on interpretation issues and evaluate their own performing.⁶¹ She believes that his musicological codes can also help students to see musicology as a relevant and informative part of their performance. Likewise, having instrumental students think about their interpretation and what they convey about themselves and the music may be helpful in fostering musicality. These examples show the relationship between imagery and music education in private lesson, music appreciation, and ensemble settings at the elementary, secondary, and post-secondary level. These sources show evidence of imagery aiding in students' creativity, emotional connection, listening skills, and enjoyment, which are related to achieving musicality and expressivity when playing an instrument.

Finally, Woody investigates the goal of musicality and expressivity with instrumental students. In a quantitative study, he compared the effectiveness of three approaches used to bring about expressivity in college piano students' performances: aural modeling, verbal instruction addressing concrete musical properties, and verbal

⁶⁰ Diana Blom, "Beyond the cover version: encouraging student performers to produce original interpretations of popular songs," *International Journal of Music Education* 24 (2006): 160.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 166.

instruction using imagery and metaphors. He did this by using each of the three approaches with three separate melodies with each piano student. The results show that musicians can benefit from all three types of instruction; however, with certain music and strengths / weaknesses of players, one can be more beneficial than another.⁶² Although all methods impacted students' expressivity, students perceived they could more easily convert metaphors / imagery into explicit musical plans.⁶³ A few months later, Woody examined this idea further in another study. He specifically analyzed the relationships between imagery and music education and how musicians translate imagery into specific musical plans when practicing and performing.⁶⁴ Woody explains the results of this second study in which undergraduate students were assigned melodies accompanied by specific images and asked to answer questions and give a performance.⁶⁵ In this quest for expression, he found that subjects had a variety of strategies when using mental imagery. Subjects either aimed to translate the qualities of the images into their sound or meditated on the images to try to internalize them.⁶⁶ The subjects' ratings reveal "...imagery-based instruction to be useful in guiding their expressive performance attempts."⁶⁷ In order to feel that it helped, subjects felt that two conditions had to be met: 1) they had to feel mastery over the technical aspects of the music before they could concentrate on any expressive considerations; and 2) they had to connect and understand to the imagery example provided. If these two conditions were not met, students felt frustrated and

⁶² Robert H. Woody, "The Effect of Various Instructional Conditions on Expressive Music Performance," *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 54 no. 1 (2006): 21.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 34.

⁶⁴ Woody, "Musicians' Cognitive," 125.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 134.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 133.

unmotivated.⁶⁸ Woody also found that students who had the least years of private instruction and students who had the most years of private instruction tended to use emotion-based strategies when dealing with the imagery examples far more than students who had a middle range of private instruction. His explanation was based on students' feedback: the students who had the least years of experience needed to be more intentional with their musicality and the imagery examples provided expressive cues that aided in their performance; the students with the most years of instruction had automatized their expressivity for the most part and the imagery examples allowed them to connect again with the music; and the students with the middle range of instruction translated the imagery examples into specific sound properties in the music.⁶⁹ While Woody aimed to quantify students' experiences of imagery with tightly controlled variables, I aimed for a more in-depth qualitative analysis of students' self-generated images when applied to pieces of their choosing. In my study, I explored how the participants perceived the implementation of imagery to have affected their understanding of a piece of music and sense of musicality.

Methodology

This qualitative ethnographic study draws from a convenience sampling from among three state universities in the East North Central Division of the Midwest. I took a multiple case study approach and had a total of eight participants who were adult instrumental music majors. To protect participant identities, I have changed the names of

⁶⁸ Ibid, 135.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

participants and their schools. Five participants were selected from my current school, thus I was acquainted with them prior to the study. Four of these students were in classes that I assisted with; however, I was not in charge of grading them either during or after the study took place. The remaining three participants attended two different universities within a one-hour drive of my institution. Participants selected were over the age of eighteen and enrolled in major-level instrumental lessons. The number of participants was decided on using the following criteria. The first reason was time allotted for the study. I only had one semester to conduct the interviews and analyze the data. The second was that I wanted to work with skilled musicians who were currently enrolled in lessons. From the literature, I found evidence to support the idea that musicality is something that is usually only achieved once there is an understanding of the technical and formal elements of music.⁷⁰ University-aged music majors are usually at a level where formal and technical elements are already well established; however, they still have much to learn about their instruments and about music. The third reason was that the design of the study required in-depth interviews, which would presumably produce a great amount of data. Finding perspectives, opinions, and ideas about imagery in music required much background information about the participants' experiences and life histories. This contextual information was necessary for interpreting the data, and it was important to include so that readers may, to some extent, also interpret the data for themselves. To narrow the participant pool and determine eligibility for the sampling, I sent out a survey. Prior to distributing this survey, I applied for and received Institutional Review Board approval (Appendix A). The distributed survey asked questions regarding each potential

⁷⁰ Ibid, 134.

participant's instrument, use of imagery, and willingness to participate in a study of this nature. This recruitment document can be found in Appendix B.

After selecting participants from the survey, I asked participants to read and sign an informed consent form (Appendix C). Once receiving consent, I conducted two interviews with each participant based on an adaptation of Seidman's Three-Interview Series. Seidman's interview process uses the first interview to establish the context of the participants' experiences, the second interview to gather details of the participants' experiences, and the final interview to acquire participants' reflected meaning of the experiences.⁷¹ For this study, I combined Seidman's first two interviews into one. In the first interview I focused on the participants' prior experience with imagery or extra-musical ideas and music. Participants were asked about their use of visual imagery or specific ideas, intentionally or unintentionally, in any aspect of their musicianship, about their knowledge of other musicians using this tool, and if they felt that incorporating specific visual imagery or narrative ideas, intentionally or unintentionally, served a specific purpose. Along with these questions and more, which can be found in Appendix D, I assigned a "homework" component in which each participant was asked to actively employ imagery for a specified period of time during her lesson and practice time. I also provided some questions and ideas to help guide participants in their selection of imagery and narrative choices. This self-generated instrument was based on Almén's outline of core properties of musical narrative (Appendix E). It was not required that participants use this tool; it was simply there to help if they felt they needed it.

⁷¹ I.E. Seidman, *Interviewing as Qualitative Research* (New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 1991), 10-11.

The second interview focused on the participants' perceptions of whether imagery impacted their musicality in any way. This interview also included a student demonstration on the instrument, so that they could demonstrate the perceived effect of this approach on their musicality in certain passages as well as overall effect on other musical aspects of their pieces. For this portion, the interviews were video-recorded in order to acquire more data. In this final interview, participants were asked about how they felt this technique affected their understanding or execution of music, if it was something they could see themselves using in the future, if it was something they would use to teach private lesson students, and if they enjoyed the music more by having a story or specific visual imagery connected to it. These interview questions can be found in Appendix F. After all interviews were completed, transcriptions were made and member-checked for validity. From these questions and from the instrumental demonstrations, I expected certain themes to emerge based on the literature. These included: *emotional connection to music, the implementation of imagery to reinforce technical skills, and imagery used to aid in collaborative learning*. Other themes such as *private personal interpretation, necessity of interpretation, and spontaneous musical associations* were discovered within individual interviews while themes such as *late-onset use of imagery, imagery as an aid with nerves and memory, and extra-musical ideas for remedial use* were discovered across cases.

Unforeseen Factors

During the course of the study, some unforeseen factors necessarily altered the method in some ways. One participant had to leave partway through the study for

medical reasons. Even though I was only able to conduct the first interview with him, his data is still useful, especially when examined as case study, so it remained in the study. Another unforeseen happening was the COVID-19 or the 2020 Coronavirus pandemic. This had an effect upon the manner in which data were collected. Instead of performing the second round of interviews in person, they were done by way of video-chat. These interviews were still video recorded and used to help analyze the data as planned. The Coronavirus also affected participants' responses and experiences in this study. The three universities on which I focused moved to online learning beginning mid-March and continued as such for the remainder of the spring semester, cancelling all concerts and recitals. Participants in some cases discussed how their feelings about these forced changes affected their interpretations of the music that they were studying.

The following two chapters contain accounts of the interviews and my analysis. Following a multiple case study approach, Chapter 2 analyzes the cases by looking at the themes that emerged within each interview, and Chapter 3 analyzes the cases by looking at the themes that emerged across participant interviews. The final pages of chapter three draw conclusions and make suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2

INDIVIDUAL CASE STUDY DATA ANALYSIS

Case 1: Addison

The first case is a student named Addison, a freshman violin performance major at St. Clair State University. Prior to participating in the study, she had experience with attaching extra-musical ideas to music. Addison explained that she has always had an organic image response to music. She often sees images of landscapes or colors while listening to or playing music. In addition, both her middle school director and college private teacher encouraged the use of characters / stories and descriptors to help foster musicality and a sense of connection to the music. Coming into the study, she already felt that extra-musical ideas help her enjoy / connect with the music, which, in turn, brings about more expressive playing. She said:

If I use [an extra-musical idea], it creates something underneath the music. It is my own little personal interpretation that I can enjoy on my own. Honestly, I think it has made me a better player in terms of being more expressive and being able to interpret pieces in my own way.

Addison talked about the piece she selected for the experiment in which I asked her to apply visualization techniques. She chose the *Allemande* from Bach's Partita II. This solo violin movement in D minor is shrouded in wistfulness with cascades of sixteenth notes and dramatic breaths and peeks. For her interpretation, she did not use the Almén-based suggestions page attached in Appendix E. As discussed in Chapter 1, this self-generated instrument, based on Almén's core properties of musical narrative, was

given to each participant to help craft an interpretation if they felt they needed help.

Addison explained that she did not use this tool because she already had the beginnings of an interpretation behind this piece. She created an interpretation that had a story, descriptors, and images. For the story, she took inspiration from Bach's life. She discovered that this piece was composed shortly after Bach's wife died, and Addison used the idea of losing a loved one and the many waves of grief that accompany such an event. She sees the pauses in the higher registers or peaks of intensity as these grief waves or rushes of sad emotions. To go along with this sad story, she used the words "somber," "grief," and "intense" to describe the emotions and feelings behind it.

Regarding images, she had one that "came to her" prior to the study while listening and that she continued to apply during her practice: "I saw some grey and earth tone colors, as well as the image of a dark room with light peeking through." When I asked her about this image, she said, "The continuous grief or sad emotions...is the dark room, then the light is the sign of hope." In the middle of the movement, she saw the faster, more flowing sixteenth notes as portraying the light with the idea of hope; however, in the final lines, the peaks of intensity in the higher register return, portraying the darkness with the feeling of grief. Her prior opinion of using extra-musical ideas did not change. She continued to feel that the extra-musical ideas helped her to enjoy / connect with the music, which she felt then brought about more expressive playing.

Two expected themes arose: *emotional connection to music* and *imagery to aid in collaborative learning*. A third expected theme, *implementation of imagery to reinforce technical skills*, is not evident in either of Addison's interviews. This is curious, since Do and Clark suggest using imagery to help reinforce technical challenges such as memory

and articulation.¹ Perhaps the reason why this theme is not evident in Addison's interviews is because she either does not feel particularly concerned with technique or because using imagery in this way has never occurred to her. The unexpected themes specific to Addison are, what I will call, *private, personal interpretation* and *spontaneous color association*.

Emotional Connection to Music

Addison initially spoke of connecting to music through using emotional feelings from an event or movie, and then channeling those feelings into the music:

If I want to convey a certain emotion across the music, I will sometimes think of an event or a movie where there were these emotions. You have something that is not related to the music that you are playing that already has you feeling a certain way, and then you use it in the music and convey that feeling.

Though she believes it is helpful to use emotions to connect to music, she rarely uses feelings from her personal experiences when listening to or playing music. When I asked her why she thought this was the case, she said:

If there is a rough time in my life and I listen to a certain piece of music, I would have a hard time going back and listening to that music again because those emotions become attached to it.

Addison dislikes associating personal feelings with a piece because she does not want to run the risk of being reminded of negative emotions from her life, which would then change her opinion of a piece. She instead prefers to employ the emotional associations of others. An example of this is her interpretation of the *Allemande*. She used the idea of Bach's loss and channeled those emotions instead of drawing from her own personal

¹ Do, "Memorizing," 21; Clark, "Natural Link," 22.

experiences. However, with ideas that are more abstract like her image of a dark room, she is able to fully invest herself:

As I went through the piece, I pictured myself sitting in the dark room, taking a sweep of the room to get a feel for the general surroundings and how objects interact with the darkness and shadows that are cast by the light coming in. You see how the objects in the room are interacting with the light, but there is still that darkness there. I actually played this and turned off all the lights in my practice room to try to get a better feel for it.

This shows evidence of Addison taking her interpretation and trying to connect with it; however, she does this with abstract ideas as opposed to personal, emotionally charged ideas.

Imagery to Aid in Collaborative Learning

Addison gave two ensemble examples of when imagery was used to aid in collaborative learning. Both her middle / high school orchestra director and her university violin teacher engrained in her the idea of using characters in both the ensemble and the private lesson settings. When discussing her middle / high school director, Addison said:

[The director] would say, ‘Come up with a little character for this part and play it how you think the character would act.’ She would then do the same thing for another section and then another section. She would tell us, ‘Take on that role. How would the multiple characters interact within this piece?’

Her university chamber coach also did something similar with her trio. He asked Addison and the other two members to come up with three descriptors for a passage. Then, as a group, he had them discuss and decide on the descriptors, write them into their parts, and then play it together with those specific descriptors in mind. These two examples of Addison’s show how extra-musical ideas can be used in a group setting to help players work together and move toward the same goal.

Private, Personal Interpretation

Addison not only likes to keep her emotions based on personal experiences out of music, but also is reluctant to share her interpretations of music with her teachers and peers. When speaking of her middle / high school director, she said:

The only time I had a problem with [using characters in the music] was whenever she would say, 'Explain it to the class.' She would go around the room and pick out people and be like, 'What do you think?' I don't know, it felt so personal for me because it was my interpretation of it and I didn't want other people judging my interpretations.

I asked her if she felt any more comfortable sharing her interpretations with individuals such as her private lesson teacher or a student in her studio, and she said, "I just really feel weird sharing any ideas with them because, for the most part, they all play at a higher level than me." However, when I asked her how she felt about sharing her interpretation with me, she expressed that she did not feel self-conscious since I was not a strings player. This is interesting because it means that she perceives that one needs to obtain a certain level of musical mastery before one is allowed to have "legitimate" musical interpretations.

Spontaneous Color Association

Something unique about Addison is that, without conscious intent, she spontaneously envisions colors and images when playing or listening to music. Unlike the characters and descriptors, these images do not require thought and effort; they come to her spontaneously. She said, "For me, I see a lot of colors and landscapes." An example can be seen in her interpretation of Bach's *Allemande*. When asked about her image, she said, "... the colors I saw in this piece were mainly neutrals. A lot of greys

and earthy colors that went along with the solemn feeling.” Addison is unique among my eight participants in that she has quite defined associations among musical passages, moods, and colors.

Case 2: Brenda

Brenda is a senior violin performance major at St. Clair State University. Unlike others in this study, something unique about Brenda is that she only had one year of private lessons prior to university, during which all of her focus was on her two audition pieces for university. The remainder of her musical training came through ensemble involvement starting at age nine. She admitted that counting and musical concepts were unfamiliar to her, focusing instead on “...playing in tune, playing the right notes, and playing together.” Brenda admitted that musicality was not something she considered prior to university and that her music had not been very expressive, focusing instead on technical aspects of music more. She feels she is “... constantly playing catch up...” on both technical and musical fronts.

Brenda and Addison had the same university private teacher, who similarly encouraged Brenda to use characters and descriptors to help foster musicality and a sense of connection to music. Coming into the study, she already felt that extra-musical ideas helped her to understand music and to play more musically through connecting music to concrete ideas. In her first interview, she said, “I think [extra-musical ideas] give me something else to grasp on to...instead of just trying to achieve ‘musicality.’ What does ‘Be musical’ even mean?” Because musicality is a nebulous, subjective term, Brenda seems to take some comfort in more solid associations, which help her define the term.

During our second interview, Brenda talked about the piece she selected for this study and application of the visualization and imagery techniques I asked her to apply. She chose the second movement of Kabalevsky's *Violin Concerto in C Major* because she felt that it was the most "emotionally charged" of all her pieces. This movement in B-flat minor has a lyrical main theme with dramatic peaks that then transitions into a *capriccioso* middle section. After this A Major middle section containing playful dotted rhythms, the B-flat minor lyrical theme returns with added embellishments. For her interpretation, she did not use the Almén-based suggestions page because she lost it after our first interview. Brenda said that stories and descriptors are a normal part of her university-level practice, and she continued that for my study. From the romantic style and minor melody, she envisioned a story of someone going through the stages of heartbreak and feeling sad, mad, and then moving to acceptance. To go along with this, she used the words "grief," "weeping," "sad," "romantic," and "intense" to describe the emotions and feelings behind it. Images are new to her and not part of her normal practice routine because they take "more brain power." In response to my assignment, she explained her image attempt:

I think of it as a mist or as a fog. I just thought of something like stage fog that you see during a musical. It is unclear what emotions the person is feeling.

Brenda's "fog" describes square 9 of the piece, a muted run of chromatic sixteenth notes grouped in quintuplets. She admitted that she had difficulty connecting to and interpreting this section because of the technical demands. At the time of the interview, she did not feel as though her image helped her with either the connecting or the playing; however, in a follow-up conversation, she explained: "Now that I have more technical command over the section, I am able to think more interpretively." This shows that the

application of her stories, descriptors, and images are useful to her only after she has mastered the technical aspects of a piece. This is something common among participants and is further examined in the following chapter.

Her prior opinion of using extra-musical ideas did not change. She still felt that the extra-musical ideas helped her to enjoy / connect with music, which then brought about more expressive playing. Brenda expressed that if she does not do this, she is just focusing on notes and technique and there is something missing from her playing. All three expected themes, *emotional connection to music*, *implementation of imagery to reinforce technical skills*, and *imagery to aid in collaborative learning*, arose. The unexpected theme specific to Brenda is *necessity of interpretation*.

Emotional Connection to Music

Part of the pedagogical procedure that Brenda's university teacher used was prompting her to think of emotions for musical passages. Since trying this, she feels that she must use emotions in order to make the music meaningful to her. In her first interview, she said:

Since a lot of my pieces are non-programmatic, I have to use a story or have emotions tied to it; otherwise, it doesn't really mean anything, and it is just notes on a page. So, for me, in order to be expressive in my music, I have to think of an emotion or something in my head to convey what I need to communicate to the audience.

Her need for emotions in order to play expressively is further examined in the unexpected theme, *necessity of interpretation*. When I asked Brenda about her interpretation of someone going through the stages of heartbreak in the Kabalevsky, I asked if this was based on a personal experience. She explained, "I try to keep my personal experiences

out of the music because I don't necessarily want to share those emotions and ideas with other people." Similar to Addison, these emotions do not come from Brenda's personal experiences because she does not want to share private emotions with others.

Implementation of Imagery to Reinforce Technical Skills

Though Brenda only gave me one example of her teacher using an image to address an issue with her technique, it is a rich example:

In the Kabalevsky *Concerto in C Major*, there is this part that is a descending scale in B-flat minor—such a horrible key—that has tenuto marks over the notes. Except these aren't supposed to be actual tenuto marks, they are more kind of accents...but they are also not quite accents. So, he was trying to demonstrate how it should sound and then I tried to imitate him. I guess I wasn't quite getting it, so he told me to think of it as petting a cat. When you pet a cat, your hand goes down and then it comes up, and he was telling me to think of my bow motions like that. More like a petting motion...there is an articulation at the beginning, it fades, and then it comes back. You wouldn't pet a cat all jerky; it would be a continuous motion. So, the bow motions have to be continuous, too, and cannot be stopping and starting.

This example is much like some of the examples found in the existing literature, specifically Do and Clark: the use of a metaphor or imagery for the purpose of correcting a technical error in the piece.² This imagery example is not focused on getting her to connect emotion with the piece, but, rather, on getting her to fix her technique.

Imagery to Aid in Collaborative Learning

Brenda gave two ensemble examples of when imagery was used to aid in collaborative learning. Her first example is of her university orchestra director using

² Ibid.

extra-musical ideas in order to help students play together and connect with the music and each other. When talking about her orchestra experience, she said:

My director uses these kinds of ideas all of the time! We played *Romeo and Juliet* by Tchaikovsky earlier this year, and he made us all think of a time we had been in love and think about that when we were playing. He also did this back in 2016, when we played the second movement of Dvořák 9. He tried to get us to think of different possibilities and actually called on people in the ensemble to share what they were thinking about.

I asked Brenda what she thought about creating an individual interpretation in an orchestra setting without lead from the director. Her response:

I think if I were principal, it would be useful. But in an orchestra setting, if you are sitting in the back of a section, you don't get a say. It is the principal and the director that get to make those kinds of choices.

Brenda sees extra-musical ideas as weighty influencers on the expressive outcomes of a piece, so much so that each member coming up with her own interpretation would render a rogue and nonuniform performance. Brenda does see a place for extra-musical ideas in an ensemble setting, but believes they need to be agreed upon collaboratively or come from someone of high authority, i.e., a director or principal player. Brenda also gave an example of these ideas used in a trio, which is the same trio described by Addison:

Last semester, [we] played the first movement of *Terezetto in C Major* by Dvořák. With some prompting from our coach, we discussed ideas and created a story. Because we were all thinking of this same story, it sounded better.

Brenda's examples show that there are instances when extra-musical ideas are used to help musicians come together, play more in sync, and play with uniform expressivity.

Necessity of Interpretation

Brenda expressed to me in both interviews how she feels she must use characters and other extra-musical ideas in order to be musical in her solo playing:

Using these ideas is a requirement for me to play musically...People have told me there is a difference in my playing when I use characters and descriptors...I feel like I have to use [the process of extra-musical ideas]. It benefits my playing a lot more when I use it as opposed to when I don't. It is very evident if I were to play something and not use it and then play it again and use it.

These statements show her firm belief that imagery is necessary for her to play expressively. These interpretations are personal in the case of her solo playing, and director / principal-led in the case of her ensemble playing. A reason for this could be that she did not learn to be musical until she got to the university level. Musical and expressive playing had not been addressed by either her middle / high school directors or her high school teacher. Since she learned to be musical using this technique, it may be the only way she believes she can play musically.

Case 3: Hailey

Hailey is a sophomore music education major with a concentration in cello at the same university as Brenda and Addison. Of my eight participants, Hailey was the one who had the least amount of exposure to extra-musical ideas in the context of learning music. For Hailey, this approach was only used on rare occasions and typically with something programmatic. Further, she is not a participant who spontaneously creates these associations. Coming into the study, she was open to the idea and was interested to learn more. When asked how she thought extra-musical ideas could affect her playing, she said:

I think that it could just bolster playing, in general. I think that it could change your perspective and add something extra to the music. I think it adds an extra element to playing, [along with] all the right notes and bowings, that not only makes it more interesting for the listener, but also for the musicians, themselves. Hopefully, in the future, I will start to think about it more because this definitely

got the wheels turning in my brain. I wish that I would have played my pieces with a story or something in mind before.

During our second interview, Hailey talked about the piece she selected for this study and her application of the visualization and imagery techniques I suggested. She chose Gluck's *Andante* from the opera *Orfeo ed Euridice*. For her interpretation, she relied on the Almén-based suggestions page to help generate ideas. She also relied more on my direction for categories of story, descriptors, and images, as well as requiring more explanation through the assignment. I suspect this is due to her lack of familiarity with incorporating extra-musical ideas into non-programmatic music. Interestingly, Hailey was unable to adhere to my request that she select non-programmatic music. She had originally chosen and prepared a different piece; however, she was not able to access her music in her dorm because of the coronavirus crisis. In its place, Hailey used the *Andante*, which she had on-hand, at home, and knew from high school. Using this programmatic music, she created an interpretation that had a story, descriptors, and images. For the story, she took inspiration from the opera. She did some research on the opera and compiled a page of her notes. The main idea with which Hailey worked was the love between Orpheus and Euridice, whose union was not blessed. She thought of the *Andante* as Orpheus singing a love song to his Euridice during springtime. Hailey's interpretation of this song specifically was Orpheus discussing the obstacles the two face in their relationship and his love for her despite them all. When asked if there was anything specific in the music that agreed with the story she explained:

I read a couple of Greek mythology resources, and obviously different authors are going to portray it differently. [At] the beginning of this piece, Orpheus is happy, excited, and I think he is talking about the good things that are happening. Then, in the middle section, it is not minor, so I wouldn't say it is a total mood shift, but there are more notes, more dynamics, a meter change, and just a lot more going

on than what you had before. So, I think, in this section, he is bringing up or acknowledging that people don't necessarily bless their union, but he is stilling willing to go through with it anyway because he loves her.

For the purposes of the assignment, she created the descriptors "sweet," "sticky," "passion," and "loving" to describe the emotions and feelings throughout the piece. She came up these descriptors based on a few places in the music marked "*dolce*." This musical term caused her to think of words associated with the word "sweet" such as, "...caramel, or something sticky, gooey, creamy, and delicious." Hailey used the springtime setting of the programmatic story to inspire her images of bunnies hopping, flowers blooming, and cherry blossom trees, which she applied to her practice sections. This creation of story, descriptors, and images were novel to Hailey, which she did in response to the assignment.

Her prior opinion of using extra-musical ideas was positive; however, she had not had much exposure to it in practice. After using these extra-musical ideas, she felt that it had much positive impact on her playing and connection to the piece. In her second interview, she articulated:

I think it made a huge difference. When you don't really know anything about the piece, it is not that you are distant from it, it is just that you are learning it for the sake of accuracy. But I think when you start to add in storytelling, imagery, and adjectives, I think you then start to play the piece for something deeper than accuracy... You still want to play the right dynamics, fingering, and bowing, it just adds an extra underlying level of musicianship that you wouldn't have had before.

When she specifically talked about the effect of extra-musical ideas on her performance, she said:

After using these ideas, it was a lot easier to play. There was a [greater] level of ease and enhancement in the musicality than when I had first played it... I also think it helped my vibrato, since I knew what the piece was communicating. I used it more sparingly... more intentionally.

Hailey also talked about the potential benefits of implementing these ideas in the music education classroom:

I think if I am going into music education, I should be doing this and researching pieces, and adding in different content areas like history, language arts, and even visual arts. I think that these things can make my student more well-rounded and enhance the music.

Two expected themes arose: *emotional connection to music* and *imagery to aid in collaborative learning*. A third expected theme, *implementation of imagery to reinforce technical skills*, is not evident in either of Hailey's interviews. Although this theme might be expected based on the findings of Do and Clark, it is understandable since her teachers rarely used extra-musical ideas in any aspect of her playing.³ The unexpected theme specific to Hailey is *freedom*.

Emotional Connection to Music

Though Hailey had rare instances in her musical education where extra-musical ideas were implemented, she had one example of her high school teacher who was trying to get her to emotionally connect with the music. She explained that she had had a positive relationship with her high school cello instructor and would share with him either positive or negative occurrences from school that day. On some occasions, he would ask her to channel the emotions she felt from her school day into the music:

I had shared with my teacher what was going on at school, and he suggested maybe using some of those emotions to influence my piece. He would definitely say something like, 'If this is a celebratory moment, channel that same energy.' There were other times if something bad was happening where he would say, 'Think about this situation and the bad things that happened. Channel that emotional mood.'

³ Ibid.

Though he used imagery in these circumstances to get Hailey to emote and connect with the music, Hailey said she only remembers him doing this with programmatic pieces. He may have thought it might be easier for Hailey to make the connections if there were a program.

Imagery to Aid in Collaborative Learning

Hailey gave two ensemble examples of imagery as an attempt to aid in collaborative learning. Her university orchestra director has had the orchestra think about extra-musical ideas on occasions. Hailey gave a recent example that involved

Mendelssohn's *Fingal's Cave*:

The orchestra is playing *Fingal's Cave* by Mendelssohn. I think that it has been the hardest piece for us to connect to, just because it is so flowy and romantic and it never really changes all that much. A couple of weeks ago, our director told us how Mendelssohn wrote it. Mendelssohn was fascinated with this cave...called Fingal's Cave. Apparently, there is only one day a year where the sun perfectly hits the cave and perfectly illuminates the inside of the cave. All of the other days of the year it is pitch black and you cannot see inside of it...Our director told us that the entire piece is the journey of the sun hitting the cave and being able to see what was inside of it. He would ask us questions like, 'Is this when the sun hits throughout the different parts of the day? Is this when Mendelssohn arrived at the cave?' I would say as soon as the director finished talking about the story and then we played it, it was insanely different in how it sounded. So, I think that everyone was thinking about the image while playing the piece, and I think it made a huge difference. Not only did it sound a lot better, but I think it just clicked for everybody, and we started to play more as an ensemble instead of sixty individual musicians.

Though this example involves program music, it shows the impact that this teaching technique had on Hailey. She felt that the technique helped the ensemble to collectively connect with the piece and also understand when the music should fluctuate and when it should stay calm. Another example Hailey gave was of her chamber coach for her quartet. The chamber coach believed that the students were playing accurately and

musically; however, their musical interpretations were not lining up. Hailey explained to me how he tried to solve this problem:

We were working on one of Florence Price's string quartets, and we were playing the *Andante* from it. Our coach gave us two options. He said, 'You can either play this glitzy-glam Broadway, or background-boat music.' So when he said those things, we tried them both to see what we would like. The glitzy-glam Broadway version had heavy vibrato and lots of slurring of notes. Then we did the background-boat [music], which was more quiet and somber sounding. It wasn't as thick and heavy as the Broadway version. So, I think this just helped us decide how we wanted to sound.

This example shows how her coach's use of descriptive language impacted Hailey.

Clearly she felt that the technique worked to help the ensemble collaboratively produce a musical interpretation, which seems to have reinforced her views on using imagery.

Freedom

Hailey likes to have freedom when musically interpreting a piece and has carried this into her own teaching. When talking about the freedom her private university instructor gives her, she said:

I think the freedom to figure stuff out for yourself vibes with me. I don't follow a lot of rules. I don't like to be told specific things to do and having due dates and specific procedures. I would rather get to the same answer or the same destination, but figure it out a different way.

I believe that this quotation shows a window into Hailey's musical learning that seems informed by her personality. These qualities, in turn, appear to influence her views on the relation between music and imagery. Her value of freedom is evident in the way that she teaches her own students. About one in particular, she said:

He was playing *Chanson Triste*, which just means sad song. He apparently thought that it was a more happy and bubbly song, and so I let him play it like that because that is how he wanted to think of it. It is a fast tempo and sounds kind of fun even though it is in a minor key. He played it kind of spritely and that is how I

let him play it and he liked it better. I think if I were to specifically tell him that it was supposed to be a sad song and demonstrate how it should be interpreted, that he would not have connected to it as much.

Hailey values freedom not only with musical interpretations, but also with the presence or absence of musicality. Concerning some of her students, she explained: “They were more looking for accuracy and making sure they could play the right notes. If it is accurate and if they are happy with it, I just have them move on to the next piece.” Hailey feels this way as a student and also as a teacher because of previous experience with a strict teacher. One of her high school teachers was very exacting about how dynamics, articulations, bowings, etc. should be executed. He did not allow for Hailey to musically interpret on her own. Meanwhile, her university teacher is very flexible and allows for multiple interpretations. I think that this approach resonates with Hailey, and she has adopted this flexible attitude with her own students. This contextual information helps to explain why Hailey feels that it is important to be allowed lots of freedom when connecting extra-musical ideas to music.

Case 4: Karen

Karen is a junior music education major with a concentration in clarinet, also at St. Clair State University. Prior to participating in my study, Karen had much experience applying extra-musical ideas to music. Something unique about Karen is that she has always created associations between music she is playing and listening to and television shows, movies, and books that interest her. Her middle / high school teacher, university private teacher, and a few directors have also encouraged stories, descriptors, and images to help produce more expressive playing. Further, Karen believes that both her

competitive dance background and influence of musical parents have affected and impacted her sense of musicality and her ability to apply extra-musical ideas. Coming into the study, she already felt that extra-musical ideas helped not only with solo playing, but also in an ensemble setting:

I feel like [the concept of extra-musical ideas] helps a lot, especially in an ensemble setting. It helps with the whole ensemble mentality. I think, as a group, it helped us feel and express what was happening in that particular part, as opposed to something that really didn't have a story to it.

Karen chose the third movement of Weber's *Clarinet Concerto No. 2*, to which she applied visualizing techniques. This popular clarinet concerto is in the key of E-flat Major and uses large leaps and sixteenth-note runs to exhibit somewhat "cheeky" passages while also having sweeter and more graceful passages with eighth-note slurs. For her interpretation, she did not use the Almén-based suggestions page because, as she put it, "I just went wild." She created an interpretation that had a story and descriptors. For the story, she took inspiration from a superhero television show. She interpreted the music as depicting two superheroes: a superhero-villain who creates problems so that he can solve them and claim fame in the more "cheeky" passages; and the superhero-sidekick who is shy and morally upright in the sweeter, more graceful passages. The piece shows both personalities and then, at the end, depicts the sidekick standing up to the villain and triumphing during the glittery, virtuosic passage marked "*brillante*." To go along with these two characters, she used the words "pompous" and "confident" to describe the villain, and the words "graceful," "innocent," "morally upright," and "sweet" to describe the sidekick. These descriptors were influenced by the alternating passages in the music as well as by the television show on which her story is based. Her prior opinion of using extra-musical ideas did not change; however, she explained that her ability to

connect deepened with this exercise. She found that this exercise helped put her feelings into words and come up with something more specific. She believed that this specific interpretation:

Helped me connect more to the music on a level that I hadn't connected before to it. I also think it added an extra element of fun because sometimes when you play a piece a million times, you get sick of it. But I think putting a fun story that you created yourself, or taking a story from something that you enjoy, can make...practicing ...and listening...a lot more fun.

All three expected themes arose from Karen's interviews: *emotional connection to music*, *implementation of imagery to reinforce technical skills*, and *imagery to aid in collaborative learning*. The unexpected theme specific to Karen is *spontaneous musical associations*.

Emotional Connection to Music

When discussing Karen's emotional connection to music, I found that it is not only something that has been encouraged by her teachers, but it is something actively pursued by Karen in order to better enjoy performing. She explained that her middle / high school private teacher explicitly taught her to connect to the music in order to enhance musicality:

Starting in eighth grade and moving forward, we would talk about imagery and coming up with stories for songs. [My teacher] would talk about what she saw and then ask me what I thought about it. We would talk about this and musicality a lot. We talked a lot about feeling it and putting your whole self into the song and into the piece.

Karen also seeks to emotionally connect to music on her own. When talking about performing, she said:

I really enjoy showing emotion through the music, and I actually get more excited to perform than just playing on my own. I think this comes from when I

competitively danced for thirteen years. There is a lot of having to be vulnerable and emotional when you are on stage—especially in a competition setting because [the judges] are judging you on your ability to connect to the music. So, I have had to perform with emotions and being vulnerable my whole life. Similarly, I feel like performing [on my instrument] is an outlet and a conduit for emotion, and I like being able to really let myself go into a piece. I actually enjoy performing in front of others so that I can feel that way.

Through her past experiences with dance, Karen has been able to apply these same ideas to playing her clarinet. Making emotional connections to music is not only more meaningful for Karen, but also helps her to enjoy sharing music with others.

Implementation of Imagery to Reinforce Technical Skills

Karen gave an example of when her middle school band director used imagery to explain articulation within a piece:

There was this one song in middle school called *Rocky Mountain Romp*. I remember it had a lot of percussion and was kind of aggressive. I think the teacher facilitated the rocky mountain imagery to explain how to place the accents and staccato eighth notes in the piece.

This example shows the use of imagery ideas used to aid in technical performance. It also shows that Karen was influenced by the memory of this event, which may, in turn, have had an impact on her.

Imagery to Aid in Collaborative Learning

Karen gave me an example of her high school band director using imagery to aid in collaborative learning:

In high school, my band director would talk about stories, especially if the song had one behind it. I remember we were playing one song—I want to say it was called *New Dawn*—that was about the dropping of nuclear bombs. That was a really heavy story line, and you could actually follow it throughout the piece. We talked a lot about the meaning behind it. He would ask us questions about it and,

based on [our answers]...he instructed us on how to play it. I feel like it really helped a lot, especially with the whole ensemble mentality. I think, as a group, it helped us feel and express what was happening in [each] particular part.

Though this is an example of a programmatic piece, Karen recognized how powerful extra-musical ideas can be in an ensemble setting. She pushed this point further by talking about using extra-musical ideas to direct her own ensembles in the future.

I think if everyone had one story or descriptor they were all working toward, it would help the ensemble as a group because [each member] would be focused on the same goal and would dig deeper into the music.

This technique clearly impacted her strongly enough to make her consider using it in the future.

Spontaneous Musical Associations

Something unique about Karen is that she spontaneously associates familiar television shows, movies, and books with music. In her first interview, when I asked if she uses extra-musical ideas on her own without the influence from a teacher / director, she said:

I think I often take inspiration from an interpretation someone else suggested, but I think if I were not led in any sort of direction, and if someone were to just hit play, I think I would [add extra-musical ideas to music] anyway. Ever since I was very little, I would hear music on the radio and immediately begin to associate it with something that I liked, like a television show or a book. To this day, I can listen to a song and...come up with a music video for it in my head. I have always done that for as long as I can remember... So, yes, I think it is something that I do on my own.

Proof of this can be seen in her interpretation of Weber's *Clarinet Concerto No. 2*, which she associated with a television show she likes. Karen explained the story behind her interpretation:

The more I thought about the idea of a superhero, the more I thought about this show called *The Boys* on Amazon. It is very good...it is kind of wild, though. It is a story of superheroes called the seven, and they are the top superheroes of the day. Everyone thinks they are these amazing people that are saving people and everyone loves them. But, in reality, they are a really corrupt group and are only doing it for fame and money. They will create problems and then solve them so everyone thinks they are these heroes. So, they are actually not good people. One of the main superhero guys is who I actually thought of. He is kind of like my interpretation in that he is in it for the glory. When he is talking to people, or doing interviews, he acts like this standup superhero that everyone pictures.

I also asked her if she shares these interpretations with her private teacher or maybe with peers in her studio. She said:

I usually feel pretty comfortable sharing them. If I am using an actual story, it is probably something to do with one of my favorite shows or something. Sometimes there is a bit of embarrassment like, 'OMG you are such a nerd!' but I am pretty comfortable sharing the fact that I am a huge nerd and take inspiration from those things.

One can see that Karen is not at all shy or self-conscious about her interpretations, unlike some of the other participants in this study. She enjoys not only showing her interpretations through musical performance, but also by informing her listeners of her extra-musical ideas. She attributes this mindset to the influence of her parents:

I will be practicing at home and my mom or dad will ask me, 'What do you see?' or they will tell me what they see when I am playing a particular piece. I remember my sophomore year of college; I was playing the piece, *Solo de Concours* by Messager. The beginning is light and chill, and I remember my mom being like, 'Oh, this is when you are in the French café. You are sitting outside and looking at the Eiffel Tower.' I remember thinking that that was a really good picture of what it sounded like and ran with it.

This shows that the musical influence of Karen's parents may have contributed to her tendency to create spontaneous musical associations.

Case 5: Nigel

Nigel is a freshman music education major with a concentration in trumpet at St.

Clair State University. Nigel had no conscious experience with either the idea of musicality or attaching extra-musical ideas to music prior to university; he does not recall his high school teachers ever addressing this explicitly with him. One reason for this could be that his lessons were inconsistent, often not happening for months at a time. Once at university, his lessons were consistent, and both his private lesson teacher and ensemble director included extra-musical ideas to help connect and to portray the mood of a piece. Since experiencing his first semester-and-a-half at university, Nigel came into this study feeling that extra-musical ideas have helped him develop a firmer sense of musicality:

I would definitely say that I connect more. I think it gives me something to play off of and something concrete to think about. I am not just playing this piece of music because you told me to play this piece of music, I am playing this piece of music because it is conveying an idea. It is something I can attach to and latch on to while playing.

Though Nigel has not used these ideas without the influence of a teacher or director, he was interested in trying them on his own in this study, with the hope that he could continue to do so in the future.

Unfortunately, I was unable to complete a second interview with Nigel because he had to leave midway through the study for medical reasons. Even though I was only able to conduct the first interview with him, his data is still useful. Two expected themes arose: *emotional connection to music* and *imagery to aid in collaborative learning*. A third expected theme, *implementation of imagery to reinforce technical skills*, was not evident in Nigel's interview. While I expected this theme to emerge across my participants' data, given Nigel's high school background and limited time at university, it is unsurprising that this theme is absent. There are no unexpected themes that are specific

to Nigel; however, several themes that emerged from his interview were common to other participants.

Emotional Connection to Music and Imagery to Aid in Collaborative Learning

Though his university private teacher uses extra-musical ideas to help him understand a mood and a purpose behind a piece, none of Nigel's examples depicted his teacher using these ideas to form an emotional connection to the music. Although this is not something that has been done by his private lesson teacher, his wind ensemble director has used extra-musical ideas to help the ensemble emotionally connect with music:

Whenever we cut off or stop in the middle of the piece, [the director] will always start to talk about how this reminded him of something emotional from his personal life. I can't think of anything specifically, but it helps us understand and connect to the music more.

In this example, his director is not only using emotions to try to get his ensemble to connect to the music, but is doing this to help them connect to each other in a collaborative learning setting, i.e., an ensemble. Nigel perceives that this technique helped him and the ensemble understand and connect to the music through the director's personal example.

Case 6: Allison

A sophomore piano performance and English major at Franklin Mills State University, Allison, like others in this study, also had had experience with attaching extra-musical ideas to music prior to meeting and speaking with me. However, her background makes her unique among my eight participants. She attended a K-12 Waldorf

school, which uses pedagogy that strives to develop students' intellectual, artistic, and practical skill in an integrated and holistic manner.⁴ In school, she was able to learn the violin and "a few flute-type instruments," as well as participate in choir. Outside of school, she took private piano lessons. Allison's college education is also unique among my participants. She is not only a music major but also an English major with a concentration in professional writing:

There are a lot of connections that people usually don't see between English and music, and I feel like your project relates to both of my majors.

Not only does Allison make a connection between English and music, but also between extra-musical ideas and music. This latter connection comes from her private piano teachers in both high school and college, though she sees its use as largely remedial. This remedial use may come from her teachers' use of extra-musical ideas only on occasions when Allison has had difficulty connecting to a piece. Coming into the study, Allison felt that extra-musical ideas helped her to bring about the expressive playing of pieces with which she formerly had difficulty:

Expression has to do with your emotion, and emotion has to do with the rhetoric behind everything. Every emotion can be described in a certain way...so, I think that if there is not an image behind the music, there is definitely some sort of rhetoric or narrative.

Allison talked about the piece she selected for this study and her use of visualization techniques. She chose the Prelude from Bach's *Prelude and Fugue in C Major* from Book II of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*. This Prelude features a continuously flowing sequence of melodic lines that gives it an improvisatory feel. For her

⁴ Francis Edmunds, *An Introduction to Steiner Education: The Waldorf School* (Forest Row, UK: Sophia Books, 2004), 86.

interpretation, she read through the Almén-based suggestions page, but ultimately decided to go with her usual approach to pieces. She created an interpretation that had descriptors and images. Allison used the words “conversation,” “democracy,” “respectful,” and “push / pull” to describe the mood and emotion of the piece. Her explanation of these descriptors:

No one is ever really talking over each other, so I thought of it in terms of different voices. It was almost like there is a conversation, but it is still a democracy. No one is talking over another to be heard, it is always calm...everyone is respectful in the way that they are communicating. They are definitely making sure the other person is done talking...it is a harmonious conversation. I think even with the sustained notes, even though they are going away and diminishing in their tone quality, they are still keeping everyone grounded in the harmony. There is a chord also at the end of the piece—this is where I came up with the idea of it being more of a democracy—that has this A natural in the soprano, the tenor throws in this A flat and it then takes on this diminished quality. The soprano, then, almost conforms to that or agrees to that. Even till the end, [the voices] are still discussing and considering all the different viewpoints.

Instead of seeing images throughout and representing the piece as whole, she saw each individual voice as taking on an image or personality. She thought of the four voices as four elements working together cohesively in nature: the soprano as water; the alto as earth; the tenor as air; and the bass as fire. She selected these images based on the descriptors. Allison also supported these images by finding specific cues and attributes in the music that she thought represented these four elements of nature. Her prior opinion of using extra-musical ideas did not change, although she believed this specific exercise deepened her understanding:

This helped me to be more engaged in how I practice. Just learning the parts separately. I even tried playing the voices on different instruments so I could hear them differently. I think [this exercise] helped in my engagement in the practice so it didn't feel so boring.

Three expected themes and one unexpected theme arose from this case. All three of my expected themes were evident in Allison's interviews: *emotional connection to music*, *implementation of imagery to reinforce technical skills*, and *imagery to aid in collaborative learning*. The unexpected theme specific to Allison is *interpretation in parts*.

Emotional Connection to Music

Allison has had teachers encourage an emotional connection to music; however, much of this emotional connection is done on her own. Allison shared that her high school private teacher focused on musicality and emotion: "I think she helped me a lot with musicality and expression and the emotion needed behind it." However, since high school, emotional connection to music has been something Allison has felt on her own. When discussing her current teacher and teaching style, she explained, "She won't demonstrate pieces for me. I think this is because the emotional and expressive part is something more that you hear and not something that you watch [teachers] demonstrate." I also asked her how she felt using extra-musical ideas when performing:

Using the images and descriptors brings the tone and emotion out of the music. At that point, I feel like I can really relate to the audience what I want them to hear...It makes it more meaningful for me.

For Allison, music is all about working at finding an emotional connection in order to make it meaningful, and then presenting an expression of that meaning to those in her audience.

Implementation of Imagery to Reinforce Technical Skills

Allison's example of imagery used to aid with technique actually comes from her piece chosen for this study. In the Bach *Prelude*, her teacher was not hearing the proper motion and sound she wanted in the opening soprano line. Of her teacher, Allison related: "She kept telling me to think of water or sled riding in order to make it more fluid." Allison took this idea of water beyond the technical and used it in crafting her extra-musical interpretation that she then perceived aided in her musicality.

Imagery to Aid in Collaborative Learning

As a pianist, Allison does not have as much instrumental ensemble experience; however, she has had experience in wind ensemble. When asked about extra-musical ideas in an ensemble setting, she recalled that her director used the technique with a piece called *Asphalt Cocktail* by John Mackey. She explains, "It is super-fast and it is supposed to be imitating the streets of New York, so the idea of swerving around everywhere and trying not to get hit. The director tried to have us all think about it that way." When I asked if she also had an example with a non-programmatic / non-referential piece, she explained that since she only has experience in wind ensemble, most all of the repertoire has something referential in the title. However, she did discuss this in a choir setting and gave me some insight to imagery in a collaborative setting:

I know you are not concentrating on vocal music, but in choir, I can't always hear the other parts. But then, when I hear the recording, I hear [the other voice parts] better. So, I feel like if the director were to come up with those images, or at least discuss them with us, it could be helpful. It is kind of hard because we each play a different part of the image, so it is kind of hard to see images as a whole, sometimes, in an ensemble and how it makes sense.

This is an intriguing idea of each member playing a different part of the image. Perhaps in a collaborative setting, Allison finds it necessary that an image not only come from the ensemble director, but also that the ensemble listen to a recording of the piece in order to hear all of the parts and how they fit together to form the image. Using Allison's mindset of imagery in an ensemble setting, one can see how this idea could translate to solo playing for the single-line instrumental musician. For Allison, musicians playing single-line instruments may need to not only listen to their own parts, but also to the accompaniment in order to get the full picture.

Interpretation in Parts

A unique aspect of Allison's interview was her interpretation. She took a closer look at parts and individual voices as opposed to looking at whole sections of pieces. Though her descriptors apply to the combination of voices and the piece as a whole, her images are focused on one voice at a time. In our second interview, she described it as, "...giving each voice its own identity." Her full explanation is as follows:

The soprano is water because of how I thought of it after my lesson. My teacher wanted me to play it more smoothly and not so didactic in the articulation. I kind of had to think about it in terms of something liquid and flowing. For the alto, I chose earth. There honestly wasn't too much behind that one in comparison to all the other ones. It is just very grounded, especially since it is toward the middle of the keyboard and grounding all the voices together. It has a lot of those sustained notes and kind of just keeps everyone under the same harmony. Then for the tenor, I chose air. I wanted air to be one of the middle voices so it could affect things around it. So the excerpt that I played on the third page has a lot of upward motions, it is always moving to whatever the new harmony is and is then landing there, but always moving up. If you put air in water it will always rise because it is lighter than water and less dense. I wanted the air to affect the water because the soprano has little motives that are faster than others. So I thought that maybe that could be when the air was rising. The bass is fire because, like the soprano, it has these faster rhythms thrown in throughout. I feel like those stand out a lot and kind of demonstrate the fiery quality and that it pushed everything along.

This explanation dissects each and every voice, which was not anything attempted by any of the other participants. A reason for this could be that most of my participants are playing single line instruments. Perhaps with multiple voices, in some circumstances, it can make more sense to interpret each voice or part individually.

Case 7: Lacey

Lacey is a junior music education major with a concentration in euphonium at The University of Summit. Though Lacey is a junior, she is only a second-year music education major. Prior to participating in the study, she had much experience attaching extra-musical ideas to music. Lacey explained that she has spontaneous visual-narrative responses to music, that is, she is able to see, in her mind's eye, a movie-like story unfold when playing and listening to music. Lacey also sometimes creates her own lyrics for instrumental music in order to help her connect to it. In addition, her private teachers in high school and university encouraged extra-musical ideas to help her connect with pieces and create her own individual interpretation. Lacey's directors in middle school and university also used extra-musical ideas to help the ensemble connect with pieces and with each other. Coming into the study, she felt that extra-musical ideas not only brought about more expressive playing, but could also help the processing of emotions and events that occur in life.

Lacey explained her application of visualization techniques to the piece she selected, Marcello's *Sonata No. 1 Op. 1 in F Major*. This first sonata is taken from his *Six Sonatas for Cello and Piano* and is comprised of four movements: *Largo* (F Major), *Allegro* (F Major), *Largo* (D Minor), *Allegro* (C Major). The first *Largo* and two *Allegros*

are in major keys and consist of fast sixteenth-note runs and syncopated rhythms, while the second *Largo* is in a minor key and contains a slower and more vocal melody. In her interpretation, she used bits and pieces from the Almén-based suggestions page. When asked if she thought it was a useful resource, she said, “I was interested to see what you thought would help, since I have never been taught to do this or given guidelines. It has just been something that I have done. Actually...having a whole process...was nice and made me look at things differently.” She created an interpretation with stories and descriptors for each of the four movements, as shown in the table below:

Table 1

	Story	Descriptors
<i>Largo</i>	Picnicking outside on a cloudy day, guessing cloud shapes	Relaxed
<i>Allegro</i>	Two people racing horses through mountains and woods	Noble and exciting
<i>Largo</i>	Two people dancing at a ball with big dresses and wigs	Waltz and romantic
<i>Allegro</i>	Belle from <i>Beauty and the Beast</i> walking through the market place	Nostalgic

Her inspiration for the first two movements came from time she had spent recently outdoors:

I have been out in nature a lot more this past week just because of the Coronavirus... I think my interpretation came from just enjoying nature a little more...I know the environment is getting better because everyone is on lockdown. It is sad that it takes [a pandemic] to make the environment better, but it is cool that pollution is down and the water is clear and the environment seems to be getting a break right now. Maybe that will make us realize, ‘Hey, maybe we should take care of the world.’

Her interpretation of the last two movements was also impacted by the coronavirus crisis. Since the virus forced her to leave campus and go home, she was feeling the nostalgia of being in her old high school bedroom. Some of the posters and decorations in her old

room are from the *Beauty and the Beast* high school musical, for which she was student director. This got her thinking:

I really love *Beauty and the Beast* because it was a show I was student director for my senior year of high school. That movie and that show just mean a lot to me. It is a nice throwback being in my old room. I haven't been back home for three years since starting college. So, it is just really nostalgic being back in my old room with all of my posters and decorations on my wall. It just makes me remember those high school days.

One can see here how this crisis had an effect on a participant's interview and extra-musical interpretation. When asked why she chose this piece in particular, Lacey explained that she chose it for my study specifically because she was having difficulty connecting to it:

This piece is definitely more technical than what I prefer to play. I like playing really slow pieces—that is just what I enjoy playing and [how] I think I sound best. I chose this [faster] piece [for the study] because I needed to work on it...I just needed to focus a little more and come up with something more vivid.

Her prior opinion of using extra-musical ideas did not change, although she believed this specific exercise helped clarify her focus:

... it took me a little bit longer, and I had to think about it a little bit more. I needed to think about what I was doing and the thought process behind a little bit more—which isn't something I am used to doing for music—... it helped me to be a little bit more focused and come up with clearer pictures and ideas rather than more vague and general things.

From Lacey's interviews, all three of my expected themes are evident: *emotional connection to music, implementation of imagery to reinforce technical skills, and imagery to aid in collaborative learning*. An unexpected theme that emerged was *spontaneous visual-narrative and lyric responses*.

Emotional Connection to Music

Lacey discussed emotional connections to music in her own playing and in teaching her private students. When discussing her own emotional connection, she gave an example of a previous piece:

I think the first movement is more of an image. I was thinking of a sea and someone that has lost their home or someone important to them. It is just a very somber piece. To me, the end of it sounded like saying goodbye, like someone is gone. There is a poem...that actually means a lot to me. I read it at my grandmother's funeral, and it is about saying goodbye as a ship sails across the sea. I associated these feeling with the music.

Unlike some of my other participants, Lacey is very comfortable using deeply personal emotions and channeling them into music:

I think the whole point of music is to connect. For me, that is why I love music...I have pieces that I play and I will just start crying because [of] feelings it brings up...For me, it helps me process things and deal with whatever is going on in life. It helps me escape...I think that is very important.

Lacey uses music as emotional expression and as a kind of therapy. She also discussed the importance of emotional connections with music regarding her future students:

Making these connections is what keeps kids in music, this is what gets them excited...Music is a way that helps students escape; I think [the process of making emotional connections to music] is a really important thing that we need to focus on in music education.

Lacey plans to use emotional connections to music to get students excited about music and also to help them escape from everything else that might have happened in their day.

Implementation of Imagery to Reinforce Technical Skills

One example of imagery to reinforce technical skills can be seen in Lacey's anecdote about her teacher. Her teacher used imagery to help her breathing to ensure that it was consistent:

I have had teachers talk about those [pinwheel toys] and actually pull one out to see if I am having a consistent air stream when I blow out. You can actually see it physically moving and know that whenever you are playing, that should be the image of the steady breath and keep it at whatever tempo and pace you are supposed to be taking.

Lacey also discussed how she feels that interpretations help with the consistency of her playing. Such images can remind her how a passage should sound and what the energy behind it should be each time.

Imagery to Aid in Collaborative Learning

Both Lacey's middle school and university band directors have implemented extra-musical ideas in collaborative learning. She gave me one very specific example involving her university band director:

He really connects to the music and has pushed for the entire ensemble to connect to the piece. For example, we were playing *O Magnum Mysterium*—it is gorgeous—which is a really important piece to him. He has two little daughters...when the first one was born, there was some sort of complication and his wife had to be under a lot of medication. My director said he was holding the baby while the nurses went to attend to something else and his wife was sleeping. He said it was basically just him and this crying baby and he had no idea what to do because she just kept crying and crying. He was saying that he didn't know...what he was doing, but then he thought that since he likes music, maybe she would too. So he played *O Magnum Mysterium*, which just happened to be the first song on his playlist. He played it, and she instantly went quiet. He said he just played it on repeat over and over again until the morning. He probably listened to it one thousand times. He told us this story, and it just made us connect to it and understand what it was like to be there in that situation. He also told us how *O Magnum Mysterium* is based on the birth of Jesus Christ and that the piece needs to feel like pure inner joy. He asked us, 'When was the last time that you felt that?' He gave us a moment of silence to just think about a time that we felt pure inner joy.

This vivid example shows the impact that the use of imagery had on Lacey within the ensemble. The director was able to inspire them, according to Lacey, by sharing not only his own personal tie to the piece, but also the history and original meaning behind the

piece. In addition, he encouraged the students to form their own connections through remembering their own feelings of “inner joy.”

Spontaneous Visual-Narrative and Lyric Responses

Something unique about Lacey is that she has a spontaneous visual-narrative response to music. She shared, “Whenever I hear music, I see an actual film in my head...there is a story that I see. It is something that I thought everyone had. I am realizing that this is not the case.” When I asked if she shared these film-story responses, she explained:

Since coming to college, I have been more open with people about what actually does go on inside my head when I hear or play a piece of music. I have also asked other students if this happens to them. I am noticing it is not as common as I thought it was.

I also was intrigued by Lacey’s spontaneous lyric response to instrumental music: “I write on my music a lot and some of it has lyrics to it and some of it has a story that I am thinking about in my head. My teacher knows that I do this, and sometimes he will give me suggestion or ideas.” When I asked her how she gets inspiration for these lyrics, she gave one example:

I have always put words to music. I think it makes me play better and makes me sound more stylistic. I think it makes me have a clearer tone. The point of music is to make you feel something, and I think I generally pull from what is going on in my life. For example, I was playing an *Andante* and *Allegro*, and I was just not connecting with the piece. It wasn’t sounding very good and I wasn’t happy about it. At the time, I was working on a play in the sound crew for Cinderella, and I was thinking about how part of my piece sounded like a wedding announcement. In Cinderella, there was a wedding announcement and I connected that to the music and created lyrics for it.

Her use of lyrics intrigued me and I was curious to see if she would use lyrics in the piece she selected for my study; however, she explained that she only usually creates lyrics for

slower pieces. Since this piece was fast and technical, she found a story to be more helpful to her playing.

Case 8: Michelle

Michelle is a junior piano performance major at the same university as Lacey. Prior to participating in the study, she had some experience with attaching extra-musical ideas to music. Both her high school and college private teachers have used imagery and descriptors with Michelle to help her with technical and musical aspects of pieces. Coming into the study, she was open to the idea, but believed that extra-musical ideas should be used only if a player is having issues with musicality: “I feel like if [someone doesn’t] have the sense intuitively, then it can be really useful. So, if it is with a piece that they just don’t connect with or if it isn’t helping on its own, then yes.” The use of extra-musical ideas as remediation is a theme that will be more closely examined in the following chapter.

Michelle chose the second movement of Beethoven’s *Sonata No. 3 Op. 2* and shared the visualization techniques she used in her interpretation. The second movement, in a modified rondo form and marked *Adagio*, is written in the key of E Major and contains a romantic middle section in the key of E minor. She did not use the Almén-based suggestions page because she forgot that it was available to her as resource. She created an interpretation with a story, descriptors, and images. While using descriptors and images had been part of Michelle’s “tool box,” using stories was something new to her. For the story, in the opening E Major section, Michelle imagined a mother and daughter traveling on a train. The mother is singing to her daughter, and her daughter

falls asleep and begins having nightmares. Michelle explained how the nightmares are depicted in the E minor section where the daughter has dreams of walking through a dark and scary forest during a storm. To go along with this story, she used the words “love” and “sweet” to describe the voice and feelings of the mother, and the words “scary” and “dark” to represent the nightmare. For her images, she saw a storm with shadows and lightening. Michelle defended these images by finding specific cues and attributes in the music that support this story. Her explanation of her story:

I thought of a mother and daughter on a train for the first section. The daughter was falling asleep on the mother’s lap as the mother was singing lullabies to her. That whole section is just kind of sweet and loving in a way...then, when it changes mood, the daughter fell asleep and started having dreams. I thought of her dreaming about being lost in a forest and it was raining and storming. Every time there was that interjection where the left hand crossed...I imagined that the mother’s voice singing the lullaby broke into her dream and layered on top of everything that was happening. I imagined [the daughter] getting lost in the forest and getting kind of scared, but then hearing her mother’s voice and getting kind of comforted...Then, when I would get loud octaves in my left hand, it would be thunder and the storm and the dream was overcoming [the mother’s voice]...but then the mother’s voice starts to overcome. When we get back to that first section repeated, the little girl is awake, forgetting about the nightmare, and starting to feel relaxed, and then she falls back asleep.

Michelle uses motives, rhythms, and articulations in other instances in the music to support her story.

Her prior opinion of using extra-musical ideas did not change. She still felt that it is a technique that can help when one is having difficulty understanding and connecting to a piece. She chose this piece, in particular, because she was having difficulty with memory, consistency, and dynamics. Two expected themes from Michelle’s interviews are *implementation of imagery to reinforce technical skills* and *imagery to aid in collaborative learning*. A third theme, *emotional connection to music*, was not evident in either of Michelle’s interviews. This is surprising since the existing literature includes the

use of emotions, whether personal or more abstract, to connect to music and also to audience members, specifically St. George, Holbrook and Cantwell and Woody and Burns.⁵ However, Michelle did not discuss her emotional connection to music, and neither did she recall any of her teachers doing so. A possible explanation could be that she had a strict teacher in high school who wanted a specific interpretation of a piece and demonstrated how he wanted this to be executed. Talking about her high school teacher, she said:

He was very, very specific. Instead of letting me develop my own interpretation, it was him telling me to crescendo here exactly this much, hold your hand here, and stuff like that. He wanted me to be more expressive, but would just tell and show me how to do it.

Perhaps with the influence of this teacher, Michelle has formed the opinion that music is about following instructions that come from the music and instructor. No unexpected themes that are specific to Michelle emerged from her interviews. However, there are themes that are common across interviews that came from Michelle's interviews. These will be analyzed in the following chapter.

Implementation of Imagery to Reinforce Technical Skills

Michelle discussed two examples where imagery was used to help with technical execution in a piece. Her first example comes from her high school piano instructor, who used imagery to help with the momentum of fast triplets in one of her pieces:

He tended to use imagery to help with [technique]...He would say, 'Imagine that you are pushing a bolder off a hill. It will first go slowly, and then it rolls down quicker and quicker and quicker,' which helped with the speed of my triplets.

⁵ St. George, Holbrook, and Cantwell, "Affinity," 264; Woody and Burns, "Past Responses," 60.

Her second example was one of her own students. When I asked if she had used storytelling, descriptors, or imagery in any capacity, she explained:

One of my students is playing one of Schubert's *Moment Musicaux*. She would always forget to play the left hand staccato and the whole left hand is staccato throughout the piece. I told her to think of a bouncing ball. A ball doesn't bounce like this, (smacks hand on the table). So, she started focusing on that image of a bouncing ball. It helped her to [remember to] play the notes shorter...

These two examples are similar to those in the literature where imagery was used to help the technical aspects of a piece.⁶

Imagery to Aid in Collaborative Learning

As a pianist, Michelle had not had much experience playing her instrument in ensemble settings; however, she is currently involved in a quartet for which her friend has composed music. This quartet has a piano, horn, violin, and electric guitar. When I asked if she would be comfortable relating the music to extra-musical ideas in this setting, she expressed that since it is her friend's ensemble, she would not. Although, about a different setting such as that of chamber music, she expressed:

I think it could be helpful in a chamber setting to have everyone concentrate on the same thing; although, I think it would depend on the group of people...If people feel strongly against [using the technique of relating to extra-musical ideas], then no; but, I think it would be a good grounding point.

Though Michelle has not had much previous experience playing the piano in an ensemble setting, she is open to the idea of using imagery to assist with collaborative playing.

The previous eight cases examined the expected and unexpected themes by participants. These cases shows both similarities and differences among them. In the

⁶ Do, "Memorizing," 21; Clark, "Natural Link," 22.

following chapter, I will examine themes across cases, synthesize the results, interpret them in relation to the existing literature, and, finally, draw conclusions and make recommendations for further research.

Chapter 3

ACROSS-CASE DATA ANALYSIS

After analyzing the eight cases individually, here I analyze across cases for common findings and emerging common themes. The findings show that my expected themes of *emotional connection to music*, *implementation of imagery to reinforce technical skills*, and *imagery to aid in collaborative learning*, which were based on the literature, rang true. Seven participants spoke of an emotional connection to music that included extra-musical ideas, five participants spoke of imagery used to reinforce technical skills, and all eight participants spoke of extra-musical ideas used in collaborative learning settings.

An unexpected finding across participants was the existence of spontaneous image-like reactions, i.e., unintentionally having specific ideas such as a color, character, or the idea of a specific emotion ‘appear’ in one’s head when listening to or playing music. Three of the eight participants had these kinds of reactions when playing or listening to music, which is a rather significant number. Further, this seems be unusual based on its absence in the literature and from my personal experiences as both a musician and as a music teacher. One possible explanation for this significant presence of these specific reactions in the study is the method of participant recruitment. Participants volunteered to be part of the study based on an email description of the study with an attached survey. Perhaps those who volunteered did so because the research topic was

particularly interesting to them. I suspect those with spontaneous image-like reactions may have been disproportionately drawn to volunteer in such a study. I believe a blind survey of undergraduate instrumental music majors would show a far less significant minority of those who are prone to such reactions.

Along with these findings, seven themes also emerged across cases: *late-onset use of imagery; difficulty using imagery with technical passages; power of a strong influencer; imagery as an aid with nerves and memory; the creation of concrete interpretations; extra-musical ideas for remedial use; and willingness to use extra-musical ideas with younger or less experienced musicians.*

Theme 1: Late-Onset Use of Imagery

One theme from this study was *late-onset use of imagery* for five of my eight participants. A brief survey of the literature shows why this theme may be expected. Though the literature shows examples of early use of imagery with students, it is not for the purpose of musicality. Encouraging the pairing of imagery in music in early grades can be seen in general education examples from the literature. Rubright posits that storytelling allows K-6 students to connect psychologically, emotionally, and intellectually with material in a way that inspires imagination.¹ Rusk and de Vries also encourage the blending of stories and music to enhance interactive learning among elementary students.² Ringgenberg goes further, beginning with the use of existing stories and music as a jumping-off point, but then branches her early elementary students into

¹ Rubright, *Beyond the Beanstalk*, 17.

² Rusk, "Music and Stories," 163; de Vries, "Parental Perceptions," 4.

creating new stories and songs.³ Building on this general education scaffold, the pairing of imagery and music in early grades can be seen in music education examples from the literature. St. George, Holbrook, and Cantwell show the concept of affinity, i.e., a connection between emotional narratives in music and the individual's motivation to learn, through their qualitative study with participants ranging in age from primary school children through adult.⁴ Fallin, like Rusk and de Vries above, blended children's literature and music. However, rather than using music to enrich literature, she used literature to enrich the music in her elementary general music classroom. She finds this connection encourages creativity, reinforces music skills and music knowledge, enhances listening and enjoyment, and expands multicultural awareness.⁵ Kerchner explores imagery as it relates to creativity and multisensory responses with second and fifth graders.⁶ Keown shows how imagery in the form of film music can be used to create meaningful opportunities with secondary students in the music education classroom.⁷ These many examples from the literature show the early use of imagery to enhance K-12 general and music education classrooms; however, these examples do not use imagery for the purpose of fostering musicality. For this reason, *late-onset use of imagery* is actually an expected theme in this study.

Some participants for whom this theme emerged never considered extra-musical ideas in their practice until university, when ensemble directors or private lesson instructors introduced this idea to enhance musical or technical aspects of playing. These

³ Ringgenberg, "Story Songs," 77.

⁴ St. George, Holbrook, and Cantwell, "Affinity," 267.

⁵ Fallin, "Children's Literature," 24.

⁶ Kerchner, "Children's Responses," 48.

⁷ Keown, "Invisible Art," 70.

teachers put the imagery tools in participants' "toolboxes" for use in their contexts, for use collectively or individually. Some participants, while introduced to this idea prior to university, did not employ these tools fully until university. This late-onset use of imagery may be a result of the participants' perceived disconnect between high-school-level private lessons and university-level private lessons. Participants acknowledged a gap in that which was expected of them in high school and that which was expected of them at university; the use of imagery is part of that gap.

Hailey and Michelle both shared how their private lessons in high school were strict, while their university lessons allowed for more freedom. Both of their high school private teachers wanted specific musical interpretations that allowed for little individuality. Hailey explained that her high school teacher was strict about "paying attention to the print," i.e., specific tempo, bowing, dynamics, etc. This teacher left little room for Hailey's interpretations, extra-musical or otherwise. On the other hand, her university studio teacher allows her the freedom to make musical interpretations for herself, though this freedom extends to extra-musical interpretations only occasionally. Hailey's experience makes apparent the "imagery gap" between high school and university. Her involvement in this study has furthered her interest in extra-musical ideas, so much so that she will use this with her own musically mature students, further reinforcing late-onset use of imagery:

[Using extra-musical ideas] might depend on the age of the student...I think [my older, more advanced students] would be way more interested in something like this rather than my younger students...not that [younger students'] brains aren't developed enough, but I think sometimes a more advanced or seasoned musician is going to be a lot more inclined to welcome those kinds of ideas.

Similarly, Michelle's late-onset use of imagery might be explained by the demands of her high school private piano instructor:

He was very, very specific. Instead of letting me develop my own interpretation, it was him telling me to crescendo here exactly this much, hold your hand here...He wanted me to be more expressive, but would just tell and show me how to do it.

When Michelle began university-level lessons, she was given the freedom to interpret the music, with imagery as a part of that freedom to interpret. Addison also commented on the freedom she has with her university-level teacher, although hers is a different kind of freedom. Addison was exposed to extra-musical ideas in middle school, but her high school teacher made no use of such ideas. In addition, she did not like her high school teacher's heavy-handed and discouraging teaching style, which, she says, resulted in stunted musicianship. Even though Addison possesses a spontaneous color response to music, this went undeveloped in high school because of her teacher, to whom she attributes the delay in her use of imagery. At university, Addison is free to develop her image responses and is further encouraged by her instructor to use characters and descriptors.

Brenda, having had private violin lessons only one year prior to university, shows late-onset use of imagery because her technique, solo repertoire, and concept of musicality were also late-onset. Her university-level playing is expressive because, with the characters and descriptors introduced by her teacher, she is able to attach "more concrete ideas to my non-programmatic music." As a private violin instructor, Brenda adopts this late-onset use of imagery with her own students:

I think I just have a harder time making [the use of extra-musical ideas] relatable to younger students. Right now, I have a five-year-old student. As much as I would love for her to be musical, we are really just trying to focus on putting her fingers on the tapes and not modulating the key in the middle of the piece...I just

need her to focus on playing the right notes...I tried [using extra-musical ideas] with [middle school] students, but I think even they are not old enough. One of my students is thirteen, and I just don't think she grasps it. I tried to explain it to her, and I just feel like it went over her head.

Brenda defends her position from her personal experience as both a student and a teacher: extra-musical ideas only make sense to her and others once the music is mastered to some degree.

Similar to Brenda, Nigel also had late-onset imagery due to late-onset musical development which was the result of inconsistent high school lessons. He explained how university lessons have pushed him to dig deeper and cover more ground:

My [university] trumpet professor...has a different style of teaching [from my high school teacher]. He pushes me on interpretations and on bringing out stylistic elements, including imagery...

Nigel uses stories, descriptors, and images with encouragement from his teacher, to “convey ideas” while digging deeper.

These findings show that, for these participants, the study of music at university is less a continuation of high school and more of a different category altogether. This late-onset use of imagery proves important in this investigation of students' perceptions of the relationship between music learning and imagery. University-level lessons may not only equip students with the tools to attach extra-musical ideas to music, but also give them the freedom to apply them. This theme of late-onset use of imagery is related to the following theme: *difficulty using imagery with technical passages*.

Theme 2: Difficulty Using Imagery with Technical Passages

One theme that arose among three of my participants was the difficulty of using imagery with technical passages. This was brought up by Brenda, Karen, and Allison. All

three discussed having difficulty channeling an image into the music when the music became technically demanding. Brenda shared, “If a passage is technically difficult to execute, I find it hard to think of more interpretive ideas when playing.” An example can be seen in the piece she chose for the study. In the second movement of the Kabalevsky *Violin Concerto in C Major*, Brenda found from square 9 to the end to be technically challenging and more difficult to interpret. She found it difficult to play her interpretation “into” the music without having command over the section first. In a later interaction, she shared that “now that I have more technical command over that section, I am able to think more interpretively.” For Brenda, the technique is only useful once the technical aspects of the piece are mastered. Karen also shared that with more technical passages, she finds it hard to focus on an interpretation and, instead, is “focused on playing the notes rather than playing the music.” With the Weber *Clarinet Concerto No. 2* she chose for the study, she found the virtuosic clarinet solo at the end to be technically demanding. She shared her interpretation of this passage as a standoff between the villain and sidekick in her story. She explained: “I know what is going on in the story, but, when I am actually playing, I need to switch that part off and think, ‘Okay, let’s do this.’ The last page is just insane and I need to focus on playing.” Allison also describes a technical passage in the *Prelude* from Bach’s *Prelude and Fugue in C Major* that she selected for the study. When asked about her images in one section, she explained:

I definitely think about my images in other sections, but, at this point in the third-to-last system, that is definitely a part where I have to think about just the tenor voice. I won’t think of [my “air” interpretation at this point], I just focus on bringing the tenor voice out.

The need for technical mastery before achieving expressive musical goals is something that Woody confirms. In this study, his subjects felt that two conditions had to be met

prior to making good use of imagery. First, they had to have mastery over the technical aspects of the music before they could concentrate on any expressive considerations; next, they had to connect with and understand the imagery.⁸ If either condition was unmet, students felt unmotivated and frustrated.⁹ It is interesting that Woody's findings, alone in the literature, show this sequence of technical mastery prior to imagery application for musicality.

Theme 3: The Power of a Strong Influencer

Another theme discovered among the five St. Clair State University students, specifically, was the impact of a strong influencer. Each participant from St. Clair discussed the powerful impact of the wind ensemble / orchestra director on their musicality through the use of extra-musical ideas. According to Addison, the director would always ask about extra-musical ideas in relation to the piece they were playing: "He would ask us about what we were thinking about the piece and also offer up his own personal interpretation." Similarly, Brenda shared how the director, during rehearsal for Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet*, "... made us all think of a time we have been in love and think about that when we were playing." Hailey gave her example of *Fingal's Cave* and how, through the image provided by their director:

"[The orchestra] sounded insanely different. I think that everyone was thinking about the image while playing the piece, and I think it made a huge difference... We started to play more as an ensemble instead of sixty individual musicians.

⁸ Woody, "Musicians' Cognitive," 135.

⁹ Ibid.

Karen also attested to the director's use of extra-musical ideas and shared, "He will tell us what he is thinking about during a song in order to give us ideas for our own interpretations." Further, Nigel recalled how this director "...talks about how [the piece] reminded him of something from his personal life...[This memory] helps us understand and connect to the music more." This strong influencer is apparently helping students to create connections with the music and the ensemble in creative ways. He not only gives his own personal interpretations, but pulls ideas from those in the ensemble. This director is setting an example by encouraging the use of imagery and interpretation that might then lead to individuals using the technique without being prompted. This example would seem to provide tentative support for Tan's argument that a large ensemble director can encourage her ensemble musicians to integrate extra-musical ideas into a performance. Incorporating such techniques into an ensemble not only can enhance rehearsal experience, but can also, according to Tan create more creative musicians.¹⁰ Historical evidence for creative music making is discussed by Kennedy, who worries that without scaffolds such as imagery, creative music making will remain on the fringes of education. The strong influencer / director in this section brings imagery to the fore, perhaps arming his ensemble musicians with creative music-making ability.¹¹ A strong influencer may also lend tentative support to St. George, Holbrook, and Cantwell, whose study points to the concept of affinity. They found affinity to be the connection between emotional narratives in music and an instrumental student's enjoyment and motivation to learn.¹²

¹⁰ Tan, "Transcultural Theory," 162.

¹¹ Kennedy, "Creative," 147.

¹² St. George, Holbrook, and Cantwell, "Affinity," 267.

The emotional narratives that the director not only gives, but also draws out of musicians in the ensemble, build on students' level of affinity with the music.

Theme 4: Imagery as an Aid with Nerves and Memory

One of the most interesting themes revealed in this study was imagery aiding in the calming of students' nerves during performance as well as piece memorization. Using extra-musical ideas proves a distraction from nerves according to a four of my participants. Brenda shared:

Usually, when I play in front of people, it makes me really nervous. Having stories, characters, or other ideas to grab onto makes the act of performing more enjoyable because I am thinking about [my characters, descriptors, and images] instead of how nervous I am.

Karen shared similar feelings when talking about nerves during a performance: "I feel better playing in front of people once I am confident in the musicality of the piece. If I do not have [stories, descriptors, and images], I actually get more nervous to play." Allison and Michelle expressed how extra-musical interpretations not only help nerves, but also music memorization. Allison shared:

I do not get as nervous about playing or memory when I 'choreograph' my pieces. My teacher wants me to map out [my imagery and interpretation] instead of thinking so much about the notes. Choreographing is something that I do in the practice room by myself to prepare for performances.

Michelle talked about extra-musical ideas helping with nerves and memorization in the second movement of Beethoven's *Sonata No. 3 Op. 2*. Difficulty with connecting and memorizing were two reasons she selected this piece in particular. When discussing its effect on her nerves, she said, "I feel like it was a point of reference during my performance to keep me calm. Instead of thinking about every single note and how

nervous I am, I was thinking about my story or images.” When discussing the effect of extra-musical ideas on her memorization of the piece, she said:

I had some memory issues with the piece, as you might have noticed. When I was playing just now, sometimes I was thinking about the story and sometimes I shifted my focus to notes and rhythms and then I would lose my place. When I was thinking about the story instead...it helped my memory. When I think about the notes, I get too lost in the details and then have memory slips. But with my [story, descriptors, and images], they help ground me and help me stay where I am in the piece. When I start thinking about the music, itself, too much, I start to second-guess what is coming next.

This last example from Michelle’s interview is similar to a technique used by Do, who encouraged students to attach emotional memory, i.e., self-generated stories, to music in order help them memorize pieces.¹³ Though the literature does not point to any other music-specific examples of imagery aiding in student memorization, Ringgenberg shows an example of music and stories aiding in student memorization in the general education classroom, at one point citing preschool student competency improving by one or two years.¹⁴ This interrelationship among stories, music, and memorization may possibly be mixed in other ways, for instance, using stories to enhance music memorization. It seems reasonable to suspect that imagery as an aid with memory and nerves is a tangible by-product enjoyed by music teachers and students when chasing imagery as an aid to musicality.

Theme 5: The Creation of Concrete Interpretations

Four of my participants were quite comfortable using extra-musical ideas on their own, prior to participating in the study; however, they found that the assignment for this

¹³ Do, “Memorizing,” 21.

¹⁴ Ringgenberg, “Story Songs,” 77.

study forced them to create more concrete interpretations, which, in turn, produced a deeper connection and engagement with the music. When discussing the Bach *Partita* she selected for the study, Addison said, “Because I had a more concrete story...there was more substance to my interpretation. I felt like there was a little more to the music I was playing.” Lacey discussed how this exercise created a more focused interpretation.

Discussing the Marcello’s *Sonata* she selected for the study:

I mainly focused on listening to other recordings of the piece and trying to see what would pop into my head. Listening and thinking about it helped me portray what I wanted... I think it took me a little bit longer and I had to think about it a little bit more. I needed to think about what I was doing and the process behind it a little more, which isn’t something I am used to doing. I think it helped me to be a little bit more focused and come up with clearer pictures and ideas rather than more vague and general things.

The act of listening and creating an extra-musical reflection is something on which Bolden focuses. Bolden designed an assignment in which college students were to create a narrative associated with a piece of music to which they listened.¹⁵ Though his students were not playing these pieces, the assignment relates to the current study. Lacey approached her assignment in two-steps: first listening to the piece and consciously creating a concrete interpretation, and then practicing and playing with that concrete interpretation in mind. I agree that creating an interpretation through listening may have generated a more concrete interpretation for Lacey.

Karen expressed that the assignment for this study not only created a more focused interpretation, but also rejuvenated her practice sessions:

This was really nice as an exercise for me to put my feelings into words with the music. I feel like that is something I don’t end up doing a lot. I have ideas in my head, but I don’t wind up sitting down and thinking through why I am thinking this, why am I doing this, or how do I explain the story behind it. I think it helped

¹⁵ Bolden, “Stories with Music,” 75.

me connect more to [the music] on a level that I hadn't connected before... I have been playing this piece for a long time now, but still felt disconnected from it. I think putting this story to it allowed me to form a different perspective and gave the piece a fresh look for me... It made the whole aspect of practicing a lot more fun.

Imagery rejuvenating musical executions is a theme that Woody also uncovered in his 2006 study. Woody found that students who had many years of instruction had automatized their expressivity for the most part and that imagery allowed them to connect again with the music.¹⁶ Similarly, I believe that the process of using this technique allowed Karen to connect again with the music. Allison did not express if this exercise provided a clearer interpretation, but, like Karen, explained that it affected her practice sessions:

This helped me to be more engaged in how I practice. Just learning the parts separately. I even tried playing the voices on different instruments so I could hear them differently. I think [this exercise] helped in my engagement in the practice and didn't feel so boring.

These four participants already integrated storytelling, descriptors, and images in their practice sessions and performance attempts. Through participating in this study, they were able to try creating these interpretations in a structured, more concrete way that ultimately helped with the level of connection and engagement in a piece. My participants' reports that the generation of imagery forced them to develop concrete interpretations, which, in turn, created stronger connections to their pieces align with the findings of St. George, Holbrook, and Cantwell, who found that narratives attached to music result in greater student enjoyment and motivation to learn.¹⁷ The present findings are also supported by Barten, who found that metaphors in music education help to

¹⁶ Woody, "Musicians' Cognitive," 135.

¹⁷ St. George, Holbrook, and Cantwell, "Affinity," 264.

communicate direction in a way that captures student imagination while also creating aesthetic and memorable experiences.¹⁸ Beyond music education, evidence of connections between music and concrete stories exist in the general education classroom. For example, Rusk and de Vries both discuss how the combination of music and literature aids student retention and enjoyment and keeps students “on task.” Participants’ feedback and these supporting sources point to a link between the creation of concrete extra-musical ideas applied to music and enjoyment / engagement in music.

Theme 6: Extra-Musical Ideas for Remedial Use

Some participants reported that their instructors used imagery alongside all student pieces. An example would be Addison and Brenda’s violin teacher, who uses characters and descriptors as an expected part of piece-learning procedure. However, other teachers and music students saw employing extra-musical ideas as a remediation method, whether for memory, musicality and expression, or technique. The use of extra-musical ideas for remediation was common among three participants in this study, all of whom selected pieces with which they were having difficulty for their ‘homework’ component. When asked why she chose the Marcello *Sonata* for this study, Lacey revealed:

I picked Marcello’s *Sonata No. 1 in F Major* because I have had a lot of issues connecting to this piece. That is why I thought it would be good for this exercise... This piece is definitely more technical than what I prefer to play. I like playing really slow pieces—that is just what I enjoy playing and [how] I think I sound best. I chose this [faster] piece [for the study] because I needed to work on it...I just needed to focus a little more and come up with something more vivid.

¹⁸ Barten, “Metaphors,” 95.

Lacey felt that after applying extra-musical ideas to this piece, she was able to create a more concrete interpretation, which, in turn, helped her connect to the piece and execute it more expressively. Michelle and Allison also selected pieces for remediation for this study. Michelle shared:

I wanted to pick a piece where I felt like [an extra-musical interpretation] would add to my ability to play and understand a piece. For most of my other pieces, I felt like I already connected and understood them without any extra help...[I chose this piece] because it was really, really slow and I was having a hard time feeling it and holding it together. I feel like I can understand each moment as it comes along, but it is hard to have a conception of it as a whole because it is so slow and so long. I thought that if I had some sort of imagery to go along with it, it would help me keep a sense of the larger structure and help it feel more cohesive. I feel like if I don't have that sense intuitively, it can be really useful.

Allison also explained that though she has attached extra-musical ideas to music in the past, it is not something that she does for every piece. She only uses this method if it adds something to her playing and helps her to connect or bring a different perspective. When describing the piece she chose for the study, she stated:

I picked the *C Major Prelude* by Bach from his Book II. I mostly picked it because I wasn't connecting very well with it. So, I kind of wanted to find a new perspective on it so that I might be able to connect more to it...There is just a lot of counterpoint [in this piece]. So, I was playing it over and over again, and it just sounded like a jumble of counterpoint. I didn't really know what to do with all of it.

Both before and after the study, Allison felt that extra-musical ideas helped her to connect with / understand a piece and remediated her previously unexpressive playing.

Woody addresses the use of imagery as remediation for lack of expressivity in his 2006 study. His findings were that students benefited from aural modeling, direct musical instruction, and instruction using imagery; however, student perception favored the

imagery and metaphor approach for expressivity direction.¹⁹ While the remaining literature supports using imagery to aid in memory, musicality and expression, and technique (see literature references in Themes 2, 4, and 5, above), it does not address remediation specifically.

Theme 7: Willingness to Use Extra-Musical Ideas with Younger or Less

Experienced Musicians

In both the first and second interviews, I asked each participant if they felt attaching extra musical ideas to music was something they would use to teach private-lesson students. Five of the eight participants already had private-lesson students and answered based on first-hand experience, while the other three participants, who had not yet taught, speculated about the use of extra-musical ideas with their future students. Of my participants, four had positive attitudes toward implementing imagery with younger students. Though Addison has not yet had the experience of teaching privately, she is very open to using extra-musical ideas with her future violin students, no matter their age or level of playing:

I think it is almost better if you start [using these extra-musical ideas] younger. I think it is almost easier for younger kids to create [extra-musical ideas]. I think it is easier for them to come up with that kind of stuff. I have never worked with younger kids before, and I have never given lessons, but I think younger kids can get distracted easily. At least when I talked to my friend about her students, she shared how often they get distracted and she has to come up with things to keep her students on track. So, maybe even coming up with a story or an idea could help them stay on task.

As future music educators and as individuals who have already had experience teaching

¹⁹ Woody, "Instructional Conditions," 21.

privately, both Karen and Lacey believe attaching extra-musical ideas to music can be a useful approach with younger students. Karen expressed:

I think this would be awesome for private-lesson students. Even in an ensemble setting, I think this would be a really, really awesome exercise for them and would have them be creative and think more about the music, ...especially for younger kids who get into this rut of playing mechanically. Like: 'Crescendo equals get louder' and they don't really know what that means in terms of musicality, they just get louder and play it mechanically. But asking questions like, 'Why should we crescendo here?' and 'What should a crescendo sound like? ...Using [stories, descriptors, and images] can help them think about instructions in the music *musically*. I think it can build their musicianship skills and would just be a fantastic tool in a teaching setting.

Similarly, Lacey shared:

With my seventh grade [euphonium students], I like to incorporate musicality into their pieces because I think it makes the music more fun for them. You can teach anyone to press down buttons and play notes, but to teach someone to play musically—that is exciting! I have seen my students get excited about [being musical and creating interpretations]. I think that is what gets kids...into music. That's what gets them inspired. No one wants to go and play excerpts for hours if you have absolutely no connection to the music. There has to be a reason you are doing it...I think it is important for young kids to explore musicality and interpretation.

Addison, Karen, and Lacey all see extra-musical ideas as enhancing lessons for students of any age, but especially with those who are younger. A significant common denominator among these three participants is background: all were introduced to the concept of musicality and extra-musical ideas applied to music at a young age. Perhaps this is why they are able to see the benefits of this approach. Further, with some imagery guidance from a teacher, it could perhaps prove beneficial and not affect young musicians negatively, as suggested by Sheldon.²⁰

²⁰ Sheldon, "Listeners' Identification," 367.

Hailey, too, teaches privately and believes implementing extra-musical ideas is useful with the young beginner; however, she believes the approach needs to be adapted: “With the younger student, you could use a simple adjective or color. That might be easier for them to comprehend instead of giving them a whole elaborate story.” Though she does not have the musical background of the other three participants who share this theme, she sees the benefit of using extra-musical ideas with beginners. The positive attitudes toward the use of imagery with young students is supported by the literature discussed in Theme 1, specifically Rubright, Rusk, de Vries, Ringgenberg, St. George, Holbrook, and Cantwell, Fallin, and Kerchner.²¹

Conclusions and Suggestions for Further Research

The present study has examined cases of applying extra-musical ideas to university students’ instrument practice. This relationship between students’ use of imagery and their understanding of a piece of music existed prior to the study for all of my participants, but to varying degrees. Some felt that their positive opinions did not change over the course of the study, while others felt that using extra-musical ideas in this study created deeper understandings and connections. The participant with the least amount of prior exposure to extra-musical ideas came into the study with positive views on its possible effect on musicality. Upon completing this study, she felt that this approach had a positive effect upon her playing. All participants believed that musical

²¹ Rubright, *Beyond the Beanstalk*, 17; Rusk, “Music and Stories,” 163; de Vries, “Parental Perceptions,” 4; Ringgenberg “Story Songs,” 77; St. George, Holbrook, and Cantwell, “Affinity,” 267; Fallin, “Children’s Literature,” 24; Kerchner, “Children’s Responses,” 48.

executions of their chosen pieces were superior after using extra-musical ideas. They perceived that they were able to achieve their musical goals through this approach. The results, both from individual-case and across-case analyses, reveal that for these particular students, extra-musical ideas have a perceived impact upon their execution of music. This study suggests that when a student learns a piece of music alongside an image or story of her own creation, a firmer understanding of the music may take place that helps with the student's musicality. I believe this study gives some clarification to approach the pathway of the gray, mysterious, and subjective area of musicality precisely because it sidesteps technical recipes and replaces them with extra-musical ideas and imagery as metaphors.

The participants in this study depict various instruments, learning styles, private lesson experiences, ensemble experiences, prior experiences with imagery, and imagery applications in this study. Readers may see themselves or their students in parts and pieces of one or more of the cases. Perhaps this identification may lead to application of themes that show some promise of the successful pursuit of musical goals. For example, if a student has little experience with using extra-musical ideas in lesson settings because most of her musical training had been through participation in ensembles, she may see herself in Brenda. Because Brenda learned to be musical at university through the technique of applying imagery to music, she perceives that she must use this technique with all pieces in order to be expressive. Perhaps the student in Brenda's similar situation may also feel this need and require extra-musical ideas through private lesson instruction. If she is given similar tools with which Brenda has been equipped, she may also have similar perceived successes and limitations. In this way, the reader may be able to apply

the findings of one or more cases to herself or her student and, thus, further explore the implications for music learning.

Further studies on using extra-musical ideas, in general, could bring about its mainstream use in music education. The findings of this study and the literature suggest some avenues, in particular, for further research. Based on *the power of a strong influencer*, one avenue for future study could be measuring the imagery influence of ensemble directors on their groups, corporately and individually. Further research on this topic could provide evidence to help mainstream extra-musical instructional strategies for training music education majors, resulting in better equipped ensemble directors and conductors. Arising from the theme *difficulty using imagery with technical passages*, a possibility for study could be a comparing 1) the learning of extra-musical ideas *alongside* the technical aspects of a piece with 2) the learning of extra-musical ideas only *after* mastery of the technical aspects. The results of a study such as this could help music instructors establish the most effective sequence of instruction. This could be beneficial to both private lesson teachers and ensemble directors. Based on *imagery as an aid with nerves and memory*, an avenue for research could be a study measuring the power of extra-musical ideas as a memory aid for instrumental students. Both the literature and my findings seem to suggest such a study could bear fruit, equipping students and performers with a possible aid for music memorization. Finally, a most interesting further study based on *willingness to use extra-musical ideas with younger or less experienced musicians* could be the measurement of the effectiveness of little-by-little introduction of imagery strategies with elementary school music students through various activities. With

further exploration of this topic, perhaps this approach could become part of the natural learning progression for students, avoiding *late-onset use of imagery*.

As a musician, I also fell into the theme of *late-onset use of imagery*. In fact, I was able to see myself in several of my cases, but most especially in Michelle. Not only did Michelle experience late-onset use of imagery, but she also plays piano and applies extra-musical ideas in the same ways that I was taught. The technique of applying extra-musical ideas was only implemented by my private piano instructor when I was having issues with my musicality. This is similar both to Michelle's learning experience and to her teaching philosophy of using imagery for remedial use only; however, this is where our similarity ends. After conducting this study, I see using extra-musical ideas beyond the remedial and the late-onset; I anticipate using this technique alongside teaching technical aspects of music as well as with musicians of all ages.

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APPENDICIES

**APPENDIX A
YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
APPROVAL**

From: Karen H Larwin
Sent: Thursday, January 30, 2020 6:32 PM
To: ckcoy@ysu.edu; Paul Louth; Emily Nicolette-Fantin
Subject: Re: IRB Application #092-20(ltr)

Dear Investigators,

Your investigation entitled Students' Perceptions of Music Learning and Imagery: Exploring and Documenting Connections. You are investigating the connection perceive between music and imagery. You will be recruiting 8-9 students. You will use screening surveys in your recruitment process at YSU and two other universities. You will conduct a three-interview series; both audio and video recording. Adult student participants will not be identified by name but by Pseudonyms in all reporting.

The research project meets the expectations of 45 CFR 46.104(a) and is therefore approved. You may begin the investigation immediately. Please note that it is the responsibility of the principal investigator to report immediately to the YSU IRB any deviations from the protocol and / or any adverse events that occur. Please reference your protocol number 092-20 in all correspondence about the research associated with this protocol.

Good luck with your research.

Karen

Karen H. Larwin, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, YSU IRB Chair &
Distinguished Professor
Counseling, School Psychology, & Educational Leadership
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APPENDIX B SURVEY FOR RECRUITMENT

Survey Questions for Potential Participation in Research Study on the Role of Imagery and Narrative in Music Learning

This survey is for recruitment purposes only and will not be used in the analysis of the study

To answer the following questions, you need to be:

- Over the age of 18
- A music major enrolled in major-level instrumental lessons on any instrument

Questions:

- 1) What instrument do you play?
- 2) Do you anticipate learning / playing / practicing non-programmatic music in the near future?
- 3) When practicing a non-programmatic piece of music, do you recall ever having used imagery, narrative, or storytelling to help facilitate your interpretation, musicality, and/or understanding of the piece or any aspect of the piece? This may have been a consciously chosen strategy, an automatic tendency, or a suggested strategy by a teacher.
- 4) If you answered yes to the previous two questions, would you consider taking part in a short, confidential research study (during the early spring semester of 2020) in which you would be asked, at a time convenient to you, to discuss your thoughts on the role of narrative and imagery in learning / understanding / listening to / performing music in a personal interview? You would also be asked to employ imagery or narrative ideas while practicing one of your pieces and then give feedback on how you feel these ideas affected your interpretation, musicality, and / or understanding of the piece?

If you would be willing to consider taking part in this study, please send your survey responses to Emily Nicolette-Fantin at enicolettefantin@student.ysu.edu by **February 10, 2020**. This research study has received official IRB approval. Full details and consent form will be provided for any prospective participants.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this brief survey!

APPENDIX C
INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Informed Consent for Participation in Educational Study (Adult form)

Dear prospective study participant:

I am a Music Education graduate student at Youngstown State University conducting research to determine the relationship between imagery and musicality. This research can contribute to the research and development of how people conceptualize music while learning, performing, and listening to it. A potential benefit for you participating in this study is an improved sense of musicality, performance, and ownership of a piece. I would appreciate it if you would participate in a study that I am conducting that will only take a little of your time.

What will take place?

On a mutually agreed-upon time and place you will be asked to participate in two to three semi-structured interviews involving a series of questions. The interviews should each take about 30-60 minutes to complete. A semi-structured interview is an interview in which a brief set of primary questions is asked and, depending on the responses given, various follow-up questions may be asked.

Only questions having to do with your attitude toward and previous experience with imagery, music, lessons, practice, teaching, ownership, and performance will be asked. You can refuse to answer any question(s) with which you're not comfortable. The sessions will be audio and video recorded so that interviews can be fully transcribed. There is a minimal risk of breach of participant confidentiality. However, I will reduce this risk in two ways: I will use pseudonyms and ensure that any identifying information be altered or kept out of the final report or manuscripts sent for publication; and I will lock the data from the interviews (original unaltered transcripts, audio recordings, video recordings) in a filing cabinet in the principal investigator's office for a period of 3 years, after which time it will be destroyed. All of the information collected in these interviews will be handled in a strictly confidential manner. I will offer my email address to you in case you want to add any additional comments upon later reflection.

In a semi-structured interview, not all questions can be known in advance; however, if you agree to participate you will be free to refuse to answer any question or to stop answering questions at any time during the interview. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions, because I am interested in your perceptions and opinions about imagery and musicality.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time, and it will not affect your academic standing at your university. You may withdraw at any time by simply informing the investigator that you no longer wish to participate. Data will be removed should you choose to withdraw from this study.

Please feel free to contact me, Emily Nicolette-Fantin, graduate student at Youngstown State University (412) 965-0594 (or enicolettefantin@student.ysu.edu) at any time if you have any questions about the study or participating as a research subject. If you would

like to talk to my faculty advisor, Dr. Paul Louth, you can contact him at (330) 941-3636 ext. 1829 (or jplouth@ysu.edu). If you have questions about your rights as a research participant please contact the Office of Research Services at 330-941-2377 or YSUIRB@yse.edu .

I understand the study described above. I am 18 years or older and agree to participate and understand that my participation is fully voluntary.

Name of participant (print)

Signature of participant Date

I understand and give permission for the investigator to audio and video record the interviews for analysis purposes.

Name of participant (print)

Signature of participant Date

APPENDIX D
INTERVIEW 1 QUESTIONS

- 1) What is your major and what year are you in school?
- 2) How many years of lessons have you had on your instrument at this point?
- 3) How passionate would you say you are about your instrument?
 - a. Are you passionate about the music you are playing and your instrument is just the vehicle for producing this sound or visa versa?
- 4) Do you do any kind of research before learning a piece? (composer, time period, reason for composition, etc.)
- 5) How many different teachers have you studied with?
- 6) How have your teachers tried to make you more musical or expressive in the past?
- 7) Do you feel comfortable being musical and expressive? Does it come naturally to you?
- 8) Do you use storytelling or do you ever incorporate (intentionally or unintentionally) visual imagery or specific ideas or narrative into any aspect of your musicianship? If yes...
 - a. Do you recall enjoying the music more by having a story or some specific visual imagery connected to it? Why or why not?
 - b. Is it something you would use to teach private lesson students? Why or why not?
- 9) Have you heard of anyone using storytelling in any aspect of musicianship, from musical preparation to execution? (colleagues, teachers, professionals in interviews, etc.)
- 10) Do you feel that incorporating narrative ideas or specific visual imagery, whether intentionally or unintentionally serves a specific purpose?

These were the primary questions for the semi-structured interview. Other follow-up questions arose based on participants' responses

APPENDIX E
ALMEN-BASED SUGGESTIONS PAGE

Imagery and Narrative Suggestions

Questions to ask yourself:

1. What is the organization or sequence of ideas (emotions, feelings, actions, etc.) throughout the piece?
2. What is the overall theme of the piece? Romance, tragedy, irony, comedy, etc.?
3. What is the conflict in the piece if there is any? What is leading up to the conflict? What is the result of the conflict?
4. What is your narrative interpretation of the piece? Do you have more than one?

Tips and Ideas:

1. Do some background reading about what was going on culturally and historically during the time in which the piece was composed. Art, war, literature, political movements, etc.
 - a. Does this have an impact on the narrative or imagery interpretation?
2. Think about the relationship between various motives throughout the piece.
 - a. Similarities and differences with registry, rhythm, order of pitches, direction, key, tempo, etc.
3. Think about the harmonic areas in relation to the overall structure of the piece.
 - a. Does it follow a pattern or is it unpredictable?
4. Imagine what would be going on between characters if this piece was the track for a movie scene.
5. Does this piece make you think about any emotional situations you have experienced in the past? A loss, a win, a heartbreak, etc.

APPENDIX F INTERVIEW 2 QUESTIONS

- 1) What piece did you pick? Why?
 - a. Did you have trouble connecting to the piece that you picked?

- 2) Did you use the suggestions page? If yes...
 - a. Did you use bits and pieces from it, or all suggestions?
 - b. Did it make coming up with your interpretation easier?

- 3) For this exercise, which technique (storytelling, descriptors, or imagery) did you use? (In first interview, said she never really used stories)
 - a. Did one come more easily than another for this piece?
 - b. Did you use 1, 2, 3, combination of two, or all three?

Demonstration Portion of Interview...

- 4) How did you feel this technique (storytelling, descriptors, images) affected your understanding or execution of the music?
 - a. Did you feel more musical and expressive than you normally do?
 - i. How did it help you?

- 5) Did this take you a lot of time in addition to your normal practice time? Was it something you easily were able to incorporate into your practice and lesson time?

- 6) Is this something you could see yourself using in the future on your own?
 - a. Whether a solo piece or an ensemble piece? In listening setting such as concert or music class?

- 7) After using these extra-musical ideas more, would this be something you would use to teach a private lesson student? Why or why not?
 - a. Have you yet?

- 8) Did you enjoy the music more by having a specific idea / interpretation behind it? Why or why not??

- 9) Did you tell your teacher about this study and what you were trying to implement in your practicing / playing?

These were the primary questions for the semi-structured interview. Other follow-up questions arose based on participants' responses