Work-based Learning Project (Extended)

***'Facing the Music'**: Exploring the Presence of Identity Foreclosure in Working Musicians and its Association with Mental Health and Burnout Syndrome.*

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Chapter One – Project Proposal

1.1: Context

Fears around the declining mental health (MH) of the general UK population are rising, with reported cases of anxiety and depression at an all-time high (Smith, 2023; Christian, 2023; Robson, 2024). A report by Mental Health UK (2025) revealed that one in five workers took time off work in 2024 due to stress, indicating that workplace stress is a significant contributor to the concerning decline in MH, particularly post pandemic. Occupational stress is known as burnout syndrome (BS) (APA dictionary of psychology, 2008). Psychologists Freudenberger and Richelson, who first coined the term burnout, described it as “a stage of fatigue or frustration brought about by a devotion to a cause, way of life or relationship that failed to produce the expected reward” (1980. p.13).

The corporate sector has a legal obligation to prioritise MH and BS prevention (Work Right, unknown date), however the freelance nature of a musicians' work puts the responsibility for such preventive measures solely on the individual (Musicians Union, 2012). A difficult expectation since the slow erosion of BS may mean that the illness arrives largely unannounced (Maslach, 2005). Additionally, musicians may be less inclined to seek help for BS as increased colloquial use of the term seems to downplay its clinical significance (Manavis, 2023).

I am a vocal coach collaborating with working vocalists and amateur singers in my private studio and within higher education. My previous research was centred around musician BS with the goal of highlighting and further understanding the alarming figures around depression and anxiety in this population. My earlier work highlights the high values of musicians with regards to their occupation, despite many reporting MH struggles (Cannon, 2023). The growing awareness of this MH crisis presents coaches with an ethical obligation to develop the skills needed to support, inspire and train young artists without compromising their long-term wellbeing (Musgrave, 2023a).

Research has consistently shown that working musicians experience MH issues such as anxiety, depression and suicidal ideation at a higher rate than the general population (Hu, 2017; Mind, 2025). To understand why, it may be helpful to consider the influence of their adolescent experience with music (Parker, 2020). As Freudenberger and Richelson (1980) note, BS often arises when intense dedication is not met with the expected outcomes. Early identification of a talent or passion can give an adolescent a sense of purpose, which is often considered beneficial in the construction of one’s identity (Malin et al., 2017). However, if an

intense dedication begins in early life it can contribute to identity foreclosure (IF) (Marcia, 1967), which can be detrimental to one's future wellbeing (Petitpas, 1978). This dichotomy highlights the need to further investigate the intersection of identity and MH, particularly in fields like music, which demand high levels of commitment, practice and passion from a young age (Evans and McPherson, 2014).

1.2: Justification

In this study I aim to contribute to the growing body of literature on musicians' MH by exploring the complex relationship between IF and psychological wellbeing in the context of a musician's occupational experience. The findings may contribute to better-informed coaching practices focused on the prevention of MH issues in working musicians and performers. Given the overlap between anxiety, depression and the symptoms of BS (Koutsimani et al., 2019), it is reasonable to suggest that BS prevention strategies could be informed by further research into the relationship between identity construction and MH in those who build a career from a passion, talent or skill.

Much of the current available research into IF and MH is based on athletes (Brewer and Petitpas, 2017; Moses, 2019; DeFreese and Shannon, 2021). Many scholars have highlighted parallels between athletes and musicians when it comes to occupational demands (Habe et al., 2019; Núñez et al., 2020; John et al., 2024), however it is important to gather data that represents musicians specifically to inspire active change in coaching practices and promote funding for musician's support systems. By using phenomenological enquiry combined with quantitative Likert scale questionnaires, this sequential mixed methods approach will triangulate data (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2023), adding strength to the findings and minimising the risk of bias that is naturally present in insider research (Unluer, 2012).

1.3: The intended impact

Following a large 2016 study into musicians' MH, the University of Westminster highlighted education as one of the key areas of change to address the MH crisis (Gross and Musgrave, 2017). In a separate Musicans Union study, 61% of participants claimed that they had undertaken formal music training at a university or institution (2012). As part of their training, emerging artists should be able to expect access to ethical coaching practices that prioritise their long-term wellbeing (Musgrave, 2023a).

Data gathered from individuals currently working in the music industry may play a crucial role in shaping best practices for institutions training young musicians to mitigate any BS vulnerabilities. It may also inform safe and efficient coaching strategies to use with those who already struggle with their MH.

1.4: The outlined intention

This phenomenological study will sit within the paradigm of constructivism. When approached through a constructivist lens, phenomenology provides a distinctive and insightful perspective in qualitative research (Smith et al., 2009; Johnson, 2024). Based on the premise that student-led coaching is more efficient for both student and coach (Fincher, 2022), it is important to ground the research in the lived experience of the population under investigation.

A literature review will explore the current understanding of IF, BS and musicians' MH. This will help ground the study in up-to-date research (February 2025). I will then develop a methodology which will enable me to gather both quantitative and qualitative data from working musicians to gain insight into their adolescent musical experiences and their current wellbeing. Participants will be found online through musicians' community groups and will be invited to complete an online Likert scale questionnaire (March 2025), with the possibility of a follow up 1-2-1 semi-structured interview via Zoom (May 2025). A response rate of at least 20 would provide sufficient information for quantitative data analysis (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). Interviews with consenting participants will be conducted following analysis of the initial quantitative data. In line with Smith et al (2009), I will aim for a sample size between three and six for the interview stage, which should provide sufficient data for interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA).

Participants will be aged 18+ and earn most of their money through music/performance or instrumental teaching. This distinction is made to ensure that participants are financially reliant on their musicianship, an important consideration when discussing BS (Chirumbolo et al., 2022). Research tools will include the 18-point version of the psychological wellbeing scale (PWS) (Ryff and Keyes, 1995), as well as an adapted version of the identity style inventory (ISI) (Berzonsky, 1989). Quantitative data will be analysed to discover trends which will inform the questions for the semi-structured interviews. Each conversation will be driven by the participants to encourage organic responses. The interviews will aim to gather detailed descriptions of the lived experiences of participants and should take no longer than four weeks to complete (May 2025). The

resulting data will then be analysed using IPA principles (June 2025). By focusing on the subjective meaning of participants lived experiences, the study will remain faithful to phenomenological principles (Smith et al., 2009).

1.4.1: Project timeline

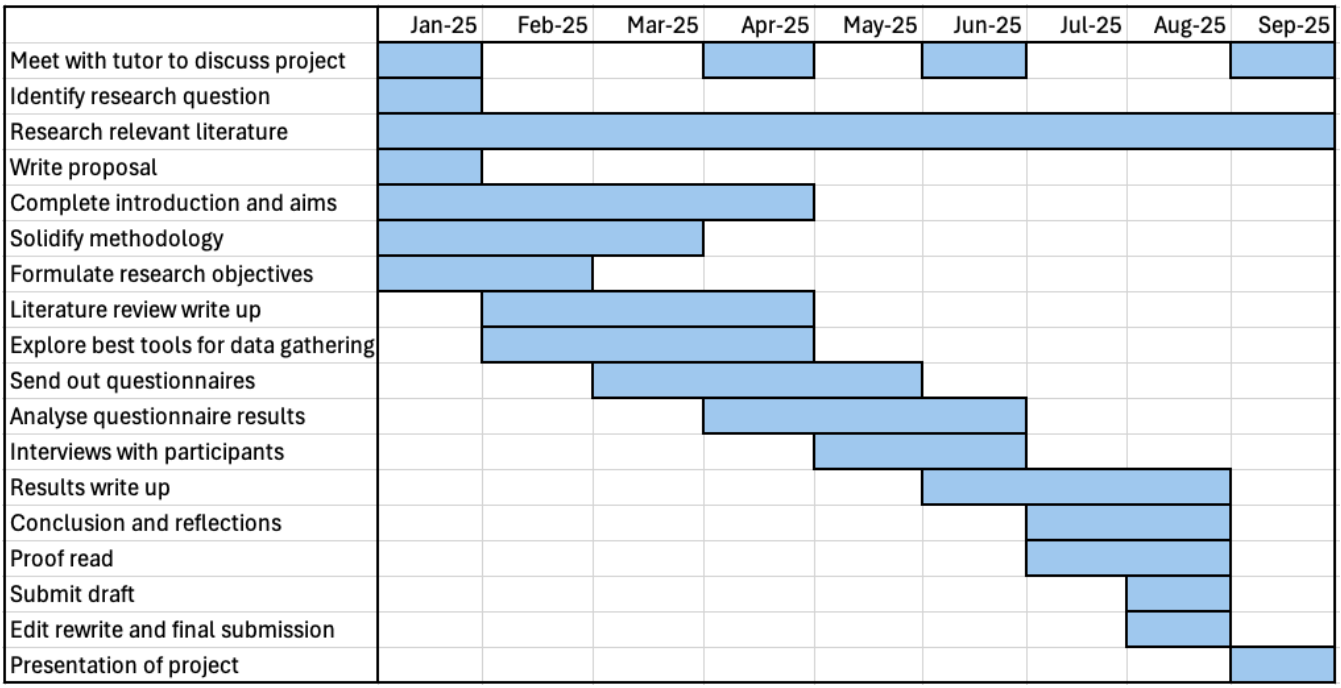

Figure 1 - Project timeline (created by Cannon 2025)

1.5: Ethics and insider research

All participants will be 18+ and able to give full consent. They will be offered full anonymity throughout the process with all identifying information redacted (Smith et al., 2009). Informed consent will be requested at each stage and participants will be reminded of their right to withdraw, fully or partially, when discussing sensitive topics. When conducting research on MH, the focus should be on the participants experience rather than the search for a diagnosis (Crowe, 2006). Data will be stored in a password protected folder for the duration of the study and destroyed following completion.

My own experience as both a performer and a coach gives me a high level of insider bias which could make this study difficult to navigate (Unluer, 2012). The phenomenological design requires me to acknowledge my own bias as part of the process (Smith et al., 2009), ensuring that I maintain an ethical transparency throughout. Bracketing my own reflections during the analytical process should allow the results to remain independent of any personal bias (Smith, 2009; Hardwicke and Wagenmakers, 2023). Using both qualitative and

quantitative methods will enable triangulation of the results to also limit bias (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2023). I believe my lived experience will help me to build rapport with my participants due to our shared understanding and value of musicianship (Mercer, 2007). I will however maintain a professional distance to ensure that boundaries are respected (Barber and Jenkins, 2014).

1.6: Individual learning outcomes

1. Lay the foundation for further research into effective coaching strategies with a focus on wellness for musicians and prevention of BS.
2. Benefit my own coaching practice by understanding the effects of identity on musicians' MH.
3. Highlight the current MH crisis in the music industry and encourage more support for musicians struggling with their MH and wellbeing.

Chapter Two – Introduction

Since 2020 there has been a consistent rise in individuals seeking mental health (MH) support (Mind, 2024), with one in five workers in the general population taking time off in 2024 due to work-related MH concerns (Mental Health UK, 2025). For musicians, MH issues are generally experienced at a much higher rate (Vaag et al., 2016; Gross et al., 2016, 2023; Gross and Musgrave, 2017; Horne, 2019), with research suggesting that musicians are four times more likely to suffer with suicidal ideation (Vertava Health, 2021).

The abrupt shutdown of all live music venues during the pandemic offered an unfortunate insight into the profound impact of workplace stress and job scarcity on musicians' MH (Littlewood, 2021; Musgrave, 2022). MH issues caused by one's occupation is known as burnout syndrome (BS) (Maslach and Leiter, 2003). Much like chronic stress, BS puts the sufferer into a state of physical and emotional exhaustion (Mental Health UK, 2021. Par 3) however, unlike chronic stress, BS builds up slowly over time (WebMD, 2024). Gross and Musgrave's 2017 study *'can music make you sick'* warned of specific vulnerabilities for working musicians that the pandemic easily exposed. The lockdowns highlighted the instability of the musicians' workplace and forced individuals to consider a life in which they weren't musicians (Musgrave, 2022). Ultimately, their work was labelled non-essential with many instantly losing their jobs and subsequently, their purpose (Littlewood, 2020).

One study reported that 34% of musicians had seriously considered abandoning their career, with a further 37% unsure about their future in music (Radcliffe, 2021). 87% of the 700 musicians in another survey stated that their MH had seriously deteriorated since 2020 (Help Musicians, 2021). The lack of support created an identity crisis like no other (Szostak and Sulkowski, 2021) and the sudden threat of detachment from their identities was perhaps the reason for the apparent crash in musicians' wellbeing (Musgrave, 2022). "Once a possible identity has been formed ... it is only let go of with great reluctance" (Oyserman and James, 2011. p.125). If musicians build strong links between their work and their identity, any fractures in their work could create tensions around their self-worth (Musgrave, 2022) and limit any personal development outside of music (Rickard et al., 2013).

Identity foreclosure (IF), a concept introduced by James Marcia (1966), refers to an early dedication to a way of life without sufficient exploration. Previous research into IF amongst athletes highlights their lack of self-exploration due to being overly defined by athletic abilities (Van Raalte et al., 1993), inability to cope with injury (Lally, 2007), and

isolation from social circles outside of their sport (Brewer et al., 2017). Despite the strong similarities between athletes and musicians (Williamon, 2024), research into IF in musicians is scant. Further investigation into IF in this population could provide a new basis for science backed coaching methods to support musicians' wellbeing as they transition from music education to music vocation.

I am a vocal coach with over 11 years' experience working with amateur and professional singers. My interest in this study comes from my own experience working closely with musicians throughout the pandemic, many of whom expressed MH struggles whilst attempting to support themselves in the performance industry. Vocal coaching, supporting clients as they develop, train or rehabilitate their voice, can be a vulnerable process. Therefore, despite not being a licenced occupation (Behlau et al., 2022), a coach has an ethical responsibility to provide a level of support that will protect the artists wellbeing (Iacovino, 2002).

The aim of this study is to explore IF, a commitment to a career, idea or belief without full exploration of alternatives (Erikson, 1959; Marcia, 1966), and its impact on the MH of working musicians. I intend to investigate whether premature commitment to a fixed musical identity may contribute to emotional distress and psychological challenges for those who pursue a career in music performance. The main outcomes expected are (i) to further understand the dynamics of the work life of a musician and enable ethically efficient coaching, (ii) to add to the literature highlighting the MH challenges for working musicians and (iii), to provide holistic, evidence based coaching practices for those who work with musicians to protect the MH of our artists.

Chapter Three – Literature Review

3.1: Introduction

The aim of this narrative literature review is to examine current research on IF, MH and BS as is related to working musicians. I aim to further understand the impact of the working musician's adolescent experience on their ongoing MH, contributing to the advancement of knowledge for those educating, supporting or collaborating with working musicians (Palmatier et al., 2018).

It is generally well known that a career in the music industry is competitive, unpredictable and unreliable (Brown, 2023; Grome, 2023; Music123, 2024). Considering the growing concerns around the declining MH amongst musicians (Brydon, 2023), and the fragility of the post-COVID-19 live music scene (Taylor et al., 2020), it does raise the question of why so many musicians continue to pursue their passion so unwaveringly (Kwon et al., 2018). "Musicians are encouraged to believe in themselves, and belief is central to musicianship" (Musgrave, 2022, p.15), but could this intense self-belief and commitment eventually contribute to MH issues as their careers progress. To understand what compels musicians to persevere despite the challenges, it may be helpful to explore their adolescent musical experience (Schlack, 2021), to discover whether IF may be a contributing factor to MH challenges that emerge later in life

3.2: Identity foreclosure

"Identity is a key concept to understand adjustment/psychological wellness in adolescents and adults" (Maroof and Khan, 2019. p.142). Identity, a combination of physical and behavioural traits which define who we are (Kurp, 2023), is difficult to define due to various theoretical frameworks providing differing views (Hermans, 2001). According to Adams (1998), identity serves several important psychological functions that help individuals maintain a coherent sense of self. IF occurs "when individuals make premature commitments to occupational or ideological roles that are socially and parentally acceptable in order to avoid identity crises" (Brewer and Petitpas, 2017, p.118).

Erikson posed that each life stage is characterised by a conflict; (i) trust vs mistrust, (ii) autonomy vs shame and doubt, (iii) initiative vs guilt, (iv) industry vs inferiority, (v) identity vs role confusion, (vi) intimacy vs isolation, (vii) generativity vs stagnation, (viii) integrity vs despair (1950). One must experience both sides of each conflict and, if navigated correctly, the positive quality will become dominant, enabling healthy life progression (Erikson, 1959).

Marcia (1966) built upon Erikson's broader identity framework with their work on ego and identity in adolescence. Marcia mused that identity was comprised of two main elements, commitment to a cause and exploration of alternatives (1966, 1967). They suggested that individuals fell into one of four identity styles based on their level of exploration and commitment (Soenens et al., 2005) *(Figure 2).* Marcia's framework is still generally accepted in the literature today (Zhang and Qin, 2023).

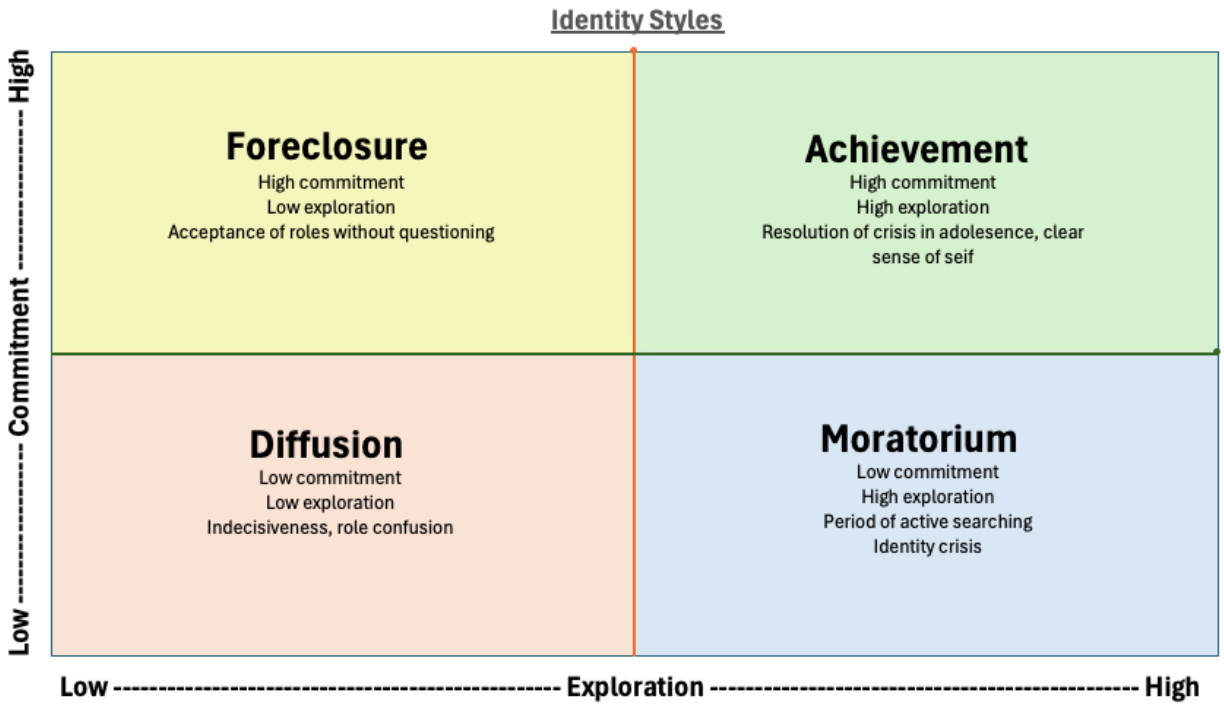

Figure 2: Identity styles (Created by Cannon 2025)

Identity crises are most common in adolescence (Erikson, 1959) when young people lose their sense of self and feel a need to rebel against uniformity (Staicu, 2024). Issues with identity continue as we switch roles and adapt to various stages of life (Zhang and Qin, 2023). Successful management of the initial identity crisis in adolescence will often establish the ability to cope with the identity shifts which come later in life, "the rebellion gradually evolves into a quest for integration with the world" (Staicu, 2024. p.243). Thus, being in a foreclosed identity state in adolescence may lead to unhealthy coping and anxiety in later life (Potterton et al., 2022).

Much work has been done to discover the impact of IF in athletes (Good et al., 1993; Murphey et al., 1996; Beamon, 2012; Brewer and Pepitas, 2017), however less is known about its impact on musicians. Much like athletes, musicians are often expected to put extensive time and effort into the development of their talent (Evans and McPherson, 2014).

This focus often results in the avoidance of exploratory behaviour and may subsequently hinder healthy development (Brown et al., 2000). Hargreaves and colleagues (2012) propose that while all individuals are born with the potential to become musicians, not everyone has the propensity to develop those skills. They also suggest that any natural musical ability is significantly enhanced by a supportive environment. Since IF is often a result of parental or environmental influence (Marcia, 1966), this dynamic may result in a higher-than-average possibility of IF in musicians compared to their non-musical counterparts.

The lack of current research focusing on the effect of IF on musicians' underscores the need for further research into the cause of musicians MH challenges, particularity following the pandemic (Breakwell and Jaspal, 2022).

3.3: The musicians' identity

Early exposure to formal music training, and positive performance experiences, contribute to the formation of a musician's sense of self (McPherson and Hallam, 2012). Many musicians will consider the title of 'musician' to be a central aspect of their identity (Beech et al., 2016; Ascenso et al., 2017). Positive feedback in adolescence enhances motor skill learning (Martinez et al., 2024), and positive praise can foster identity alignment with that skill (Davis, 2019). Thus, if an adolescent is praised for a talent, and encouraged to pursue it as their only obligation, they are more likely to embrace it as part of their identity. "If he accepts work as his only obligation and "what works as his only criterion of worthwhileness he may become the conformist and thoughtless space of his technology and of those who are in a position to exploit it" (Erikson, 1950, p.261).

Research suggests that musical development is most likely shaped by a combination of both nature and nurture (McPherson and Hallam, 2012), with evidence supporting both the role of genetic predisposition (Mosing et al., 2014) and environmental factors (Clark and Lisboa, 2013) in musical ability. The more time spent engaging in musical activities, such as practicing and performing, the more the adolescent will begin to identify as a musician (Howe and Slobada 1991; Sloboda et al., 1996; Clark and Lisboa, 2013). Musicians may be less able to explore alternative identities due to the time commitment needed to excel at their chosen instrument (McPherson, 2000). This commitment means that they are more likely to engage in social activities which encourage collaboration with other musicians or performers (Musgrave, 2023b). The feeling of security in a community may lessen their chances of experiencing necessary levels of adolescent identity confusion (Ragelienė, 2016). A strong

musician identity can enhance short term motivation, resilience and psychological wellbeing (MacDonald et al., 2002) however, this can make career changes or setbacks particularity distressing (Ascenso et al., 2018).

3.4: Musicians' mental health

The internet is littered with autobiographical descriptions of a musician's work-life, indicating that no two musician's career paths are the same (Ike, 2016; V, 2020; CIPD, 2023). Whilst many artists will declare high values held around their jobs (Cannon, 2023), the current structure of the musician's work life does not seem conducive to maintaining positive MH, "The only thing that causes depression for musicians is the music industry itself" (Gross and Musgrave, 2017, p.12).

A growing body of research indicates that musicians face elevated levels of MH challenges compared to other professional groups (Gross and Musgrave, 2017, 2020; Vaag et al., 2016; Détári et al., 2020; Loveday et al., 2022; Musgrave, 2022). Studies consistently show that over 70% of musicians report symptoms of anxiety, depression and panic disorders (Gross and Musgrave, 2017; Loveday et al., 2022), with a 2021 study concluding that 89% of musicians surveyed believed that their MH was negatively affected by the pandemic (Help Musicians, 2021; Shotwell, 2021). This pattern is further demonstrated by the increasing number of musicians seeking MH support since 2022 (Thraves, 2022; Help Musicians, 2023), suggesting that pursuing a career based on passion or talent may cause poor MH and "significantly higher levels of clinical depression" (Loveday et al., 2022, p.508). Identity conflicts may also arise when a musician is required to make compromises whilst working in the industry, for example if a classical musician must perform pop music to pay the bills (Rowley et al., 2016).

3.5: Musician burnout

BS is suspected when physical and MH issues are caused by one's occupation (Mental Health UK, 2021). Often described as "psychological erosion" rather than an acute stressor (Maslach, 2005, p.39), BS has been classified as a syndrome, rather than a disease (WHO, 2019). This classification restricts access to the same medical intervention that would be afforded to those with a disease and lessens the likelihood of clinical diagnosis (Nadon et al., 2022).

Much research has been done to understand the effects of BS in the helping professions (nurses, therapists, teachers) (Maslach, 1976; Maslach and Jackson, 1981),

however less is known about BS in the music industry (Psycformusos, 2020). It is generally agreed amongst scholars that the three main pillars of BS are emotional exhaustion, reduced personal accomplishment and depersonalisation (Maslach et al., 1997; Defreese and Smith, 2013), although there is some disagreement about the order in which the sufferer will experience each stressor (Edú-Valsania et al., 2022). Musician BS is particularly important to understand in 2025 as we witness many artists struggle to maintain the engagement they were able to garner during the pandemic (Bradbury et al., 2021), with 66% of musicians reporting that they no longer felt a sense of purpose (Musgrave 2022).

Maslach and Leiter posed that the six areas of work life requiring balance to avoid BS are workload, control, reward, community, fairness and values (2003), with a key BS indicator being excessive workload with little reward. Recent studies indicate that financial instability also plays a huge role in BS vulnerability (Chirumbolo et al., 2022). In 2023, Help Musicians published the first ever musicians census, providing a real insight into the finances of working musicians. Despite 70% of the 5867 respondents reporting that they had received professional or formal training, almost a quarter of the participants stated that they do not earn enough to support themself or their dependants (Help Musicians and Musicians Union, 2023). Building a career on musicianship may be even more challenging for a musician with IF if the strong bond between identity and occupation offers little financial reward.

Whilst the research around musicians' MH seems vast, BS does not take up much of the discourse (Mental Health UK, 2021), "We're not familiar with the concept of burnout in human beings so we look elsewhere for answers" (Freudenberger and Richelson, 1980. p.6). Beech et al suggest that although many creatives struggle with the demands placed on them by the corporate sector, for musicians "the very struggles appeared to be intrinsic to the identity and practice of the musician" (2016, p.507). If we continue to glorify hard work and a relentless dedication to passion (Hook, 2023), BS will remain a threat for musicians. Particularly as this chronic condition is often highlighted too late due to the perceived hardworking and successful nature of the sufferer (Freudenberger and Richelson, 1980).

This literature review has explored how IF may contribute to the MH challenges and BS experienced by musicians. A strong musical identity built on adolescent passion and positive feedback, combined with the pressures of success in an unstable industry, creates conditions where identity conflict and BS may thrive. Despite its importance in sport research, the intersection of IF, MH and BS remains underexplored for musicians. In the following section I will outline how my research project aimed to address this gap by

investigating the lived experiences of working musicians through the lens of their identity development in adolescence.

Chapter Four – Methods

4.1: Study design

This exploratory study adopted a sequential mixed-methods design, combining Likert scale questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, to examine whether IF during adolescence may contribute to the high number of working musicians seeking MH support (Thraves, 2022; Help Musicians, 2023). Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was used to analyse how individuals made sense of their own lived experiences (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009). This allowed for a detailed, personal exploration into participants past experiences and subjective reflection on the development of their musicianship.

My work as a vocal coach, and my experience as a working vocalist, inform my overall paradigm of interpretivism (Mertens, 2012). Through my own experience working in the music industry, and numerous conversations with clients regarding their work-life, it is my belief that multiple realities exist and there is no universal truth when discussing human experience (Guba and Lincoln, 2005; Rehman and Alharthi, 2016). My ontological position of relativism, and belief that reality is constantly changing, means that this project will be free from positivist assumptions (Darmstadter, 2016). My aim was not to produce any generalisable findings, but to identify patterns within the complex and subjective experience of working musicians to inspire further research (Howell, 2016; Gray, 2018).

The study was split into two phases. The initial exploratory phase used Likert scale questionnaires to measure the musicians' degree of commitment to their musical identity and the extent to which they engaged in identity exploration during adolescence, as well as their current psychological wellbeing. The intention of this quantitative phase was to identify emerging patterns, themes, or issues that may merit deeper investigation. Phase two, the phenomenological qualitative phase, will then focus on the lived experiences of a smaller subset of participants (Breakwell and Jaspal, 2022). Phenomenology allowed for a deeper understanding of how individuals made meaning of their personal identity, particularly if their sense of self is heavily tied to their role as musicians (Smith et al., 2009; Van Manen, 2016; Creswell and Poth, 2018).

4.2: Participants

The two measure self-report survey, created using Google forms, was designed for English speaking participants over 18 years old, who identify as working musicians/performers. The word 'performers' was included to encourage singers to

participate due to colloquial evidence that many singers do not feel included in the category of 'musician' (DiOrio, 2019, Sutton, 2024). Similarly, the phrase 'working musician' was used in place of 'professional musician' due to many musicians not considering themselves professional despite it being their main source of income (Loveday, Musgrave and Gross, 2022).

Participants were divided into two groups, working musicians (earning at least 60% of their income from music/performing), and instrumental/singing teachers (most of their income comes from teaching). A survey by Musicians Union showed that 60% of musicians surveyed earned most of their income from teaching, however only 20% identified with the role of teacher, with most claiming to identify as a performing artist (2012). I separated the two groups to preserve a pool of musicians who identified solely as performers to avoid conflating my research with research on teacher BS (Ghanizadeh and Jahedizadeh, 2015).

The survey was posted into Facebook networking groups for musicians, shared amongst colleagues and emailed to my studio mailing list. Participants were not offered any incentives to take part, however efforts were made to lower cognitive overload in the completion of the questionnaire by using the shortest version of each tool (Wong et al., 2021). Further information on the research instruments used will be outlined below.

4.3: Research instruments

Two Likert scale questionnaires were used in the initial data collection, one was created to access the participants experiences with identity formation during adolescence (CvE-M), and the other was chosen to measure the participants current psychological wellbeing (PWS). These tools were combined to explore any potential trends between identity style in adolescence and current psychological wellbeing.

4.3.1: Identity Style Measurement

The identity style inventory (ISI) is the most popular tool used to assess participants against three main identity styles (Berzonsky, 1989). The self-report questionnaire separates participants into three identity styles: informational, normative, and diffuse avoidant (Berzonsky, 2004). The results allow the researcher to categorise participants into one of the four states, (i) achieved, (ii) moratorium, (iii) foreclosure and (iv) diffuse (Marcia, 1966).

A revised version of the ISI-v3 consists of 40 statements representing informational (11), normative (9), diffuse-avoidant (10) and commitment (10) (Berzonsky, 1992).

Berzonsky and colleagues (2013) note that the validity of the isi-v3 tool is dependent on the phenomena being studied, “some participants may endorse an informational style with respect to personally relevant issues (e.g., religious values) but a diffuse-avoidant style with respect to self- irrelevant issues (e.g., political values)” (2013. p.895). With these limitations in mind, I created an adaptation of the ISI-3 for musicians (ISI-v3M) to focus the participants on their sense of identity specifically around their music participation (*Appendix A).*

A pilot study was conducted using the ISI-v3M, with participants recruited through online forums. Whilst a Cronbach Alpha of 0.7 is generally considered acceptable (Cortina, 1993), some of the results showed a notably low internal consistency *(Table 1).*

Table 1 - Cronbach alpha - ISI-M pilot study

ISI – v3M	***Cronbach Alpha***
Commitment	0.1787634
Informational	0.2547893
Normative	0.6673525
Diffuse/Avoidant	0.6866029

Due to the low reliability of this amended tool, a new survey was created specifically to measure commitment and exploration in musicians (CvE-M). The survey, adapted from existing validated instruments related to identity status (Marcia, 1966; Berzonsky, 2008), included 18 statements rated on a 5-point Likert scale (from strongly disagree to strongly agree) *(Appendix B).* Cronbach Alpha was measured for each scale and, despite the small participant response for the pilot study (10 participants), each scale scored well on reliability *(Table 2).* The CvE-M tool was then deemed reliable for use in the study.

Table 2 - Cronbach alpha - CvE-M pilot study

CvE-M	**Cronbach Alpha**
Commitment	0.8028017
Exploration	0.8626977

4.3.2: Psychological wellbeing scale (PWS)

The PWS gives an overview of participants current wellbeing. There are 2 versions of the PWS, a 42-item scale and an 18-item scale. Whilst the 42-item scale is more statistically sound (Ryff and Keyes, 1995), the extra time needed to complete the test may discourage participants (Wong et al., 2021). The shortened item version measures the following six dimensions; self-acceptance (SA), purpose in life (PL), personal growth (PG), positive relations with others (PRO), environmental mastery (EM) and autonomy (A) (Ryff and Keyes, 1995) *(Appendix C).* Ryff and Keyes found the test to have an internal consistency ranging between 0.86 to 0.93, with test-retest reliability ranging from 0.88 to 0.81 (1989). Quantitative results from the PSW and CvE-M were analysed using Jamovi Software (The Jamovi Project, 2024).

The two-stage quantitative questionnaire was piloted before release (27th February 2025) and multiple questions were adapted to ensure that they were clear and that the resulting data was useful (Brooks et al., 2016). The final version of the “Facing the Music” questionnaire was made live on 4th March 2025 and remained open for 60 days, collecting a total of 22 responses. Following completion of the questionnaire, participants were asked to provide their email address to take part in an online interview. 15 respondents provided their email addresses, seven considered themselves to be music teachers and eight working musicians.

4.3.3: Semi-structured interviews

Participants who declared themselves to be working musicians were invited, by email, to take part in a semi-structured interview (26th April 2025) *(Appendix D).* Semi-structured interviews provide flexibility to probe areas of personal significance while

maintaining a focus on the research question (Smith and Osborn, 2008). This design was therefore well suited to capture the participants recollection of complex experiences during adolescence.

Smith et al (2009) recommend using three as the default sample size for a master's study to allow both detailed analysis and comparison. "Given the complexity of most human phenomena, IPA studies usually benefit from a concentrated focus on a small number of cases" (Smith et al., 2009, p.51). This will enable a full breakdown and analysis of each participants' experience despite the short timescale available for the study (Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2014; Michels et al., 2024).

The semi-structured interview questions were designed to be open ended and flexibl, in line with the IPA values of eliciting deep, personal responses (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009) *(Appendix E)*. The 11 questions were split across five themes which were informed by the literature review and study aims.

(i) *Musical upbringing:* These questions allowed participants to recount early experiences and perceived autonomy in adolescence, a critical element given that IF often involves commitment without adequate exploration (Marcia, 1966; Kroger and Marcia, 2011).

(ii) (ii) *Identity development in youth:* Limited exploration is a hallmark of IF (Kroger et al., 2010), therefore questioning whether there was any exploration beyond music is key to this study.

(iii) (iii) *Current musical identity:* Asking the participants about their current understanding of their identity will help illuminate whether early commitments made during adolescence have shaped their ongoing sense of self, and whether those early commitments continue to feel authentic, satisfying, or restrictive (Marcia, 1966; Kroger and Marcia, 2011).

(iv) (iv) *Mental health and emotions*: This line of questioning was inspired by evidence discovered during the literature review connecting prolonged IF with psychological vulnerabilities such as anxiety and BS (Potterton et al., 2022). Additional informed consent was obtained before exploring topics related to MH.

(v) (v) *Reflection*: Reflection is a strategy recommended in IPA for accessing deeper layers of self-understanding and meaning (Smith and Osborn, 2015).

In line with the principles of IPA, the analytical process employed in this study was grounded in a commitment to understand how participants make sense of their lived experiences. Central to this approach was the practice of double hermeneutics, analysing the way the participant makes sense of their experience (first hermeneutic layer), along with my own opinion of their sense making (second hermeneutic layer) (Smith and Osborn, 2008). Given the added complexity of being an insider researcher, this method ensures transparency in any interpretation, honouring the participants voice whilst also recognising my own influence in any resulting data (Flowers and Larkin, 2009; Alase, 2017).

4.4: Ethical considerations

Discussing sensitive issues has the potential to cause harm (Decker et al., 2011). Since the main consideration in any study is to avoid causing any harm (Smith et al., 2009), informed consent was gained throughout the process. Participants who took part in the two-stage questionnaire agreed to a disclosure before they could access the online survey *(Appendix F)*. This disclosure outlined the expectations of their involvement and any information regarding the storage and use of resulting data. They had the option to remain fully anonymous, however by providing their email address they consented to being contacted via email to request further involvement. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and a decision not to engage in further contact would be unchallenged. Participants were given the option of reviewing any information included in the study (Smith et al., 2009).

Chapter Five – Findings

5.1: CvE-M findings

The first tool used to gather information from the participants was the commitment versus exploration scale for musicians (CvE-M), both critical elements when trying to understand IF (Marcia, 1966). The descriptive Likert scale responses were converted into numerical values to enable quantitative analysis. Individual item scores were categorised into three bands, low (1-2), moderate (3), and high (4-5). This classification approach is consistent with established practices for interpreting Likert scale data, where ranges are divided proportionally to allow for clearer distinctions in participants' responses (Allen and Seaman, 2007; Boone and Boone, 2012). These bands allowed a clearer understanding of participants' identity profiles by enabling meaningful comparison across the key dimensions of exploration and commitment, *(Appendix G).* Both measures are scored out of 45 with scores >36 indicating higher levels of identity commitment or active exploration in adolescence and scores <18 demonstrating low levels. Scores from 19-35 were classed as moderate.

Findings were then analysed using Jamovi software (The Jamovi Project, 2024) to limit chances of human error (Barchard and Pace, 2011). The sample *(N = 22)* showed generally low levels of exploration *(M = 18.1, SD = 4.81)* and high levels of commitment *(M = 35.5, SD = 5.41)*, which, based on Marcia's work on identity styles (Marcia, 1966, 1967), may suggest the presence of IF *(Table 3*).

The Shapiro-Wilk test, which is suitable for smaller sample sizes *(N < 50),* was used to assess whether the data for each variable deviated significantly from a normal distribution (Shapiro and Wilk, 1965). The test indicated that both exploration *(W = 0.952, p = 0.353)* and commitment (W = *0.968, p = 0.666)* were approximately normally distributed. Since the p-values exceeded 0.05, the assumption of normality was not violated for the findings from the CvE-M scale (Shapiro and Wilk, 1965).

Table 3 - Descriptive breakdown of CvE-M data

	Exploration	**Commitment**
N	22	22
Mean	18.1	35.5
Median	17.5	36.0
Standard Deviation (SD)	4.81	5.41
Shapiro-Wilk W	0.952	0.968
Shapiro-Wilk p	0.353	0.666

A correlation analysis (Pearson's correlation) of the data revealed a strong negative linear relationship between exploration and commitment ($r(20)= -0.759$, $p<0.001$) *(Figure 3).* This suggests that participants who scored higher in commitment tended to report lower levels of exploration, consistent with Marcia's (1966) conceptualisation of IF. When divided into subgroups, the scatterplot also revealed a notable difference between those who made majority of their income through music/performance (M) and those who make majority of their income through instrumental teaching (T) *(Figure 4).* While both groups demonstrated the same negative relationship between commitment and exploration, the trend was more pronounced among musicians. Musicians showed lower levels of exploration and higher levels of commitment, putting them at a higher risk of IF compared to teachers, where findings seemed to support a slightly healthier balance.

This pattern may align with findings by Ballantyne (2007) which suggest that musicians who transition into teaching roles often engage in further training which supports broader identity exploration and more adaptive coping strategies. A larger version of this scatterplot was created in MS Excel to visualise the four identity states (Marcia, 1966) and where each participant falls according to the CvE-M *(Figure 5).*

Overall, these results support the possibility that IF is unavoidable for most young musicians. The data suggests that high scores in both commitment and exploration, a hallmark of healthy identity development, are not easily achieved within the culture of music and performance where “practice makes perfect” (McPherson and McCormick, 2006; Bonneville-Roussy et al., 2011). The relationship between identity and commitment in adolescent musicians certainly warrants further investigation to help inform coaches and music educators seeking to support healthy coping strategies and promote ongoing wellbeing in their clients.

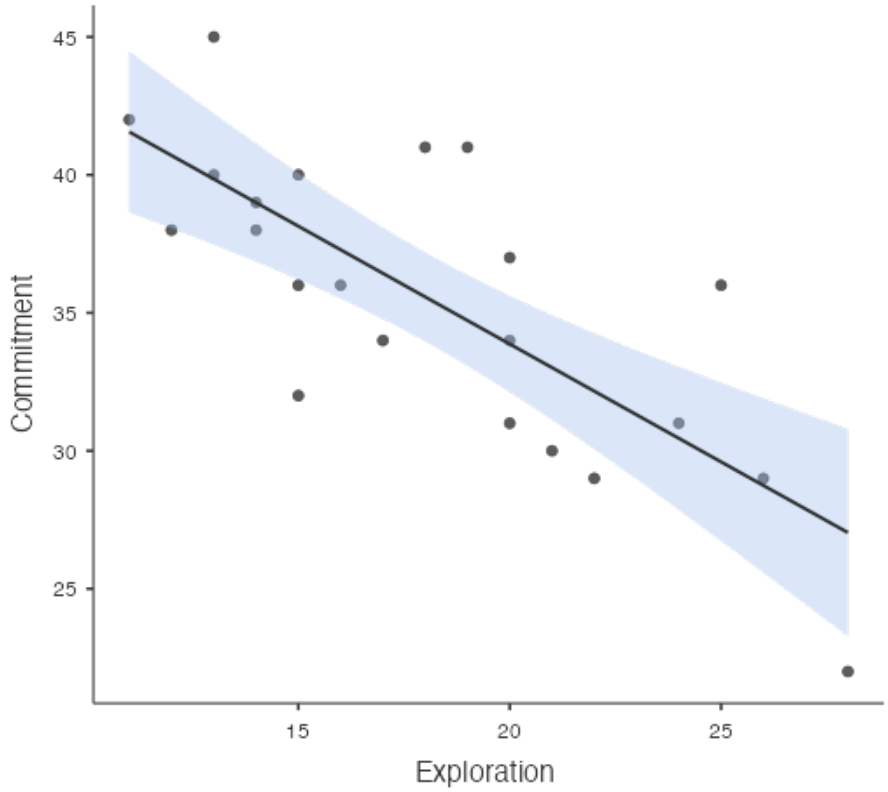

Figure 3 - Scatterplot of CvE-M findings

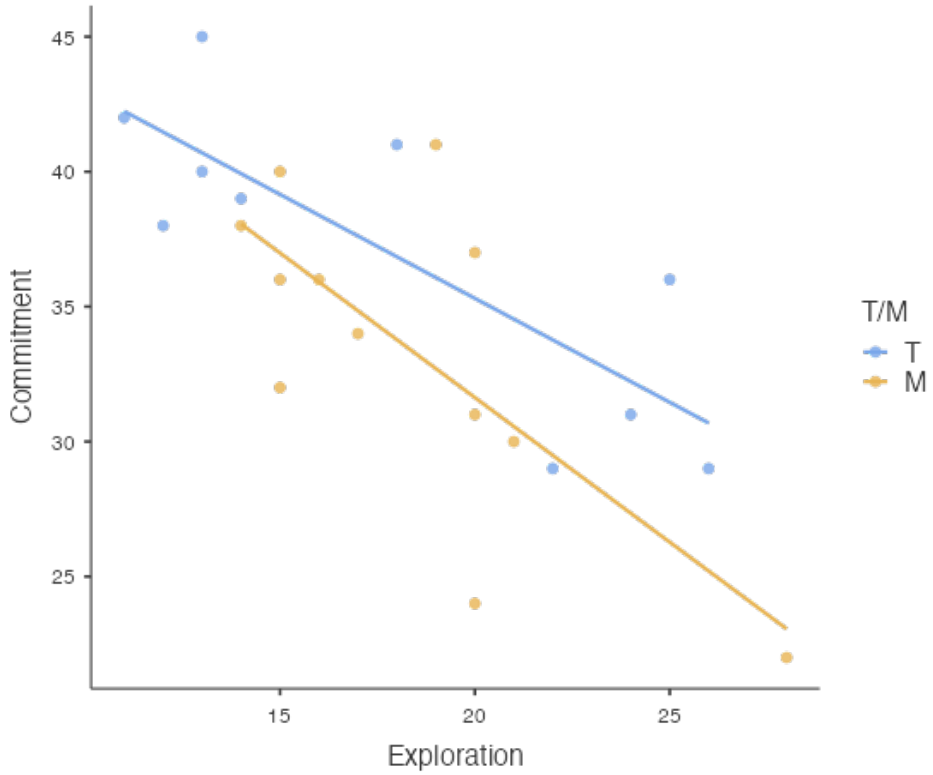

Figure 4 - Scatterplot of CvE-M findings: Musicians (M) and teachers (T) separated.

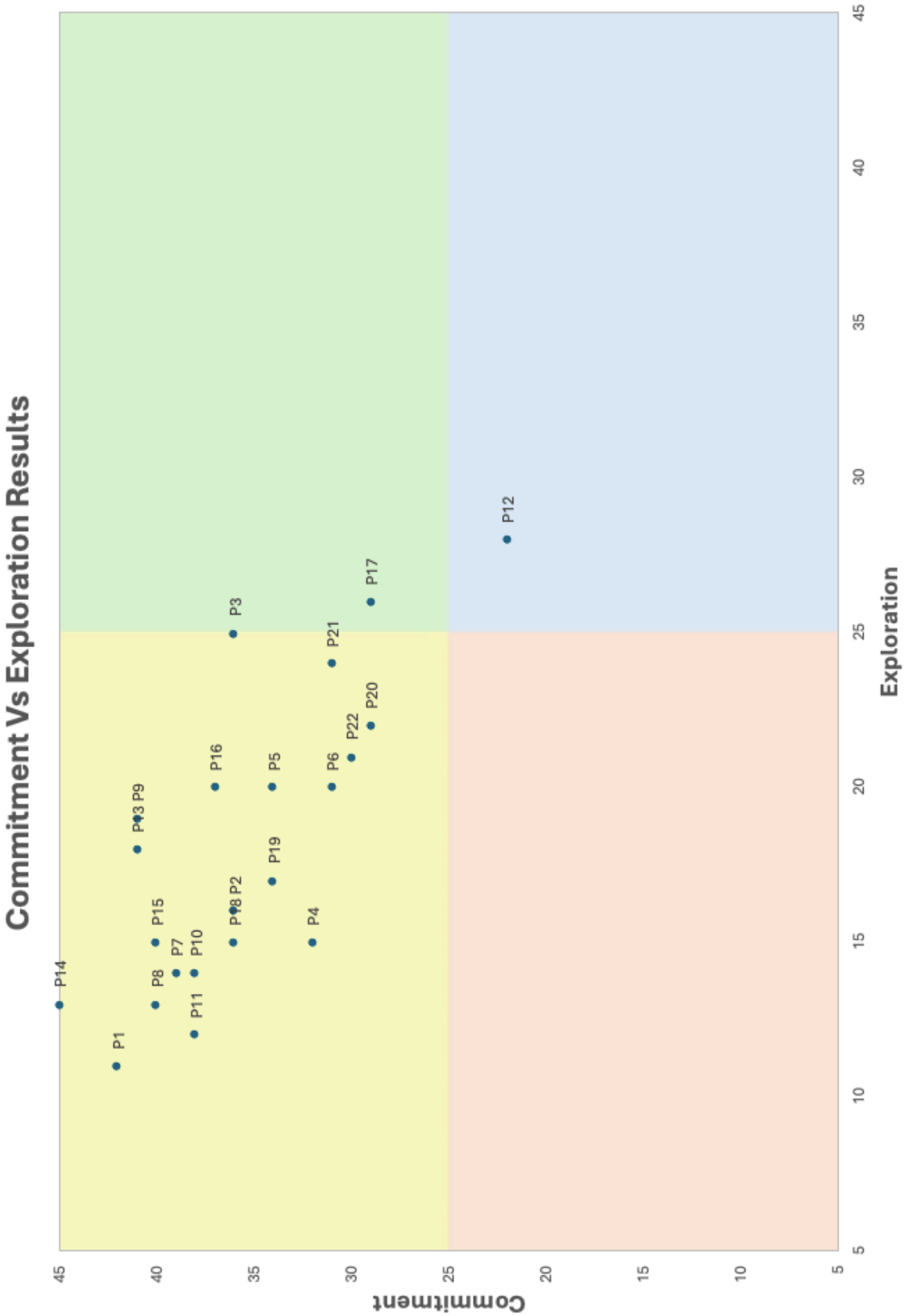

Figure 5 - Chart showing results from the 'Facing the Music' questionnaire.

5.2: Psychological wellbeing scale (PWS) findings

Ryff (1989) identified six key dimensions of psychological wellbeing that are especially relevant to musicians' identity and MH. Self-acceptance (SA) is a central feature of MH and involves holding a positive view of oneself, whilst positive relations with others (PRO) reflects the ability to form close relationships, fundamental to balanced wellbeing. Autonomy (A) refers to the ability to self-evaluate using personal standards rather than relying on external approval and environmental mastery (EM) describes the ability to shape one's environment in a way that promotes positive well-being. Purpose in life (PL) is defined as having goals, intention and a sense of direction and finally, personal growth (PG) reflects an openness to experiences and the pursuit of continual development (Ryff, 1989).

Ryff and Keyes' 18-item PWS scores the six subscales on a 7-item Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree (1995). As with the CvE-M results, descriptive Likert scale responses were converted into numerical values and the data was analysed using Jamovi software (The Jamovi Project, 2024) *(Table 4).*

Table 4 - Descriptive breakdown of PWS data

	SA	**PL**	**PG**	**EM**	**PRO**	**A**
N	22	22	22	22	22	22
Mean	15.1	15.9	17.6	13.5	15.6	15.7
Median	16.5	15.5	18.0	14.0	16.5	16.0
Standard deviation	4.92	3.48	3.20	4.37	4.43	4.22
Minimum	3	10	10	3	6	6
Maximum	21	21	21	21	21	21

There have been no published guidelines on what constitutes as ‘high’ or ‘low’ scores on the PWS, however it is suggested that researchers use upper and lower quartiles to categorise high and low scores on each scale (Celestine, 2021). Therefore, each subscale was scored out of 21 (High>17 and low <10) and scores were recorded in a table to identify high and low scorers in each subscale *(Appendix H).*

PG had the highest mean score (17.6) perhaps suggesting that participants may see themselves as being on a journey of continual development (Ryff and Keyes, 1995). SA was one of the lowest scoring items (Mean = 15.1) however results show high variability (SD = 4.92) which may point to an inconsistency in how participants perceive and accept themselves. EM was the lowest scoring domain, which could indicate a general lack of control over participants environment (Ryff and Keyes, 1995).

When combined these results suggest that, whilst some participants may have previously experienced IF, many are showing high results in PG and A, possibly indicating a move towards identity exploration or even identity achievement. Importantly, the low scores in EM and the variability of the SA results may point to continued psychological challenges for some individuals in the group. Ryff and Keyes (1995) emphasise that, whilst composite scores offer a general overview, it is essential to consider participant scores separately to develop a more nuanced understanding of individual wellbeing. The following section will dive deeper into the individual scores of the participants who took part in the interview stage.

5.3: Participant breakdown

Of the 22 musicians who completed the questionnaire, nine declared that they earn most of their money through instrumental teaching, with 13 stating that they earn over 60% of their income through music production/performance. Respondents were aged between 20 and 68, with most being in their 30’s. I contacted the eight working musicians who provided their email to invite them to participate in a Zoom interview *(Appendix D).* Three individuals responded and subsequently took part in the interview stage. These participants (two instrumentalists and one vocalist) will be referred to by the participant numbers assigned in the initial quantitative stage, P9, P19 and P22.

During the interview phase it emerged that one participant (P22) did not fully meet the original inclusion criteria due to their financial reliance on another job outside of their musicianship. The decision was taken to continue with the interview and retain this participant in the study, consistent with the flexible nature of IPA which prioritises richness of

data over strict inclusion criteria (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Their experiences aligned closely with the study's aims whilst contributing a valuable comparative perspective.

5.3.1: Participant 9

P9 is a 31-year-old working musician who makes most of their money playing bass guitar in wedding bands, they also work as a tutor and stage crew. Their educational qualifications include music GCSE, A-level and a degree from a music institute. During the interview P9 declared a diagnosis of borderline personality disorder (BPD) which they believe could exacerbate their feelings of imposter syndrome, the feeling that one does not belong or that any success is down to chance or error (Feigofsky, 2022). P9 scored very low on the PWS with an overall score of 50/124 *(Table 5).*

Table 5 – Participant 9 PWS results breakdown.

Subscale	**Score**	**Descriptive Interpretation**
Self-acceptance (SA)	3	*Extremely Low*
Environmental mastery (EM)	3	*Extremely Low*
Purpose in life (PL)	12	*Moderate - Low*
Positive relations with others (PRO)	6	*Very low*
Personal growth (PG)	10	*Low*
Autonomy (A)	16	*Moderate - High*

P9's extremely low scores in SA and EM could suggest struggles with self-worth and lack of control. With low scores in PRO, P9 may be feeling isolated. A significant finding in musicians, who's work often relies on positive connections with peers. P9's PWS results may indicate IF or BS with the low scores suggesting a dedication to a career which isn't currently supporting positive MH.

5.3.2: Participant 19

P19 is a 33-year-old working musician who works as a singer performing at gigs and corporate events. They do not have any other income outside of their performing work. P19 was inspired to sing when they were young by their sister and went on to complete an undergraduate degree in music. P19 discusses their experience with anxiety which is heightened by the act of performing and lack of job security. P19 indicated generally low wellbeing on the PWS with 58/124.

Table 6 – Participant 19 PWS results breakdown.

Subscale	**Score**	**Descriptive Interpretation**
Self-acceptance (SA)	9	*Low*
Environmental mastery (EM)	7	*Very low*
Purpose in life (PL)	10	*Low*
Positive relations with others (PRO)	12	*Moderate - Low*
Personal growth (PG)	13	*Moderate*
Autonomy (A)	7	*Very low*

P19 shows broad dissatisfaction with low scores across the board *(Table 6).* The particularity low scores in A and EM could suggest that P19 is trapped in a role which no longer suits their needs. Low scores in PL and SA are common amongst those in IF and the moderate levels of PG could indicate BS and a desire for change. The results of the PWS suggests that P19 may have a constricted sense of self which is often central to IF

5.3.3: Participant 22

P22 is a 47-year-old multi-instrumentalist who was raised in a very musical household and identifies strongly as a professional musician. They work full time in a high-

powered role for an engineering company and spend most of their free time playing multiple instruments in various bands and musical theatre shows. P22 demonstrated the highest PWS result out of the three with 111/124.

Table 7 – Participant 22 PWS results breakdown.

Subscale	**Score**	**Descriptive Interpretation**
Self-acceptance (SA)	21	*Very high*
Environmental mastery (EM)	16	*High*
Purpose in life (PL)	13	*Moderate*
Positive relations with others (PRO)	21	*Very high*
Personal growth (PG)	21	*Very high*
Autonomy (A)	19	*Very high*

P22 scored highly across the board most notably in SA, PRO and PG where they scored maximum marks *(Table 7)*. Their moderate scores in PL could suggest shifting goals, however this does not seem enough to disrupt their overall wellbeing.

5.4: Semi-structured interview findings

Each interview transcript was analysed through an iterative process of IPA coding (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009), with a focus on identifying recurring patterns and meanings across each of the participants accounts. Through a process of deep immersion into all three transcripts, emergent themes were developed and examined in relation to their potential connection to IF or BS.

Double hermeneutics involves not only understanding how participants made sense of their experience but also interpreting my own perspective on that sense-making (Smith

and Osborn, 2008). The second hermeneutic layer allowed me to question the reasoning for the participants responses, capturing the complexity of the human experience (Larkin et al., 2006). The recurring themes representing key insights that emerged across all three interviews were early commitment, external validation through music, role overidentification and struggles with self-worth. Each of these themes, and their possible association to IF and BS in musicians, will be outlined and explored below. Direct quotes from participants will be presented in italics to ensure clarity.

5.4.1: Theme One - Early Commitment

IF is characterized by early commitment to an ideal without exploration of other options (Marcia, 1966; Kroger and Marcia, 2011). Young people today are under increasing pressure to live fulfilling lives (Mental Health Foundation, 2018), particularly given the influence of social media, which often presents an idealised version of life. As a result, adolescents may be reluctant to experience crisis in some of their most socially vulnerable years (Ehmke, 2025), "many adolescents minimize the anxiety caused by the identity crisis by attempting to resolve it prematurely" (Shaffer and Zalewski, 2011. p.63). If this identity commitment is then built upon to establish a career in adulthood one may feel dejected if it doesn't generate the expected reward, often leading to BS (Freudenberger and Richelson, 1980). The following extracts represent participants own account of their commitment levels during their early musical experiences.

5.4.1.1: P9 - Social acceptance. Evidence of early commitment for P9 came in answer to the question "How, and when, did you first get into music?". Their response shows an unquestioning decision to become a musician at a very young age, *"I just remember being young, like eight years old, and watching 'The Blues Brothers' and thinking that looks pretty cool, I wanna do that."* P9's recollection not only highlights the influence of pop culture on young people, but also reflects the broader idea that the role of 'musician' is of great social value and could provide a gateway to acceptance (North et al., 2000).

P9 seems to declare that they were drawn to musicianship simply because 'it looks pretty cool' however, their commitment to training suggests a deeper motivational force. This is later supported by their statement, "*I thought being in bands would get me girls and things like that... more social credibility."* Here P9 introduces the idea of social credibility, which becomes a recurring theme throughout their interview. Adolescents have a heightened sensitivity to social reward (Foulkes and Blakemore, 2016), which may lead them to prematurely attach themselves to a position which earns them respect from their peers. P9's

recollection of watching The Blues Brothers may reflect a romanticised narrative developed over time to avoid confronting the idea that they were seeking acceptance (McAdams, 1993).

This aligns with research which suggests that identity formation in adolescence is often a strategic negotiation between internal preferences and external social demands (Bosma and Kunnen, 2001). P9 realised early that to thrive socially they needed to attain social capital and peer recognition. Their comment, *"also there were three bands in my school and no bass players",* acknowledges that it was important for them to feel socially valued, reinforcing the idea that their identity formation was shaped by a desire to belong (Shotter, 1993; He, 2023). The success of this method of belonging in adolescence may exacerbate BS vulnerability if the dedication to their identity ceases to earn them the same recognition or external rewards in adulthood (Freudenberger and Richelson, 1980).

P9 was so committed to becoming a musician that they were willing to move through three different instruments before they found one that felt like a good fit.

> *"I didn't know what I wanted to play, so I started off learning guitar and I really sucked at that... Then I started learning drums and again I sucked at that... And then I decided to try out bass"*

Rather than questioning whether music was the right path, P9's efforts were focused on finding comfort in the identity they had already accepted. This reflects what Kroger (2007) describes as 'exploration in commitment', where one's behaviour mimics exploration, yet it occurs within a foreclosed identity structure. We see the same pattern of internal exploration in P22, who also took time in adolescence to learn multiple instruments.

5.4.1.2: P22 - Parental influence. Whilst P9's exploration appears to have been motivated by the desire to belong, P22's adolescent experience seems to be driven by a sense of rebellion, *"I'm a rebel at heart, so I went, no I'll teach myself the guitar."* P22 was raised by a father who strongly valued piano as a core skill, *"My dad just was convinced that to get anywhere in music you've got to be able to play the piano."* Yet they still wanted to find their own voice, *"I found guitar... that was my instrument. That was the one that I connected with".*

For P22 their early commitment to music seemed inevitable, *"my mum was actually playing a show rehearsal eight months pregnant with me and you can pretty much say my education started from that point."* P22's phrasing suggests that they feel their musicianship

was inherited and passively absorbed rather than chosen. Their commitment to music was a given, not a decision, therefore any rebellion, or self-driven exploration, occurred within the boundary of the musical identity passed down from their parents. This is a concept that is further cemented by their powerful statement *"Music and I existed in the same space, neither of us had a choice".* This statement is a perfect example of Marcia's (1966) definition of IF in action, commitment without exploration outside of the given role.

P22 talks about 'absorbing' what was happening around them *"with the grade five theory, I didn't need to learn it... I just absorbed it",* they also stated, *"both taught at home, so I used to just absorb everything that was going on."* These statements are further evidence that P22 was passively influenced into their musician role by their family. A clear example of the dynamic Marcia references when he talks about the role of strong parental influence in IF and the heightened vulnerability for individuals when parents have control of their early commitment decisions (Marcia 1966).

I noticed that P22 speaks mostly of their parents as a combined 'they', suggesting that their parents are a unified authority. This aligns with research that children will often view their parents as a singular source of control or guidance (Baumrind, 1991). It highlights the lack of agency a child has over their own identity development, particularly in situations where parental expectations are strongly imposed. The expectations placed on them seemed to centre around musical excellence. Whilst they recall actively dismissing these ideals as a youngster,

> *"I did my grade six theory ... I got 98 out of 100... my mum was very upset that I didn't stay to check my work because I could have got the extra mark. I wouldn't have done; I've not got the patience for checking my work"*

they later evidence the very traits of music elitism that they so strongly rejected, *"that's where you see proper musicianship, you know, people need to be able to read music. People need to actually understand what dynamics are."* This description of what they consider to be 'proper musicianship' suggests that familial influence can be so deep rooted that we may not even notice the parts of our identity that are a product of our environment (Schachter and Ventura, 2008). Familial influence in general plays a big role in early identity formation and IF (Marcia, 1966; Berríos-Allison, 2005). This kind of influence is also a powerful contributor to P19's early musicianship.

5.4.1.3: P19 - Role models. P19 was 11 years old when they decided that they wanted to follow in their sisters' footsteps and become a singer, *"I basically gate-crashed her*

lessons and started going with her". The use of the term "gatecrashing" is communicated with a playful positivity, yet it takes on a deeper significance when considered alongside other comments like, *"my sister was more in the spotlight than me" and "she was like the main one if you know what I mean".* This perceived lack of autonomy in their early identity formation causes them to unquestionably adopt the identity that their sister had chosen, a clear example of Marcia's original description of foreclosure (1966). Their current low PWS autonomy score suggests that this lack of autonomy is deep rooted.

P19 also mentions another influence, *"I was very heavily influenced by my auntie... She was performing on the West End and stuff, so I was like, that's what I want to do."* P19 mentions the West End with the sense of pride, indicating that they believe this to be a definition of success. The high status they give to the 'West End' could suggest an idea of prestige around the lifestyle, making it attractive and worthy of commitment.

They also speak about the influence of their coaches in their early training environment, *'it was really professional so there was a lot of people that I really looked up to."* The use of the word professional is another example of P19 adding status to the job of a performer. Collectively, these statements exemplify how IF can be influenced by the people around us whose perceived success inspires one's own early commitment (Kroger, 2007).

When asked whether music took up a lot of their time, their phrasing *"erm, yeah it did to be fair",* suggests a moment of reflection, as though P19 is only just considering the intensity of their early commitment. The possibility that this was not critically evaluated at the time reinforces the idea of a passively adopted identity (Kroger, 2007).

Together the accounts from all three participants show how early commitment in adolescence is often formed in response to external pressures such as familial norms, role models or the desire for social acceptance. These strong outside influences may discourage identity exploration during a socially vulnerable developmental period (Mental Health Foundation, 2018; Ehmke, 2025), leading to identities that appear stable but lack the long-term security which comes from autonomous exploration (Shaffer and Zalewski, 2011).

An important consideration is the distinction between the instrumentalists and the vocalist with regards to their chosen instrument. Both instrumentalists were able to cycle through instruments until they found one which felt like a good fit, maintaining a separation between themselves and their instrument. For the vocalist, the instrument they chose to pursue is inseparable from themselves, therefore any challenges with their voice may be experienced as challenges with the self (Monks, 2003; Forbes et al., 2023).

5.4.2: Theme two – External validation through music

External validation plays a significant role in IF, especially in fields like music and sport where early recognition and praise can shape a person's identity before they've had a chance to critically explore other options (Kroger and Marcia, 2011). Adolescents who are perceived as 'talented' frequently receive praise and encouragement from teachers, parents, and peers, which can result in premature commitment to a singular role (Kemp, 1996; Gembris, 2012). This process limits identity development (Ritchie and Williamon, 2011) and can lead to crises of self-worth if validation is suddenly withdrawn (Haslam et al., 2011; Ascenso et al., 2018). Insufficient reward, or validation withdrawal, can also add to the vulnerability of BS, particularly when combined with a high workload (Maslach and Leiter, 2003). Over time, dependency on validation can create a fragile sense of self, vulnerable to crisis when external approval wanes or when the musician's career trajectory shifts (Araújo et al., 2017).

In contrast to athletes, who often face identity crisis in early adulthood due to the higher likelihood of early retirement (Beamon, 2012), musicians may continue their career until much later in life. This crisis avoidance can result in prolonged negative wellbeing due to a higher likelihood of developing poor coping skills (Erikson, 1959). Additionally, the common belief that musical ability is a 'gift' may reinforce the expectation of identity acceptance (McPhee and Stollery, 2002), eliminating any perceived need to explore other options. Whilst each participant demonstrated varying relationships with validation, it consistently emerged as a key motivator across each interview.

5.4.2.1: P9 - Talent and worth. For many musicians, early recognition of their abilities can lead to swift and largely unquestioned identity commitments (McPherson, 2008). In the case of P9 however, their reflection on the word 'talent' reveals a retrospective questioning of how their musical identity was initially formed, *"People use the word 'talent', but, um, a talent implies that some deity is bestowed upon you, some ability, whereas I think people just have an aptitude for things."* P9 resists the notion of 'talent' as an externally bestowed or innate gift, aligning instead with the concept of "aptitude". This shift in language suggests a growing awareness of how external labels may have shaped their early identity, particularly in relation to their musical path. The use of phrase 'people use the word' may indicate that talent was projected onto the participant before they had the chance to explore or define their own sense of identity, a hallmark of IF (Marcia 1966).

The pursuit for external validation continues to feature in P9's early identity decisions, *"I thought, again, more social credibility playing in bands... When you're a teenager, that's sort of how you see things".* This reflection indicates a distancing from earlier beliefs and a recognition that their teenage motivations may have been externally driven. This sentiment is further solidified when they reference their current thoughts *"even as musicians now, we still fantasise and dream about big gigs, don't we?",* indicating that they still have a desire for validation through performance. Their extremely low SA scores in the PWS suggest that this need may not be being met in their career.

As they reflect on their professional setbacks, P9 describes a collapse in self-worth, *"you've got the crippling doubt as to like, well, I've lost all this really good work... So, it was either I'm a shit bass player, or I'm a shit human being".* This comment reveals how heavily their self-worth has become invested in their perceived talent, to the point where professional setbacks were internalised as personal failings. The absence of external validation led to P9's internalisation of complete failure, reflecting the psychological vulnerability of those with IF (Ascenso et al., 2017; MacDonald et al., 2022).

Their retelling of excessive practice in adolescence could provide some clarity as to why P9 feels like their skill was not gifted to them, *"I spent every lunch time in the practice rooms, whether I was with someone or not, I was either noodling or practicing or something... like it did take a lot of my time yeah".* This could heighten their vulnerability to BS if they feel their effort is undervalued later in life (Freudenberger and Richelson, 1980).

5.4.2.2: P22 - Achievement and resistance. P22 grew up in a highly structured musical environment and recalls external pressure from their parents' due to their own achievements in music, *"My parents are very music elitist. They are Royal Northern College of Music people."* Whilst they did meet most of these expectations, *"I did my grade six theory... I got 98 out of 100",* they seemed to do so with an element of resistance, adding

"I completed the exam in about 45 minutes and my mum was very upset that I didn't stay to check my work because I could have got the extra mark... I've not got the patience for checking my work."

Resistance to parental pressure may reduce the likelihood of IF by fostering exploration (Marcia, 1966), however it can also lead to conflicted identity development if not supported (Cote, 2009). Exploration within music may still result in IF (Kroger, 2007), however P22's parents expressed such a necessity to train in a particular way that P22 decided to look elsewhere for a career path, *"I was discouraged from doing the thing that I*

actually love because I was told mistruths." Their parents lack of validation for the things they considered less of an achievement caused P22 to rebel, learning instruments which were deemed less important, *"I decided I was gonna teach myself the guitar, because they wouldn't."*

They were unable to get validation from their parents when playing their chosen instrument, however they discovered that they could get validation socially from peers, *"I got free drinks by playing guitar in bars".* It is possible that music also served a functional role as well as a creative outlet. Their comment *"Put me in front of a microphone, let me show off and I'm over the moon, happy as ever"* indicates that, for them, performance is intrinsically tied to being watched. The use of the phrase 'show off' implies that audience approval is central to their sense of self, suggesting some lingering elements of performance-based self-worth (Schlenker and Leary, 1982).

For P22 the joy is not just about performing, it's about being seen. It's not just about academic achievement, but also being heard, *"I found guitar was, that was my voice, that was my instrument."* They stopped actively seeking validation from their parents because their standards were too high, and whilst this did mean that they ultimately chose another career path, it gave them the freedom to play. Something that they still see as a benefit to this day *"My musical career IS my mental health".*

5.4.2.3: P19 - Recognition and visibility. P19's adoration of the professional musicians around them in adolescence reflects a desire for external validation, *"I was very heavily influenced by my auntie... She was performing on the West End and stuff".* Performing on the West End provides the performer visibility and acclaim, suggesting that this goal is driven by audience validation rather than purely internal motivation. The desire to replicate a family member in the public eye, suggests that they were exposed to the possibility of recognition through performance from an early age.

P19's love of music grew alongside their progression, *"because I progressed, I think that made me love it more".* This suggests a feedback loop where external success and affirmation reinforced their sense of self (Weeks et al., 2009), aligning with research suggesting that high-achieving young performers often conflate their success with self-worth (Richie and Williamon, 2011).

Their musical identity appears to have filled a social void, *"that's... what made me from like a nobody... to kind of known".* For them, their identity as a singer was a path towards belonging and validation. This is particularity significant as this implies that the

absence of this role would have caused vulnerability for them during adolescence. This is evidenced in literature which suggests that IF may be reinforced in environments where social approval is linked to performance (Kroger and Marcia, 2011).

P19 shows an emotional vulnerability related to their need for validation, *"I makeup scenarios before they even happen... I always make up the worst-case scenario".* Weeks et al describe this behaviour as a form of social anxiety where an individual will monitor their environment and focus their attention on indicators of external evaluation (2009). Although Lillevoll et al found that those in IF were less likely to experience social anxiety (2013), validation seems to have been such a powerful motivator for P19 that they developed this behaviour as a pre-emptive strategy to cope with the emotional impact of losing it.

The accounts highlighted in this section demonstrate how external validation can deeply shape and reinforce IF in musicians during adolescence. Validation emerged as a central influence in the identity development of each participant, with both P9 and P19 appearing to have formed their identities prematurely as a result (Marcia, 1966). Coupled with the PWS results, the accounts of P9 and P19 demonstrate the fragility of an identity which is built on a foundation of positive feedback (Ascenso et al., 2017; MacDonald et al., 2022). The need to be seen and heard seemed to be a core theme amongst all three participants, revealing how deeply the need for validation is tied to their perceived value (Schlenker and Leary, 1982; Richie and Williamon, 2011).

Of the three pillars of BS (emotional exhaustion, reduced personal accomplishment and depersonalisation) musicians are particularly vulnerable to reduced personal accomplishment if the main indicator of success is derived from external validation. For both instrumentalist, there seems to be an acknowledgement of the prolonged process of skill development. P9 spent much of their adolescence practicing the bass guitar, whilst P22 was raised in an environment where music education was highly valued. In contrast, P19 seems to demonstrate less separation between themself and their talent, recalling how they developed alongside their perceived progression. Their sense of intrinsic worth seems closely intwined with their identity, perhaps due to the inherent personal nature of the voice (Forbes et al., 2023). This may make them more vulnerable to MH challenges if validation is withdrawn. This raises the question of whether vocalists are even more prone to IF, and subsequently BS, as any external validation is more likely to be interpreted as affirmation of the self, not just praise for effort or hard work (Monks, 2003).

5.4.3: Theme Three - Role overidentification

Musicians who experience early praise and social reinforcement often risk overidentifying with their role (Richie and Williamon, 2011). If this role is ever disrupted it can lead to IF (Marcia, 1966), BS (Shoman et al., 2023) and long-term psychological vulnerability (Cote, 2009; Beamon, 2012). Rigid commitment to a foreclosed identity is also linked to poor adaptability in life transitions (Bosma and Kunnen, 2001). All three participants articulate a deep identification with music as a core part of their sense of self.

5.4.3.1: P9 - "I'm definitely a musician". In response to the question "how would you view yourself?" P9 confidently replied*, "I'm definitely a musician".* This declaration not only represents a fixed mindset, but also hints at a sense of pride associated with that role.

They do however express an inner conflict, stating that they feel like both *"a very confident, competent musician"* and *"that meme of that kid who just practices at home... and is always saying 'big things coming' on Instagram".* Although their self-identification varies from confidence to self-deprecating humour, it does not move beyond the musician frame. This aligns with the work of Waterman and Waterman (1974), who argue that foreclosed individuals demonstrate strong commitment to a path that has not been meaningfully questioned or tested. Whilst P9 hints at a current conflict, they do not give any evidence of a conflict in adolescence where IF is most likely to occur (Marcia, 1966).

Role overidentification can be a product of social isolation (Grove et al., 2004). P9 recalls not being able to partake in social events due to their parents' strict rules, *"everyone in my year wanted to do house parties and stuff like that and my parents would never let me go."* When other sources of connection are lacking the adolescent may commit more strongly to the identity they have deemed will give them purpose or social recognition (Cote, 2009), *"so I just used that time to practice basically".*

Even within their musical identity, P9 seems to allow their role to determine their behaviour, *"as a bass player, I accepted the idea that I am not gonna be the creative force in the band a long time ago"*. They do not challenge the expectations of the role that they have adopted, another sign of IF (Marcia, 1966). Their very low PRO scores may add another layer to this statement, as P9's working relationships may be negatively affected by the role that they have adopted.

Later P9 explains the framework for their own identity construction, revealing how important external influence is to them, "*we are all individuals, but we base our individuality*

on the experience we see of others". Their external identity has been shaped by observing others, causing them uncertainty around who they really are, *"it's hard to tell, um how much of that turns you into something fake or turns you into something that you really want to be."* This could suggest a possible overidentification with the musician role, blurring the boundary between the real self and the image adopted for their occupation. This lack of separation between work and personal identity can be a cause of BS (Stringer et al., 2015).

5.4.3.2: P22 - "Musician is me as a person". Unlike P9 and P19, P22 does have another career alongside their work as a musician. They do show strong signs of overidentification with the role of musician, however the separation of their musicianship and their occupation may act as a buffer, protecting their wellbeing (Stringer et al., 2015). The phrase 'musician is me as a person' is strong evidence that their musicianship is foundational to how they define themselves, whilst they view their work as "*the thing that I do to pay the bills".*

IF can increase psychological vulnerability, particularly when the individual faces challenges or disruptions to the role they so closely identify with (Luyckx et al., 2011). P22 seems able to avoid role disruption as they keep their career and music separate, retaining full control of choices around their musicianship. When they do experience challenges regarding their value, they can stand their ground as they don't rely on their musicianship for financial gain*, "I'd probably charge them more... I'd be quite blunt about it".* This is a position that is not afforded to the average working musician who may be required to compromise on their value out of financial necessity (Musgrave, 2025). This may suggest that role overidentification is only detrimental if it is the musicians only measure of value (Grove et al., 1997).

5.4.3.3: P19 - "it's me... that's what I am". P19 shows role overidentification when they state, *"Music is definitely like, my main part of my identity... it is me. That's what I am."* This conflation of the self with a singular role reflects the idea that music is not just a vocation but the foundation of P19's personal existence. They recall being known as the singer in school, *"I felt like that was my only identity... kind of what made me from like, a nobody",* music is positioned as the singular trait that granted them social recognition and a sense of self-worth. This early fusion of their social role and identity is consistent with findings showing that young people who achieve early success or external validation in a specific domain may prematurely commit to that identity (Beamon, 2012), limiting the exploration of other roles and increasing susceptibility to crisis when that role is threatened (Erikson, 1959).

This limited exploration is evidenced when discussing their weekly schedule, which seemed to leave little room for additional interests,

> *"we'd have rehearsals like all day Sunday, and Tuesday and then, like, I'd be there all-day Saturday and it'd be like that every week... I was still having my singing lessons and then, erm, I think I was doing dance lessons maybe at the time as well. So yeah, it did take up quite a lot of time"*

When asked directly if they feel limited by their musical identity they responded, *"I'd have no choice now as to whether it is or not, because it just is now".* This statement implies a loss of agency, as though the identity has solidified beyond P19's control, a hallmark of IF (Marcia, 1966) and indicative of the depersonalisation stage associated with BS (Maslach and Leiter, 1997).

All three participants exhibit strong identification with their role as musicians, often at the expense of broader identity development. For P9 and P19, music appears to have been both a defining feature and a place to find adolescent acceptance, a breeding ground for IF (Marcia, 1966; Cote, 2009). Whilst P22 demonstrates a more functional duality between the professional and personal identity, their comments still reflect strong ties to their musicianship. This may suggest that strong identification with a singular role is not detrimental unless it occurs in the absence of any other roles (Grove et al., 1997).

Unlike the two instrumentalists, P19 does not seem to have considered any alternative career options, *"should I do something that's more job security?... it's just not me to do that, you know".* Their job as a singer is so deeply connected with the identity they formed in adolescence that the idea of pursuing another career is unimaginable, despite the MH challenges that they admit could be exacerbated by their work. This theory is also compounded by their low Autonomy scores, evidencing a lack of agency over their career trajectory.

Overcommitment to a role has been shown to escalate cases of BS, particularly when combined with job dissatisfaction (Avanzi et al., 2014). The feedback loop created by IF and BS may leave the working musician too exhausted to fully engage, yet to psychologically committed to walk away.

5.4.4: Theme four - Struggles with self-worth

When self-worth is prematurely associated with a talent or skill, an individual's wellbeing may be contingent on continued affirmation within that role (Wang and Li, 2018). If external validation is withdrawn, individuals with IF may struggle with feelings of inadequacy, shame or role confusion (Cote, 2009), making them especially vulnerable to psychological distress. Working musicians are more likely to experience negativity around their musicianship as they are required to place a value on their artistry (Musgrave, 2023a, 2025). All three participants openly expressed varying degrees of psychological vulnerability.

5.4.4.1: P9 – Rejection. P9 demonstrated how closely their self-esteem was tied to their identity as a musician when describing a critical experience in which they were unexpectedly removed from a major European tour,

"they took me off that with a couple of weeks' notice... that really affected my mental health because without knowing what I did wrong... the spiral just goes, well, you're just shit, aren't you? You're just pretty shit."

Reflecting further, P9 revealed an internal struggle between personal worth and acceptance for their musicianship,

"I don't know which one was more detrimental to my mental health... thinking that no one actually likes me and wants to be around me, or the thing I spent half my life working towards, I'm still not good enough"

These reflections may illustrate the emotional weight of disrupted identity in foreclosed individuals, and how self-worth can become contingent upon continued professional validation (Crocker and Wolfe, 2001). This adds context to their extremely low questionnaire results in the areas of SA and EM as this statement evidences low self-acceptance and lack of control. P9's account also implies a perceived contract between effort and outcome, namely, that their lifelong commitment should lead to success. This imbalance is one of the core traits leading to BS (Freudenberger and Richelson, 1980).

When success does not occur, it is experienced as a personal injustice,

"You get to that point where you make yourself ill, because you're practicing so hard, and you're not getting the opportunities you want. You sort of end up looking at the sky going 'Oi, I sacrificed a load of shit, where's my payoff?'"

This comment is especially revealing as it highlights the emotional cost of IF and P9's apparent vulnerability to BS. Without an alternative source of self-worth to draw upon professional rejection becomes a reflection of person inadequacy (Stringer et al., 2015). P9's statements reenforce Cote's theory that IF can increase psychological vulnerability, especially in times of adversity (2009).

5.4.4.2: P22 - Balance. P22 presented a more balanced perspective. While they acknowledged ongoing self-doubt, *"you're gonna have to battle with this like galactical scale of ego that's balanced out by this colossal sense of self-doubt"*, they also appeared more emotionally resilient. Collectively, their comments suggest that having an additional career outside of music may act as a psychological buffer, providing stability, balance and a broader foundation for self-worth (Mizera-Pęczek et al., 2024).

For P22, music remains a vital emotional outlet which exists within a more diverse identity structure alongside their professional occupation, *"My musical career IS my mental health. It is the thing that allows me to switch a different part of my brain on".* P22's experience supports literature which states that when music is not the sole source of financial or personal validation, its therapeutic qualities may be enhanced (Trondalen, 2016; Viola et al., 2023).

5.4.4.3: P19 - Instability. P19 underscored how their identity as a musician shaped their overall sense of personal value, *"If I didn't do music... I'd be that person that people don't remember."* This statement highlights the emotional toll from building a career on a strong personal identity, particularly when one's self-worth becomes narrowly dependent on success in a competitive profession (Schwartz et al., 2011).

Despite the awareness that their job heightens their anxiety *"a main part of my job does bring that out... I'm constantly in a battle",* P19 does not entertain the notion of changing careers, *"I think I'd have it in any job I did because I think it's just installed in me."* The belief that their MH struggles are inevitable may be due to a continued unwillingness to explore an alternative environment (Luyckx et al., 2008). This is supported by their low scores in EM and A in the quantitative findings. They also reference constant job insecurity, *"I'm constantly in a battle because there's no job security"* which is a core BS risk factor (Aybas et al., 2015).

Throughout their interview, P19 talks a lot about community. Whether it's the professionals who inspired them in their adolescence, the way people at school viewed them or how they feel when collaborating with other artists, they seem to get much of their positive

feedback from external sources. It is only when discussing how they feel internally that they show possible vulnerability with their MH.

They state, *"It's like when I'm with the right people, then I love that."* However, their low PRO score may suggest that this is a desire that is not currently being fulfilled. IF can occur due to an absence of suggested alternatives from one's social group. The social structure of a musician is often made up of other musicians/performers, many of whom may also be experiencing IF (Marcia, 1966). This shared thinking may strengthen communal connection and lessen the desire for further external exploration.

Both P9 and P19 disclosed MH struggles related to their careers. P9 showed an awareness of the detrimental effect their work had on their MH and even expressed a desire to change careers. P19 demonstrated little willingness explore alternatives, instead suggesting that their MH issues would persist regardless of their job. Both experiences sit in stark contrast to P22, who credits their musicianship with having a positive impact on their MH.

5.5: Summary of findings

Overall, despite differences in education, chosen instrument, age and professional experience, the participants in the interview stage of this study demonstrated notable similarities. The emergent themes were strong with all three participants exampling high levels of unquestionable commitment, overidentification with their musician role and a strong reliance on external validation. However, differences in financial reliance on music emerged as a key factor influencing wellbeing and BS vulnerability.

For P9 and P19, whose self-worth and professional stability were closely tied to their musicianship, evidenced by their low EM and SA scores, the loss or reduction of external validation posed a significant MH risk. In contrast P22's financial independence from music seemed to buffer them from some of these pressures, allowing for sustained engagement in music performance without the same vulnerability. Together these cases suggest that, whilst IF can drive dedication and accelerate skill development, it may also create MH and BS vulnerability later in life if the conditions that once reinforced that identity are challenged.

Chapter Six – Conclusion

This study set out to explore the role of IF in the lives of working musicians, examining how early commitment to a musical identity might challenge musicians' MH and heighten their BS vulnerability. I aimed to address the gap in the literature by applying a concept more frequently explored in athletes to the experiences of working musicians, a population which faces similar performance pressure, social expectations and career instability (Habe et al., 2019; Núñez et al., 2020; John et al., 2024).

The rationale for this investigation was born from the rising evidence of poor MH in working musicians (Gross et al., 2016; Vaag et al., 2016; Horne, 2019) and my own experience coaching working vocalists during, and following, the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose was not to seek clinical diagnosis, but to investigate the realities of life as a working musician to inform ethical, constructive interventions by music educators, coaches and mentors.

Clear thematic patterns emerged across this study, primarily participants profound commitment to the musician identity and over-reliance on external validation. The findings align with established literature on IF, underscoring MH risks when self-worth becomes so narrowly tied to a singular role, particularly when personal and professional identity are combined (Marcia, 1966; Crocker and Wolfe, 2001). Participants formative years were characterised by strong external influences and limited exploration beyond music. For P9 and P19, social recognition and validation played a pivotal role in securing their musical identities, with professional setbacks often internalised as personal failures. This fragile sense of self-worth is often described as a defining feature in IF literature (Marcia, 1966; Ascenso et al., 2017).

The inclusion of P22, who did not meet the original criteria, provided an important comparative insight. Their experience supports the idea that earning an income outside of musicianship can act as a buffer against MH decline, even in cases of apparent fixed identity or IF. This supports my previous research which proposed that the current MH decline in working musicians may be closely linked to BS (Cannon, 2023). Consequently, the primary finding of this project is that the negative impact of IF on MH is largely mediated by BS.

The qualitative phase of this study was able to gather rich data, however the small sample size, whilst suitable for IPA (Smith et al., 2009), limits any generalisability of the findings. Additionally, my role as an insider researcher may have influenced both data collection and interpretation despite reflexive awareness being maintained throughout.

Perhaps most importantly, the qualitative accounts only reflect those willing to speak openly about their MH, which may result in the absence of opposing perspectives. This project fulfilled my objective of expanding my own knowledge and enriching my professional practice. This deeper understanding will enable me to engage in healthier approaches to artist development, driven by a renewed empathy and understanding of the MH challenges facing working musicians.

Overall, this study highlights the need for holistic coaching which recognises both the physical and psychological resilience needed in the performance industry. It underlines the importance of supporting musicians in developing and nurturing an identity that does not rely on performance-based validation. By introducing discussions around career flexibility, identity awareness and self-validation outside of any talent or skill, we could reduce the chances of long-term MH challenges and BS. In the case of vocal coaching, drawing upon psychological theory, as well as vocal pedagogy, and grounding the approaches in relevant literature, could help reduce the long-term impact of IF on vocalists' MH.

BS has only recently entered the cultural spotlight (Tyson, 2022), reflecting a shift in how occupational exhaustion is understood, both in the literature and publicly. Further research into musician BS is now needed to fully explore and understand its impact on our industry. By prioritising BS awareness and fostering healthy identity development in young musicians, music educators, coaches and mentors can help safeguard musicians' MH, whilst ethically supporting the new generation of artists and securing the long-term sustainability of our profession.

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Appendix A

ISI-v3 questions and adaptations.

Commitment - ISI-Version3	**Commitment – Pilot**
Regarding religious beliefs, I know basically what I believe and don't believe.	I have always known that I wanted to be a musician.
I know what I want to do with my future.	I have clear and definite life goals.
I'm not sure which values I really hold.	I am not sure which values I really hold.
I'm not sure what I want to do in the future.	I am not sure where i am headed in my career
I'm really into my major; it's the academic area that is right for me.	I am really into music/performance; it's the right career path for me.
I'm not sure what I should major in (or change to).	I am not sure if this career is for me.
To live a complete life, I think people need to get emotionally involved and commit themselves to specific values and ideals.	To live a complete life, I think people need to get emotionally involved and commit themselves to specific values and ideals.
Excluded	
I'm not really sure what I believe about religion.	I am not really sure what my core beliefs are.
I have a definite set of values that I use in order to make personal decisions	I have a definite set of values that I use to make career decisions
I have some consistent political views; I have a definite stand on where the government and country should be headed.	I have a definite stance on where my industry should be headed.

Informational ISI-Version3	**Informational – adapted for musicians**
I've spent a great deal of time thinking seriously about what I should do with my life.	I've spent a great deal of time thinking seriously about what I should do with my life.
When I discuss an issue with someone, I try to assume their point of view and see the problem from their perspective.	When I discuss an issue with someone, I try to assume their point of view and see the problem from their perspective.
I've spent a lot of time reading and trying to make some sense out of political issues.	I spent a lot of time researching whether this was the right career for me.
I find it's best to seek out advice from professionals (e.g., clergy, doctors, lawyers) when I have problems.	I seek out advice from professionals when I have personal problems.

I find that personal problems often turn out to be interesting challenges.	I find that problems at work often turn out to be interesting challenges.
When making important decisions I like to have as much information as possible.	When making important career decisions I like to have as much information as possible.
I like to have the responsibility for handling problems in my life that require me to think on my own.	I like to have the responsibility for career decisions that require me to think on my own.
Excluded	
I've spent a good deal of time reading and talking to others about religious ideas.	I've spent a great deal of time reading and talking openly to others about values and beliefs.
I've spent a lot of time and talked to a lot of people trying to develop a set of values that make sense to me.	I've spent a lot of time and talked to a lot of people trying to develop a set of values that make sense to me.
When I have to make a decision, I like to spend a lot of time thinking about my options.	When I have to make a career decision, I like to spend a lot of time thinking about my options.
When I have a personal problem, I try to analyse the situation in order to understand it.	When I have problems with my career, I try to analyse the situation in order to understand it.

Diffuse/Avoidant - ISI-Version3	**Diffuse/Avoidant – adapted for musicians**
I'm not really sure what I'm doing in school; I guess things will work themselves out.	I'm not really sure where I'm heading with my career; I guess things will work themselves out.
It doesn't pay to worry about values in advance; I decide things as they happen	It doesn't pay to worry about where my career is headed; I decide things as they happen.
When I have to make a decision, I try to wait as long as possible in order to see what will happen.	When I have to make a career decision, I try to wait as long as possible in order to see what will happen
It's best for me not to take life too seriously; I just try to enjoy it.	It's best for me not to take life too seriously; I just try to enjoy it.
I try not to think about or deal with problems as long as I can.	I try not to think about or deal with problems as long as I can
I sometimes I refuse to believe a problem will happen, and things manage to work themselves out.	I tend to just focus on the positives and things just manage to work out.
When I know a situation is going to cause me stress, I try to avoid it.	When I know a situation is going to cause me stress, I try to avoid it.
Excluded	

Many times by not concerning myself with personal problems, they work themselves out	When personal problems arise, I try to delay acting as long as possible.
I try to avoid personal situations that will require me to think a lot and deal with them on my own.	I try to avoid personal situations that require me to think a lot and deal with them on my own
I'm not really thinking about my future now; it's still a long way off.	I am not really thinking about my future now, it is still a long way off

Normative - ISI-Version3	**Normative – adapted for musicians**
I've more-or-less always operated according to the values with which I was brought up.	My close family and friends recognised and supported my talent from a young age.
I've always had purpose in my life; I was brought up to know what to strive for.	I've always had purpose in my life; I was brought up to know what to strive for.
Regarding religion, I've always known what I believe and don't believe; I never really had any serious doubts.	I always knew I was going to be a musician/performer; I never really had any serious doubts.
I've known since high school that I was going to college and what I was going to major in.	I've known since high school that I wanted to continue my education in music/performance.
I think it's better to have a firm set of beliefs than to be openminded.	I think it's better to have a firm set of beliefs than to be openminded.
I prefer to deal with situations where I can rely on social norms and standards.	I prefer to deal with situations where I can rely on social norms and standards.
I find it's best for me to rely on the advice of close friends or relatives when I have a problem.	I rely on the advice of my close friends or family when it comes to my career.
Excluded	
I think it's better to have fixed values, than to consider alternative value systems.	**I think it's better to have fixed values, than to consider alternative value systems.**
Once I know the correct way to handle a problem, I prefer to stick with it.	**Once I know the correct way to handle a problem, I prefer to stick with it.**

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Commitment
Informational
Diffuse/Avoidant
Normative

Bold questions - ISI Version3
Underlined questions = Adapted for musicians.

1) **Regarding religious beliefs, I know basically what I believe and don't believe.**
I have always known that I wanted to be a musician.

2) **I've spent a great deal of time thinking seriously about what I should do with my life.**
I've spent a great deal of time thinking seriously about what I should do with my life.

3) **I'm not really sure what I'm doing in school; I guess things will work themselves out.**
I'm not really sure where I'm heading with my career; I guess things will work themselves out.

4) **I've more-or-less always operated according to the values with which I was brought up.**
My close family and friends recognised and supported my talent from a young age.

I've spent a good deal of time reading and talking to others about religious ideas. (INFO)
I've spent a great deal of time reading and talking openly to others about values and beliefs.

5) **When I discuss an issue with someone, I try to assume their point of view and see the problem from their perspective.**
When I discuss an issue with someone, I try to assume their point of view and see the problem from their perspective.

6) **I know what I want to do with my future.**
I have clear and definite life goals.

7) **It doesn't pay to worry about values in advance; I decide things as they happen.**
It doesn't pay to worry about where my career is headed; I decide things as they happen.

(R) I'm not really sure what I believe about religion. (COMM)
I am not really sure what my core beliefs are. (reversed)

8) **I've always had purpose in my life; I was brought up to know what to strive for.**
I've always had purpose in my life; I was brought up to know what to strive for.

9) **R I'm not sure which values I really hold.**
I am not sure which values I really hold. (reversed)

I have some consistent political views; I have a definite stand on where the government and country should be headed. (COMM)

I have a definite stand on where my industry should be headed.

Many times by not concerning myself with personal problems, they work themselves out. (DIFF)
When personal problems arise, I try to delay acting as long as possible.

10) **I'm not sure what I want to do in the future.**
I am not sure where i am headed in my career. (reversed)

11) **I'm really into my major; it's the academic area that is right for me.**
I am really into music/performance; it's the right career path for me.

12) **I've spent a lot of time reading and trying to make some sense out of political issues.**
I spent a lot of time researching whether this was the right career for me.

I'm not really thinking about my future now; it's still a long way off. (DIFF)
I am not really thinking about my future now, it is still a long way off

I've spent a lot of time and talked to a lot of people trying to develop a set of values that make sense to me. (INFO)
I've spent a lot of time and talked to a lot of people trying to develop a set of values that make sense to me.

13) **Regarding religion, I've always known what I believe and don't believe; I never really had any serious doubts.**
I always knew I was going to be a musician/performer; I never really had any serious doubts.

14) **I'm not sure what I should major in (or change to).**
I am not sure if this career is for me. (reversed)

15) **I've known since high school that I was going to college and what I was going to major in.**
I've known since high school that I wanted to continue my education in music/performance.

I have a definite set of values that I use in order to make personal decisions. (COMM)
I have a definite set of values that I use to make career decisions.

16) **I think it's better to have a firm set of beliefs than to be openminded.**
I think it's better to have a firm set of beliefs than to be openminded.

17) **When I have to make a decision, I try to wait as long as possible in order to see what will happen.**
When I have to make a career decision, I try to wait as long as possible in order to see what will happen

When I have a personal problem, I try to analyse the situation in order to understand it. (INFO)

When I have problems with my career, I try to analyse the situation in order to understand it.

18) **I find it's best to seek out advice from professionals (e.g., clergy, doctors, lawyers) when I have problems.**
I seek out advice from professionals when I have personal problems.

19) **It's best for me not to take life too seriously; I just try to enjoy it.**
It's best for me not to take life too seriously; I just try to enjoy it.

I think it's better to have fixed values, than to consider alternative value systems. (NORM)

20) **I try not to think about or deal with problems as long as I can.**
I try not to think about or deal with problems as long as I can

21) **I find that personal problems often turn out to be interesting challenges.**
I find that problems at work often turn out to be interesting challenges.

I try to avoid personal situations that will require me to think a lot and deal with them on my own. (DIFF)
I try to avoid personal situations that require me to think a lot and deal with them on my own

Once I know the correct way to handle a problem, I prefer to stick with it. (NORM)

When I have to make a decision, I like to spend a lot of time thinking about my options. (INFO)
When I have to make a career decision, I like to spend a lot of time thinking about my options.

22) **I prefer to deal with situations where I can rely on social norms and standards.**
I prefer to deal with situations where I can rely on social norms and standards.

23) **like to have the responsibility for handling problems in my life that require me to think on my own.**
I like to have the responsibility for career decisions that require me to think on my own.

24) **I sometimes I refuse to believe a problem will happen, and things manage to work themselves out.**
I tend to just focus on the positives and things just manage to work out.

25) **When making important decisions I like to have as much information as possible.**
When making important career decisions I like to have as much information as possible.

26) **When I know a situation is going to cause me stress, I try to avoid it.**
When I know a situation is going to cause me stress, I try to avoid it.

27) To live a complete life, I think people need to get emotionally involved and commit themselves to specific values and ideals.
To live a complete life, I think people need to get emotionally involved and commit themselves to specific values and ideals.

28) **I find it's best for me to rely on the advice of close friends or relatives when I have a problem.**
I rely on the advice of my close friends or family when it comes to my career.

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Appendix B

Commitment vs Exploration for Musicians Survey (CvE-M)

1. *Growing up others often labelled me as a musician/singer/performer.
2. Music/performing was a significant part of my life during adolescence.
3. *Many of my social circles as a child revolved around music/performing.
4. *As a youngster I felt certain that I would become a musician.
5. *As a teenager, there were more important things in life than music/performing.
6. In my youth, I made sacrifices (like time with friends or other activities) to pursue my musical interests.
7. I felt a sense of responsibility to improve my musical talents during my younger years.
8. *In school I was considered to be creative rather than academic.
9. I tried many different educational paths before I decided to follow music.
10. When I was younger, I felt a deep drive to improve and develop my musical abilities.
11. I was committed to my musical growth as a teenager, even if it meant missing social events.
12. *My caregivers were extremely supportive of me developing my musical talent.
13. Music was not a big part of my life growing up.
14. During my teenage years, I spent a lot of time honing my musical skills.
15. *I decided young that I was willing to put in the hard work required to succeed in the music industry, even if it took time.
16. For as long as I can remember I have felt a sense of fulfilment and purpose when making music.
17. *As a teenager, I felt that music was most of my identity.
18. *As a child I took breaks from music/performance practice to pursue other interests.

Exploration (1*) (3*) (4*) (8*) (9) (12*) (13) (15*) (17*)
Commitment (2) (5*) (6) (7) (10) (11) (14) (16) (18*)

***Indicates should be scored in reverse.**

High = 36-45
Low = 9-18

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Appendix C

Psychological wellbeing scale questions.

Self-acceptance.

1. When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out so far.
2. In many ways I feel disappointed about my achievements in life.
3. I like most parts of my personality.

Positive relations with others.

1. Maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me.
2. People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others.
3. I have not experienced many warm and trusting relationships with others.

Autonomy.

1. I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions.
2. I have confidence in my own opinions, even if they are different from the way most other people think.
3. I judge myself by what I think is important, not by the values of what others think is important.

Environmental mastery.

1. The demands of everyday life often get me down.
2. In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live.
3. I am good at managing the responsibilities of daily life.

Purpose in life.

1. Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them.
2. I live life one day at a time and don't really think about the future.
3. I sometimes feel as if I've done all there is to do in life.

Personal growth.

1. For me, life has been a continuous process of learning, changing, and growth.
2. I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how I think about myself and the world.
3. I gave up trying to make big improvements or changes in my life a long time ago.

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Appendix D

Email sent to participants who opted in to further involvement.

Hi

Thank you again for taking part in my survey "Facing the Music – A study into the role of identity on musician wellbeing." Your insights are incredibly valuable to this research.

I'm now moving into the second phase of the project, which involves short, one-to-one interviews with working musicians. These conversations will explore early musical experiences in more depth, particularly during adolescence, and how these may relate to current wellbeing and identity as a musician.

I'd love to invite you to take part in this phase of the study and share your experiences. Interviews will be held online via Zoom and arranged at a time that works best for you. They typically last around 30–45 minutes.

If you're interested and available, please reply to this email and I'll follow up with more details.

Thanks again for your time and support.

Best regards,
Claire Cannon

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Appendix E

Semi-Structured Interview Questions and Prompts

Section 1: Musical upbringing.

Q1: Can you tell me about how and when you started learning music?

Who introduced you to it?
Was it your choice or someone else's idea?

Q2: What was your musical training like during your teenage years?

Formal lessons, school programs, competitions?
How much time did it take up?

Q3: Did you feel supported, pressured, or both in your music training?

How did parents/teachers/peers influence you?

Section 2: Identity Development in Youth.

Q4: Looking back, did you explore other hobbies, careers, or identities?

If not, why do you think that was?

Q5: Do you feel music was something you chose, or something that was chosen for you?

Did you ever question your path?
Did you feel like music defined who you were back then?
How did you feel about that?

Section 3: Current Musical Identity.

Q6: How do you view your identity now—as a musician and as a person?

Is music still central to how you see yourself?

Q7: Do you ever feel limited or boxed in by your musical identity?

Can you describe a time when that felt especially true?

Section 4: Mental Health and Emotions.

Q8: What effect has your career in music had on your mental health?

Have you experienced anxiety, burnout, or emotional fatigue?
Have there been times when it affected your well-being?

Q9: How do you cope with the emotional highs and lows of being a musician?

Do you have support systems?
Do you take breaks, seek help, or feel like you can't?

Section 5: Reflection.

Q10: Do you ever wonder who you might have become if you hadn't pursued music so seriously as a teen?

Does that idea bring curiosity, sadness, or something else?
If you could go back, would you do anything differently in terms of your identity or music journey?
Why or why not?

Q11: What advice would you give to a teenager who has only ever seen themselves as a musician?

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Appendix F

Questionnaire informed consent

The aim of this research project is to investigate the impact of identity on wellbeing.
The study will be in two parts:

1) *Online survey.* 2) *Online interview.*

You are NOT obligated to participate in the interview stage once you have completed this survey.

The first part of this study involves a questionnaire which will take around 15-25 minutes. If you are uncomfortable answering any of the questions, please leave it blank and move on to the next one.
If you are happy to be contacted regarding a short online interview, please enter your email address at the end of the survey. If not, please leave that question blank.
You will not be required to provide your name or any other identifying information. Email addresses will not be held by the researcher once the interviewees have been selected and you will not receive any correspondence following the study unless requested.

- I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time.
- I understand that I can refuse to answer any question involved during the research process without any consequences of any kind.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves completion of an online survey and the possibility of a short online interview.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous.
- This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in dissertation, conference presentation, published papers and further research papers.
- I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.
- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained on a password protected hard drive until July 2025.
- I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for up to two years.
- I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

If you would like any further information, please use the email address below
2217694@student.uwtsd.ac.uk

Appendix G

Identity profiles from CvE-M

Participant ID	***Commitment***	***Exploration***	***Suggested Identity Status***
P1	42 (H)	11 (L)	**Identity foreclosure**
P2	36 (H)	16 (L)	**Identity foreclosure**
P3	36 (H)	25	**Identity foreclosure**
P4	32	15 (L)	**Identity foreclosure**
P5	34	20	**Identity foreclosure**
P6	31	20	**Identity foreclosure**
P7	39 (H)	14 (L)	**Identity foreclosure**
P8	40 (H)	13 (L)	**Identity foreclosure**
P9	41 (H)	19	**Identity foreclosure**
P10	38 (H)	14 (L)	**Identity foreclosure**
P11	38 (H)	12 (L)	**Identity foreclosure**
P12	22	28	Identity moratorium
P13	41 (H)	18 (L)	**Identity foreclosure**

P14	45 (H)	13 (L)	**Identity foreclosure**
P15	40 (H)	15 (L)	**Identity foreclosure**
P16	37 (H)	20	**Identity foreclosure**
P17	29	26	**Identity achieved**
P18	36 (H)	15 (L)	**Identity foreclosure**
P19	34	17 (L)	**Identity foreclosure**
P20	29	22	**Identity foreclosure**
P21	31	24	**Identity foreclosure**
P22	30	21	**Identity foreclosure**

Appendix H

PWS findings spreadsheet

	SA	EM	PL	PRO	PG	A	Total
P1	16	14	20	15	20	11	96
P2	18	13	16	18	16	18	99
P3	17	14	14	20	21	20	106
P4	13	9	11	15	15	21	84
P5	13	21	21	20	21	18	114
P6	19	14	20	12	20	15	100
P7	15	10	16	18	16	15	90
P8	16	14	19	18	20	17	104
P9	3	3	12	6	10	16	50
P10	19	19	12	10	20	18	98
P11	12	14	15	12	17	15	85
P12	17	16	15	14	19	14	95
P13	5	9	12	10	11	6	53
P14	21	20	20	21	21	21	124
P15	15	11	14	20	16	17	93
P16	19	15	20	11	18	16	99
P17	9	18	17	19	18	15	96
P18	19	10	17	18	17	9	90
P19	9	7	10	12	13	7	58
P20	17	13	15	12	17	16	90
P21	19	17	21	21	20	21	119
P22	21	16	13	21	21	19	111

HIGH
MED
LOW

Claire Cannon
2217694
BMPF7010

Appendix I

P9: Interview via Zoom on 17th April 2025 @ 13:59 (33.52 minutes)

Interviewer: Firstly, can you just confirm that you are happy to be recorded for this interview

P9: Yes of course,

Interviewer: Thank you. I just have about 10/11 questions for you if that's ok? There are a few questions relating to mental health, so if there is anything you don't feel comfortable with that's not a problem at all, we can just move on. Anything you are happy to share will remain anonymous, and I'll redact any names or identity information in my study, and if you want to take anything out at any point please just let me know.

P9: Sure, that all sounds good, I'm more than happy to help, I had to interview people for my dissertation so I'm happy to pay it forward.

Interviewer: Amazing thank you. So, my first question is, can you tell me about how, and when, you first got into music.

P9: Sure, well I just remember being young, like 8 years old and watching the blues brothers and thinking that looks pretty cool. I wanna do that. So yeah, but, you know, I started off, I didn't know what I wanted to play, so I started off learning guitar and I really sucked at that. Also, I don't think my teacher was right for me on that. Then I started learning drums and again I sucked at that, again I don't think my teacher was right for me on that. And then I decided to try out bass. And um yeah, I don't, people use the word 'talent', but, um, a talent implies that some deity is bestowed upon you, some ability, whereas I think people just have an aptitude for things. Yeah, um an' I just had an aptitude for playing the bass, and also there were three bands in my school and no bass players.

Interviewer: So you saw an opening and you filled it?

P9: Exactly I was like 'this is what market dominance, this is what monopoly is, isn't it'. But yeah, mainly it was erm, I didn't, I never, there weren't many jobs that I really wanted to do. I love playing music, being a teenage boy as well, I thought being in bands would get me girls and things like that, that was part of it as well. And yeah, I wasn't the most popular person, but I also wasn't, you know, the runt of the litter in school either. I thought again, more social credibility playing in bands and stuff like that, which is all bollocks really. When you're a teenager, that's sort of how you see things. But I stuck with music, um basically because I didn't know what else to do. I was quite good at music. I could see my teacher on bass making a living out of it, so I thought well I might be able to. And erm, my girlfriend at the, I did very poorly at my levels because I would rather be gigging and practicing and playing video games, and so my girlfriend at the time showed me a prospectus for BIM Bristol. You only need like three Es to get in there, three Es and an audition, so I did that and yeah, I just kept going with music anyway because I realised I'm so horrifically qualified to do anything else.

Interviewer: I hear that lot actually, like "wait, I can audition for Uni rather than like having to do exams. I'll do that" *[laughs]*

P9: Yeah, *[laughs]* exactly, exactly. Exams can be so intimidating, and while auditions are intimidating as well, it's sort of something you're more used to. You can practice for an audition in the shower, you can't revise while you're doing other things. Well, if you're a singer, you're practicing when you're driving, you know, a sing along to tunes, you, what you love, or whatever. So erm, whereas yeah, exams are very different kettle of fish altogether. So yeah, that's why I kind of stuck with music, really.

Interviewer: So would you say that music took up a lot of your time when you were in high school?

P9: I certainly wanted it to. Obviously we were limited in terms of budget and parents' rules. My parents had this really annoying rule where I had to be home by 6 o clock. Cause we lived in the countryside where there were no pavements. So I'd get the train into Cardiff but getting the train back I had to walk home in the dark and they were never comfortable with that. So it wasn't like I could go do rehearsals in the rehearsal studios in Cardiff until like 10PM or something like that. So, um, when I was, this is, one thing I am grateful for with that is, when everyon', when I turned 15 house parties became a thing. Skins was on Channel 4. And like everyone in my year wanted to do house parties and stuff like that and my parents would never let me go, so I just used that time to practice basically. So yeah, it took up a lot of my time, my personal time, not so much of my social time, though I would have liked it to have taken up a lot more, but in terms of like, being in school, from the age of about 14 onwards I spent every lunch time in the practice rooms, whether I was with someone or not, I was either noodling or practicing or something. It did, like it did take a lot of my time yeah.

Interviewer: So would say that you were supported by your parents, or pressured, or were you just allowed to decide what you wanted to do?

P9: I was supported within limitations, up until a point. My parents would pick me up from gigs late, sometimes, if they were close enough. I don't know if you know South Wales very much, but I lived in a village between Cardiff and Barry. So if I had a gig in Barry, which is an easy drive for them, they would pick me up. If I had a gig in Cardiff, I had to find a lift or get my own way home or something. They were very supportive. They would drive me to rehearsals and they would buy me gear within like a specific budget or something. One thing that they did do, they give me, this seems crazy now, they'd give me 3.50 a day for lunch money and I would just save that up and then by the end of like, term, I'd have like 150 to 200 quid to just put towards gear and stuff like that. I don't know if they knew I was doing that or not, but that, I saw that as some sort of support to be honest as well. They were supportive within limitations.

Interviewer: So in that case, do you think, I know you talked about talent and how it's not just bestowed upon you. But do you think you chose music, or do you think music kind of chose you? Did you feel like you had a choice in that?

P9: Oh yeah I certainly did have a choice, and I definitely chose music, like, well millions of people watch the blues brothers and thought 'I wanna do that' and only a minority of people actually tried to. I don't think that's down to talent. I think that's down to like your own view of what's attainable. Does that, if that makes sense?

Interviewer: Yeah, if you're a dreamer, naturally, then you're gonna be more inclined to dream, right?

P9: Exactly. *[laughs]* Or if you're an eight-year-old who saw the blues brothers for the first time and you've never played an instrument before and then you go into school and look

around and you see there's no one else playing instruments. It seems unattainable and unrealistic, so then you start looking. You might always still want to do that but it's the fantasy, it's the dream. And even as musicians now, we still fantasise and dream about big gigs, don't we? So, I think, yeah, it's, it's down to, uh yeah, you make the choice, but ultimately it's up to your environment, whether that choice is viable or not. Your environment or your community, or both.

Interviewer: So what would you say your current identity is now? How do you view yourself?

P9: I'm definitely a musician, not so much of a creative. It's quite hard because I've always had a bit of self-esteem issues but I suppose this job is up and down anyway. So I have my own band, which is sort of like my passion project, and in that I do get to be creative, but most of the rest of the time, whether its weddings or playing for other artists, I am just learning their stuff. And if they allow me to be creative then great, but I'm not, as a bass player, I accepted the idea that I am not gonna be the creative force in the band a long time ago. I do know a lot of bass players who are MDs, or the sole writers. Like erm, Dua Lipa's bass player is her co-writer, I'm aware. So there are exceptions to that. But erm, So I've never been very confident with friendships or communities or working in a group so I tend to just sit back and let everyone else take the reins, unless I feel it's like a really bad decision or something. Um, and in my role as a session musician, I've been sort of let down by numerous bands as well, and the reasons why can vary from budgeting to location, um, but it's hard to take those seriously sometimes given other evidence to 'he contrary. So you say how do identify? Sometimes I identify as a very confident, competent musician, other times I think I am that meme of that kid who just practices at home all the time and then goes out and does weddings and is always saying 'big things coming' on Instagram. But um I suppose the reality is a, a sort of, a mixture of both potentially. Yeah, part of, part of me is just all about hustling, trying to get as many gigs as possible. Like I'll do 50 weddings a year, but I'm not in a wedding band, just depping for lots of people, which I suppose is a like, a sort of gratifying thing that I can just do that with um dep-bands. Um so yeah, I don't know, still, my identity still makes me kind of feel like I'm just sort of um, a bull in a China shop trying to find my way in and out.

Interviewer: When you talk about the kind of the calm competent musician and then the bull in the China shop, would you say there's the element of imposter syndrome in there?

P9: Totally, yeah totally, and it's hard to tell, for me, whose the real deal and who isn't, if that makes sense. I think, we are all individuals, but we base our individuality on the experience we see of others, or the way other people, you know, we go, oh, I'd like to be more like that person when they're calm, and I'd like to be more like this person when they're excited, or something like that. And it's hard to tell, um how much of that turns you into something fake or turns you into something that you really want to be. It's something I've struggled with a lot. There's um, there's a, there's a guy I had some lessons with over lockdown who is the most modest, chill bass player I've ever met and he never told me that he plays in one of my favourite bands and I don't know how, I don't how he can be that modest. Whenever I get an offer for an original session gig I do want to tell everyone *[laughs]* cause I'm so excited. But he's just like *[laughs]* I don't know how he does it. I certainly try to give of that chilled aura, especially when playing the show. But like, when the shows over and were looking to where the next show could be, or when we can get the next bit of work, for me, I can't speak for this guy, but it is a bit like, well that was a fluke last time, or they worked with me last time and now they know I'm a bit shit. I'm never actually sure of myself as a musician. And I'm sure that teacher of mine probably goes through that as well a little bit in his own mind, but doesn't, his aura is always just calm and can do anything basically.

Interviewer: I teach a lot of um professional and semi-professional vocalists and it's wild to just see them doing their thing on the internet or like you know in shows and then actually know them and be like you were throwing up like yesterday about this and now you're just on stage living it. Does that resonate with you?

P9: True yeah, I only got 2 students cause not many people wanna learn bass but I've been telling one of my students about um yeah, not playing too much as a bass player, not overfilling, not showing off. And that same evening I'll go do a gig and I'll be like, *[mimes fancy bass riff]*. So I'm not always the best at practicing what I preach to be honest. *[laughs]*

Interviewer: *[laughs]* Who is? So I've got a few questions about emotions, mental health and things like that. There's only two questions. Um but, you've mentioned it a few times, but what effect do you think your career has on your mental health?

P9: Well there's a lot of things that will affect my mental health to do with my career. One of them obviously being money, the stress of like, uggg am I gonna make money this month, especially during the winter? But I assume no matter what job you've got if you've got more expenses one month, you're worried about that so, erm, maybe musicians more so because we don't make as much, so theres that. Like I said before, not being the most confident person in groups or with friendships, that's one thing that erm, as a professional musician, I've really, really struggled with. To give a bit of context, I was touring "touring", I did a number of international shows with a pop band and I got to the point where I knew their set better than they did, and the front of house engineer was telling me that and I felt really good, really accepted. I had the singer who thought of himself as a bit of a Noel Gallagher, and he's like, "you're in now mate". Um, and then, uh, the day before um a show in Singapore for the [redacted] they just told me, I had packed my bags and everything and they just told me, oh, we forgot to book you a hotel. Singapore at the [redacted] there's not gonna be any hotels left, so I couldn't go to that. And then a month later I was supposed to be doing the tour of Europe with [redacted] for two weeks. In November, that would have been five grand of work um, and they took me off that with a couple of weeks notice, and I had no time to fill the diary in some of the deadest months of the year. Um and they said it was because of budgeting, but the, the band is bankrolled by the guitarist who's father, not to name names but he owns the one of the biggest businesses in the UK, so I know that budgeting wasn't necessarily and issue. Um and that that was a big um, that really affected my mental health because without knowing what I did wrong, um, I just, the spiral just goes, "well, you just shit aren't you. You're just pretty shit". There was another band straight out of BIM I started playing for another band who basically had me on full time for live stuff, but not, this was a weird one. They had me full time for live stuff, but no writing or studio work. But I was credited on the album as playing bass on it. It was very odd, I didn't do the studio sessions, it was very odd. But after a year of working with them, they were paying me about half of what a wedding would pay me, they just said, "well you know, our bass player, his wife is back off maternity leave, or their kids are old enough now for him to go off and come do the gigs again, so cheers". And yeah again, like I'm sort of thinking like, was I really that shit or um you know, and finally, the bands where they didn't, I didn't worry about this sort of thing. They were all hopped off on coke most of the time. And not, and while they were very supportive of me as an individual, being around them was a struggle, not being someone who, I smoke a bit of weed but I don't really like cocaine. So being around them was a bit of a struggle for my mental health as well. And the other attitudes they had, I think were quite poor to me as a growing young person, mistaking what this being a musician was all about. And then, yeah, you've got, you've got the crippling doubt as to like, well, I've lost all this really good work, is it because I'm shit? Is it because, you know in music we always want to work with good people, one of the only good lessons I had from BIM is like, we're in music college, we can all play well. What's gonna get you booked over

you is if I can stand being on a tour bus with you for six months. So it was either I'm a shit bass player, or I'm a shit human being. *[laughs]*

Interviewer: That's what it comes in your reasoning?

P9: Yeah, exactly. And so I don't know which one was more detrimental to me as a like, uh my mental health thinking that no one actually likes me and wants to be around me or the thing I spent half my life working towards, I'm still not good enough. Um, I don't know which one is easier to accept.

Interviewer: When in reality, it's likely that someone was just rubbish at their job and didn't book the right things, you know?

P9: One that one occasion for sure but, you know, I've been doing this professionally for 10 years. I've been playing bass for about 15, 16. Erm, not every situation is the same, and yeah, it's um I do find it very hard to judge um, like, uh, yeah, when it is genuine "thanks very much. Appreciate you, but we're gonna part ways" and or whether it's behind closed doors, "fuck me, so glad we got rid of him" you know.

Interviewer: The human brain always goes to the negative, we do that for survival, don't we?

P9: I suppose your right yeah, but that's been a big issue, part of my mental health. And there's the other stuff like, you know, in summer you might have 8 gigs in a row with different bands so there is no accommodation cause it's all different bands. So you're going from one end of the country home, wake up, go to another, very little sleep, more driving than eating and I think that is just uh, it is a byproduct of the job, sure, but I don't think there's much we can do about that as musicians except not take the extra work, to be honest. And theres part of me when I do have those busy periods, I'm in the middle of it going, 'ahhh I just really, just don't wanna do the gig tomorrow. But another part of me he's like, "yeah, I'm, I'm a working musician. Eight days a week this week. Yeah" *[laughs]* You know, so it's, it's a whirlwind.

I have been diagnosed with borderline personality disorder. Um, and the research suggests that that's an environmental um, what's the word, development. Not necessarily genetic one and I don't know if it's music or growing up that got me that gave me that diagnosis or not. But there is a huge element of yes, imposture syndrome with personality or disorder, but also erm, someone I know who works in mental health used this term, "I hate you please don't leave me" *[laughs]* in borderline personality disorder. So it gets to a point with the band where im so fed up I wanna quit but my personal pride doesn't wanna lose the work or doesn't wanna be seen as unaccepted. So it's a very complicated subject and hard for me to compartmentalize to really an understand. But it truly does, more often than not it's the acceptance that affects my mental health really. It's whether I'm good enough as a person or good enough as a player to be working with people. And because this has been most of my life dreaming to be a musician, um, it's more important to me than, um, to my, like my girlfriend will say, than just me having a nice time on a day off. You know, I don't feel like I deserve a nice time on a day off. I've gotta practice because I've got a day off. I shouldn't have a day off. I'm a working musician I need to practice to get more gigs. Erm, and that's just not healthy. It's sort of like the whiplash sentiment of music, which a lot of musicians have, some have balanced it, some haven't, but um there's this idea that every spare moment you've gotta be in the shed working really hard and I don't know how healthy that is either to be honest.

I just wish we would talk about it more. And we take a, I don't know if you go to many gigs or jam nights but the ones I call hot shots. They have this aura of not wanting to talk about their experience with these sorts of things and I don't know if it's so they can look more mysterious and more professional or more stoic. But erm, it would give, I don't know, someone like me, more of an acceptance of myself knowing that they go through the same things, which they probably do, but without hearing them talk about it, I just think there some kind of God who can just show up to any gig, nail it, leave and get the next gig no problem and it's, I don't, it's not envy, it's more just, um I want to be like that really rather than just envy and it would be great to understand how they compartmentalise their thoughts in order just to get to that mindset before they get to that point professionally but then again everyone's different.

Interviewer: We are getting a bit more open about being able to talk about that, but I think finding coping strategies for people in the community as we work together is what we need.

P9: Yeah absolutely. There's erm, especially here in Bristol, I think this might be universal, especially in the jazz world, if you are a young musician and you want to get into jazz, and you go to a jazz jam night, and you talk to one of the guys running it there who have been playing jazz for years, there is this massive aura of "oh you're new, alright we'll give you the easiest one". Not really wanting to talk to them or get them more interested in jazz, to the point where they could be running that jam night, or running their own jam event. And it puts young people off the genre or music in general, or makes young people think that success is personified by being like that, which is obviously detrimental to those who come after them and then after them and it, I don't know it's like generational trauma. *[laughs]*

Interviewer: [laughs] The whole music industry is just generational trauma.

P9: Yeah [laughs] erm, if you look at like how Motown records treated their artists, their session musicians and how James Jamieson used to have to go into the office with a gun to get paid. Like after that there was more legal protection for musicians but not a lot, and more you know, the generational trauma does bring change and I think now we're at the point where we do need yes ourselves to change in order to not pass generational trauma downwards to the next bunch of um, I'm gonna say grassroots professional musicians, but also, you know streaming companies um, are taking advantage of the generational trauma of musicians just wanting to have their music heard. So yeah there is a lot of generational trauma and especially looking back as a young person, um looking up to the people I looked up to reading their biographies or watching their interviews, I sort of watched them and think, oh yeah I should be like that. Which obviously is probably more detrimental. I don't think attitudes of the 80s or the 70s have much place today [laughs]. So, yeah, the generational trauma. I think, yeah, that's a, that's a very, that's a very, very good way of putting that, yeah. We are affected by those who come before us, to be honest.

Interviewer: So, last two questions, if that's all right with you. Do you ever wonder what you would have done if you didn't pursue music?

P9: Yeah, yeah, I don't know what I would have done. I had a part time job as a bartender until I finished uni. I'd probably still be doing that.

Interviewer: Does that feeling, when you think about alternatives, does it does it make you feel sad that you didn't do that, or happy that you continued doing what you're doing?

P9: It makes me happy that I continued doing it but that was at the start of my career, at this time I'm thinking about making a change as well. I couldn't have done it then because of my

age or experience, but now I'm thinking about just being a lorry driver, you know, go here, then there, so, but I wouldn't have been able to go do that if I had just stayed being a bartender. Yeah, I honestly don't know where I would be if I hadn't gone for music. I don't know what my career would have been. Maybe it would have been in media in general, but again that very competitive. It's quite subjective and sort of slimy as well *[laughs],* some areas of media. I honestly don't know what I would have done, I failed my A-levels and then my girlfriend at the time gave me this prospectus and said look, you can get in here easy. And I got it. And then when I was in I realized that no one, especially around third year, no one's gigging in my year, so I need to stop going to university. Well I didn't drop out. I did the dissertation and everything, but I stopped going to lessons and started trying to find gigs in the local area. I suppose is a plan but it's always been just a big see what happens sort of thing. And more often than not it's been a slightly positive experience there haven't been many jam nights I've gone into and God fuck this. These guys are really annoying and horrible people, I'm gone. So yeah, it's not been until I've been in my professional setting for a number of years'that I've really felt like um It's been a huge struggle. And then again, maybe it's just l'ck, you know, who we know and eveythignt like that.

Interviewer: Yeah, social currency is is very important in music.

P9: Yeah, so that's my least favourite thing in the world, yeah. That band I as telling you about where they all did cocaine and stuff. So the bass player in that band was actually a massive hot shot, he's played for a number of American and British pop artists. So the reason why I was in that band is because he was touring abroad with them. So a hugely gratifying to be told that I can fill the boots of someone like that. But at the same time, I had this massive amount of pressure to be the same person as he was in order to get through the same circles and hopefully follow the same trajectory, which of course, in the world of music is naff, but I can imagine in the world of corporateness, that is how people see promotions, right?

Interviewer: I mean, don't say a lot of the people at the top top top level of the corporate sphere are psychopaths *[laughs]*

P9: Yeah *[laughs]* yeah, they are and even in music there are a lot of very successful people who are pshycopaths. I don't know if you watch the Simpsons?

Interviewer: Yeah, who doesn't watch the Simpsons? *[laughs]*

P9: There's this wonderful bit where Monty Burns comes to school to give a talk on business and he's like, "family, friends and ethics, these are the things you must slay if you want to be successful in business" *[laughs]* and yeah and I do see other musicians, like the guy who got me into this pop band, who was my friend, erm, you know, be really friendly to me and then they second that the band didn't need me anymore. They had me on the track for their live gigs from rehearsals, they had recorded me so I was on the track, and that was his ethics out of the window in a way just so he could keep the band going. So yeah, I think there are quite a few psychopaths in music and in that case as well, you know, there was someone in that band who was the son of someone very rich and very successful. And so I kind of saw that in them as well. I'd be sat with them in a pub between and a gig, looking at my bank account going, "oh tight month this month" And he and he'd say, "what are your outgoings?" So I'm like, about 1800 he goes "ahh I'll spend that in a night"

Interviewer: That helps. Thanks. I'm better now. *[laughs]*

P9: Yeah, *[laughs]* and because it's his band and he's bankrolling it everyone around the table is like "hahahahahah, you're so funny". So, yeah, to me, that's really psychopathic as well and so, um and so it's yeah, I think, yeah, I think's best just to let your playing speak for itself and not be a dick.

Inteviewer: So that leads me to my last question, I guess, is if you were I mean, it seems you you teach as well. So what would be your main advice for a young musician who is, you know, adolescent who wants to go into music?

P9: First of all have no expectations, don't be a dick. Obviously practice, but don't do the whiplash thing where you're practicing so hard you making yourself ill. Because then if you get to that point where you make yourself ill, because you're practicing so hard, and you're not getting the opportunities you want, you sort of end up looking at the sky going "oi, I sacrificed a load of shit, where's my payoff" and that can start pushing you down as well. It's, it's a mixture of being humble, calm and just erm, yeah, just, I wouldn't say I'm the best person to take advice off, but just be humble and calm and be social as well, I one thing. One thing I'm very guilty of is going off into my cocoon between soundcheck and the gig everyone wants to go off, get a drink and see some of the other bands and I'd rather just sit in the van and that gives off a very antisocial, what's the word, idea about yourself whereas you know, um I just wanted a bit of peace and quiet. Um but you know, the more sociable all you are the more you develop relationships and then the more those relationships will turn into potential work opportunities. Like the guy in BIM said to us as a class, "we can all play as musicians, we can all play really well, it's whether I want to be on tour bus with you for six months, that's gonna get you the gig". So, yeah, be humble and uh, calm and yeah, keep practicing, but don't hurt yourself doing it.

Interviewer: Amazing. I feel like that's been super helpful, it's been really good to meet you, Thank you so much.

P9: No worries, yeah, yeah, I'm glad to help pay it forward cause once someone helped me in my dissertation so,

Interviewer: and the karma will come back around. Thank you, I appreciate you giving your time.

P9: Thank you, bye

Interviewer: *Bye.*

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Appendix J

Coding for P9 interview

Interviewer: Firstly, can you just confirm that you are happy to be recorded for this interview ***P9:*** Yes of course, ***Interviewer:*** Thank you. I just have about 10/11 questions for you if that's ok? There are a few questions relating to mental health, so if there is anything you don't feel comfortable with that's not a problem at all, we can just move on. Anything you are happy to share will remain anonymous, and I'll redact any names or identity information in my study, and if you want to take anything out at any point please just let me know. ***P9:*** Sure, that all sounds good, I'm more than happy to help, I had to interview people for my dissertation so I'm happy to pay it forward. ***Interviewer***: Amazing thank you. So, my first question is, can you tell me about how, and when, you first got into music. ***P9:*** Sure, well I just remember being young, like 8 years old and watching the blues brothers and thinking that looks pretty cool. I wanna do that. So yeah, but, you know, I started off, I didn't know what I wanted to play, so I started off learning guitar and I really sucked at that. Also, I don't think my teacher was right for me on that. Then I started learning drums and again I sucked at that, again I don't think my teacher was right for me on	Young 8 years old Inspired by media "Looks pretty cool" Commitment Just wanted to play any instrument Negative self image Unhelpful guidance Negative self perception Unhelpful guidance	Social credibility Commitment Negative self image Neg experience with musicians Negative self image Commitment Neg experience with musicians

that. And then I decided to try out bass. And um yeah, I don't, people use the word 'talent', but, um, a talent implies that some deity is bestowed upon you, some ability, whereas I think people just have an aptitude for things. Yeah, um and I just had an aptitude for playing the bass, and also there were three bands in my school and no bass players.	Changing instrument to continue with music – commitment Does not believe in talent "People have an aptitude for things" = not special Down playing effort Lack of musicians around.	Commitment Commitment Social credibility
Interviewer: So you saw an opening and you filled it?		
P9: Exactly I was like 'this is what market dominance, this is what monopoly is, isn't it'. But yeah, mainly it was erm, I didn't, I never, there weren't many jobs that I really wanted to do. I love playing music, being a teenage boy as well, I thought being in bands would get me girls and things like that, that was part of it as well. And yeah, I wasn't the most popular person, but I also wasn't, you know, the runt of the 'Itter in school either. I thought again, more social credibility playing in bands and stuff like that, which is all bollocks really. When you're a teenager, that's sort of how you see things. But I stuck with music, um basically because I didn't know what else to do. I was quite good at music. I could see my teacher on bass making a living out of it, so I thought well I might be able to. And erm, my girlfriend at the, I did very poorly at my levels because I would rather be gigging and practicing and playing video games, and so my girlfriend at the time showed me a prospectus for BIM Bristol. You only need like three Es to get in there, three Es and an audition, so I did that	Market dominance – felt different/special No specific occupational goal "I love playing music" Teenage boy = get girls Wasn't popular in school Not unpopular. "social credibility" Didn't know what else to do? I was good at music Playing video games and doing music	No other options Love of music Social credibility Social credibility Social credibility No other options Positive self-image Low exploration Negative self-image Love of music No other options

and yeah, I just kept going with music anyway because I realised I'm so horrifically qualified to do anything else.		Low exploration Negative self-image
Interviewer: I hear that lot actually, like "wait, I can audition for Uni rather than like having to do exams. I'll do that" *[laughs]*		
P9: Yeah, *[laughs]* exactly, exactly. Exams can be so intimidating, and while auditions are intimidating as well, it's sort of something you're more used to. You can practice for an audition in the shower, you can't revise while you're doing other things. Well, if you're a singer, you're practicing when you're driving, you know, a sing along to tunes, you, what you love, or whatever. So erm, whereas yeah, exams are very different kettle of fish altogether. So yeah, that's why I kind of stuck with music, really.		Low exploration Motivated Love of music Low exploration No other options
Interviewer: So would you say that music took up a lot of your time when you were in high school?		
P9: I certainly wanted it to. Obviously we were limited in terms of budget and parents' rules. My parents had this really annoying rule where I had to be home by 6 o clock. Cause we lived in the countryside where there were no pavements. So I'd get the train into Cardiff but getting the train back I had to walk home in the dark and they were never comfortable with that. So it wasn't like I could go do rehearsals in the rehearsal studios in Cardiff until like 10PM or something like that. So, um, when I was, this is,	No sign of parents being part of the pressure. Was not allowed to parties so he stayed home and	Love of music Commitment

one thing I am grateful for with that is, when everyone, when I turned 15 house parties became a thing. Skins was on Channel 4. And like everyone in my year wanted to do house parties and stuff like that and my parents would never let me go, so I just used that time to practice basically. So yeah, it took up a lot of my time, my personal time, not so much of my social time, though I would have liked it to have taken up a lot more, but in terms of like, being in school, from the age of about 14 onwards I spent every lunch time in the practice rooms, whether I was with someone or not, I was either noodling or practicing or something. It did, like it did take a lot of my time yeah.	practiced, he is grateful for this. By not being allowed to parties he was encouraged to practice Practice took up a lot of time. Sacrifice Practice took up a lot of time.	Commitment Commitment Commitment Love of music Lack of exploration Commitment
Interviewer: So would say that you were supported by your parents, or pressured, or were you just allowed to decide what you wanted to do?		
P9: I was supported within limitations, up until a point. My parents would pick me up from gigs late, sometimes, if they were close enough. I don't know if you know South Wales very much, but I lived in a village between Cardiff and Barry. So if I had a gig in Barry, which is an easy drive for them, they would pick me up. If I had a gig in Cardiff, I had to find a lift or get my own way home or something. They were very supportive. They would drive me to rehearsals and they would buy me gear within like a specific budget or something. One thing that they did do, they give me, this seems crazy now, they'd give me 3.50 a day for lunch money and I would just save that up and then by the	Support was there but not pressure Sacrifice	

end of like, term, I'd have like 150 to 200 quid to just put towards gear and stuff like that. I don't know if they knew I was doing that or not, but that, I saw that as some sort of support to be honest as well. They were supportive within limitations.		Commitment Love of music
Interviewer: So in that case, do you think, I know you talked about talent and how it's not just bestowed upon you. But do you think you chose music, or do you think music kind of chose you? Did you feel like you had a choice in that?		
P9: Oh yeah I certainly did have a choice, and I definitely chose music, like, well millions of people watch the blues brothers and thought 'I wanna do that' and only a minority of people actually tried to. I don't think that's down to talent. I think that's down to like your own view of what's attainable. Does that, if that makes sense?	Chose music It felt attainable Motivated	Love of music Commitment Lack of exploration Motivated
Interviewer: Yeah, if you're a dreamer, naturally, then you're gonna be more inclined to dream, right?		
P9: Exactly. *[laughs]* Or if you're an eight-year-old who saw the blues brothers for the first time and you've never played an instrument before and then you go into school and look around and you see there's no one else playing instruments. It seems unattainable and unrealistic, so then you start looking. You might always still want to do that but it's the fantasy, it's the dream. And even as musicians now, we still fantasise and dream about big gigs, don't we? So, I think, yeah, it's, it's down to, uh yeah, you make	Dreamers	Social Credibility Fixed identity Love of music

the choice, but ultimately it's up to your environment, whether that choice is viable or not. Your environment or your community, or both.	Foreclosure?	Motivated
Interviewer: So what would you say your current identity is now? How do you view yourself?		
P9: I'm definitely a musician, not so much of a creative. It's quite hard because I've always had a bit of self-esteem issues but I suppose this job is up and down anyway. So I have my own band, which is sort of like my passion project, and in that I do get to be creative, but most of the rest of the time, whether its weddings or playing for other artists, I am just learning their stuff. And if they allow me to be creative then great, but I'm not, as a bass player, I accepted the idea that I am not gonna be the creative force in the band a long time ago. I do know a lot of bass players who are MDs, or the sole writers. Like erm, Dua Lipa's bass player is her co-writer, I'm aware. So there are exceptions to that. But erm, So I've never been very confident with friendships or communities or working in a group so I tend to just sit back and let everyone else take the reins, unless I feel it's like a really bad decision or something. Um, and in my role as a session musician, I've been sort of let down by numerous bands as well, and the reasons why can vary from **budgeting** to location, um, but it's hard to take those seriously sometimes given other evidence to the contrary. So you say how do identify? Sometimes I identify as a very confident, competent musician,	Chose music Limited Lack of autonomy Go with the flow attitude **Money**	Commitment Negative self-image Love of music Low exploration Negative self-image Negative self-image Neg experience with musicians

other times I think I am that meme of that kid who just practices at home all the time and then goes out and does weddings and is always saying 'big things coming' on Instagram. But um I suppose the reality is a, a sort of, a mixture of both potentially. Yeah, part of, part of me is just all about hustling, trying to get as many gigs as possible. Like I'll do 50 weddings a year, but I'm not in a wedding band, just depping for lots of people, which I suppose is a like, a sort of gratifying thing that I can just do that with um dep-bands. Um so yeah, I don't know, still, my identity still makes me kind of feel like I'm just sort of um, a bull in a China shop trying to find my way in and out. ***Interviewer:*** When you talk about the kind of the calm competent musician and then the bull in the China shop, would you say there's the element of imposter syndrome in there? ***P9:*** Totally, yeah totally, and it's hard to tell, for me, whose the real deal and who isn't, if that makes sense. I think, we are all individuals, but we base our individuality on the experience we see of others, or the way other people, you know, we go, oh, I'd like to be more like that person when they're calm, and I'd like to be more like this person when they're excited, or something like that. And it's hard to tell, um how much of that turns you into something fake or turns you into something that you really want to be. It's something I've struggled with a lot. There's um, there's a, there's a guy I had some lessons with	Commitment as he identifies as a musician in both scenarios. Questions identity but only in the context of being a musician. IMPORTANT. Idea of identity is that it is built from parts of others.	Commitment Negative self-image Commitment External validation/Social credibility Negative self-image Neg experience with musicians

over lockdown who is the most modest, chill bass player I've ever met and he never told me that he plays in one of my favourite bands and I don't know how, I don't how he can be that modest. Whenever I get an offer for an original session gig I do want to tell everyone *[laughs]* cause I'm so excited. But he's just like *[laughs]* I don't know how he does it. I certainly try to give of that chilled aura, especially when playing the show. But like, when the shows over and were looking to where the next show could be, or when we can get the next bit of work, for me, I can't speak for this guy, but it is a bit like, well that was a fluke last time, or they worked with me last time and now they know I'm a bit shit. I'm never actually sure of myself as a musician. And I'm sure that teacher of mine probably goes through that as well a little bit in his own mind, but doesn't, his aura is always just calm and can do anything basically. ***Interviewer:*** I teach a lot of um professional and semi-professional vocalists and it's wild to just see them doing their thing on the internet or like you know in shows and then actually know them and be like you were throwing up like yesterday about this and now you're just on stage living it. Does that resonate with you? ***P9:*** True yeah, I only got two students cause not many people wanna learn bass but I've been telling one of my students about um yeah, not playing too much as a bass player, not overfilling, not showing off. And that same evening I'll go do a gig and I'll	Idols	Negative self-image Social credibility/external validation Love of music Negative self-image

be like, *[mimes fancy bass riff]*. So I'm not always the best at practicing what I preach to be honest. *[laughs]*		Love of music Negative self-image
Interviewer: *[laughs]* Who is? So I've got a few questions about emotions, mental health and things like that. There's only two questions. Um but, you've mentioned it a few times, but what effect do you think your career has on your mental health?		
P9: Well there's a lot of things that will affect my mental health to do with my career. **One of them obviously being money, the stress of like, uggg am I gonna make money this month, especially during the winter? But I assume no matter what job you've got if you've got more expenses one month, you're worried about that so,** erm, maybe musicians more so because we don't make as much, so theres that. Like I said before, not being the most confident person in groups or with friendships, that's one thing that erm, as a professional musician, I've really, really struggled with. To give a bit of context, I was touring "touring", I did a number of international shows with a pop band and I got to the point where I knew their set better than they did, and the front of house engineer was telling me that and I felt really good, really accepted. I had the singer who thought of himself as a bit of a Noel Gallagher, and he's like, **"you're in now mate"**. Um, and then, uh, the day before um a show in Singapore for the [redacted] they just told me, I had packed my bags and everything and they just told	Money worries Feeling accepted	Negative self-image Negative self-image Social acceptance

me, oh, we forgot to book you a hotel. Singapore at the [redacted] there's not gonna be any hotels left, so I couldn't go to that. And then a month later I was supposed to be doing the tour of Europe with [redacted] for two weeks. In November, that would have been five grand of work um, and they took me off that with a couple of weeks notice, **and I had no time to fill the diary in some of the deadest months of the year.** Um **and they said it was because of budgeting, but the, the band is bankrolled by the guitarist who's father, not to name names but he owns the one of the biggest businesses in the UK, so I know that budgeting wasn't necessarily and issue.** Um and that that was a big um, that really affected my mental health because without knowing what I did wrong, um, I just, the spiral just goes, "well, you just shit aren't you. You're just pretty shit". There was another band straight out of BIM I started playing for another band who basically had me on full time for live stuff, but not, this was a weird one. They had me full time for live stuff, but no writing or studio work. But I was credited on the album as playing bass on it. It was very odd, I didn't do the studio sessions, it was very odd. But after a year of working with them, **they were paying me about half of what a wedding would pay me**, they just said, "well you know, our bass player, his wife is back off maternity leave, or their kids are old enough now for him to go off and come do the gigs again, so cheers". And yeah again, like I'm sort of thinking like, was I really that	Money Money Lack of validation money	Neg experience with musicians Neg experience with musicians Negative self-image Neg experience with musicians Neg experience with musicians Negative self-image

shit or um you know, and finally, the bands where they didn't, I didn't worry about this sort of thing. They were all hopped off on coke most of the time. And not, and while they were very supportive of me as an individual, being around them was a struggle, not being someone who, I smoke a bit of weed but I don't really like cocaine. So being around them was a bit of a struggle for my mental health as well. And the other attitudes they had, I think were quite poor to me as a growing young person, mistaking what this being a musician was all about. And then, yeah, you've got, you've got the crippling doubt as to like, well, I've lost all this really good work, is it because I'm shit? Is it because, you know in music we always want to work with good people, one of the only good lessons I had from BIM is like, we're in music college, we can all play well. What's gonna get you booked over you is if I can stand being on a tour bus with you for six months. So it was either I'm a shit bass player, or I'm a shit human being. *[laughs]* ***Interviewer:*** That's what it comes in your reasoning? ***P9:*** Yeah, exactly. And so I don't know which one was more detrimental to me as a like, uh my mental health thinking that no one actually likes me and wants to be around me or the thing I spent half my life working towards, I'm still not good enough. Um, I don't know which one is easier to accept. ***Interviewer:*** When in reality, it's likely that someone was just	Lack of external validation = identity crisis in later life Did not feel like they learned much at uni. Competition	Neg experience with musicians Negative self-image Negative self-image Lack of validation = negative mental health Negative self-image

rubbish at their job and didn't book the right things, you know?		
P9: On that one occasion for sure but, you know, I've been doing this professionally for 10 years. I've been playing bass for about 15, 16. Erm, not every situation is the same, and yeah, it's um I do find it very hard to judge um, like, uh, yeah, when it is genuine "thanks very much. Appreciate you, but we're gonna part ways" and or whether it's behind closed doors, "fuck me, so glad we got rid of him" you know.		Commitment Negative self-image
Interviewer: The human brain always goes to the negative, we do that for survival, don't we?		
P9: I suppose your right yeah, but that's been a big issue, part of my mental health. And there's the other stuff like, you know, in summer you might have 8 gigs in a row with different bands so there is no accommodation cause it's all different bands. So you're going from one end of the country home, wake up, go to another, very little sleep, more driving than eating and I think that is just uh, it is a byproduct of the job, sure, but *I don't think there's much we can do about that as musicians except not take the extra work*, to be honest. And theres part of me when I do have those busy periods, I'm in the middle of it going, 'ahhh I just really, just don't wanna do the gig tomorrow. But another part of me he's like, "yeah, I'm, I'm a working musician. Eight days a week this week. Yeah" *[laughs]*	*Lack of control*	Commitment Love of music Commitment

You know, so it's, it's a whirlwind.		
I have been diagnosed with borderline personality disorder. Um, and the research suggests that that's an environmental um, what's the word, development. Not necessarily genetic one and **I don't know if it's music or growing up that got me that gave me that diagnosis or not.** But there is a huge element of yes, **imposture syndrome** with personality or disorder, but also erm, someone I know who works in mental health used this term, "I hate you please don't leave me" *[laughs]* in borderline personality disorder.	diagnosis Imposter syndrome despite doing music forever and practicing all the time.	
So it gets to a point with the band where im so fed up I wanna quit but my personal pride doesn't wanna lose the work or **doesn't wanna be seen as unaccepted.** So it's a very complicated subject and hard for me to compartmentalize to really an understand. But it truly does, **more often than not it's the acceptance that affects my mental health really.** It's whether I'm good enough as a person or good enough as a player to be working with people. And because this has been most of my life dreaming to be a musician, um, it's more important to me than, um, to my, like my girlfriend will say, than just me having a nice time on a day off. You know, I don't feel like I deserve a nice time on a day off. I've gotta practice because I've got a day off. I shouldn't have a day off. I'm a working musician I need to practice to get more gigs. Erm, and that's just not healthy. It's sort of like the whiplash sentiment of music, which a lot	**Doesn't wanna be seen as unaccepted.** Practicing	Negative self-image Social acceptance Social acceptance Negative self-image Commitment Negative self-image Negative self-image

of musicians have, some have balanced it, some haven't, but um there's this idea that every spare moment you've gotta be in the shed working really hard and I don't know how healthy that is either to be honest.	Practicing too much is unhealthy	ommitment
I just wish we would talk about it more. And we take a, I don't know if you go to many gigs or jam nights but the ones I call hot shots. They have this aura of not wanting to talk about their experience with these sorts of things and I don't know if it's so they can look more mysterious and more professional or more stoic. But erm, it would give, I don't know, someone like me, more of an acceptance of myself knowing that they go through the same things, which they probably do, but without hearing them talk about it, I just think there some kind of God who can just show up to any gig, nail it, leave and get the next gig no problem and it's, I don't, it's not envy, it's more just, um I want to be like that really rather than just envy and it would be great to understand how they compartmentalise their thoughts in order just to get to that mindset before they get to that point professionally but then again everyone's different.	Isolation We should talk more – feeling alone Feeling alone Feels different	Neg experience with musicians Negative self-image
Interviewer: We are getting a bit more open about being able to talk about that, but I think finding coping strategies for people in the community as we work together is what we need.		
P9: Yeah absolutely. There's erm, especially here in Bristol, I think this might be universal, especially in the jazz world, if you are a young musician and you want to get into jazz, and		

you go to a jazz jam night, and you talk to one of the guys running it there who have been playing jazz for years, there is this massive aura of "oh you're new, alright we'll give you the easiest one". Not really wanting to talk to them or get them more interested in jazz, to the point where they could be running that jam night, or running their own jam event. And it puts young people off the genre or music in general, or makes young people think that success is personified by being like that, which is obviously detrimental to those who come after them and then after them and it, I don't know it's like generational trauma. *[laughs]* ***Interviewer:*** [laughs] The whole music industry is just generational trauma?. ***P9:*** Yeah [laughs] erm, if you look at like how Motown records treated their artists, their session musicians and how James Jamieson used to have to go into the office with a gun to get paid. Like after that there was more legal protection for musicians but not a lot, and more you know, the generational trauma does bring change and I think now we're at the point where we do need yes ourselves to change in order to not pass generational trauma downwards to the next bunch of um, I'm gonna say grassroots professional musicians, but also, you know streaming companies um, are taking advantage of the generational trauma of musicians just wanting to have their music heard. So yeah there is a lot of generational trauma and especially looking	Generational trauma points to their experience with other Musicans being negative and passing that down	Neg experience with musicians Neg experience with musician

back as a young person, um looking up to the people I looked up to reading their biographies or watching their interviews, I sort of watched them and think, oh yeah I should be like that. Which obviously is probably more detrimental. I don't think attitudes of the 80s or the 70s have much place today [laughs]. So, yeah, the generational trauma. I think, yeah, that's a, that's a very, that's a very, very good way of putting that, yeah. We are affected by those who come before us, to be honest.		Neg experience with musicians Neg experience with musicians
Interviewer: So, last two questions, if that's all right with you. Do you ever wonder what you would have done if you didn't pursue music?		
P9: Yeah, yeah, I don't know what I would have done. I had a part time job as a bartender until I finished uni. I'd probably still be doing that.	Unable to imagine what it would be like if their weren't a musician	No other options Lack of exploration
Interviewer: Does that feeling, when you think about alternatives, does it does it make you feel sad that you didn't do that, or happy that you continued doing what you're doing?		
P9: It makes me happy that I continued doing it but that was at the start of my career, at this time I'm thinking about making a change as well. I couldn't have done it then because of my age or experience, but now I'm thinking about just being a lorry driver, you know, go here, then there, so, but I wouldn't have been able to go do that if I had just stayed being a bartender. Yeah, I honestly don't know where I would be if I		Early love of music

hadn't gone for music. I don't know what my career would have been. Maybe it would have been in media in general, but again that very competitive. It's quite subjective and sort of slimy as well *[laughs],* some areas of media. I honestly don't know what I would have done, I failed my A-levels and then my girlfriend at the time gave me this prospectus and said look, you can get in here easy. And I got it. And then when I was in I realized that no one, especially around third year, no one's gigging in my year, so I need to stop going to university. Well I didn't drop out. I did the dissertation and everything, but I stopped going to lessons and started trying to find gigs in the local area. I suppose is a plan but it's always been just a big see what happens sort of thing. And more often than not it's been a slightly positive experience there haven't been many jam nights I've gone into and God fuck this. These guys are really annoying and horrible people, I'm gone. So yeah, it's not been until I've been in my professional setting for a number of years that I've really felt like um it's been a huge struggle. And then again, maybe it's just luck, you know, who we know and everything like that.	Lack of control	No other options No other options Negative self-image Lack of exploration Lack of exploration
Interviewer: Yeah, social currency is is very important in music.		
P9: Yeah, so that's my least favourite thing in the world, yeah. That band I was telling you about where they all did cocaine and stuff. So the bass player in that band was actually a massive hot shot, he's played for a number of American and	Social currency	Neg experiences with other musicians

British pop artists. So the reason why I was in that band is because he was touring abroad with them. So a hugely gratifying to be told that I can fill the boots of someone like that. But at the same time, I had this massive amount of pressure to be the same person as he was in order to get through the same circles and hopefully follow the same trajectory, which of course, in the world of music is naff, but I can imagine in the world of corporateness, that is how people see promotions, right? ***Interviewer:*** I mean, don't say a lot of the people at the top top top level of the corporate sphere are psychopaths *[laughs]* ***P9:*** Yeah *[laughs]* yeah, they are and even in music there are a lot of very successful people who are psychopaths. I don't know if you watch the Simpsons? ***Interviewer:*** Yeah, who doesn't watch the Simpsons? *[laughs]* ***P9:*** There's this wonderful bit where Monty Burns comes to school to give a talk on business and he's like, "family, friends and ethics, these are the things you must slay if you want to be successful in business" *[laughs]* and yeah and I do see other musicians, like the guy who got me into this pop band, who was my friend, erm, you know, be really friendly to me and then they second that the band didn't need me anymore. They had me on the track for their live gigs from rehearsals, they had recorded me so I was on the	Social currency Social pressure	Social acceptance Neg experience with other musicians Neg experience with musicians

track, and that was his ethics out of the window in a way just so he could keep the band going. So yeah, I think there are quite a few psychopaths in music and in that case as well, you know, there was someone in that band who was the son of someone very rich and very successful. And so I kind of saw that in them as well. I'd be sat with them in a pub between and a gig, looking at my bank account going, "oh tight month this month" And he and he'd say, **"what are your outgoings?" So I'm like, about 1800 he goes "ahh I'll spend that in a night"**	Money	Neg experience with musicians
Interviewer: That helps. Thanks. I'm better now. *[laughs]*		
P9: Yeah, *[laughs]* and because it's his band and he's bankrolling it everyone around the table is like "hahahahahah, you're so funny". So, yeah, to me, that's really psychopathic as well and so, um and so it's yeah, I think, yeah, I think's best just to let your playing speak for itself and not be a dick.		Neg experience with musicians
Interviewer: So that leads me to my last question, I guess, is if you were I mean, it seems you you teach as well. So what would be your main advice for a young musician who is, you know, adolescent who wants to go into music?		
P9: First of all have no expectations, don't be a dick. Obviously practice, but don't do the whiplash thing where you're practicing so hard you making yourself ill. Because then if you get to that point where you make yourself ill, because	Practice is important... "obviously" Issues of commitment and practice.	Neg experiences with other musicians

you're practicing so hard, and you're not getting the opportunities you want, you sort of end up looking at the sky going "oi, I sacrificed a load of shit, where's my payoff" and that can start pushing you down as well. It's, it's a mixture of being humble, calm and just erm, yeah, just, I wouldn't say I'm the best person to take advice off, but just be humble and calm and be social as well, I one thing. One thing I'm very guilty of is going off into my cocoon between soundcheck and the gig everyone wants to go off, get a drink and see some of the other bands and I'd rather just sit in the van and that gives off a very antisocial, what's the word, idea about yourself whereas you know, um I just wanted a bit of peace and quiet. Um but you know, the more sociable all you are the more you develop relationships and then the more those relationships will turn into potential work opportunities. Like the guy in BIM said to us as a class, "we can all play as musicians, we can all play really well, it's whether I want to be on tour bus with you for six months, that's gonna get you the gig". So, yeah, be humble and uh, calm and yeah, **<u>keep practicing, but don't hurt yourself doing it.</u>** ***Interviewer:*** Amazing. I feel like that's been super helpful, it's been really good to meet you, Thank you so much. ***P9:*** No worries, yeah, yeah, I'm glad to help pay it forward cause once someone helped me in my dissertation so, ***Interviewer:*** and the karma will come back around. Thank you,	Despite all the struggle and the possible desire to change careers they still don't advise others against the career? Networking is important. It's not just about talent, is about your whole personality	Negative self-image Social acceptance Negative self-image Social acceptance Social acceptance.

I appreciate you giving your time. ***P9:*** Thank you, bye ***Interviewer:*** *Bye.*		

Claire Cannon
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Appendix K

P22: Interview via Zoom on 27th April 2025 @ 12:15 (37.42 minutes)

Interviewer: So the first thing was just can you tell me when you started to learn music and how you were introduced to music?

P22: Ok so, um, my mom and both music teachers. I was born in 1977. Erm, my mum was actually playing a show rehearsal eight months pregnant with me and you can pretty much say my education started from that point. So I've always been around music, both taught at home so I used to just absorb everything that was going on. Erm, they tried to teach me the piano when I was seven, that didn't work out too well. They started again when I was about 11, erm started piano and the trombone, when I was 13, 12 about 12, I decided I was gonna teach myself the guitar, because they wouldn't. So by the time I was 13, I think we've got my grade five trombone, my grade, grade two piano, and I was teaching guitar. I did my first gig on guitar five, erm eight weeks after starting to learn. Guitar was, I found guitar was, that was my voice, that was my instrument. That was the one that I connected with, and I think probably cause I taught myself I was a bit more into that side of it. Did my grade 8 on trombone when i was about 15, never got past grade 4 well, I did my grade 5 but failed it on piano. I had zero love for the piano at the time but I really like playing the piano now, and yeah and being in shows and bands and choirs and everything since then.

Interviewer: So your parents wanted you to play piano but not a guitar? Was that a conscious thing?

P22:: My parents are very music elitist. They are both Royal northern college of music people. So they both, my mum is a concert level pianist, my dad, he says that he's got his grade eight piano but we've never seen the certificate but he's a grade eight trombonist. My dad's dad played trombone in the Halle, and my mums dad was like the quintessential bar pianist who just would get everybody up and dancing. So this constant kind of theme of stuff going through. My dad just was convinced that to get anywhere of music and go be able to play the piano, so that was his thing, "you've gotta learn piano'" Once you've learned the piano, I'll teach you guitar." So I went, I'm a rebel at heart, so I went, no I'll teach myself the guitar. That was kind of where that came from, but yeah, music education I did er. I did my grade five theory and then I did my grade six theory just because my mum entered me and didn't tell me, so she gave me a week's notice. um I got 98 out of 100, I think, but yeah. I completed the exam in about 45 minutes and my mum was very upset that I didn't stay to check my work because I could have got the extra mark. I wouldn't have done; I've not got the patience for checking my work. Er, I did GCSEs and did A level music, got music prize, didn't put any effort in, so I didn't get, I got a C, I think, or a D in music, but I didn't put any effort into it. Erm and then, yeah, since then I've been. I do it on the side, I wanted to keep music as being the stress relief rather than, because I had, I think when it was about, let's say 2005, I think in 2005 I kind of got myself, so at university I did a civil and structural engineering, so I didn't do music. Erm, and I remember walking, and I never turned up. I was a terrible student, drank the way through university. I got free drinks by playing guitar in bars. Erm but I scraped through by the skin of my teeth and came out with a degree that got me into then the industry of civil and structural engineering. Erm, whilst I was doing that, I was just continuing playing and being in whatever bands would have me. Um then by the time I got to 2005 I got back into teaching guitar and was at a guitar school and I joined their band. So in 2005/6, through to 2010, I think I was in, at one time I was in something like seven or eight bands all at the same time, so I was teaching Tuesdays and Thursday after work, seven till ten. and I was the main cover because I can play a lot of different instruments. So I

would go in and cover for whatever they needed. So I was constantly in school doing that, but was also rehearsing every night, um and then gigging Friday, Saturday, Sunday and sometimes Monday. So I was at this point where I was earning more from music than I was from being an engineer. But I was still of the mind that the engineering side of things would provide me with that stability and actually have more potential in terms of earnings and things. And I wanted to maintain music as being the me thing. Put it this way I think, I was probably earning about 25 grand a year in my day job back in 2005, bought a flat and I was earning more from music, at that point and that was when I had to make a bit of a decision. Think in 2010, and I maintained everything all at the same time I was basically rehearsing until three in the morning, going home, getting a couple of hours sleep, getting up and driving to a construction site and doing an engineering, I was project manager then, doing project management's on site from like eight in the morning in Preston till 5 o'clock driving back, getting home at six, getting out the door, getting down to the school, teaching in the school, then rehearsing 10 till 12, and then rehearsing 12:30 till 2:30, 3 o'clock in the morning, different bands. So I was doing that constantly.

Interviewer: So when you were younger, in school, did you have other hobbies or were you the music kid?

P22: Erm, I played lacrosse, I was on the team for lacrosse. and I was quite subtle with my music at school. The school that I went to I didn't really gel with people because it was it was like a very, it was a private school, it was [redacted] so I didn't really mix very well with the kids there so I had one mate and we just stuck together and kept out of everyone's hair. I was actually in a band with people who were three years older than me who had left the school, so when I was in like, when I was 16, 15, they were all leaving and going to university, so I was in a band with people at university. So I used to go to Leeds at the weekends when I was like 15, 16 to go out and play and end up wherever I ended up. The thing is I was playing working men's clubs from being about 13, 14 in East Manchester, so I kind of grew up playing in bars. And everyone in my year group was into club music were I wasn't, I was into grunge music an things like that, so they were all fixated on going to a club from the age of 15, 16, which didn't appeal to me. And I didn't mix, so I was constantly out and about. So school though is, my interest was guitar outside of school. In school, I was not the most academic, but that might due to my neurodivergence that's undiagnosed. yeah, I was always bottom of the class, but if I wanted to, I could apply myself. So math, I was in the bottom set and I said I wanted to be an engineer and they said you can't if you're in the bottom set. So I made them sit me in the higher set paper to prove a point and beat everybody apart from ten people in the school, which meant, no can do it, I just can't be bothered. With it being a private school they were very traditional in the way they were teaching. I know the school still and I know they have really changed cause my nephew and niece are both there. And my sister tells me about it and it's completely different. Yeah, it seems to be.

Interviewer: So would you say music chose you or you or you chose music when you think back?

P22: Music and I existed in the same space, neither of us had a choice, there you go. Being erm, looking back my parents were really good about it, they didn't want to force music on me, but, when they're teaching at home every night till 9 o clock at night and the only room that could exist in was the kitchen cause that was the only room that didn't have music going on, but I could still hear it. It's just there, erm and I used to, and I'd just pick stuff up. So my ear became very good pretty quick, so, and my mom hated me doing it because she was in the lounge, so I used to walk through the lounge quite a bit. But I came downstairs. It wouldn't be uncommon of me to just shout out the wrong note they were playing and say

that should be an F#. You'll know that in teaching you start see, after a couple of years you suddenly realise, everyone makes the same mistakes. I'd be able to walk downstairs and without looking I'd be like, your using the wrong fingering. Everybody always puts that run in and uses the wrong fingering. I can't play it, but I've been listening to my mom tell people for the last six years that they're always putting finger four on there and when they should be stretching and putting three on. You know, I picked up stuff like that, it's why with the grade five theory I didn't need to learn it because I just sat around while mum was teaching it and I just absorbed it. and also I taught myself the theory of music through playing the guitar because I could see it. to me it made more sense on the guitar than it did on the piano. because the patterns always the same for your major thirds, your minor thirds, your dominants etc. So learning things like modes, chord structures and understanding the mathematics of it. So music to me was where maths and art kind of came together. That was that was kind of why i became good at maths as well as music.

Interviewer: So nowadays, what is what would you call yourself? What's your identity structurally would you say?

P22: I'm a musician who moonlights as a commercial director for a global engineering company.

Interviewer: Okay, so musician first?

P22: Always musician first. Musician is me as a person. My career is the thing that I do to pay the bills. Which is why I keep them separate.

Interviewer: Okay, does that does that, do you feel like that limits you in at all, having that kind of real strong identity?

P22: The other way around. I means I can be quite cavalier in my career because I know that any given moment I go out and make enough money to pay bills playing guitar. I can you know, when people say, ah, take a job on and just do it like you've only got a year to live, that's how I've always been, which is always like, I can always make money. I know that. So I've got enough contacts. I've always been, I've been the person that people reached out to for a long time in South Manchester with things like wedding bands and stuff, where they need a cover. Which drives agencies up the wall because I don't work for an agency because I won't sign up to an agency so, and they've contacted me and said, "oh you're doing a lot of work for our agency, you should sign on", and im like "nah I'm not doing it for you doing it for my need to cover so",

Interviewer: So I've got just like two questions based around, like, mental health, if that's alright. So I wondered what effect would you say that your musical career specifically has on your mental health or the positive or negative,

P22: My musical career IS my mental health. It is the thing that allows me to switch a different part of my brain on. It allows me to take a backseat in things because at work I'm doing, I'm in charge of a lot of things at work. I've got, you know, I'm the commercial director for a hundred million pound a year company. I'm constantly doing contract negotiations. This time last year had 300 staff reporting into me across Europe, and I was running teams in India and things. So, works really intense. It's incredibly, it's the opposite side to it. So when I go into the musical thing, usually I'll just take a step back, let other people do things, but if I need to, if it gets to the point where I'm like, "this is getting ridiculous I'll just sort of step in a sort things out." So music to me is the relaxing bit, it allows me to switch another bit of my brain on it. It disengages my work brain. So it, I can literally, I make I make quite big

decisions by playing guitar because it switches all the noise off in my head so I'm just because it goes into the music space and it creates clarity. It's really, it's very useful. Yeah. Some people go to the gym and that's their thing, you know they go out and they say "ahhh I need to hit a pinch bag" or whatever, im like ok suit yourself. I'll do something a bit more creative

Interviewer: So it seems like you've kind of hacked the system, but would you um I guess this is conjecture slightly, but would you say if you didn't have your like day job that you would be okay you know full-time being a musician or could you see them maybe trips there?

P22:: If was to quit my day job I would sell the house that I live in so that I could buy somewhere small without mortgage for a start. Once I've done that, then it goes into the other side of it. Now this is where my wife and I have this slight split on it. She's very, so we do a lot of uh, we do this acoustic duo. Erm, and she does a lot of the negotiating things. My non-music job is negotiation, and I'm very much on self-worth and what people should be paying. So I like to sit and go, look, at the end of the day, we did a wedding last year and it was, it was at "mates rates" which annoys me, and it was, you know, it was a full day. We have to set off at 11 o'clock in the morning. We're getting back at midnight, 1 o'clock in the morning, we did the entrance music, the ceremony, the drinks reception, and I think we did some, we might have even played during the wedding breakfast or something. We definitely did the first dance. So we did all of that, and I think the fee might have been about 700 pounds.. and it was down kind of Shrewsbury way. So we got back and my wife going, that was great, that was really good. Its 700 pounds. And stood looking at all the equipment in the lounge. and my I said, look, I know that the stage we were stood on cost them 1500 pounds to rent. If someone asked me to, if they wanted to rent all of our gear and they wanted me to drive it down there, stay with it all day and then bring it back and do from 11 o'clock in the morning till whatever time, and do all of that and set it up, but not sing I said, I'd probably charge them more than we charged them. I said, that's what I want to kind of. So if I was, if I went full time musician, I'd be quite blunt about it. I can be quite charming, though, so I get away with it *(laughs)*

Interviewer: What are your thoughts on putting value on art?

P22: Yeah its completely devalued yeah, we used to play, one of the bands that was in, we used to play at [redacted] and we got a residency there and each member of the band was getting 100 pounds in the night and they were saying, oh well, we could we could get more and, well, were worth more because we're all a fantastic bunch of musicians. And I said, yeah, we should be earning more than 100 pounds for doing, you know, getting there at, say half eight to do a set at nine, and set at 10, set at 11 and a set at 12. four sets, 30 minutes and erm, we're a six-piece band, so the bar is paying us 600 quid, I said yeah, we should be paying more. We should be getting paid more. But they said well, "we're, we're gonna go in, were gonna demand we get paid more" and I said, okay, but let me tell you from the other side. You got a bar where we are an overhead. They could get three guys straight out of university who would be quite happy to do it for 100 pounds a head. It's on the doorstep. They can just turn up, they can waltz in, I said we don't bring any equipment. They've got a full backline, the only thing I bring is a guitar and cable. Same with the other guitarist, same with the bassist, the keyboardist, they've got the mic, they've even got a drumkit. So anyone could do it. But the other thing you've got to remember is, its [redacted] the crowd are interested in you playing 'seven nation army' where it lowers the collective IQ of the room by 50 points. Every man in the room is going dun dun dun dun,... and it drives me insane, out of time, it just gives them a quick break from whatever they're doing in the toilets, and everyone is dead happy. But that's a song I used to teach on day one of guitar. Get a group of lads

who just wanna make a few quid, you know hundred quid in the pocket, I said, we go ahead and charge 150 a head for a six piece, that's 900 quid for the band whereas they could get a three piece and doing 300 quid and the crowd, don't care about musicianship. They just want to hear the pleasers. So the market is being completely saturated in that sense and things like Gigpig and the other such other things are available. That's caused a bit of an issue. My wife puts something on 'the circle', I think recently, just an open question about it and it prompted a huge response to the point where Gigpig actually contacted her to ask her a few questions. because they don't take a don't take a cut like an agent, so they're not responsible for what the venues are putting on. So, what we're finding is Gigpig will put erm an advert out, we'll go yes yes yes yes yes yes and they just go to the lowest bidder. So you put your fee on, for what you'll do the gig for, and they will take the lowest one. So, its driving the market down. It's saturated with artists and there's no relationship building with the client then.

Interviewer: And there's no relationship between price and quality either?

P22: Exactly, you can't sense check it. And then the quality, for most bars, they don't really mind as long as there's no incidents. So, well that's playing bars, which is totally a different thing. So you know, I do a lot of show playing and things I've MDd' 'Jesus Christ Superstar', I've played in, I did 'School of Rock' last year. Um, where I did, I basically taught all the kids how to be in a band and then I played in the band. I'm doing 'Little Shop of Horrors' this year. I'll be doing a couple that haven't being announced, yet, in the next couple of years. Getting the trombone back out as well, and I've not touched that in about 15 years, so that's coming out, got to get my lip back in. Erm, that's where you see proper musicianship, you know, people need to be able to read music. People who need to actually understand what dynamics are, play as an actual unit, follow a band leader, a conductor, whatever it may be.

Interviewer: Do you think, because obviously it sounds like you're just ready to be on the go at all times, right? But do you think there maybe musicians out there that have given up and moved back to just doing the day job thing because they can't afford it?

P22: So over the years there's like, there's a band that I got into back in 2002, 2003. 2003 where I, so I had taken a few weeks off work between jobs and taught myself to play bass properly. and got myself a base rig and kind of like, I kind of got to the point with guitar where felt like I was in a bit of a lull, bit of a plateau, feeling like there wasn't anything new in it. So, I decided to lean into the bass and get into that side of things. and someone that I used to know spoke to a mate of mine who's a teacher, a pianist, asking him to join a band and said they needed a bassist, and he named like three bassists and my mate said "well [redacted] isn't around at the moment but if you remember [redacted], he plays bass as well now." And I ended up getting into that band, and at the time I was talking to my mate about it. and he said, I think [redacted] had really stepped away from doing music because it got that point where he just can't really make the money from music that he can from doing the other thing. And I can't think of many musicians that I know who don't have full time jobs in background. Mental health is a big part of it, sometimes it just doesn't pan out. One of the things that I find quite interesting, So many years ago, I was seeing a girl who was a, she was an occupational therapist working in psychological, uh, what they call it psycho forensic science. And so she knew a lot about neurodiversity and other such things. And she started seeing me and after a few weeks, one night she went, you do realize that there's not a single friend of yours who doesn't have some form of neurodivergence. She goes, you're literally the most balanced, but even you are off the scale with certain elements. I just last went, yeah, because everyone's a musician. and I'm sure it all kind of goes hand in hand, but I don't know which one comes first. I'm guessing your neurodivergent and part of that might be an attraction to music. Like I say, you know, you can clear your head. But with that comes a lot

of struggles. Depression is VERY common, and it can be triggered by so many different things. So, I see it a lot in my friendship group, you know, a lot of my mates are all like session musicians and the like in South Manchester and the surrounding areas. And yeah, so I see a lot in them. There's different characters respond differently, but there's definitely a correlation. It's weird, you can literally go through each band I'm in and you can put people into categories that you go, oh that person and oh that person.

Interviewer: So would you say you can find solace in the production of music, but the actual work, life and the lifestyle is not really conducive to a healthy environment if you are neurodivergent?

P22: It's very much that, and I've actually seen a friend, another friend of mind who's a drummer and he's been, he's never really talked about it from a mental health point of view, but I watched through the decades, cause we've played together for a long time. And he worked on a six-monthly cycle, which was really interesting to see because you know we shared a flat together, we lived in each other's pockets for quite a while, I was his best man. And one of the bands were in, you know, six months into the year, it be, we need to be playing everything absolutely as close to the record as poss, he was very much about the sound music production. Didn't want to know about everything else around it. Typical drummer, couldn't drive, you know, was a nightmare to deal with, phenomenal drummer, so the better the drummer, bigger the problem. All of them. *[laughs]* If you find a levelheaded drummer, chances are he can't keep time and he's very limited in what he can do. The best drummers are off the charts problematic. So, I've got this one who can't drive couldn't hold down a job and constantly was like fixated on "it's gotta be exactly as the record" and "we need to change our name. We need a really sensible function bad name." Six months later guarantee that without a doubt, "we shouldn't be playing things as the record we should be putting our identity on it and we you know, I really like the band name. We shouldn't change it we should stick with it because it's humorous. And then six months later, So we had to just shrug our way through that every six months and go, yeah, let's think about it in three or four months. But yeah, he used to, he's gone, he came out of that and eventually went, "I don't wanna play live anymore." And his big thing became, because he suddenly realized his big thing was how it was the production. To be perfect, it made sense to him to do it more in the recording sense. So, he build his little shed in his garden which is soundproof, and he lives in the shed, and he just writes music that most people never hear, but it sounds phenomenal. And that's his solace, you know?

Interviewer: I think we maybe just as we get older, we start to just figure it out, like by a bit how it works for us.

P22: Yeah you know what makes you happy, because when your part of the ride in that journey early on and it's the fun side of it, you feel part of it cause you found people who are likeminded. And you kind of get into the circuit and you're surrounded by people who've got the same hang-ups, the same, the same amusement, the same passion, its, but different flavours of it, And that's what you haven't worked out early on, you're more excited about. It's like a relationship in the early days you find all the excitement and then, if you got the wrong one, later on you find that the flavours aren't quite the same within it. And that's when it, things don't necessarily match. Erm and yeah, that, that experience of life starts to give you that visibility of things where you see it before it's too late. So that's where you start to really kind of learn things, to learn more about yourself that allows you to put yourself in a better position for it.

Interviewer: So, when we talk about reflection do you ever wonder, if you weren't raised in a musical household and if you didn't have that synergy with music as a youngster, do you

ever wonder what you would have done? I guess you kind of have a kind of a normal job, right?

P22: Yeah, a normal job that I don't get much enjoyment out of. The only reason I work, I said this to my, my current boss, when we first sat down, he didn't know me, he's now one of my best mates, but when we first sat down, I said, "look you are gonna really struggle with me" I said, "but you're gonna love it" I said. Unfortunately, you've employed a musician to do this, I said, so the things that motivate me are not same things that motivate everybody else. Things that motivate me in my non-music career are, is there something in this job that's gonna, that I can find amusement in, something that's gonna amuse me. And erm, I said and while I'm doing that, you're gonna have to battle with this like galactical scale of ego that's balanced out by this colossal sense of self-doubt. That's the problem that I have is that, put me in front of a microphone, let me show off and I'm over the moon, happy as ever. At the same time, full of self-doubt. And people don't realize it straight off. I was talking to, you know, my best mate is an incredible vocalist. He doesn't think he is. He says his skill is not being a singer, he says, I'm an okay singer, he says, I'm a brilliant front man. I go yeah, okay, I agree with, I agree with that to an extent, you are a brilliant front man, but you are a great vocalist. You sing Robert Plant. You sing, we do Led Zeppelin. We do two led Zeppelin songs in our set and they are the strongest ones we do because his vocal is flawless on them. Even when his voice is gone, he can still do the Robert Plant 'whole lot of love' and 'rock and roll', he just nails it. So, and I've seen him, he took the lead on Jesus Christ Superstar, and you know, Gethsemane, which has got the note and things like that, and he was brilliant. He's just superb. So yeah, so I was talking to him about it and Helena was here and we were talking about something. And she was like, well the pair of you are the same, you know, you'd be fine just stick you in front of people and's he's like, yeah, but I'm actually, I'm actually quite shy. I'm an introverted extrovert or an extroverted introvert. He said that I'm happy, I'm comfortable in my space being on stage with a microphone singing. He says he's even happier on stage doing that if he's got me stood next to him.

Interviewer: So, lastly, what advice would you give to a young musician or someone who was interested and wanted to do it as a career as a youngster?

P22: Erm, I've done it quite a lot, to be fair. Erm, Everything that I wasn't given to begin with. So first band I was ever in, three piece band we had a lad on drums, dunno what happened to him, erm me on guitar and another lad who played the keys but occasionally played Saxophone. Very strange combination for a band. And me and the guy who's playing sax/keys, we're in the same class at school. And we went through, we were grade for grade on our instruments me on trombone, him on saxophone. And then we got to the end of fifth form, and the end of fifth form I stayed on the sixth form, and my dad's telling me because I originally wanted to be a sound engineer, and my dads going 'you've gotta have grade 8 piano to be sound engineer. My dad and the piano thing, 'you've gotta have grade 8 piano to be a sound engineer'. And I went, I'm never gonna get that, and I thought, and I was teaching guitar at the time, and I was teaching this lad and his dad was in a big house and I said what does your dad do and he said he's a civil engineer, hence I became a civil engineer. But I was discouraged from doing the thing that I actually love because I was told mistruths. Erm because my dad wanted, you know, he was very elitist in that sense. The guy who played saxophone his parents just said, yeah, what do you want to do? So, we got to end of fifth form and he went to Chets in Manchester to do six form. I stayed on and did my stuff and then afterwards I went to university to do civil engineering. He went to the INCM I think, did sax from there and then he up sticks and moved down to London and moved into a single bed flat, or a two bed flat with another guy that we knew who played drums. This guy plays with a BBC swing orchestra and plays for Shirley Bassey and does like stuff in that circuit. Got a big swing band I think. So my mate paying saxophone, that's what he did, and I

went down the route of I'll just go and play whatever and just stay happy doing that. Erm, and we stayed in touch and I remember that the point of realization was, early days of Facebook I think it was, and it was new year and people putting new years photos on. And I'd spent my new year in Sheffield with some my old uni mates and I looked at his, and his picture was him on the front of Simon LeBon's yacht because he was now playing saxophone for Duran Duran. And he has become the go to sax player for the 80 stuff. So he plays for Duran Duran still and he plays for Tony Hadley. And right there is that, how, where, where's the point where that decision's made? And it's actually it's right at the start of it. Where I listened to my dad who was saying oh no you need this and you need that, he wasn't given those boundaries. So he just went and did the thing that he was doing. So the first thing is, if you wanna do it, just do it, it's on you, it's not on other people you just gotta go and do it. You've gotta put the work in, but to actually then branch out from it, it's just never saying no to an opportunity and do as many different things as you possibly can. I'm a big believer that getting and doing things like theatre, as well as doing the thing that you do, because a lot of people get driven into their style of music, so bass players go, I love Jack Hope, I love Stewart Zender and so I'm gonna, and they hone it in. And they can play in those styles phenomenally, but they can't play anything outside of it. You get drummers who can play, they can play rock, but you ask them to play a shuffle, you play dynamics and it's all lost. And they can be the best they can, you know, best in that area. Anyway, so that's where you start looking at the likes of people like Slash. Slash, great rock guitarist can play blues, but if you ask him to play jazz, he'd be lost, if you ask him to play other things, he'd be lost. So variety, while you're in that early learning stage, don't say no to anything. If someone says do you wanna come and play acoustic guitar two in a show, say yes. And if you can't, if you can't read, learn to read before you get to the rehearsal because its actually not that difficult.

Interviewer: That's perfect. Thank you for your time, I really appreciate it.

P22: Not a problem, Thank you

Appendix L

Coding for P22 interview

Interviewer: So the first thing was just can you tell me when you started to learn music and how you were introduced to music?		
P22: Ok so, um, my mom and dad were both music teachers. I was born in 1977. Erm, my mum was actually playing a show rehearsal eight months pregnant with me and you can pretty much say my education started from that point. So I've always been around music, both taught at home so I used to just absorb everything that was going on. Erm, they tried to teach me the piano when I was seven, that didn't work out too well. They started again when I was about 11, erm started piano and the trombone, when I was 13, 12 about 12, I decided I was gonna teach myself the guitar, because they wouldn't.	Parents were musicians Accepts he was constantly musically educated Role models were committed to getting him into piano. Individual agency within the confines of the foreclosed identity.	Typical IF environment. Typical IF environment Typical IF environment. Typical IF environment, lack of exploration outside of music
So by the time I was 13, I think we've got my grade five trombone, my grade, grade two piano, and I was teaching guitar. I did my first gig on guitar five, erm eight weeks after starting to learn. Guitar was, I found guitar was, that was my voice, that was my instrument. That was the one that I connected with, and I think probably cause I taught myself I was a bit more into that side of it. Did my grade 8 on trombone when i was about 15, never got past grade 4 well, I did my grade 5 but failed it on piano. I had zero love for the piano at the time but I really like playing the piano now, and yeah and being in shows and bands and choirs and everything since then.	Extensive history of music education Represents a desire to rebel but did not rebel outside of music. Identity could be already formed.	Typical IF environment, high commitment High achiever Love of music Typical IF environment. External validation
Interviewer: So your parents wanted you to play piano but not a guitar? Was that a conscious thing?		

P22: My parents are very music elitist. They are both Royal northern college of music people. So they both, my mum is a concert level pianist, my dad, he says that he's got his grade eight piano but we've never seen the certificate but he's a grade eight trombonist. My dad's dad played trombone in the Halle, and my mums dad was like the quintessential bar pianist who just would get everybody up and dancing. So this constant kind of theme of stuff going through. My dad just was convinced that to get anywhere of music and go be able to play the piano, so that was his thing, "you've gotta learn piano'" Once you've learned the piano, I'll teach you guitar." So I went, I'm a rebel at heart, so I went, no I'll teach myself the guitar. That was kind of where that came from, but yeah, music education I did er. I did my grade five theory and then I did my grade six theory just because my mum entered me and didn't tell me, so she gave me a week's notice. um I got 98 out of 100, I think, but yeah. I completed the exam in about 45 minutes and my mum was very upset that I didn't stay to check my work because I could have got the extra mark. I wouldn't have done; I've not got the patience for checking my work. Er, I did GCSEs and did A level music, got music prize, didn't put any effort in, so I didn't get, I got a C, I think, or a D in music, but I didn't put any effort into it. Erm and then, yeah, since then I've been. I do it on the side, I wanted to keep music as being the stress relief rather than, because I had, I think when it was about, let's say 2005, I think in 2005 I kind of got myself, so at university I did a civil and structural engineering, so I didn't do music. Erm, and I remember walking, and I never turned up. I was a terrible student, drank the way through university. I got free drinks by playing guitar in bars. Erm but I scraped through by the skin of my teeth and came out with a degree that got me into then the industry of civil and structural engineering. Erm, whilst I	Strong musician identity. Mum – piano Dad – trombone Generational musicians Strong belief that music is important Rebellion inside of the identity. Perfectionism Signal of high status within music which must be important Did not follow music education through uni. Less protective of achievements around non music. Continued to play music though all education.	Typical IF environment. High achievers Parental influence Typical IF environment Fixed identity Typical IF environment High commitment. High achiever Perfectionism Fixed sense of identity Love of music Not typical IF Social acceptance

was doing that, I was just continuing playing and being in whatever bands would have me. Um then by the time I got to 2005 I got back into teaching guitar and was at a guitar school and I joined their band. So in 2005/6, through to 2010, I think I was in, at one time I was in something like seven or eight bands all at the same time, so I was teaching Tuesdays and Thursday after work, seven till ten. and I was the main cover because I can play a lot of different instruments. So I would go in and cover for whatever they needed. So I was constantly in school doing that, but was also rehearsing every night, um and then gigging Friday, Saturday, Sunday and sometimes Monday. So I was at this point where I was earning more from music than I was from being an engineer. But I was still of the mind that the engineering side of things would provide me with that stability and actually have more potential in terms of earnings and things. And I wanted to maintain music as being the me thing. Put it this way I think, I was probably earning about 25 grand a year in my day job back in 2005, bought a flat and I was earning more from music at that point, and that was when I had to make a bit of a decision. Think in 2010, and I maintained everything all at the same time I was basically rehearsing until three in the morning, going home, getting a couple of hours sleep, getting up and driving to a construction site and doing an engineering, I was project manager then, doing project management on site from like eight in the morning in Preston till 5 o'clock driving back, getting home at six, getting out the door, getting down to the school, teaching in the school, then rehearsing 10 till 12, and then rehearsing 12:30 till 2:30, 3 o'clock in the morning, different bands. So I was doing that constantly. ***Interviewer:*** So when you were younger, in school, did you have other hobbies or were you the music kid?	Excessive musicianship Awareness of the inability to rely financially on music Excessive workload to maintain music as a thread through life	Fixed identity. Fixed identity Social acceptance Lack of stability in music Love of music High achiever

P22: Erm, I played lacrosse, I was on the team for lacrosse. and I was quite subtle with my music at school. The school that I went to I didn't really gel with people because it was it was like a very, it was a private school, it was [redacted] so I didn't really mix very well with the kids there so I had one mate and we just stuck together and kept out of everyone's hair. I was actually in a band with people who were three years older than me who had left the school, so when I was in like, when I was 16, 15, they were all leaving and going to university, so I was in a band with people at university. So I used to go to Leeds at the weekends when I was like 15, 16 to go out and play and end up wherever I ended up. The thing is I was playing working men's clubs from being about 13, 14 in East Manchester, so I kind of grew up playing in bars. And everyone in my year group was into club music were I wasn't, I was into grunge music an things like that, so they were all fixated on going to a club from the age of 15, 16, which didn't appeal to me. And I didn't mix, so I was constantly out and about. So school though is, my interest was guitar outside of school. In school, I was not the most academic, but that might due to my neurodivergence that's undiagnosed. yeah, I was always bottom of the class, but if I wanted to, I could apply myself. So math, I was in the bottom set and I said I wanted to be an engineer and they said you can't if you're in the bottom set. So I made them sit me in the higher set paper to prove a point and beat everybody apart from ten people in the school, which meant, no can do it, I just can't be bothered. With it being a private school they were very traditional in the way they were teaching. I know the school still and I know they have really changed cause my nephew and niece are both there. And my sister tells me about it and it's completely different. Yeah, it seems to be.	Found a space within music and musicians Collaborating with much older people Grew up performing in adolescence. Very similar to P9. Exclusion from others Fixed statement Identity from young Went to private school	Lack of social acceptance Social acceptance High achiever High achiever Fixed identity Lack of social acceptance Fixed identity High achiever

Interviewer: So would you say music chose you or you or you chose music when you think back?		
P22: Music and I existed in the same space, neither of us had a choice, there you go. Being erm, looking back my parents were really good about it, they didn't want to force music on me, but, when they're teaching at home every night till 9 o clock at night and the only room that could exist in was the kitchen cause that was the only room that didn't have music going on, but I could still hear it. It's just there, erm and I used to, and I'd just pick stuff up. So my ear became very good pretty quick, so, and my mom hated me doing it because she was in the lounge, so I used to walk through the lounge quite a bit. But I came downstairs. It wouldn't be uncommon of me to just shout out the wrong note they were playing and say that should be an F#. You'll know that in teaching you start see, after a couple of years you suddenly realise, everyone makes the same mistakes. I'd be able to walk downstairs and without looking I'd be like, your using the wrong fingering. Everybody always puts that run in and uses the wrong fingering. I can't play it, but I've been listening to my mom tell people for the last six years that they're always putting finger four on there and when they should be stretching and putting three on. You know, I picked up stuff like that, it's why with the grade five theory I didn't need to learn it because I just sat around while mum was teaching it and I just absorbed it. and also I taught myself the theory of music through playing the guitar because I could see it. to me it made more sense on the guitar than it did on the piano. because the patterns always the same for your major thirds, your minor thirds, your dominants etc. So learning things like modes, chord structures and understanding the mathematics of it. So music to me was where maths and art kind of came together. That was that was kind of why	Impactful statement of fixed identity without choice. Foreclosure. Importance of being good at music. Absorbing the ways of parents Discusses music like it has its own language.	Fixed identity Lack of exploration High achiever External validation High achiever Typical IF environment High achiever High achiever

I became good at maths as well as music. ***Interviewer:*** So nowadays, what is what would you call yourself? What's your identity structurally would you say? ***P22:*** I'm a musician who moonlights as a commercial director for a global engineering company. ***Interviewer:*** Okay, so musician first? ***P22:*** Always musician first. Musician is me as a person. My career is the thing that I do to pay the bills. Which is why I keep them separate. ***Interviewer:*** Okay, does that does that, do you feel like that limits you in at all, having that kind of real strong identity? ***P22:*** The other way around. It means I can be quite cavalier in my career because I know that any given moment I go out and make enough money to pay bills playing guitar. I can you know, when people say, ah, take a job on and just do it like you've only got a year to live, that's how I've always been, which is always like, I can always make money. I know that. So I've got enough contacts. I've always been, I've been the person that people reached out to for a long time in South Manchester with things like wedding bands and stuff, where they need a cover. Which drives agencies up the wall because I don't work for an agency because I won't sign up to an agency so, and they've contacted me and said, "oh you're doing a lot of work for our agency, you should sign on", and im like "nah I'm not doing it for you doing it for my need to cover so", ***Interviewer:*** So I've got just like two questions based around, like, mental health, if that's alright. So I wondered what effect would you say that your musical career specifically has on your mental health or the positive or negative,	Extreme comment Separation of music and work Later states he would sell house so could earn but not reliable. Refuses to work for agencies – mistrust?	Fixed identity Fixed identity Awareness of lack of pay Fixed Identity High achiever Negative exp with musicians

P22: My musical career IS my mental health. It is the thing that allows me to switch a different part of my brain on. It allows me to take a backseat in things because at work I'm doing, I'm in charge of a lot of things at work. I've got, you know, I'm the commercial director for a hundred million pound a year company. I'm constantly doing contract negotiations. This time last year had 300 staff reporting into me across Europe, and I was running teams in India and things. So, works really intense. It's incredibly, it's the opposite side to it. So when I go into the musical thing, usually I'll just take a step back, let other people do things, but if I need to, if it gets to the point where I'm like, "this is getting ridiculous I'll just sort of step in a sort things out." So music to me is the relaxing bit, it allows me to switch another bit of my brain on it. It disengages my work brain. So it, I can literally, I make I make quite big decisions by playing guitar because it switches all the noise off in my head so I'm just because it goes into the music space and it creates clarity. It's really, it's very useful. Yeah. Some people go to the gym and that's their thing, you know they go out and they say "ahhh I need to hit a punch bag" or whatever, I'm like ok suit yourself. I'll do something a bit more creative	Same statement as PP9 An important statement – how do you switch off work brain if it is your work. Can this be what causes mental health issues?	Love of music High achiever High achiever Love of music Can music be work if it's so therapeutic?? Fixed Identity
Interviewer: So it seems like you've kind of hacked the system, but would you um I guess this is conjecture slightly, but would you say if you didn't have your like day job that you would be okay you know full-time being a musician or could you see them maybe trips there?		
P22: If was to quit my day job I would sell the house that I live in so that I could buy somewhere small without mortgage for a start. Once I've done that, then it goes into the other side of it. Now this is where my wife and I have this slight split on it. She's very, so we do a lot of uh, we do this acoustic duo.	Can not rely on music as work. Lifestyle vs music	

Erm, and she does a lot of the negotiating things. My non-music job is negotiation, and I'm very much on self-worth and what people should be paying. So I like to sit and go, look, at the end of the day, we did a wedding last year and it was, it was at “mates rates” which annoys me, and it was, you know, it was a full day. We have to set off at 11 o'clock in the morning. We're getting back at midnight, 1 o'clock in the morning, we did the entrance music, the ceremony, the drinks reception, and I think we did some, we might have even played during the wedding breakfast or something. We definitely did the first dance. So we did all of that, and I think the fee might have been about 700 pounds.. and it was down kind of Shrewsbury way. So we got back and my wife going, that was great, that was really good. Its 700 pounds. And stood looking at all the equipment in the lounge and my, I said, look, I know that the stage we were stood on cost them 1500 pounds to rent. If someone asked me to, if they wanted to rent all of our gear and they wanted me to drive it down there, stay with it all day and then bring it back and do from 11 o'clock in the morning till whatever time, and do all of that and set it up, but not sing I said, I'd probably charge them more than we charged them. I said, that's what I want to kind of. So if I was, if I went full time musician, I'd be quite blunt about it. I can be quite charming, though, so I get away with it *(laughs)* ***Interviewer:*** What are your thoughts on putting value on art? ***P22:*** Yeah its completely devalued yeah, we used to play, one of the bands that was in, we used to play at [redacted] and we got a residency there and each member of the band was getting 100 pounds in the night and they were saying, oh well, we could we could get more and, well, were worth more because we're all a fantastic bunch of musicians. And I said, yeah, we should	Dislikes when people lowball musicians. High workload High sense of self worth. High sense of self-worth High workload and low pay	Neg exp with musicians/bookers Neg exp with musicians/bookers Neg experience with musicians/bookers Neg experience with musicians/bookers

be earning more than 100 pounds for doing, you know, getting there at, say half eight to do a set at nine, and set at 10, set at 11 and a set at 12. Four sets, 30 minutes and erm, we're a six-piece band, so the bar is paying us 600 quid, I said yeah, they should be paying more. We should be getting paid more. But they said well, "we're, we're gonna go in, were gonna demand we get paid more" and I said, okay, but let me tell you from the other side. You got a bar where we are an overhead. They could get three guys straight out of university who would be quite happy to do it for 100 pounds a head. It's on the doorstep. They can just turn up, they can waltz in, I said we don't bring any equipment. They've got a full backline, the only thing I bring is a guitar and cable. Same with the other guitarist, same with the bassist, the keyboardist, they've got the mic, they've even got a drumkit. So anyone could do it. But the other thing you've got to remember is, its [redacted] the crowd are interested in you playing 'seven nation army' where it lowers the collective IQ of the room by 50 points. Every man in the room is going dun dun dun dun,... and it drives me insane, out of time, it just gives them a quick break from whatever they're doing in the toilets, and everyone is dead happy. But that's a song I used to teach on day one of guitar. Get a group of lads who just wanna make a few quid, you know hundred quid in the pocket, I said, we go ahead and charge 150 a head for a six piece, that's 900 quid for the band whereas they could get a three piece and doing 300 quid and the crowd, don't care about musicianship. They just want to hear the pleasers. So the market is being completely saturated in that sense and things like Gigpig and the other such other things are available. That's caused a bit of an issue. My wife puts something on 'the circle', I think recently, just an open question about it and it prompted a huge response to the point where Gigpig actually contacted her to ask her	Doesn't matter quality of musicians Lessens the importance of quality Undervaluing of quality	Neg experience with other musicians. Neg experiences with musicians/bookers Neg experiences with Musicians/bookers

a few questions. because they don't take a don't take a cut like an agent, so they're not responsible for what the venues are putting on. So, what we're finding is Gigpig will put erm an advert out, we'll go yes yes yes yes yes yes and they just go to the lowest bidder. So you put your fee on, for what you'll do the gig for, and they will take the lowest one. So, its driving the market down. It's saturated with artists and there's no relationship building with the client then. ***Interviewer:*** And there's no relationship between price and quality either? ***P22:*** Exactly, you can't sense check it. And then the quality, for most bars, they don't really mind as long as there's no incidents. So, well that's playing bars, which is totally a different thing. So you know, I do a lot of show playing and things I've MDd' 'Jesus Christ Superstar', I've played in, I did 'School of Rock' last year. Um, where I did, I basically taught all the kids how to be in a band and then I played in the band. I'm doing 'Little Shop of Horrors' this year. I'll be doing a couple that haven't being announced, yet, in the next couple of years. Getting the trombone back out as well, and I've not touched that in about 15 years, so that's coming out, got to get my lip back in. Erm, that's where you see proper musicianship, you know, people need to be able to read music. People who need to actually understand what dynamics are, play as an actual unit, follow a band leader, a conductor, whatever it may be. ***Interviewer:*** Do you think, because obviously it sounds like you're just ready to be on the go at all times, right? But do you think there maybe musicians out there that have given up and moved back to just doing the day job thing because they can't afford it?	Devaluing of the art by agencies = devaluing of his identity Lack of quality Evidence of hierarchy. Reminiscent of parents elitist options	Neg experience with musicians/bookers Fixed identity Fixed identity

P22: So over the years there's like, there's a band that I got into back in 2002, 2003. 2003 where I, so I had taken a few weeks off work between jobs and taught myself to play bass properly. and got myself a bass rig and kind of like, I kind of got to the point with guitar where felt like I was in a bit of a lull, bit of a plateau, feeling like there wasn't anything new in it. So, I decided to lean into the bass and get into that side of things. and someone that I used to know spoke to a mate of mine who's a teacher, a pianist, asking him to join a band and said they needed a bassist, and he named like three bassists and my mate said "well [redacted] isn't around at the moment but if you remember [redacted] he plays bass as well now." And I ended up getting into that band, and at the time I was talking to my mate about it. and he said, I think [redacted] had really stepped away from doing music because it got that point where he just can't really make the money from music that he can from doing the other thing. And I can't think of many musicians that I know who don't have full time jobs in background. Mental health is a big part of it, sometimes it just doesn't pan out. One of the things that I find quite interesting, So many years ago, I was seeing a girl who was a, she was an occupational therapist working in psychological, uh, what they call it psycho forensic science. And so she knew a lot about neurodiversity and other such things. And she started seeing me and after a few weeks, one night she went, you do realize that there's not a single friend of yours who doesn't have some form of neurodivergence. She goes, you're literally the most balanced, but even you are off the scale with certain elements. I just last went, yeah, because everyone's a musician. and I'm sure it all kind of goes hand in hand, but I don't know which one comes first. I'm guessing your neurodivergent and part of that might be an attraction to music. Like I say, you know, you can clear your head. But with that comes a	Again, evidence of elitism in thoughts Over practicing? Difficult finances	Fixed Identity

lot of struggles. Depression is VERY common, and it can be triggered by so many different things. So, I see it a lot in my friendship group, you know, a lot of my mates are all like session musicians and the like in South Manchester and the surrounding areas. And yeah, so I see a lot in them. There's different characters respond differently, but there's definitely a correlation. It's weird, you can literally go through each band I'm in and you can put people into categories that you go, oh that person and oh that person. ***Interviewer:*** So would you say you can find solace in the production of music, but the actual work, life and the lifestyle is not really conducive to a healthy environment if you are neurodivergent? ***P22:*** It's very much that, and I've actually seen a friend, another friend of mind who's a drummer and he's been, he's never really talked about it from a mental health point of view, but I watched through the decades, cause we've played together for a long time. And he worked on a six-monthly cycle, which was really interesting to see because you know we shared a flat together, we lived in each other's pockets for quite a while, I was his best man. And one of the bands were in, you know, six months into the year, it be, we need to be playing everything absolutely as close to the record as poss, he was very much about the sound music production. Didn't want to know about everything else around it. Typical drummer, couldn't drive, you know, was a nightmare to deal with, phenomenal drummer, so the better the drummer, bigger the problem. All of them. *[laughs]* If you find a levelheaded drummer, chances are he can't keep time and he's very limited in what he can do. The best drummers are off the charts problematic. So, I've got this one who can't drive couldn't hold down a job and constantly was like fixated on "it's gotta be exactly as the record" and "we need to change our name. We need a		

really sensible function bad name." Six months later guarantee that without a doubt, "we shouldn't be playing things as the record we should be putting our identity on it and we you know, I really like the band name. We shouldn't change it we should stick with it because it's humorous. And then six months later, So we had to just shrug our way through that every six months and go, yeah, let's think about it in three or four months. But yeah, he used to, he's gone, he came out of that and eventually went, "I don't wanna play live anymore." And his big thing became, because he suddenly realized his big thing was how it was the production. To be perfect, it made sense to him to do it more in the recording sense. So, he build his little shed in his garden which is soundproof, and he lives in the shed, and he just writes music that most people never hear, but it sounds phenomenal. And that's his solace, you know? ***Interviewer:*** I think we maybe just as we get older, we start to just figure it out, like by a bit how it works for us. ***P22:*** Yeah you know what makes you happy, because when your part of the ride in that journey early on and it's the fun side of it, you feel part of it cause you found people who are likeminded. And you kind of get into the circuit and you're surrounded by people who've got the same hang-ups, the same, the same amusement, the same passion, its, but different flavours of it, And that's what you haven't worked out early on, you're more excited about. It's like a relationship in the early days you find all the excitement and then, if you got the wrong one, later on you find that the flavours aren't quite the same within it. And that's when it, things don't necessarily match. Erm and yeah, that, that experience of life starts to give you that visibility of things where you see it before it's too late. So that's where you start to really kind of learn things, to learn more about yourself that allows	Finds comfort in the act of music production for perfection Identity foreclosure? When you are younger you cant see the signs?	Social acceptance

you to put yourself in a better position for it. ***Interviewer:*** So, when we talk about reflection do you ever wonder, if you weren't raised in a musical household and if you didn't have that synergy with music as a youngster, do you ever wonder what you would have done? I guess you kind of have a kind of a normal job, right? ***P22:*** Yeah, a normal job that I don't get much enjoyment out of. The only reason I work, I said this to my, my current boss, when we first sat down, he didn't know me, he's now one of my best mates, but when we first sat down, I said, "look you are gonna really struggle with me" I said, "but you're gonna love it" I said. **Unfortunately, you've employed a musician to do this,** I said, **so the things that motivate me are not same things that motivate everybody else.** Things that motivate me in my non-music career are, is there something in this job that's gonna, that I can find amusement in, something that's gonna amuse me. And erm, I said and while I'm doing that, **you're gonna have to battle with this like galactical scale of ego that's balanced out by this colossal sense of self-doubt.** That's the problem that I have is that, put me in front of a microphone, let me show off and I'm over the moon, happy as ever. At the same time, full of self-doubt. And people don't realize it straight off. I was talking to, you know, my best mate is an incredible vocalist. He doesn't think he is. He says his skill is not being a singer, he says, I'm an okay singer, he says, I'm a brilliant front man. I go yeah, okay, I agree with, I agree with that to an extent, you are a brilliant front man, but you are a great vocalist. You sing Robert Plant. You sing, we do Led Zeppelin. We do two led Zeppelin songs in our set and they are the strongest ones we do because his vocal is flawless on them. Even when his voice is gone, he can still do the	Different motivators	Fixed Identity External Validation

Robert Plant 'whole lot of love' and 'rock and roll', he just nails it. So, and I've seen him, he took the lead on Jesus Christ Superstar, and you know, Gethsemane, which has got the note and things like that, and he was brilliant. He's just superb. So yeah, so I was talking to him about it and Helena was here and we were talking about something. And she was like, well the pair of you are the same, you know, you'd be fine just stick you in front of people and's he's like, yeah, but I'm actually, I'm actually quite shy. I'm an introverted extrovert or an extroverted introvert. He said that I'm happy, I'm comfortable in my space being on stage with a microphone singing. He says he's even happier on stage doing that if he's got me stood next to him. ***Interviewer:*** So, lastly, what advice would you give to a young musician or someone who was interested and wanted to do it as a career as a youngster? ***P22:*** Erm, I've done it quite a lot, to be fair. Erm, Everything that I wasn't given to begin with. So first band I was ever in, three piece band we had a lad on drums, dunno what happened to him, erm me on guitar and another lad who played the keys but occasionally played Saxophone. Very strange combination for a band. And me and the guy who's playing sax/keys, we're in the same class at school. And we went through, we were grade for grade on our instruments me on trombone, him on saxophone. And then we got to the end of fifth form, and the end of fifth form I stayed on the sixth form, and my dad's telling me because I originally wanted to be a sound engineer, and my dads going 'you've gotta have grade 8 piano to be sound engineer. My dad and the piano thing, 'you've gotta have grade 8 piano to be a sound engineer'. And I went, I'm never gonna get that, and I thought, and I was teaching guitar at the time, and I was teaching this lad and his dad was in a big house and I	Instilling strong opinions as a parent	External validation

said what does your dad do and he said he's a civil engineer, hence I became a civil engineer. But I was discouraged from doing the thing that I actually love because I was told mistruths. Erm because my dad wanted, you know, he was very elitist in that sense. The guy who played saxophone his parents just said, yeah, what do you want to do? So, we got to end of fifth form and he went to Chets in Manchester to do sixth form. I stayed on and did my stuff and then afterwards I went to university to do civil engineering. He went to the INCM I think, did sax from there and then he up sticks and moved down to London and moved into a single bed flat, or a two-bed flat with another guy that we knew who played drums. This guy plays with a BBC swing orchestra and plays for Shirley Bassey and does like stuff in that circuit. Got a big swing band I think. So my mate paying saxophone, that's what he did, and I went down the route of I'll just go and play whatever and just stay happy doing that. Erm, and we stayed in touch and I remember that the point of realization was, early days of Facebook I think it was, and it was new year and people putting new years photos on. And I'd spent my new year in Sheffield with some my old uni mates and I looked at his, and his picture was him on the front of Simon LeBon's yacht because he was now playing saxophone for Duran Duran. And he has become the go to sax player for the 80 stuff. So he plays for Duran Duran still and he plays for Tony Hadley. And right there is that, how, where, where's the point where that decision's made? And it's actually it's right at the start of it. Where I listened to my dad who was saying oh no you need this and you need that, he wasn't given those boundaries. So he just went and did the thing that he was doing. So the first thing is, if you wanna do it, just do it, it's on you, it's not on other people you just gotta go and do it. You've gotta put the work in, but to actually then branch out from it, it's just never saying no to an	Dad discouraged him with his opinions	

opportunity and do as many different things as you possibly can. I'm a big believer that getting and doing things like theatre, as well as doing the thing that you do, because a lot of people get driven into their style of music, so bass players go, I love Jack Hope, I love Stewart Zender and so I'm gonna, and they hone it in. And they can play in those styles phenomenally, but they can't play anything outside of it. You get drummers who can play, they can play rock, but you ask them to play a shuffle, you play dynamics and it's all lost. And they can be the best they can, you know, best in that area. Anyway, so that's where you start looking at the likes of people like Slash. Slash, great rock guitarist can play blues, but if you ask him to play jazz, he'd be lost, if you ask him to play other things, he'd be lost. So variety, while you're in that early learning stage, don't say no to anything. If someone says do you wanna come and play acoustic guitar two in a show, say yes. And if you can't, if you can't read, learn to read before you get to the rehearsal because its actually not that difficult. ***Interviewer:*** That's perfect. Thank you for your time, I really appreciate it. ***P22:*** Not a problem, Thank you		

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Appendix M

P19: Interview via zoom on 3rd May 2025 @ 14:21 (11.21 minutes)

Interviewer: My first question is, can you tell me a little bit about how, and when, you started learning music, how old you were, what inspired you, who inspired you?

P19: So probably started properly when I was like 11. So, my sister went to singing lessons and I basically gate-crashed her lessons and started going with her. Erm, so then we did like musical theatre style there, and then I was very heavily influenced by my auntie, I wanted to do what she was doing. She was performing on the West End and stuff so I was like, that's what I want to do. Erm, and then I joined a musical theatre, like amateur group, where I went on a Saturday and then that's where it like fully started then, because we did like shows and it was a lot more intense. So that's where it sort of began really.

Interviewer: So, when you said "that's where it fully started" what was it that made you think, "oh, I love this, I want to do this." Was there anything in particular, or just in general, the routine?

P19: I think it was like *[pause]* I don't, cause it was really professional so there was a lot of people that I really looked up to, you know. Like, I'd gone from just doing it kind of, for fun, and then, even though it was like, amateur, it felt really professional. But I think I just really enjoyed it. I think it was like the people that were in it, and the people I was being taught by. Erm, and we got a lot of connections and really good opportunities from it. So then because I progressed, I think it made me love it more.

Interviewer: So did it take up a lot of your time?

P19: Erm yeah it did to be fair, it took up quite a lot of my time. As standard I went every Saturday but then, when we had a show on, we'd have rehearsals like all day Sunday, and Tuesday and then, like, I'd be there all-day Saturday and it'd be like that every week. Alongside like other stuff I was doing, so I was still having my singing lessons and then, erm, I think I was doing dance lessons maybe at the time as well. So yeah, it did take up quite a lot of time.

Interviewer: Did you have any other hobbies outside of music performance and dance? Did you do anything else or explore any other hobbies when you were younger?

P19: Not really, no. I did a few like sports with school but I wasn't really that good. So yeah, I didn't really do anything.

Interviewer: Would you say that music was something that you chose, or do you feel like it chose you, like were you drawn to it or did you have a choice?

P19: Yeah, I definitely had a choice. I mean, I think because it's in my family, it was kind of always there. I was very much like the quiet child so like my sister was more in the spotlight than me. Erm, but I think, and then she decided she didn't want to do it but I think because I wasn't in the spotlight it kind of helped me just do it, in a way that I wanted to, if you know what I mean. Like, I did it cause I wanted to.

Interviewer: So there wasn't any pressure?

P19: Yeah, there was no pressure really, because I wanted to be like her, but she was like the main one if you know what I mean. So then I just kind of like, followed her, if you will. So then it kind of came naturally.

Interviewer: So when you think about your identity now, how would you describe yourself to somebody who doesn't know you.

P19: I mean music is definitely like my main part of my identity, so it would be, because it's the only thing I do really, I'm a musician. Yeah, like I'm a singer and I do it professionally for my job. And every week I do all different things to keep it fresh. But yeah, it's definitely like, it is me. That's what I am.

Interviewer: Do you ever feel limited by that, you identity as a musician, does it ever feel limiting at all?

P19: It definitely did at school, like I felt like that was my only identity, really that sort of kind of what made me from like a nobody, d'ya know, like a bit invisible, to like kind of, kind of known, was because of that. So if I didn't do music, then I don't think I'd, I'd be that person that people don't remember, d'ya know what I mean? Like I would have just floated through school. Like, it's been like that through all the years, and that's kind of all I've been known as so it is kind of like, I'd have no choice now as to whether it is or not because it just is now.

Interviewer: That leads me on to the next question which is about mental health. So, obviously just share whatever you feel comfortable sharing, but with that kind of feeling of being a musician and feeling that that's what you are. Does do you feel like that has any effect over your mental health at all?

P19: There's definitely elements of it. I think, because I've always, I've always suffered from mental health without knowing I did, like for years. So I've definitely always suffered from anxiety. Erm, I didn't know what it was at the time but for as long as I can remember I have. Erm but also a main part of my job does bring that out because it's a nerve-wracking industry and I'm constantly in a battle because there's no job security. So like I definitely think that is a main factor, the, well no, I think I'd have it in any job I did because I think it's just installed in me. But it definitely brings it out more in different like scenarios, but I think it also can affect how far I push myself as well.

Interviewer: So have you developed any coping strategies for the emotional highs and lows of the job of being a musician, or do you just deal with things as they come up.

P19: Yeah, I kind of deal with them as they come up, because I very much, I makeup scenarios before they even happen. So, I always make up the worst-case scenario so when it's not that *[laughs].* Erm, but I'd say like, maybe as I'm getting older, it's just naturally helping because there's a lot more that I know now, and I'm a lot stronger. Erm, but I'm very much, I deal with it as it comes, like I don't really, I'll think about the worst-case scenario but I don't actually do anything about it until the time comes and then I deal with it, you know, prevent it. But yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Ok, I've just got two more questions. This is more about reflection and alternatives and things like that, but do you ever wonder what you might have done, or where you might be, if you didn't pursue music when you were younger?

P19: Ah, all the time *[laughs], Yeag*

Interviewer: What does that look like for you?

P19: I don't know, cause it's a weird like, I do always have that battle like, should I do something that's more job security. It means I'm set up for when I'm older. Like I'll have a, you know, a proper pension and like things like that in the long run. Erm *[pause],* Yeah, like I always think, but then I just think, it's not me to do that you know. Like I do love the whole, like, how spontaneous this job is. And cause I'm very much like that and I'm very much, I make a decision as I go, dya know, like. And I like that, with this job, I have that option to say yes and no to things. I don't just have to go and do it every week cause I have to. Well, I do because I need the money, but I like, I have a bit more flexibility with it.

Interviewer: What are your favourite things about your job? What do you really enjoy and appreciate about what you do for work?

P19: I think it's like meeting other people, like amazing musicians. Collabing with loads of people. I do like, sort of, the flexibility. Even though it is kind of a battle, I do battle with that, trying to manage work and just like ,life as a whole. But also there is that element of flexibility that if I did want to go on holiday, I can just book a week off. But then it's that battle, obviously that like, you don't earn money for that week. But you can if you want to. D'ya know like, erm, yeah, I like that. And it's just mainly the people, and like, as much I do love the job, and there'll be certain gigs where I'll get like, a big buzz from it and I'd be like, yeah. It's like when I'm with the right people, then I love that.

Interviewer: So last question, what advice would you give to a teenager or someone young if they said they wanted to be a musician.

P19: I would say, if you want to do it professionally, only do it if you REALLY love it. Cause it can take away that love for it, in a way, when you're doing it for work rather than a hobby. But also I'd say, just grasp every opportunity whether you're nervous to do it or not, do it. Like even if you're having doubts about it, you'll know in your gut if it's right or not but if it's just because you're like, a little bit scared of the opportunity, do it, because you never know what door that could open, Erm and always be nice to everyone on the way up.

Interviewer: I love that. Thank you.

P19: That's all right. Hope that was all right.

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Appendix N

Coding for P19 interview

Interviewer: My first question is, can you tell me a little bit about how, and when, you started learning music, how old you were, what inspired you, who inspired you?		
P19: So probably started properly when I was like 11. So, my sister went to singing lessons and I basically gate-crashed her lessons and started going with her. Erm, so then we did like musical theatre style there, and then I was very heavily influenced by my auntie, I wanted to do what she was doing. She was performing on the West End and stuff so I was like, that's what I want to do. Erm, and then I joined a musical theatre, like amateur group, where I went on a Saturday and then that's where it like fully started then, because we did like shows and it was a lot more intense. So that's where it sort of began really.	Inspired by sister Inspired by auntie Got involved with a community – which will encourage 'belonging'.	Identity foreclosure Identity foreclosure
Interviewer: So, when you said "that's where it fully started" what was it that made you think, "oh, I love this, I want to do this." Was there anything in particular or just in general the routine?		
P19: I think it was like *[pause]* I don't, cause it was really professional so there was a lot of people that I really looked up to, you know. Like, I'd gone from just doing it kind of, for fun, and then, even though it was like, amateur, it felt really professional. But I think I just really enjoyed it. I think it was like the people that were in it, and the people I was being taught by. Erm, and we got a lot of connections and really good opportunities from it. So then because I progressed, I think it made me love it more.	Very inspired by people around, want to be part of it + environment + experience with performers. Positive feedback from others	Social credibility Love of music + feedback loop External validation Social credibility
Interviewer: So did it take up a lot of your time?	High commitment	

P19: Erm yeah it did to be fair, it took up quite a lot of my time. As standard I went every Saturday but then, when we had a show on, we'd have rehearsals like all day Sunday, and Tuesday and then, like, I'd be there all-day Saturday and it'd be like that every week. Alongside like other stuff I was doing, so I was still having my singing lessons and then, erm, I think I was doing dance lessons maybe at the time as well. So yeah, it did take up quite a lot of time.		High commitment High commitment Low exploration
Interviewer: Did you have any other hobbies outside of music performance and dance? Did you do anything else or explore any other hobbies when you were younger?		
P19: Not really, no. I did a few like sports with school but I wasn't really that good. So yeah, I didn't really do anything.	Reinforcing the idea that being good at it was important	Low exploration
Interviewer: Would you say that music was something that you chose, or do you feel like it chose you, like were you drawn to it or did you have a choice?		
P19: Yeah, I definitely had a choice. I mean, I think because it's in my family, it was kind of always there. I was very much like the quiet child so like my sister was more in the spotlight than me. Erm, but I think, and then she decided she didn't want to do it but I think because I wasn't in the spotlight it kind of helped me just do it, in a way that I wanted to, if you know what I mean. Like, I did it cause I wanted to.	Looks up to sister, inspired Less pressure on her when her sister quit.	Typical IF environment High commitment
Interviewer: So there wasn't any pressure?		
P19: Yeah, there was no pressure really, because I wanted to be like her, but she was like the main one if you know what I mean. So then I just kind of like, followed her, if you will. So then it kind of came naturally.	Inspired	External validation
Interviewer: So when you think about your identity now, how would you describe yourself to somebody who doesn't know you.		

P19: I mean music is definitely like my main part of my identity, so it would be, because it's the only thing I do really, I'm a musician. Yeah, like I'm a singer and I do it professionally for my job. And every week I do all different things to keep it fresh. But yeah, it's definitely like, it is me. That's what I am.	Core identity	Music as a core identity No other options Core identity
Interviewer: Do you ever feel limited by that, you identity as a musician, does it ever feel limiting at all?		
P19: It definitely did at school, like I felt like that was my only identity, really that sort of kind of what made me from like a nobody, d'ya know, like a bit invisible, to like kind of, kind of known, was because of that. So if I didn't do music, then I don't think I'd, I'd be that person that people don't remember, d'ya know what I mean? Like I would have just floated through school. Like, it's been like that through all the years, and t'at's kind of all I've been known as so it is kind of like, I'd have no choice now as to whether it is or not because it just is now.	Identity foreclosure statement	Core identity Social credibility Social credibility Core identity
Interviewer: That leads me on to the next question which is about mental health. So, obviously just share whatever you feel comfortable sharing, but with that kind of feeling of being a musician and feeling that that's what you are. Does do you feel like that has any effect over your mental health at all?		
P19: There's definitely elements of it. I think, because I've always, I've always suffered from mental health without knowing I did, like for years. So I've definitely always suffered from anxiety. Erm, I didn't know what it was at the time but for as long as I can remember I have. Erm but also a main part of my job does bring that out because it's a nerve-wracking industry and I'm constantly in a battle because there's no job security. So like I definitely think that is a main factor, the, well no, I think I'd have it in any job I did because I think it's just installed in me. But it definitely brings it out more in	Mental health issues Very common Mental health due to job No way to test this as they have always done music.	Lack of security

different like scenarios, but I think it also can affect how far I push myself as well. ***Interviewer:*** So have you developed any coping strategies for the emotional highs and lows of the job of being a musician, or do you just deal with things as they come up. ***P19:*** Yeah, I kind of deal with them as they come up, because I very much, I makeup scenarios before they even happen. So, I always make up the worst-case scenario so when it's not that *[laughs].* Erm, but I'd say like, maybe as I'm getting older, it's just naturally helping because there's a lot more that I know now, and I'm a lot stronger. Erm, but I'm very much, I deal with it as it comes, like I don't really, I'll think about the worst-case scenario but I don't actually do anything about it until the time comes and then I deal with it, you know, prevent it. But yeah, yeah.	Ok not being in control	
Interviewer: Ok, I've just got two more questions. This is more about reflection and alternatives and things like that, but do you ever wonder what you might have done, or where you might be, if you didn't pursue music when you were younger? ***P19:*** Ah, all the time *[laughs], Yeah*		
Interviewer: What does that look like for you?	Thinks about other options	
P19: I don't know, cause it's a weird like, I do always have that battle like, should I do something that's more job security. It means I'm set up for when I'm older. Like I'll have a, you know, a proper pension and like things like that in the long run.		Lack of job security Lack of job security
Erm *[pause],* Yeah, like I always think, but then I just think, it's not me to do that you know. Like I do love the whole, like, how spontaneous this job is. And cause I'm very much like that and I'm very much, I make a decision as I go, dya know, like. And I like that, with this job, I have that option to say yes and no to things. I don't just have to go and do it every week cause I have to. Well, I do because I need the	Feels unstable	Core identity

money, but I like, I have a bit more flexibility with it. ***Interviewer:*** What are your favourite things about your job? What do you really enjoy and appreciate about what you do for work? ***P19:*** I think it's like meeting other people, like amazing musicians. Collabing with loads of people. I do like, sort of, the flexibility. Even though it is kind of a battle, I do battle with that, trying to manage work and just like ,life as a whole. But also there is that element of flexibility that if I did want to go on holiday, I can just book a week off. But then it's that battle, obviously that like, you don't earn money for that week. But you can if you want to. D'ya know like, erm, yeah, I like that. And it's just mainly the people, and like, as much I do love the job, and there'll be certain gigs where I'll get like, a big buzz from it and I'd be like, yeah. It's like when I'm with the right people, then I love that. ***Interviewer:*** So last question, what advice would you give to a teenager or someone young if they said they wanted to be a musician. ***P19:*** I would say, if you want to do it professionally, only do it if you REALLY love it. Cause it can take away that love for it, in a way, when you're doing it for work rather than a hobby. But also I'd say, just grasp every opportunity whether you're nervous to do it or not, do it. Like even if you're having doubts about it, you'll know in your gut if it's right or not but if it's just because you're like, a little bit scared of the opportunity, do it, because you never know what door that could open, Erm and always be nice to everyone on the way up. ***Interviewer:*** I love that. Thank you. ***P19:*** That's all right. Hope that was all right.	Internal battle, control Vs no control Control but no control Community It is important to be popular in the industry	Social credibility Social credibility Social credibility

Appendix O

Table of themes from semi-structured interviews

ID	Quotes	Theme
P9	• I thought being in bands would get me girls and things like that, that was part of it as well. • I thought, again, more social credibility playing in bands and stuff like that, which is all bollocks really. When you're a teenager, that's sort of how you see things. • you go into school and look around and you see there's no one else playing instruments. It seems unattainable and unrealistic, so then you start looking. • I'll do 50 weddings a year, but I'm not in a wedding band, just depping for lots of people, which I suppose is a like, a sort of gratifying thing that I can just do that with um dep-bands. • Whenever I get an offer for an original session gig I do want to tell everyone *[laughs]* cause I'm so excited. • I got to the point where I knew their set better than they did, and the front of house engineer was telling me that and I felt really good, really accepted. I had the singer who thought of himself as a bit of a Noel Gallagher, and he's like, "you're in now mate". • And then, yeah, you've got, you've got the crippling doubt as to like, well, I've lost all this really good work, is it because I'm shit?... So it was either I'm a shit bass player, or I'm a shit human being. • I don't know which one was more detrimental to me as a like, uh my mental health thinking that no one actually likes me and wants to be around me or the thing I spent half my life working towards, I'm still not good enough. • So it gets to a point with the band where I'm so fed up I wanna quit but my personal pride doesn't wanna lose the work or doesn't wanna be seen as unaccepted. • More often than not it's the acceptance that affects my mental health really. • I had this massive amount of pressure to be the same person as he was in order to get through the same circles and hopefully follow the same trajectory. • the more sociable all you are the more you develop relationships and then the more those relationships will turn into potential work opportunities.	Social acceptance /External validation
P19	• So then, because I progressed, I think it made me love it more. • *(Music)* kind of what made me from like a nobody, d'ya know, like a bit invisible, to like kind of, kind of known... if I didn't do music, then I don't	Social acceptance /External validation

	think I'd, I'd be that person that people don't remember, d'ya know what I mean? • I think it's like meeting other people, like amazing musicians. Collab-ing with loads of people... It's like when I'm with the right people, then I love that. • always be nice to everyone on the way up.	
P22	• Did my grade 8 on trombone when I was about 15. • I was a terrible student, drank the way through university. I got free drinks by playing guitar in bars. • I was the main cover because I can play a lot of different instruments. So I would go in and cover for whatever they needed. • I was actually in a band with people who were three years older than me who had left the school, so when I was in like, when I was 16, 15, they were all leaving and going to university, so I was in a band with people at university. • It wouldn't be uncommon of me to just shout out the wrong note they were playing and say that should be an F#. • When you're part of the ride in that journey early on and it's the fun side of it, you feel part of it cause you found people who are likeminded. • Put me in front of a microphone, let me show off and I'm over the moon, happy as ever. • I'm comfortable in my space being on stage with a microphone singing.	Social acceptance /external validation
P9	• And even as musicians now, we still fantasise and dream about big gigs, don't we? • I'm definitely a musician • Sometimes I identify as a very confident, competent musician, other times I think I am that meme of that kid who just practices at home all the time and then goes out and does weddings and is always saying 'big things coming' on Instagram. But um I suppose the reality is a, a sort of, a mixture of both potentially. • I honestly don't know where I would be if I hadn't gone for music.	Fixed identity
P19	• I think because it's in my family, it was kind of always there. • I mean music is definitely like my main part of my identity, • like I'm a singer... it's definitely like, it is me. That's what I am. • I felt like that was my only identity, really that sort of kind of what made me from like, a nobody • that's kind of all I've been known as so it is kind of like, I'd have no choice now as to whether it is or not because it just is now. •	Fixed identity

P22	• Music and I existed in the same space, neither of us had a choice, • I'm a musician who moonlights as a commercial director for a global engineering company. • Always musician first. Musician is me as a person. • Unfortunately, you've employed a musician to do this, I said, so the things that motivate me are not same things that motivate everybody else.	Fixed identity
P9	• well I just remember being young, like 8 years old and watching the blues brothers and thinking that looks pretty cool. I wanna do that. • I spent every lunch time in the practice rooms, whether I was with someone or not, I was either noodling or practicing or something. • they'd give me 3.50 a day for lunch money and I would just save that up and then by the end of like, term, I'd have like 150 to 200 quid to just put towards gear and stuff like that. • Oh yeah I certainly did have a choice, and I definitely chose music,	Early, unquestioned commitment
P19	• then I was very heavily influenced by my auntie, I wanted to do what she was doing. She was performing on the West End and stuff so I was like, that's what I want to do	Early, unquestioned commitment
P22	•	Early, unquestioned commitment
P9	• I was supposed to be doing the tour of Europe... and they took me off that with a couple of weeks notice ...that really affected my mental health because without knowing what I did wrong, um, I just, the spiral just goes, "well, you just shit aren't you. You're just pretty shit". • So it was either I'm a shit bass player, or I'm a shit human being. • so I don't know which one was more detrimental to me as a like, uh my mental health thinking that no one actually likes me and wants to be around me or the thing I spent half my life working towards, I'm still not good enough. • I do find it very hard to judge um, like, uh, yeah, when it is genuine "thanks very much. Appreciate you, but we're gonna part ways" and or whether it's behind closed doors, "fuck me, so glad we got rid of him" you know. • I have been diagnosed with borderline personality disorder... and I don't know if it's music or growing up that got me that gave me that diagnosis or not. • more often than not it's the acceptance that affects my mental health really. It's whether I'm good enough as a person or good enough as a player to be working with people. And because this has been most of my life dreaming to be a musician, um, it's more important to me. • Because then if you get to that point where you make yourself ill, because you're practicing so hard, and you're not getting the opportunities you want, you sort of end up looking at the sky going "oi, I sacrificed a load of shit, where's my payoff" and that can start pushing you down as well.	Struggles with self worth
P19	• it's the only thing I do really,. • I didn't do music, then I don't think I'd, I'd be that person that people don't remember, d'ya know what I mean? • I do always have that battle like, should I do something that's more job security... but then I just think, it's not me to do that you know.	
P22	• you're gonna have to battle with this like galactical scale of ego that's balanced out by this colossal sense of self-doubt. • put me in front of a microphone, let me show off and I'm over the moon, happy as ever. At the same time, full of self-doubt.	

P9	• there weren't many jobs that I really wanted to do • But I stuck with music, um basically because I didn't know what else to do. • because I realised I'm so horrifically qualified to do anything else. • I don't know what I would have done. (if I hadn't pursued music) • I honestly don't know where I would be if I hadn't gone for music. I don't know what my career would have been	No Plan B
P19	• I did a few like sports with school but I wasn't really that good. So yeah, I didn't really do anything. • it's the only thing I do really, I'm a musician. • So if I didn't do music, then I don't think I'd, I'd be that person that people don't remember, • I'd have no choice now as to whether it is or not because it just is now.	
P22		

Appendix P

Ethics form

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APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

RESEARCH STUDENTS
This form is to be completed by the student within **SIX** months for full-time students and **TWELVE** months for part time students, after the commencement of the research degree or following progression to Part Two of your course.

Once complete, submit this form via the ***MyTSD Doctoral College Portal*** at (https://mytsd.uwtsd.ac.uk).

This document is also available in Welsh.

RESEARCH STAFF ONLY
All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing and emailed to pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk , with the title 'Ethical Approval' followed by your name.

STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES should submit this form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.

In order for research to result in benefit and minimise risk of harm, it must be conducted ethically. A researcher may not be covered by the University's insurance if ethical approval has not been obtained prior to commencement.

The University follows the OECD Frascati manual definition of **research activity**: "creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications". As such this covers activities undertaken by members of staff, postgraduate research students, and both taught postgraduate and undergraduate students working on dissertations/projects.

The individual undertaking the research activity is known as the "principal researcher".

Ethical approval is not required for routine audits, performance reviews, quality assurance studies, testing within normal educational requirements, and literary or artistic criticism.

Please read the notes for guidance before completing ALL sections of the form.

This form must be completed and approved prior to undertaking any research activity. Please see Checklist for details of process for different categories of application.

SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

1	Full Name:		Claire Cannon			
2	Tick all boxes that apply:		Member of staff:	☐	Honorary research fellow:	☐
	Undergraduate Student	☐	Taught Postgraduate Student	☒	Postgraduate Research Student	☐

3	Institute/Academic Discipline/Centre:	WAPPAR
4	Campus:	Carmarthen
5	E-mail address:	2217694@student.uwtsd.ac.uk
6	Contact Telephone Number:	07530 277 650
	For students:	

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7	Student Number:	2217694
8	Programme of Study:	MA Professional Practice (Voice Pedagogy)
9	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Louise Emanuel/Julie Crossman/Debbie Winter

SECTION B: Approval for Research Activity

1	Has the research activity received approval in principle? (please check the Guidance Notes as to the appropriate approval process for different levels of research by different categories of individual)		**YES**	☒	**NO** ☐
					Date
2	If Yes, please indicate source of approval (and date where known): ***Approval in principle must be obtained from the relevant source prior to seeking ethical approval***	Research Degrees Committee	☐		
		Institute Research Committee	☐		
		Other (write in) WAPPAR Ethics Board Representative	☒		

SECTION C: Internal and External Ethical Guidance Materials

	Please list the core ethical guidance documents that have been referred to during the completion of this form (including any discipline-specific codes of research ethics, location-specific codes of research ethics, and also any specific ethical guidance relating to the proposed methodology). Please tick to confirm that your research proposal adheres to these codes and guidelines. You may add rows to this table if needed.	
1	**UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice**	☒
2	**UWTSD Research Data Management Policy**	☒
3	*[List any other relevant documents here]*	☐

SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity
If there are external collaborators then you should gain consent from the contact persons to share their personal data with the university. If there are no external collaborators then leave this section blank and continue to section E.

1	Institution					
2	Contact person name					
3	Contact person e-mail address					
4	Is your research externally funded?		**YES**	☐	**NO**	☒
5	Are you in receipt of a KESS scholarship?		**YES**	☐	**NO**	☒
6	Are you specifically employed to undertake this research in either a paid or voluntary capacity?	Voluntary	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☒
7		Employed	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☒

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8	Is the research being undertaken within an existing UWTSD Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership (APLP)?	If YES then the permission question below does not need to be answered.	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☒
9	Has permission to undertake the research has been provided by the partner organisation?	(If YES attach copy) If NO the application cannot continue	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☒

Where research activity is carried out in collaboration with an external organisation

10	Does this organisation have its own ethics approval system?	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐
	If Yes, please attach a copy of any final approval (or interim approval) from the organisation (this may be a copy of an email if appropriate).				

SECTION E: Details of Research Activity

1	Indicative title:	Get a real job. An investigation into the musician's experience of burnout; what is responsible for the musicians mental health crisis.		
2	Proposed start date:	06/01/25	Proposed end date:	22/08/25
	Introduction to the Research (maximum 300 words per section) **Ensure that you write for a <u>Non-Specialist Audience</u> when outlining your response to the points below:** *Purpose of Research Activity* *Proposed Research Question* *Aims of Research Activity* *Objectives of Research Activity* Demonstrate, briefly, how **<u>Existing Research</u>** has informed the proposed activity and explain *What the research activity will add to the body of knowledge* *How it addresses an area of importance.*			
3	**Purpose of Research Activity** Research on musicians' mental health continuously shows over 70% of working musicians report struggles with anxiety, these numbers continue to rise following the 2020 pandemic. This research aims to investigate whether many of the struggles with mental health may be due to burnout syndrome. Burnout is not yet classified as a medical condition but is considered a syndrome consisting of three elements: emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced accomplishment. Historical research into burnout shows that it can be career ending for those who experience the syndrome. My previous research into this phenomenon has shown links between burnout and passion, shame, identity, perfectionism and lack of social support. This project will investigate the complete experience of the working musician to see where common struggles may be attributed to burnout syndrome in a population which is currently underrepresented in the burnout space. (this box should expand as you type)			
4	**Research Question** The main research question will develop as the project progresses and the literature review is completed. How does social support affect burnout vulnerability? What is the interrelationship between research on music performance anxiety and burnout? (this box should expand as you type)			

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5	**Aims of Research Activity** For this project I will use qualitative enquiry to investigate the occupational experience of working musicians to explore ways in which the expectations placed on musicians may contribute to burnout syndrome. I will use open ended questions in online surveys and interviews to gather participants experiences of building and sustaining a career in the music industry. Through thematic analysis I will investigate common themes to discover and highlight ways in which the industry may be contributing to the mental health crisis through its occupational structure. (this box should expand as you type)
6	**Objectives of Research Activity** To further understand the occupational experience of musicians with a view to destigmatising burnout syndrome and remove, or contextualise, the individual burden of anxiety and stress. The overall objective is to highlight possible organisational issues in the music industry which are currently viewed as personal issues for musicians. (this box should expand as you type)
	Proposed methods (maximum 600 words) Provide a brief summary of all the methods that **may** be used in the research activity, making it clear what specific techniques may be used. If methods other than those listed in this section are deemed appropriate later, additional ethical approval for those methods will be needed. You do not need to justify the methods here, but should instead describe how you intend to collect the data necessary for you to complete your project.
7	This project will include an in-depth literature review to establish the basis of burnout research and the intersection between burnout vulnerabilities and musicians work life. Additional qualitative data will be collected via an online survey and audio recordings of online/face to face interviews. Online focus groups may be utilised where audio recording will also be employed. (this box should expand as you type)
	Location of research activity Identify all locations where research activity will take place.
8	Surveys will be shared online in musicians networking spaces and contact with participants will be mostly online however, there may be some interviews which take place face to face in Warrington, UK. (this box should expand as you type)
	Research activity outside of the UK If research activity will take place overseas, you are responsible for ensuring that local ethical considerations are complied with and that the relevant permissions are sought. Specify any local guidelines (e.g. from local professional associations/learned societies/universities) that exist and whether these involve any ethical stipulations beyond those usual in the UK (provide details of any licenses or permissions required). Also specify whether there are any specific ethical issues raised by the local context in which the research activity is taking place, for example, particular cultural and/or legal sensitivities or vulnerabilities of participants. If you live in the country where you will do the research then please state this.
9	*(this box should expand as you type)*

10	Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents **NOT** publicly available?	**NO**	☒
		YES	☐

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11	If Yes, please provide details here of how you will gain access to specific documentation that is not in the public domain and that this is in accordance with the current data protection law of the country in question and that of England and Wales. *(this box should expand as you type)*

	Does your research relate to one or more of the seven aims of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015?	**YES**	**NO**
12	A prosperous Wales	☐	☒
13	A resilient Wales	☐	☒
14	A healthier Wales	☐	☒
15	A more equal Wales	☐	☒
16	A Wales of cohesive communities	☐	☒
17	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	☐	☒
18	A globally responsible Wales	☐	☒
19	If YES to any of the above, please give details:		
	(this box should expand as you type)		

SECTION F: Scope of Research Activity

	Will the research activity include:	**YES**	**NO**
1	Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?	☒	☐
2	Use of interviews?	☒	☐
3	Use of focus groups?	☒	☐
4	Use of participant diaries?	☒	☐
5	Use of video or audio recording?	☒	☐
6	Use of computer-generated log files?	☒	☐
7	Participant observation with their knowledge?	☒	☐
8	Participant observation without their knowledge?	☐	☒
9	Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	☐	☒
10	Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally or emotionally harmful / offensive?	☐	☒
11	Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	☐	☒
12	Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	☐	☒
13	Use of procedures that involve deception?	☐	☒

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14	Administration of any substance, agent or placebo?	☐	☒
15	Working with live vertebrate animals?	☐	☒
16	Procedures that may have a negative impact on the environment?	☐	☒
17	Other primary data collection methods. Please indicate the type of data collection method(s) below.	☐	☒
	Details of any other primary data collection method: (this box should expand as you type)		

If NO to every question, then the research activity is (ethically) low risk and **may** be exempt from **some** of the following sections (please refer to Guidance Notes).

If YES to any question, then no research activity should be undertaken until full ethical approval has been obtained.

SECTION G: Intended Participants

If there are no participants then do not complete this section, but go directly to section H.

	Who are the intended participants:	**YES**	**NO**
1	Students or staff at the University?	☐	☒
2	Adults (over the age of 18 and competent to give consent)?	☒	☐
3	Vulnerable adults?	☐	☒
4	Children and Young People under the age of 18? (Consent from Parent, Carer or Guardian will be required)	☐	☒
5	Prisoners?	☐	☒
6	Young offenders?	☐	☒
7	Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator or a gatekeeper?	☐	☒
8	People engaged in illegal activities?	☐	☒
9	Others. Please indicate the participants below, and specifically any group who may be unable to give consent.	☐	☒
	Details of any other participant groups: (this box should expand as you type)		

	Participant numbers and source Provide an estimate of the expected number of participants. How will you identify participants and how will they be recruited?	
10	How many participants are expected?	I expect a response rate of 25-30. Survey will be closed if it hits 50 replies in order to allow sufficient time to analyse the results. *(this box should expand as you type)*
11	Who will the participants be?	Participants will be working musicians who earn at least 50% of their income from the music industry. *(this box should expand as you type)*

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12	How will you identify the participants?	Participants will be identified online via social media posts and through networking sites. Participants may also be identified through word of mouth and networking in the researcher's local music scene. *(this box should expand as you type)*

	Information for participants:	**YES**	**NO**	**N/A**
13	Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	☒	☐	☐
14	Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	☒	☐	☐
15	Will you obtain written consent for participation?	☒	☐	☐
16	Will you explain to participants that refusal to participate in the research will not affect their treatment or education (if relevant)?	☒	☐	☐
17	If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	☒	☐	☐
18	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	☒	☐	☐
19	With questionnaires, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?	☒	☐	☐
20	Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs?	☒	☐	☐
21	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation, in a way appropriate to the type of research undertaken?	☒	☐	☐
22	If NO to any of above questions, please give an explanation			
	(this box should expand as you type)			

	Information for participants:	**YES**	**NO**	**N/A**
24	Will participants be paid?	☐	☒	☐
25	Is specialist electrical or other equipment to be used with participants?	☒	☐	☐
26	Are there any financial or other interests to the investigator or University arising from this study?	☐	☒	☐
27	Will the research activity involve deliberately misleading participants in any way, or the partial or full concealment of the specific study aims?	☐	☒	☐
28	If YES to any question, please provide full details			
	(this box should expand as you type)			

SECTION H: Anticipated Risks

	Outline any anticipated risks that may adversely affect any of the participants, the researchers and/or the University, and the steps that will be taken to address them.

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	If you have completed a full risk assessment (for example as required by a laboratory, or external research collaborator) you may append that to this form.		
1	**Full risk assessment completed and appended?**	**Yes**	☐
		No	☒
2	**Risks to participants** For example: sector-specific health & safety, emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data, sensitive organisational information		
	Risk to participants: 1) Research into a participant's history with mental or physical health struggles may cause further trauma. 2) Sensitive information may be declared in surveys or interviews. *(this box should expand as you type)*	*How you will mitigate the risk to participants:* 1) Participants will choose their level of involvement in line with how comfortable they are. Questions will be open and participants can leave questions unanswered. Details of additional support available will be given to all participants. There is no requirement for anyone to participate in the full study and can cease to be involved at any time. 2) Information will be held in a password protected file and any personal or sensitive data will be redacted. *(this box should expand as you type)*	
3	If research activity may include sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use) or issues likely to disclose information requiring further action (e.g. criminal activity), give details of the procedures to deal with these issues, including any support/advice (e.g. helpline numbers) to be offered to participants. Note that where applicable, consent procedures should make it clear that if something potentially or actually illegal is discovered in the course of a project, it may need to be disclosed to the proper authorities		
	A consent form will be included at the beginning of the online survey and participants will need to accept that they have read the form before commencing the survey. Participants will be referred to relevant helplines at the end of the survey regardless of whether there is any sensitive disclosure or not. eg: Silence the shame - Non profit which helps eliminate stigma around mental health for musicians with group conversations and opportunities: Music health alliance - providing access to medical and financial assistance for musicians struggling with mental health: Music minds matter - provides counselling services to working musicians struggling to cope. *(this box should expand as you type)*		
4	**Risks to the investigator** For example: personal health & safety, physical harm, emotional distress, risk of accusation of harm/impropriety, conflict of interest		
	Risk to the investigator: Risks of overstepping professional boundaries when dealing with issues of mental health and psychology. Risk to professional reputation *(this box should expand as you type)*	*How you will mitigate the risk to the investigator:* Remain open with participants about my own qualifications, inform them that my enquiry is explorative, and I cannot offer any advice regarding mental health other than signposting to relevant health care providers. I will operate within ethical boundaries and seek support from supervisors where required. *(this box should expand as you type)*	
5	**University/institutional risks** For example: adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection		
	Risk to the University:	*How you will mitigate the risk to the University:*	

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	Researcher behaviour and treatment of sensitive data may endanger the reputation of UWTSD Risk of potential data breach of participants personal information. *(this box should expand as you type)*	Researcher will adhere to all relevant codes of conduct to ensure ethical procedures are met at all times. Researcher will ensure data storage is secure and robust. *(this box should expand as you type)*
6	**Environmental risks** For example: accidental spillage of pollutants, damage to local ecosystems	
	Risk to the environment: n/a *(this box should expand as you type)*	*How you will mitigate the risk to environment:* n/a *(this box should expand as you type)*

	Disclosure and Barring Service			
	If the research activity involves children or vulnerable adults, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate must be obtained before any contact with such participants.	**YES**	**NO**	**N/A**
7	Does your research require you to hold a current DBS Certificate?	☐	☒	☐
8	If YES, please give the certificate number. If the certificate number is not available please write "Pending"; in this case any ethical approval will be subject to providing the appropriate certificate number.			

SECTION I: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

1	**Feedback** What de-briefing and feedback will be provided to participants, how will this be done and when?
	Participants will receive my email address and feedback will be available to participants upon request. *(this box should expand as you type)*
2	**Informed consent** Describe the arrangements to inform potential participants, before providing consent, of what is involved in participating. Describe the arrangements for participants to provide full consent before data collection begins. If gaining consent in this way is inappropriate, explain how consent will be obtained and recorded in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation.
	A consent form will be issued for participants to provide consent prior to any interviews. A digital consent form will be included as the front page of the online survey. *(this box should expand as you type)*
3	**Confidentiality / Anonymity** Set out how anonymity of participants and confidentiality will be ensured in any outputs. If anonymity is not being offered, explain why this is the case.
	Participants will not be using names in surveys or interviews. Anonymity will be kept on the study by using numbers instead of names. *(this box should expand as you type)*

SECTION J: Data Protection and Storage

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	Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 "GDPR" and the Data Protection Act 2018 "DPA")?	YES	NO
1	***"Personal data"*** *means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'). An identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person. Any video or audio recordings of participants is considered to be personal data.*	☒	☐
	If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
2	Audio recordings will be used in this study to enable coding after the data is captured from the participant. This ensures legitimacy of the coding process as the recordings allow the researcher to double check the coding results. *(this box should expand as you type)*		
	Does it involve special category data (as defined by the GDPR)?	YES	NO
3	***"Special category data"*** *means sensitive personal data consisting of information as to the data subjects' –* *(a) racial or ethnic origin,* *(b) political opinions,* *(c) religious beliefs or other beliefs of a similar nature,* *(d) membership of a trade union (within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992),* *(e) physical or mental health or condition,* *(f) sexual life,* *(g) genetics,* *(h) biometric data (as used for ID purposes),*	☒	☐
	If YES, provide a description of the special category data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
4	Mental health discussion may be included. *(this box should expand as you type)*		

	Will data from the research activity (collected data, drafts of the thesis, or materials for publication) be stored in any of the following ways?	YES	NO
5	Manual files (i.e. in paper form)?	☒	☐
6	University computers?	☐	☒
7	Private company computers?	☐	☒
8	Home or other personal computers?	☐	☒
9	Laptop computers/ CDs/ Portable disk-drives/ memory sticks?	☒	☐
10	"Cloud" storage or websites?	☐	☒
11	Other – specify:	☐	☒
12	For all stored data, explain the measures in place to ensure the security of the data collected, data confidentiality, including details of backup procedures, password protection, encryption, anonymisation and pseudonymisation:		
	Data will be stored in a password protected folder on a password protected computer which is not used by anyone else. Data will not be shared. *(this box should expand as you type)*		

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	Data Protection		
	Will the research activity involve any of the following activities:	**YES**	**NO**
13	Electronic transfer of data in any form?	☒	☐
14	Sharing of data with others at the University outside of the immediate research team?	☐	☒
15	Sharing of data with other organisations?	☐	☒
16	Export of data outside the UK or importing of data from outside the UK?	☐	☒
17	Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails or telephone numbers?	☒	☐
18	Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals?	☐	☒
19	Use of data management system?	☐	☒
20	Data archiving?	☐	☒
21	If YES to any question, please provide full details, explaining how this will be conducted in accordance with the GDPR and Data Protection Act (2018) (and any international equivalents, where appropriate):		
	All data will be encrypted and kept in password protected cloud storage on the Company's Office 365 system which will not be shared. Any USB sticks used to store or transfer data will be password protected. All data transfers will be encrypted, and password protected. All participants will be given a unique identifier to ensure confidentiality and this list will be kept securely in the password protected folder. The data will be stored until the completion of the project and then deleted. In accordance with the DPA2018, participants will have the right to ask to see what data is held relating to them, and this data will be deleted immediately if the participant requests this, in which case the data will not be used in the project. *(this box should expand as you type)*		
22	List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity:		
	The researcher. *(this box should expand as you type)*		
23	List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity:		
	The researcher *(this box should expand as you type)*		
24	Give details of data storage arrangements, including security measures in place to protect the data, where data will be stored, how long for, and in what form. Will data be archived – if so how and if not why not.		
	All data will be encrypted and kept in password protected cloud storage on the Company's Office 365 system which will not be shared. Any USB sticks used to store or transfer data will be password protected and will be reformatted at the end of the project in order to destroy the data. The data will be stored until the completion of the project and then deleted. *(this box should expand as you type)*		
25	Please indicate if your data will be stored in the UWTSD Research Data Repository (see https://researchdata.uwtsd.ac.uk/). If so please explain. (*Most relevant to academic staff)*		
	(this box should expand as you type)		

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26	Confirm that you have read the UWTSD guidance on data management (see https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/)	**YES**	☒
27	Confirm that you are aware that you need to keep all data until after your research has completed or the end of your funding	**YES**	☒

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SECTION K: Declaration

	The information which I have provided is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have attempted to identify any risks and issues related to the research activity and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants. In submitting this application I hereby confirm that I undertake to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice which is published on the website: https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/research/research-ethics/		
1	**Signature of applicant:**		**Date: 11/11/24**

For STUDENT Submissions:

2	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Laura James	**Date: 23.1.2025**
3	Signature:	Laura James	

For STAFF Submissions:

4	Academic Director/ Assistant Dean:		**Date:**
5	Signature:		

Checklist: Please complete the checklist below to ensure that you have completed the form according to the guidelines and attached any required documentation:

☐	I have read the guidance notes supplied before completing the form.
☐	I have completed **ALL RELEVANT** sections of the form in full.
☐	I confirm that the research activity has received approval in principle
☐	I have attached a copy of final/interim approval from external organisation (**where appropriate**)
☐	I have attached a full risk assessment (where appropriate) *ONLY TICK IF YOU HAVE **ATTACHED A FULL RISK ASSESSMENT***
☐	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice.
☐	I understand that before commencing data collection all documents aimed at respondents (including information sheets, consent forms, questionnaires, interview schedules etc.) must be confirmed by the DoS/Supervisor, module tutor or Academic Director.

RESEARCH STUDENTS ONLY Once complete, submit this form via the **MyTSD Doctoral College Portal** at (https://mytsd.uwtsd.ac.uk).
RESEARCH STAFF ONLY All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing and emailed to pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk , with the title 'Ethical Approval' followed by your name.

April 2022`13PG2 Ethical Approval Form

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STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES should submit this form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.