Masculinities and Music
Masculinities and Music: Engaging Men and Boys in Making Music

By

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For Jean and Duncan
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PRELUDE

Personal perspectives

When I was six, I fractured my skull. Some of my friends say this experience had a lasting effect on my musical and intellectual capacity. They are right. While I was convalescing for six weeks in hospital, I had to lie very still on my back. This was problematic for an active six year old and I began to fill my days by singing. I would wake at sunrise and begin to sing. I don’t recall much of the repertoire but I am guessing that it was influenced by two pillars of my life at the time:

We were living in Bundaberg, a small coastal town in Queensland, Australia. The main industry was sugar and the flat town was a patchwork of cane in various stages of growth. My dad was a Presbyterian minister who, after preaching the sermon, would sometimes join the choir for the anthem. While we led an itinerant life in some respects (I lived in ten different houses before I was 20), one of the constants in our life was attendance at church. The church was right next door to the house in Bundaberg, so the music of the pipe organ would float across the rose gardens into our home, even if we weren’t inside attending the service. I knew all the hymns and sang them with considerable gusto.

The other influence was Mr Hesse, the school music teacher. With the benefit of hindsight, Mr Hesse was, more strictly speaking, a song teacher. We sang with him in class and I was also in the choir. One of the songs we sang was *A Tragic Story*, by William Makepeace Thackeray. The amusing story of a sage, whose pigtail remained behind her (regardless of her efforts to bring it to the fore), must have appealed to me, for I sang this song often on those mornings in bed. The other tune I can recall was *Morning Has Broken* which was enjoying simultaneous popularity as a song in church and in the charts. The song begins

> Morning has broken, like the first morning,
> Blackbird has spoken, like the first bird.
The elderly gentleman in the adjacent room must have loved being woken each day by the dulcet sounds of my clear, well-projected voice. After a few weeks, he began to send the food trolley into my room with a treat: some butterscotch lollies! These were my favourite sweets and served to keep my mouth closed for a few minutes.

My voice was to be silenced only one other time in this period. The following year, I had my tonsils removed and once again had the privilege of hospital accommodation and food. Two other childhood ailments prevented my complete involvement in school activities at this time: Firstly, I was mildly myopic and also suffered from strabismus. I was therefore unable to focus on distant objects and when I did, at least one of my eyes was looking at something else. Secondly, I had the condition medically known as pes planus, more commonly referred to as flat feet. The cure for the eye condition involved surgery, followed by eye exercise. Far worse, in my dysfunctional eyes, was the remedy for my flat feet: brown boots, with built-up insoles to ensure I developed an arch foot; which, after a few years, I did.

Treatment for these conditions took me out of school for various periods: this affected my involvement in many school activities, as did my inability to see into the distance or to walk without stumbling over small objects in my path. Being the youngest of four children, some of whom had suffered similar ailments, my parents were kept poor through medical expenses. I didn’t thank my parents for their care and generosity: far from it. I suspected they were to blame for at least the flat feet and myopia and medical science seems to support the view that these conditions are, in fact, inherited. I didn’t realize at the time that I would have been far worse off had I not been treated.

So it was that my first few years of formal education were punctuated by illness, accident and treatment for infirmities and afflictions, none of them particularly serious or life-threatening. There may have been some issues with social interaction, as children can be hard on their peers if they appear different. The child of poor parents, with wandering eyes and flat feet must have been subject to some scrutiny, but I remember none of it. Besides, I had my singing.

I sang at school, solo and in the school choirs, and participated in Eisteddfodau, often coming first or second in my sections. The choirs often sang in massed events with hundreds of children from the
surrounding schools. This was to become a feature of my musical experience for many years to come.

When I was ten my family moved to Brisbane, a place that was to become my home on and off for the next 30 years. [I was actually born in this city but moved to Bundaberg when I was three.] Two major musical events remain vividly in my memory from this time. Singing in the annual Choral Fest in the City Hall – again with hundreds of other children and singing in the school variety concerts. The feeling of community that we felt through choral singing led me to participation in choirs and choruses for many years. These feelings and friendships changed my life. There were other influencing factors. My introduction to organised sport was not a happy one. The first question I was asked at my new school was “Are you fast?” I thought for a while and replied “Fast at what?” I discovered at lunchtime that it meant fast at running (preferably with a ball in hand) towards other boys whose sole purpose was to grab you and throw you to the ground. This, I learned was called “Rugby League.” I wasn’t fast and I didn’t see the point. My excuse is that I had been born with flat feet and couldn’t see very well. Nevertheless, I settled into my adopted town [which was really my birthplace, anyway] relatively easily and continued to sing a lot.

With high school came another change in schools. I caught the bus to high school and, although it was only a ten-minute trip, I still remember the horror that accompanied this journey each day. I didn’t play sport. I enjoyed singing and my parents wouldn’t buy me long trousers to wear to school – not even in winter. These three things combined to make me somewhat of a victim. [I may have already had something of a victim mentality, on the grounds of my childhood illnesses, but this is unlikely.] My immediate peer group consisted of the other two boys in my grade who didn’t wear long pants. We were subjected to some interesting acts of violence. One particular favourite was for the other boys to chew up lollies and spit them into our hair as we boarded the bus. Being the 1970s, we were all very proud of our long locks, but this pride diminished somewhat when it was strewn with slightly masticated fruit tingles, chocolates or, on particularly bad days, chewing gum. I still have an aversion to chewing gum … and to wearing shorts. One highlight of this period could be found in my academic results: first in Japanese and, believe it or not, first in Woodwork.
We moved across town when I was fourteen. The principal reason for this upheaval to my fourth (and penultimate) school was to be nearer the church we were attending. I was not in favour of this move but it proved to be a useful one for my social and musical development. As part of the new school uniform, my parents bought me long pants. In my mind, my social status improved dramatically. School didn't offer me much. There were the usual subjects: maths, English, history, science and a language. I did music at school and learned a little about musical styles but nothing about the mechanics. It was a bit a bludge subject where no-one really worked hard. Lunch times were often spent alone in the library: sometimes reading but mostly just staying out of the way. My nemesis was compulsory Wednesday afternoon sport. How I loathed those afternoons! Reflecting now, I was often the Last One Picked, described so eloquently in Howard Crabtree's Whoop-Dee-Doo. No-one wanted the slightly bookish, uncoordinated kid on their teams and frankly, I wasn't so keen on being involved. I found alternate activities: photography, ice-skating, ten-pin bowling, chess and cards. The only down side to these activities was the bus ride to an off-campus location. My earlier experiences of buses were not happy ones and this phobia was exacerbated when the bus carrying us down the hill to ten-pin bowling had dodgy brakes and ran out of control for 500 metres into the school library. Two of my refuges were destroyed at once: no more off-campus activities and no more library-visiting at lunch time.

Outside of school, I began to learn guitar, largely under the influence and instruction of an elder brother who also played in a band. He was at university at the time and they played mostly covers, but also wrote some original music. My first chord was E minor, followed a short time later by A. I was then able to play some of George Harrison's My Sweet Lord. I played these two chords over and over for about six months until I learned D. This knowledge, combined with E major opened up a whole new range of repertoire I could sing and play. Armed with these four chords, I joined a band. For two years, I sang and played the latest rock: Status Quo, Deep Purple, Led Zeppelin and others. Clearly by the end of these two years I had added a few more chords to the repertoire and music surrounded me in the house, at school and at church. I realised that playing in a band, like singing in a choir, brought strong feelings of belonging and lifelong bonds were formed. My status improved through my involvement in rock music. Perhaps it was the instrumentation, perhaps the material. Perhaps I was just finding myself in these early adolescent years. After two years we moved …again.
The destination this time was Rockhampton: a town of about 50000 people sustained by the railway and the meatworks. I went along to the new school, and the new church, with my usual fears about change. I was only beaten up once in the first few months, which I understand was pretty good for a newcomer in this part of the world. Despite my misgivings, Rockhampton proved to be an awakening on three counts: television, music theatre and girls.

The reference to television probably needs some explaining. Television came to Australia in 1956, in time for the Melbourne Olympics. Almost 20 years later, in 1975, colour television was introduced. I only know this because I saw the appliances in shop windows: we didn’t have television in our house until I was sixteen. At the time I thought that the absence of this appliance added to my social disadvantage: classmates would come to school with stories of Gilligan’s Island, F-Troop and Doctor Who. I had no idea what they were talking about. I felt isolated in this regard, but respected my parents’ opinions that television would only stop me from studying.

All this came to and end when I was able to watch my Grandfather’s black and white set in the spare bedroom. We had two channels: the national broadcaster and a commercial network. We could really only get reception for the national broadcaster, so I settled for watching that for 30 minutes each day. There was a music show in Australia at the time called Countdown. It featured clips and live performances of mostly local bands, with interviews from visiting artists. I began to understand the rock genre a little better. Every now and then I would be allowed to watch other shows but my parents had warned me to believe nothing of what you read in the newspapers and only half of what you saw on television: this is where my mistrust of the media began. At 16, I still found it intriguing to have the world brought into my house, but always felt a sense of unease with the authoritative masculine approach to the delivery of information.

I auditioned for the school musical Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat, and won the leading role. This proved to be a turning point in my life. I had found my place in the world of music theatre. Here I could combine my singing with my love of rock music and do it before an adoring audience. I loved the thrill of performing on stage: of telling a story through singing and movement. I sang in more stage shows at this time and also joined a folk group. I returned to the Eisteddfod circuit and performed creditably. In school music we studied a
variety of material from the western art music canon. Two highlights remain from this time: Verdi’s *La Traviata* and Peter Maxwell-Davies’ *Eight Songs for a Mad King*. The works could not have been more diverse in style but they had the same dramatic intent. I am still moved when hear the last act of *La Traviata*. I am equally moved by the plight of the mad King George in *Eight Songs* and particularly enjoy the moment when he breaks the violin. I dreamed of performing these pieces one day, not just because I, too, want to break a violin. The teacher who introduced these pieces to us was an interesting fellow: He loved his music with a passion and chose these works, and the school musicals with considerable care. He gave me an opportunity to play in the school orchestra: first on guitar and later on drums. The school music program was a fledgling one and I learned about how to build a music program from this man. I later realised that I also modelled my teaching style on his: passionate about the content, yet calm and relaxed in delivery.

Then, there was the issue of girls. I had been attracted to them from late primary school but here, in Rockhampton, things really started to happen! The notoriety brought about through the stage productions (not to mention the ratio of males to females) brought with it many opportunities for casual moments and more serious relationships. My first serious girlfriend was a dancer: good looking, light on her feet and sharing my interest in music theatre. Despite my interests in things “feminine” and my lack of interest/ability in things “masculine,” my sexuality was never in doubt, at least not in my mind. I lost this first girlfriend to a soccer player and my loathing of and rivalry with sportsmen commenced. I liked music theatre, I disliked sport (and many of those who played it in these rural communities) and I really loved female company. These experiences were constants throughout my adolescent years and I was resolute about being a heterosexual male, who engaged in so-called “feminine” pursuits.

At the end of my school years, there was the inevitable question: what now? I had not excelled as a scholar and life as professional sportsman seemed a long shot, so at the instigation of my brother, I auditioned and was accepted into the vocal program at the state Conservatorium. If I thought that singing in a musical was fun, here was a place where I could sing all day. It was heaven. I sang in choirs, in operas, musicals, with big bands, and in solo recital. I toured Europe and Asia. These tours were, in hindsight, critical incidents in my life. The first took me to Venice, where I had my first beer and Vienna, where I enjoyed wine-tasting … from a stein. In Germany I realised for the first time that involvement in music
didn’t mean that you were on the periphery. Here was a place where music was revered and those who performed were supported by the public, the press and the government. Later, this realisation would form the basis of study into distinctly Australian perspectives on the arts, many of which are reported in this volume. My first visit to England was also part of this tour and I saw first hand the involvement of males in vocal music, from the boy chorister to the all-male Welsh and Cornish choirs. What a joy this was; what a relief!

Outside of study times, in the evening and on the weekends, I played (on and off) in a band with my brother. He was beginning to write musicals at this time and we spent time together recording and producing these. I learned some valuable lessons in these undergraduate years: take opportunities when they come, learn from your mistakes and if you want to make a living in the arts, consider teaching.

After completing studies in classical singing and music education, I pursued dual careers as music teacher and opera/music theatre singer. I entered the world of professional performance in opera and music theatre, performing works by Stravinsky, Wagner, Verdi, Puccini and later Bernstein, Sondheim Schwartz. Performing in the opera that had instigated my love of the art-form, _La Traviata_, however, was to prove elusive.

This period was like a return to my school days: doing something I really enjoyed, being paid for it and forming life-long friendships. There was something about singing together, the dressing room banter, the on-stage fun and after show relaxation that appealed. Simultaneously, I taught in primary schools initially before taking on positions as Director of Music and Performing Arts in private schools, both single-sex and coeducational. In particular, I spent ten years teaching in a day and boarding school for boys. I saw boys struggle as a result of their choices at school. Boys who didn’t play sport were often ostracised or plain bored, and boys wouldn’t engage with certain types of music. Together with the school management, we set about changing this perception. The Headmaster organised a mixed-voice choir with the girls’ school nearby and drove the bus himself to pick them up. The next initiative was to introduce a jazz program and from there, things really took. It was to be the beginning of a program that led to over 500 boys being engaged in music making in bands, orchestras, choirs and, of course, music theatre.
A few university posts followed: one in which I was able to share my love of music theatre with students and my current position where I have the opportunity to influence a whole new generation of teacher and performers. The last few years in a university have afforded me the opportunity to devote time to researching the involvement of males in music, reflecting on my own experiences and the experiences of others.

**A philosophical perspective**

The story above accounts for a number of factors the reader will encounter in this book. The book is firmly situated in the Western art music tradition, with (like the author) occasional excursions into popular genres. Furthermore, as a male, researching male participation in music, I come with a particular viewpoint: there is little doubt that patriarchy continues to privilege males in western society and I acknowledge that I am the beneficiary of that positioning. Not only am I a biological male, my sexuality is heterosexual and I have a white, middle-class upbringing. A common theme in masculinities research is that writing from such a privileged position as McLean (1995, p. 82) notes

…often arouses impatience, frustration or outright hostility from those groups who have experienced the consequences of men’s power. There is nothing quite so off-putting as listening to someone moan about how hard it is to be privileged...

The risk of accusation of chauvinism, misogyny and particularly patriarchy are strong themes in masculinities studies. As an author, I have struggled to locate myself in the debate that is gender research in music education. I initially investigated feminism and found that according to Hadley and Edwards (2004, p. 5) such research could be situated within feminist studies:

Feminism offers an alternative in the midst of male modes of seeing themselves. Not only interventionist, but also critical, feminism attempts to deconstruct the various ways that the feminine has been constructed… feminism ought to be inherently diverse, and encouraging of difference, plurality of voices, and have a rich and complex imagery.

The sentiments expressed about acceptance of difference and diversity were not my experiences of the study of gender through a feminist lens. Rather, I found many feminist musicologists stuck in the second wave and unable to accept a male researcher wanting to study males in music.
Rejections from journals and conferences were common and when accepted for conference presentations, the reception was frosty at best, hostile at worst. I felt the need to investigate what other male researchers were doing. Ashley (2007, p. 2) claims that the examination of masculinity as an academic discipline has grown out of feminist studies. Ashley comments further that

The greatest amount of masculinity literature is written by feminist, or (when male) … pro-feminist scholars. The social constructivist view of gender is both hegemonic and hostile to writers on boys such as Biddulph (1997), who insist that boy is a biological quality inherent in individual brains. This kind of question seems to trouble Mac-an-Ghaill (2002) who notes that we still do not have a language to describe the majority of boys who are “soft boys.”

Pro-feminism appeared to be worth examining. I certainly didn’t subscribe to the essentialist views of Biddulph, so the movement already had credibility in my eyes. Historically, its origins can be found in the men’s liberation movement of the 1970s. The basic premise is that pro-feminism works towards a gender-just society through a personal and political definition of masculinity. Masculinity, in the view of the pro-feminists, is a two-edged sword: it brings both power and powerlessness.

McLean (1997) clarifies this point stating, “Men have a desire for power while having a fear of powerlessness.” Pro-feminists are “gay affirmative” and campaign for an end to homophobia and any other forms of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, though most of their members are heterosexual. This seemed to be an ideal fit. I agreed with creating a gender-just society and was certainly interested in any campaign that was going to reduce homophobia. The problem for me was that the movement is concerned with developing a theoretical framework and can, as such, be viewed as a political force, not a personal one. The examination of masculinity and music is personal: both for me and for all males who suffer because of their engagement in musical activities. Pro-feminism argues that the vast majority of males experience considerable privilege due to living in a sexist society. Pro-feminism has strong links to academia and, as Ashley noted above there is an almost exclusive association of masculinities literature with pro-feminist scholars.

The themes of difference, plurality and complexity mentioned by Hadley and Edwards seemed to have resonances with post-feminist thinking about gender. In post-feminist thought, a gender-just society is
also sought. Post-feminist men support the claims of women for social, political and economic equity. They also express similar concerns for men and boys. It is on this point that pro-feminists and post-feminists differ. The post-feminist claims that the feminists (male and female) lack an understanding of the disproportionate ways in which males suffer, are disempowered and are at risk of abuse and neglect. There is a danger that male affirming voices can be seen as misogynist and repressed by feminists because they challenge feminist doctrines. As a post-feminist, Kipnis (1995, p.283) claims that a critique of feminism needs to be viewed as “more than chauvinism, backlash or counter-social revolution and where proactive male perspectives are not paranoically dismissed as implicitly anti-feminist.”

Writing with my Canadian colleague Adam Adler in 2004, we posited that a post-feminist construct is required for examining issues of gender in music and general education. At that time we embraced the term critical genderist thinking and action which described the process/s of examining issues of gender across the entire gender spectrum. The idea behind this was to overcome the fact that male gender studies remain outside of gender studies because they do not focus on the experiences of girls and women. Gender studies had, in our view, become a feminist-centric study of gender which, in philosophy, could include any studies of gender, including studies of femininity, masculinity and male gender issues; but in practice did not. “Masculinity studies” as a way of describing what we were investigating was also found to be problematic because such a reference

Conveys a two-dimensional view of male gender issues, whereby any study of male gender issues necessarily focuses on the issue of masculinity. In post-modern terms, we recognize that a continuum of gender exists, and that all individuals – whether gendered male or female through still sex-related categories – experience and exhibit aspects of both masculinity and femininity (Adler and Harrison, 2004, p. 271).

Furthermore, we found that the reference to male-centred gender research as “masculinity studies” presented a linguistic challenge and served to marginalize male-centred research and male researchers from the field of gender studies. So while feminist studies served to divide gender researchers, masculinity studies created similar divides. In addition, “gender studies” was found to be a kind of vacuous place in which nothing really existed. By using the term critical genderist thinking and action we were able to mobilize researchers and practitioners in the field. The
combination of both philosophy (thinking) and practice (action) was an attractive one that produced some exciting initiatives and collaborations in our field.

Within myself, however, there was still some disquiet. I was unable to reconcile my own gendered experience of music as described in my auto-ethnography with the philosophy. I was encouraged to map the interaction of sex, sexuality and gender in relation to my experience, using the following definitions from my own recent writing:

- **Sex** is described as a biologically determined entity, related to male and female anatomy.
- **Sexuality** is the preference for male and/or female partners and the performance of the acts associated with those preferences.
- **Gender** refers to the societal expectations associated with being male or female, typically described in terms of masculinity and femininity.

These categories are independent yet related to the extent that males may exhibit feminine attributes just as females may possess masculine qualities. A further influence is the role of sexuality: for example, males who exhibit feminine attributes are often labeled as homosexual, though there is no causal link between being male, feminine and homosexual (Harrison, 2008, in press).

If the spheres of biological sex, sexuality and gender were to interplay, I had positioned myself as biological male and heterosexual. What of my gender? I suspected that my interests skewed my gender slightly towards femininity. Using continuums to map this (allowing for the fact that these are, in themselves, inadequate binary oppositions and cannot be represented without the use of a three dimensional model), I would map myself as:

| SEX: Male ______________________________________ Female |
| SEXUALITY: Heterosexual __________________ Homosexual |
| GENDER: Masculine__________________________ Feminine |

Many of my colleagues were not personally located in this way and so my search began for yet another position. The term SNAG (sensitive new age guy) was popular in the eighties, but this didn’t quite capture my essence, either. One of my research students pointed me towards the work.
of Heasley (2005) and Hill (2004), which provided some elucidation. Hill (2006) refers to the term "feminine heterosexual men" and goes on to provide a number of labels that have been employed in academia:

Academics have called these males "feminine boys" (Green, 1987) or "girly boys" (Corbett, 1999). They might have been called "sissies" or "queer" during childhood (Corbett, 1998; Green, 1987) and some are proudly reclaiming both labels in adulthood (e.g., Heasley, 2005; Hunter, 1993; Rottnek, 1999). Others have called them simply "effeminate" men (e.g., Dansky, Knoebel, & Pitchford, 1977) or ambiguously "nontraditional" men (Coleman, 1986). More recently, the terms "nice guys" (Herold & Milhausen, 1999) and "new men" (Miller, Bilimoria, & Pattini, 2000) have been used. Though clearly the term that caught the imagination of the popular media is "metrosexual." (Hill, 2006, p. 146).

For those who are straight men who identify with feminine attributes, Heasley (2005) uses the term queer-straight males. While this seems tautological, Heasley’s term defines a way for men to explore ways of being masculine that is outside the hetero-normative. These ways of being then act to change constructions of masculinity that disrupt, or have the potential to challenge the hegemonic male. My journey could therefore be described in the following way:

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Figure 0.1 Progression of theories

This is how I have come to view myself in the gender landscape: as a practitioner making music theatre, as a teacher working with males and females and coming to terms with their views of being different. As a teacher, I have also embraced the views of music education and democracy as espoused by Kumashiro (2000) in relation to broader views of education and, specifically in relation to music, those of Woodford. Woodford (2004) describes a “social critique of oppressive systems is grounded on the universal belief in the right to freedom and justice for all” (p. 101). Specifically in relation to gender, Woodford recognises that
Some musical and pedagogical practices, such as those denying male or female children access to certain kinds of musical participation, emphasizing slavish imitation over personal creativity, or discouraging them from considering alternative values, may well be inimical to democratic culture… music education scholars have written extensively about how negative societal attitudes and gender stereotyping contribute to the musical disfranchisement of children by arbitrarily restricting their involvement in specific kinds of school and community activities. Among the more pernicious negative stereotypes already found in schools are that “boys don’t sing” and that “girls shouldn’t conduct, compose, or play ‘masculine’ instruments like drums.” (p. 77)

These democratic views inform my teaching, but also influence my role as researcher who is largely involved in describing and interacting with facets of males’ engagement with music.

To enable others to join me on the journey, I have begun by discussing the factors that contribute to the construction of masculinity in Chapter One. One of the significant aspects of this chapter is revealed in figure 1.1, in which themes of socialisation of males are captured. This diagram should be viewed in the light of the personal and philosophical perspectives revealed in this prologue. “George” is also introduced to us in Chapter One. George is a fictional character, but based on amalgams of many males, including myself. In the first five chapters, George represents the views of men who were interviewed for this volume and other men encountered in discussions about masculinity and music.

Chapter Two explored the manifestation of masculinities in contemporary society. Particular foci in Chapter Two are the inter-related themes of media and sport, both of which are strongly influenced by my childhood and adolescent interactions as described above. The school environment is dealt with in Chapter Three, with discussions on single-sex schooling and out-of school activities, also part of my own experience of music. Chapters Four and Six explore notions of stereotyping in the literature and through recent fieldwork respectively, while the intervening Chapter Five takes a look at the study of gendered participation in music.

Several other themes drawn from the opening narrative are pursued in the volume. The roles of family, religion and peers feature, and are evident in the first few chapters. In a manner reminiscent of this reflection, early experiences, role modes and school influences of Chapter Seven. Similarly, the case studies reflect on the ugly side of bullying and almost compulsory interest or ability in sport. In Chapter Seven, several other
men are introduced to the story, men like George who shared their stories in much the same way as I have shared mine. Chapters Eight and Nine deal with the practicalities of applying the discussions in the previous chapters for boys and men respectively.

The pages of this volume demonstrate my journey and the journeys of other men and their interactions with music. The personal reflections above, alongside observations of other males, combined with the literature identify a number of salient themes to be explored in this book.
CHAPTER ONE

MASCULINITIES

This chapter focuses on the investigation of masculinities and femininities in attempt to define their nature and constituent parts. The process of defining these two gender concepts as single objects is almost impossible but this nebulousness is simultaneously limiting and emancipating. Because gender constructs are fluid through time and context, it should be acknowledged that any attempts at categorisation need to allow for those constraints.

1.1 Masculinities

The terms femininity and masculinity are typically used to refer to the social and cultural expectations attached to being a woman or man including thinking, behaviour, aspirations and appearance. Masculinity and femininity are typically viewed as binary opposites. They are similarly assigned to a particular biological sex – males are considered masculine and females are regarded as feminine. Furthermore, there is an expectation of compulsory heterosexuality associated with discussions of sex and gender. Given that males are assumed to be masculine, they are logically supposed to be attracted to females. Similarly females are expected to be feminine and attracted to males. These erroneous associations are counterproductive and affect the engagement of males and females in many aspect of life, including music and other arts.

Given that masculinity could be comprised of a substantial amount of femininity, attempting to define masculinity as a single entity is pointless. Recent thought has centred on the notion of the existence of a multiplicity of masculinities (Tolson 1997; Brod 1987; Kaufman 1987; Kimmel 1987; Jefferson 1994; Connell 1995). Of these, Connell used the term “hegemonic masculinity”, implying the existence of a variety of masculinities and a hierarchical ordering of them, in which one form (the hegemonic) overrides almost all others. Hegemony refers to the beliefs and values held and enforced by dominant and powerful social groups.
Connell also challenges the concept of defining masculinity as an object, insisting that the focus be on “the processes and relationships through which men and women conduct gendered lives.” Similarly, Kenway and Fitzclarence (1997, p.119) state: “masculine identities are not static, but historically and spatially situated and evolving.” Masculinities may therefore change over time within a culture and vary from one culture to another. Kimmel and Messner also argued that the meaning of masculinity could change throughout the course of a man’s life.

In order to gain some concept of the historical positioning of masculinities in the 21st century, historical foundations (as described by Doyle, 1995), are worth contemplating:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideal Male</th>
<th>Source(s)</th>
<th>Major Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Epic</td>
<td>Epic sagas of Greece and Rome (800 – 100 BC)</td>
<td>Action, strength, courage, loyalty and the beginning of patriarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual</td>
<td>Teachings of Christ, early church fathers and monastic tradition (400 – 1000AD)</td>
<td>Self-renunciation, restrained sexual activity, anti-feminine and anti-homosexual attitudes, and a strong patriarchal system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chivalric</td>
<td>Feudalism and Chivalric code of honour (12th century social system)</td>
<td>Self sacrifice, courage, physical strength, honour and service to the lady and primogeniture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renaissance</td>
<td>16th century social system</td>
<td>Rationality, intellectual endeavours and self exploration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bourgeois</td>
<td>18th century social system</td>
<td>Success in business, status and worldly manners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Doyle (1995, p.27)

The historical basis for notions of patriarchy that emphasize physical strength, courage and the subordination of women and homosexuals are worthy of comment at this point as they relate directly to the power relationships inherent in masculine and feminine constructs and their effect on musical participation. A closer examination of these features will assist in establishing a context for rigidity of gender roles.

Doyle claimed that the “Epic” world of the Greek and Roman literature, featured action, strength, courage, loyalty and the beginning of
Masculinities. It is important to note that, in the context of this discussion, no distinction will be made between Greek and Roman culture. In justifying a similar position Walters (1993, p. 23) states

there are some differences in surface cultural patterns between the Greek-speaking and Latin-speaking halves of the ancient world, it is arguable that beneath these lie deep-seated cultural assumptions that are shared; that there is, with local variations, a pattern of thought on issues of gender common to what Peristiany has called “Mediterranean society.”

Masculinity in Greco-Roman societies valued competition, evidenced through public (and peer-reviewed) performance in political, athletic and military contexts. Greek and Roman literature confirm the existence of a hegemonic view of masculinity, albeit somewhat different from the modern hegemony described above. Physiognomy, the use of external features, facial characteristics and physical gait influenced and continues to provide some basis for understanding 21st century stereotypes. Aligned with this theory is an emphasis on patriarchy, pederasty and male homosexuality. Keuls calls this period a “phallocracy:” the reign of the phallus in which the glorification of war, male athleticism, and public male nudity was featured. A complementary set of skills also brought social status: Homer’s *Iliad* draws the characters as honour, status, and power. To achieve such values, self-control, order, clarity, and rationality were inherent to the extent that, as Morgan (2000, n. p.) notes

Other values and qualities, to the extent that they deviate from the idealized norm were pushed to the periphery, to the dark and spinning edge of the world. All that is foreign, all that is feminine, all that is wild and unrestrained; all these are coalesced into an idea of Otherness that forms a dark sea of chaos into which one must strive continually not to fall.

Morgan also acknowledges that without otherness, there is no central hegemony, and that the arts at the time celebrate the conquest of hegemony over otherness. Otherness (or difference) will be explored in more detail later in this volume.

An important distinction made by Bloch (2001) is that this hegemonic masculinity in the ancient world was related to gender but not to sex. Sexuality did not carry the same compulsory connection with gender and the biological sex: compulsory heterosexuality was not part of the construction of masculinity as described thus far in this chapter. The so-called post modern view of biological sex, gender and sexuality as
independent spheres was part of society 2000 years ago. Patriarchy, however, was a potent as ever: a man could switch forth between female and male partners, as long as there were his inferiors. The married man was not expected to confine himself to his wife, but could continue the full range of his sexual activities just as he had done before marriage. The function filled by the wife was to provide her husband with children, but not, as Bloch notes, to act as companion or intellectual partner. Williams (1999) suggests that the major societal organizers did not centre on homosexual and heterosexual but on other dominant-subordinate categories: free and slave, dominant and subordinate, masculine and effeminate. Veyne (1978, p. 33) concurs

The sexuality of the ancient world and our own are two structures that have nothing in common, and cannot even be superimposed on each other. If we shift focus from sexuality to gender, the constellation of meanings becomes clearer, for the people so categorised, though male in sex, are not men in gender.

Despite the emphasis on patriarchy and the other dichotomous structures evident in Greco-Roman societies, the study of their view of sex, gender and sexuality provides an opportunity to break away from a stance that categorizes only as “masculine” or “feminine” to the extent that forsaking one gender role can only result in the adoption of the “opposite” gender. Walters (1993, p. 21) further suggests that Greco-Roman cultures permit

a more open-minded exploration of the other ways men’s and women’s lives, sexualities, and genders have been organised [which] may be useful in enabling us to see our own society’s gender arrangements in a fresh light, and thereby start to ask new and interesting questions of that crucial site of social power that we call gender.

Of particular note in Doyle’s historical account in Table 1.1 are anti-femininity and the anti-homosexual bias present in the early Christian church. Some women were viewed as evil and the early church fathers portrayed women as the reason for men’s downfall and subsequent sinfulness. Biblical evidence as described in the stories of Adam, Eve and the Serpent; Herod, Salome and John the Baptist reinforced this argument. With regard to homosexuality, the early fathers emphasized the need for a true man to renounce his sexual desires and an insistence that the only sexual outlet was to be found in heterosexual activity (and even then only for procreation). Sex beyond marriage and sex as a human expression of
love and joy or for pleasure seeking was expressly banned by Pope Gregory the Great in the 6th century. To put this into historical perspective, this was initially designed to provide a contrast with the homosexual practices of the Greeks and Romans and to propagate the population with Christian believers. Taken out of context and applied to 21st Century thought and practice, such attitudes are now seen as oppressive and discriminatory.

Conflict between sacred and secular views of masculinity was apparent in the middle ages. For the monastic orders, the emphasis, according to Cullum and Lewis, was on honouring their vows of chastity and virginity. This became one form of defining masculine identity: self-sacrifice and service to the church. Secular society continued to value courage, physical strength, service to the lady and primogeniture. The renaissance featured a return to the valuing of intellect, and of the arts. The rational was combined with a strong sense of exploration, questioning and challenge.

By the end of the 18th century, the positive value put on male passions shifted. Competitiveness became important and tenderness was out of favour. A century later, masculinity faced its greatest challenges: feminism, the literary and artistic avant-garde, and socialism. One of the features of this change was that the challenge came from within:

Men in the middle classes and even the aristocracy who could (or would) not conform to the manly ideal. They proved remarkably assertive and unabashed by their deviancy, flaunting it at times in a most carefree manner. Languor, softness, and sensuality were the traits of this counter-masculinity. Effeminacy and androgyny was uncovered within the heart of masculine society (Mosse 1996, p. 107).

As an Australian, it is clear to the author that there were many aspects of Australian society that were resistant to this view: The convict, according to Colling, was abandoned, robbed of skills, family and friends and, even as early as the transportation ship, began to realize that the only person he could trust was himself. The convict also needed to repress and divert any softer emotions that may make him vulnerable to exploitation. Colling reported that the proportion of men to women was approximately 4:1 in the cities and 20:1 in the country. Hughes, in The Fatal Shore, highlights the social significance of this lack of gender proportion by suggesting that women moderate men’s behaviour. The early settler developed a “survival frontier mentality” which united against authority. Bushrangers became role models. In this respect, Australian settlement
differed from America, where the Pilgrim Fathers had deep religious convictions. In South Africa, where the Dutch reformers were reportedly strict and hard working, it was different again. Early European settlers in Australia who took over Aboriginal land had to suppress feelings of pity, fear and compassion and value loyalty, reliability, ingenuity, courage, toughness and humour.

The gold rush of the 1850s reinforced competitiveness and distrust of authority. The Catholic Irish migrants who arrived at this time brought a culture of struggle against oppression that dated back hundreds of years. The Eureka Stockade, says Colling, embodied egalitarianism, the idea that the working man is as good as his master.

The World Wars brought the opportunity to be a hero: Australian men were suited to war with their suppression of tender emotions, dependence on external threat, the perception of good and evil in “black and white” terms and their sense of loyalty to one another. The union movement further reinforced these attributes. The “pub” became a social centre where the topics of conversation included work, sport, politics and sex. When television commenced transmission in 1956, Australia’s first steps towards globalisation began. The Vietnam War exposed the myth of heroics and at the same time embodied anti-authority. Men could grow their hair and women could take the pill and become more actively involved in the workforce, thus blurring traditionally established sex roles. Feminism initially began to attack men for their role in establishing a patriarchal society and the male identity was subjected to scrutiny.

Across more than 200 years of European settlement, men adopted unusual role models and celebrated unusual events: Eureka Stockade, Ned Kelly, Gallipoli and Waltzing Matilda. The last of these embodies the cultural hero – fearlessness, contempt for authority and hardship. There was little room for uncertain, creative, loving and frightened men.

In Australia, and in other parts of the Western world, the recipe for an accepted form of masculinity was in place. By the 21st century, one accepted view of masculinity was entrenched, albeit with subtle regional variations. Ingredients for this recipe included an emphasis on patriarchy and compulsory heterosexuality.
1.2 Hegemonic Masculinity

A central concept in the discussion of masculinities and femininities is the notion of hegemonic masculinity, the historical basis for which has been discussed in the preceding section. There is a strong argument that suggests that contemporary hegemonic masculinity does not exist in its purest form. Whitehead (2002) argues that the very notions of masculinity and femininity are becoming blurred suggesting that, “there are no overarching ideologies or dominant discourses into which men can retreat...” (p. 6). As intimated by Connell earlier, masculinity cannot be defined as an object, but as processes and relationships. It is not, therefore, possible to find an individual who fulfils all the criteria of a hegemonic male. The lack of a single entity that personifies hegemonic masculinity does not deny its existence as a construct in social institutions.

Furthermore, Lusher and Robins (2007) acknowledge that Connell

…recognises the need to be both global and local in theorizing about gender. Connell’s relational theory is presented within a macro sociological framework which is complemented with fine-detailed *life histories* of men. These ethnographic accounts provide rich qualitative descriptions that explore gender in the context of real men’s lives, giving micro level detail to complement macro structural relations.

This volume began with an ethnographic account of the author with this in mind. Let’s introduce another account now, with the story of George.
George grew up in a rural town, 200 kilometres from the nearest metropolitan centre. His first memory of music was listening to his Irish grandparents singing around the piano. The material, he recalls, was mostly folksongs, some cumulative songs and the occasional war song. It’s a long way to Tipperary, Carrick Fergus and The Rose of Summer were favourites. George spent a lot of time at his maternal grandparent’s house. His mother would take him and his sister there when she went to work at the local café between 9am and 2pm each day. They loved the time with their grandparents: not just the singing, the reading of books together on the couch, the delicious food and the occasional toffee apple or fairy floss. Their grandparent’s house was a rambling timber place on stumps, right in the middle of town. There was lots of yard around the house and they could ride their bikes, climb trees, make cubbyhouses and play hide-and-seek. George’s dad worked in the mine near the town. He worked long shifts: ten hours a day, five days a week but at least he didn’t work weekends like some of his workmates. On the days he was working, George’s dad only really had time to come home, eat a meal, and watch some sport on television and sleep. George didn’t see much of his dad during the week. Life revolved around his mum and his grandparents. Things were different on Saturdays and George looked forward to having some time with his dad. There was a sense of ritual about Saturdays. Getting up early to a full breakfast cooked by his mum, then into the town for the weekly shopping. George’s parents didn’t have a lot of money and it was always a bit of a struggle to prioritise the shopping items each week. There was certainly no money for luxury items: just the essentials. His dad bought his copy of Rugby League Week and his mum the Women’s Weekly. In the afternoon, it was a drive out to the football ground on the outskirts of town. A barbeque lunch was served: sometimes his mum would help out at the canteen and his dad would help to mark up the field for the afternoon games: reserve grade at 1pm and the main game first grade at 3pm. When George was a toddler, his dad played first grade. His dad was a big strong man who played in forward pack. His mates described him as a “hard man,” someone who would hit the ball up and had little fear of the opposition. George has potent memories of his dad’s playing days, even though he was very young.

This is only the beginning of George’s story. We’ll meet him again throughout the first part of this volume. This construction of George’s masculinity and that of his father were brought about through a range of process (family, education, religions, tradition, peers). The features of hegemonic masculinity that contribute to male socialisation don’t exist in reality but through this hybrid image. Elements of this person may well exist in some men, but the whole package is rare. Wetherell & Edley (1999, p.336) emphasize this point:
Hegemonic masculinity is not a personality type or an actual male character. Rather, it is an ideal or set of prescriptive social norms, symbolically represented, but a crucial part of the texture of many routine and disciplinary activities. The exact content of the prescriptive mundane social norms which make up hegemonic masculinity is left unclear.

While this lack of clarity can be problematic, because it is a relational construct, some elucidation can be forthcoming if it is viewed in relation to other masculinities and femininity.

As hegemonic masculinity is associated with heterosexuality, power, authority and aggression, femininity has frequently and erroneously been defined as “everything else,” “different” or “other” and therefore subordinate. The concept of “otherness” has been discussed at length in the literature on gender and sexuality. For men and boys, hegemonic masculinity limits emotional horizons shows contempt for sensitivity and does not allow room for creativity or otherness. Hegemonic masculinity limits opportunities for involvement in a wide range of activities: this includes, but is not restricted to, the arts. Consider why Billy Elliot is such a big deal. Was the construction of masculinity so rigid in that environment that Billy’s dancing was on the outer? It strikes a chord with us because Billy is different. Billy survived but for many men and boys the power of hegemonic masculinity is so great that they don’t.

The majority of men may not consciously subscribe to hegemonic masculinity, but it exerts influence through cultural and institutional practices and has strong roots in patriarchy. It favours toughness, physical strength and aggression. While it is not true across all cultures and all periods of history, it is represented and shaped by the media in the 21st century. Furthermore, while it does not always involve violence, hegemonic masculinity is often underwritten by the threat of violence. McLean takes this further: the process of making a man out of a boy often involves physical and emotional brutalisation and emphasis on hardness and strength. At the same time, contempt for sensitivity, delicacy and emotional intimacy need to be demonstrated. Not all boys experience such treatment, but all are aware of its existence and are affected by that awareness. The unspoken law is: I’ll get beaten up if I display sensitivity – if I cry, dance or sing.
1.3 Other Masculinities

Given that not all men subscribe to hegemonic masculinity, and brief discussion of other views of masculinity may prove worthwhile. Marginal masculinity is inspired and legitimised by hegemonic masculinity. It is marginal in the sense that it only has influence in one particular sphere of society, usually a social class or race. Marginal masculinity is authorized by the dominant class or race. The other two masculinities, subordinate and complicit, are not authorised by hegemonic masculinity.

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Subordinate masculinity is in direct opposition to hegemonic masculinity. It is repressed and oppressed by it. It represents any forms of masculinity that draw their identity from beyond the hegemonic. Any attachment to the feminine is likely to put the owner in this category and subject him to various forms of violence. While it is not possible to define gay masculinities, the stereotypical view of the gay man is often perceived to be part of this form of masculinity.

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Complicit masculinity applies to those who do not live up to or subscribe to hegemonic masculinity but benefit from it without being, as Connell (1995, p.79) puts it, “in the front line of troops of patriarchy.” Perhaps the greatest benefit of belonging to this style of masculinity is in the gain achieved through the subordination of women. Those who belong to this group are complicitous with hegemonic masculinity even though they fail to live up to it.

Any of these other forms exist because of the place hegemonic masculinity holds. Bird (1996, p. 123) suggests that

Masculinities that differ from the norm of hegemonic masculinity, however, are generally experienced as “private dissatisfactions” rather than foundations for questioning the social construction of gender....
Hegemonic masculinity persists, therefore, despite individual departures from the hegemonic form.

Conversely, hegemonic masculinity can only exert influence in relation to subordinate, complicit and marginalized masculinities. In describing the interrelationship of these forms of masculinity, Lusher and Robins (2007) posit that by denigrating subordinate masculinity, hegemonic masculinity asserts its superiority and achieves legitimate rule. In this sense, hegemonic masculinity must convince complicit masculinity that subordinate masculinity is illegitimate, thus setting itself up as legitimate.
Connell urges masculinity researchers to embrace “plurality” and “hierarchy of masculinities” (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 846), at the same time suggesting that

the terms “hegemonic masculinity” and “marginalised masculinities” name not fixed character types but configurations of practice generated in particular situations in a changing structure of relationships. Any theory of masculinity worth having must give an account of this process of change. (Connell, 1995, p. 81)

This book acknowledges this limitation and focuses on the particular situation of engagement with music, itself an ever-changing series of relationships.

1.4 Challenging Hegemonic Masculinity

Deleuze challenges the existing construction masculinity and encourages the “imagining our gendered boundaries to their furthest limits” (Colebrook 2002). Men and boys should be emancipated to interrogate the multifarious nature of their own experiences, complementing them with counter-hegemonic experiences. Stoudt (2006) suggests that working with institutions to create opportunities to contest hegemonic masculinity will reveal and confront masculine curriculum ideals. Demetriou encourages a reconceptualization of hegemonic masculinity that does not refuse other subordinated masculinities but rather hybridizes them. This hybrid form has begun to emerge but only through men who already enjoy high status. The metrosexual movement of the early 21st Century (referred to in passing in the prologue) was largely driven by rich, powerful and footballers. This term was the media-friendly description for those males who lived just on the perimeter of hegemonic masculinity but had sufficient credit to ensure status within society. As this volume reveals later, the use of role models such as these can be useful tools in breaking down rigid forms of masculinity but the implementation of such a strategy requires great care. Challenging hegemonic masculinity comes at a cost, a cost that many males are not willing to risk.

The danger in defying any dominant code is in the price paid to do so. Boys are determined at all costs not to be female and the notions that boys are more likely to be discouraged from engaging in feminine behaviours than girls for engaging in masculine behaviour has some historical basis in the literature (Fagot 1978; Langlois and Downs 1980). This form of
control contributes to the construction of hegemonic masculinity. Gilbert (1998, p.24) notes:

The threat of a hybridized [sic] “girlie-man” is ever present for many boys. Boys learn that masculinity is a performance reliant on physical control, autonomy and independence. Being labelled a “girlie-man” is life’s greatest fear. Therein lies mockery, derision and rejection.

The existence of a “girlie-man” has been the topic of debate for some time. According to Hill, "feminine heterosexual men" by whatever label are those that demonstrate behaviours or traits that are stereotypically associated with femininity, even if they subscribe to a queer-straight stance. There is a well documented history of males generally being viewed more negatively than females for gender role transgressions (Jackson and Sullivan 1990; Martin 1990; Moller, Hymel and Rubin 1992). In particular, parents, peers and teachers show more concern when males deviate from traditional role prescriptions. Males are more likely to be punished for acting like a “sissy.” O’Conor (1995, p.99) also gives examples of boys being beaten up because they are feminine or different. This includes name calling or joining in the laughter at “fag” or “dyke” jokes. Epstein (1998) and Frosh (2001) each further emphasis the significance of homophobic abuse when it is levelled at boys who “dislike rough and tumble games…preferring gentler pursuits.” Teenagers who failed to conform to the macho stereotype risk being bullied or labelled as gay by their fellow students. Being artistic can also be problematic.

Thorne (in Gilbert & Gilbert 1998, p.178) is more graphic in describing these behaviours: “Boys bond through … aggressing against other boys (called girls, fags or sissies) who are perceived to be weaker.” This homophobic violence can be related to the fear of the feminine. The consequences of not belonging to the correct group and/or belonging to the wrong group are frequently violent. Dominance performances and contests, say Kenway and Fitzclarence (1997, p.121) revolve around “toughness, athletic ability, strength, popularity with girls, sexual achievements and risk taking.” At the same time, dominance performances also distance boys from physical weakness, expressive skills, creativity, and co-operation. The performances to which Kenway and Fitzclarence refer will sometimes include harassing teachers, girls and other boys particularly those identified as “gay.” Forsey (1990, p. 29) notes that

Males manifest their power through rivalry and ambition, the intimidation, dominance and exploitation of lesser beings – females, children and weaker
males, disregard for intimacy and the self-knowledge and empathy that intimacy engenders rejection of any personal qualities or accomplishments that may be considered feminine. These manifestations are generated and reinforced by family, education, religions, tradition, the media, peers and society at large.

The existence of male gender role rigidity: the restriction of the gender role development and expression, brought about through a lack of ability to experience femininity as much as females experience masculinity, is discussed by Archer and Pollack both refer to this as gender straight-jacketing: boys are ashamed to express signs of neediness, dependence, sadness or vulnerability. Comments such as “Boys know if they say anything sappy to each other they’ll be humiliated and called a fag” are common in this literature. This fear of being labelled a fairy, a wuss or a fag, of being perceived as feminine or homosexual prevents boys from expressing emotions that are encouraged in girls. Reynolds (2007, p. 293) commented that

the majority of boys experienced a range of pressures and fears as they entered the hegemonic world of heterosexuality, the power relations involved in their practices overtly (and indirectly) denigrate and subordinate femininities and marginalized masculinities.…boys who transgressed or deviated from the heteronormative gendered script were open targets for gender-based or sexualized bullying.

1.5 Patriarchy, avoidance of femininity and male gender role rigidity

Some of the factors contributing to the construction of male gender role rigidity can be identified. They include the historical imperatives referred to in Table 1.1 earlier. They also include patriarchy, an emphasis on physical strength and courage and the subordination of women and homosexuals. Earlier references in this chapter pertain to the role the avoidance of femininity and male gender role rigidity play in constructing masculinity. The contributing factors referred to above are so intertwined that it is almost impossible to separate them. Mac An Ghaill claimed there are three cultural elements that contribute to the construction of hegemonic masculinity: compulsory heterosexuality, misogyny and homophobia. I first attempted to bring together the notions of patriarchy, hegemonic masculinity, devaluing femininity and their influence on male gender-role rigidity, avoidance of femininity and homophobia in 2002. In subsequent work with Adam Adler the influence of feminist theory was acknowledged
and in more recent writing, the figure was further adapted for the Australian context. Figure 1.1 was represents current thinking in this domain and will be used later in the volume to encapsulate the relationship of these concepts to participation in music.

In the broader perspective of the arts, Wayne Martino reflected on the idea of art as a cultural practice for enabling what the teacher considers to be “a deep expression of self.” This, he said, can be threatening for boys, as the expression of self interacts with the culture of masculinity and the nature of how homophobia, misogyny and femiphobia are operationalized as mechanisms for policing tenuous, but acceptable hegemonic heterosexual masculinities. Martino and Frank pursued this notion further in 2006, examining the identity of the art teacher as being un-masculine and art being associated with females. The art teacher (not to mention the drama teacher, dance teacher and music teacher, along with their students) would be questionable in terms of his masculinity. Engagement in the arts, including participation and achievement will be explored further in the following chapter. The influences in Figure 1.1 affect all aspects of schooling:

Figure 1.1 Influences on Male Socialisation

To provide further explanation of Figure 1.1: in its most recent usage, patriarchal power refers to the fact that men have historically and traditionally dominated culture and have been privileged by it. It serves to exclude or marginalise certain individuals or groups – women, the effeminate, and homosexuals: any that opposes the hegemonic. Patriarchy also hierarchically positions those within its ranks.
By taking this view, it is clear that not all men achieve power: a person’s masculinity may be defined by whether he even has a place within patriarchy. The foundation for patriarchy is in stereotypes: small physical and mental differences between men and women greatly exaggerate and perpetuate a patriarchal system of power. The extent to which these stereotypes effect participation will be made evident later in this volume.

Patriarchy therefore affects men as much as women. Men are oppressed and isolated by the models to which they are expected to conform. Men struggle to prove themselves to be men and the penalties for failing to do so are considerable. They are teased, isolated and forced into constant competition in drinking, sport, womanising and risk-taking behaviours. Masculine identities often expect men to curtail their lifestyles in order to conform. This can include the choices men have made with regard to music. Gender studies have not always recognised the damage done to men under patriarchy.

The feminine and the homosexual male are unthinkable and have no place in the heterosexual culture: they are the abject in patriarchy. Their expulsion from patriarchy helps to define patriarchy. Heterosexual males’ behaviour is therefore kept under scrutiny. A body of research has been undertaken into how the avoidance of femininity and homophobia contribute to the construction of hegemonic masculinity. Less is known about the relationship between gender-role rigidity and avoidance of femininity and this will be explored at this time. The concept of gender-incongruent behaviour is a central defining mechanism for masculinity. Along with other social institutions, schools perpetuate systems that support hegemonic masculinity by which women and non-conforming males are disempowered and subordinated. This is done through the rewarding of success in sports and traditionally masculine academic areas such as maths and sciences while success in the arts is often marginalised. Adam Adler (1997, p.30) placed the blame for this with society when he claimed that:

Our students grow amidst a flood of messages from parents, school and the media about what is acceptable in terms of gender-appropriate behaviour. Individuals who possess inherent traits, which are ascribed as outside of their gender, are stigmatised. Behaviour that crosses established gender boundaries is ridiculed and punished.
A large body of research has considered the concept that homophobic accusation is used to spread intolerance of behaviours perceived to be outside the boundaries of traditional gender role expectations amongst young people. Jackson (1990, p.188) gives an account of his personal experience of this phenomenon: “We made constant jokes about browners and queers were always on the lookout for any unguarded hint of effeminacy in each others’ gestures and behaviours.”

Heterosexual men who are careless in monitoring their behaviour may incur the wrath usually reserved for homosexual men: hostility, marginalisation and persecution. The effeminate heterosexual man who signals non-correspondence between effeminacy and sexual orientation is particularly vulnerable.

It has been found that homosexuals are less likely than heterosexuals to possess either a greater degree of cross gender traits or cross-gender identity. The terms “poof,” “gay,” “fag” and “queer” have been found to refer not to a person’s sexual practices, but to their gender: the words being a generic form of “non-masculine” or “effeminate.”

Being unmasculine in this way is not necessarily being feminine, but rather being in opposition to the accepted view of masculinity. The issue here is therefore not about homosexuality, though homosexuals are the definitive targets: it is more about characteristics and behaviours. Phillips (2001, p.201) gives clarity to this idea: feminine characteristics in males do not necessarily indicate homosexuality: “there is no direct relationship between how “feminine” a man might appear to be and homosexuality.”

The characteristics of those likely to be accused of being “less than masculine” are apparent in the literature. Researchers including Plummer and Pease refer to such things as being dependent, physically immature, weak, gentle, soft, submissive, unconventional, emotional and tender, being too neat, studious, and academic, privileged or not being sporty or part of the team. Anyone who breaks from the team to support an accused “poofter” can also be considered suspect. Femininity is therefore to be avoided.

McCreary (1994, p.517) states that there are two possible models for the avoidance of femininity:

The social status model predicts that males are punished because feminine behaviour is lower in status than masculine behaviour. The sexual
Masculinities 31

orientation model predicts that, for males, there is a stronger perceived link between gender roles and sexuality and that a male acting in a feminine way is more likely to be considered a homosexual than a female acting a masculine way.

McCreary’s work related directed to the exhortations by parents for boys not to cry and the use of name calling when boys do not measure up to physical tests (throwing etc) are clear warnings about what is acceptable behaviour.

George remembers his grandparents taking them to the park at times. One day, his sister burnt the back of her legs going down a hot slippery slide. The first response from his grandmother was “Are you okay?” When he fell off the swing a few weeks later he had gravel-rash on his knees and his hands are lacerated. The first response from his grandmother was “Don’t cry!”

This attitude extends beyond the playground into the workplace. The Kinsey Institute report, as described by Levitt and Klassen in 1973, found that one of the beliefs American adults had was that only certain occupations were appropriate for homosexuals. These were subsequently dubbed “sissy work.” Levine subsequently provided an illustrative (but not exhaustive) example of the types of occupations that may be culturally approved. In Table 1.2 they are listed according to “feminine” behaviours. Homophobia, when presented in this light, has the capacity to limit employment prospects and/or further entrench stereotypes.

Table 1.2 Levine’s examples of “sissy work” according to feminine behaviours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feminine Field</th>
<th>Occupations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nutrient Jobs:</td>
<td>Helping Professions: Nurse, librarian, secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Domestic Work: Cook, counterman, airline steward, bellhop, bartender, waiter, orderly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decorative Jobs:</td>
<td>Commercial Arts: Graphic designer, window display</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Home related: Interior decorator, florist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grooming: Fashion designer, hairdresser, model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressive Jobs:</td>
<td>Entertainment: Actor, singer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arts: Dancer, musician, artist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Levine (1995, p.219)

It can also serve to limit areas of interest. Lehne (1995, p.334) confirms this:
Homophobic men do not participate in sissy, womanly, homosexual activities or interests. Maintenance of the male sex role as a result of homophobia is as limiting for men as female sex roles are for women. An appreciation of many aspects of life, although felt by most men in different times of their lives, cannot be genuinely and openly enjoyed by men who must defend their masculinity through compulsively male-stereotyped pursuits. Fear of being thought to be a homosexual thus keeps some men from pursuing areas of interest, or occupations, considered more appropriate for women or homosexuals.

The last word in the construction of masculinity comes from Butler (1990, p. 140) who describes gender as

a construction that regularly conceals its genesis: the tacit collective agreement to perform, produce, and sustain discrete and polar genders as cultural fictions is obscured by the credibility of those productions—and the punishments that attend not agreeing to believe in them; the construction “compels” our belief in its necessity and naturalness. The historical possibilities materialized through various corporeal styles are nothing other than those punitively regulated cultural fictions alternately embodied and deflected under duress.

1.6 Summary

Homophobia and avoidance of femininity limit the involvement of males in many aspects of life. This in turn, helps to create gender-role rigidity helps to construct hegemonic masculinity which reinforces patriarchy and the cycle recommences.

In order to break the cycle, the institutional forces that contribute to it need to be examined. The role of Christian religion has been referred to in passing in this chapter, as has the significance of family expectation and historical tradition. Media and Sport will be discussed in Chapter 2 and Education will be discussed in Chapter 3. Before moving on, let’s catch up with the institution of George’s family:
As George got older, he realised things were not going well at home. His dad no longer played first grade football. Occasionally he would turn out for reserve grade if they were short of players. The Saturday ritual stayed in place, though. Shopping in the morning, football in the afternoon and leaving dad at the clubhouse to drink with his mates. His dad would often come home late, quite drunk and there would be loud discussions emanating from his parent’s bedroom. As time went on, his dad would stay out at night during the week too and eventually stayed out overnight a few times. George’s mum challenged his dad about this one afternoon and, after a massive argument, his dad left the house. George didn’t see him for many years.

George’s mum took the kids and moved in with her parents for a while. Money was tight and she had to extend her hours at the café to make ends meet. In his last few years of primary school, George was brought up by his grandparents. They were kind, generous people. One day, his grandfather showed George his shotgun. George was intrigued by this contraption and asked his grandfather what he used it for. His grandfather replied that he had never used it, but knowing it was there, just in case, was important to him.
CHAPTER TWO

MASCULINITY, MEDIA AND SPORT

The next two chapters look at how gender identity is manifest in the context of community and school. This chapter posits that an individual, as a member of an effectively organized society, would be able to examine his or her identity in relation to his or her potential for the development of socially valued talents and traits. These traits would be cultivated through formal and informal educational processes for the betterment of society and the well being of the individual. The traits that are potentially existent in the individual and those that are valued by contemporary society are not always in harmony. This tension is explored throughout Chapter 2. A particular feature of this chapter is the role of the media in constructing masculinity, and aligned with media representation, the function sport plays in maintaining masculine stereotypes.

2.1 Masculinity and Media

The role of the media in reinforcing stereotypical representations of women and femininity has been the topic of research for some time. The examination of masculinities in the media has only recently gained interest in the research arena. Hegemonic masculinity has, in part, been constructed through media which continues to inform and perpetuate rigid constructs.

Mainstream media representations play a role in reinforcing ideas about what it means to be a “real” man in our society. In most media portrayals, male characters are rewarded for self-control and the control of others, aggression and violence, financial independence, and physical desirability. In the report *Boys to Men: Media Messages about Masculinity*, three main themes about the portrayal of men in the media emerge:

- the majority of male characters in media are heterosexual
male characters are more often associated with the public sphere of work, rather than the private sphere of the home, and issues and problems related to work are more significant than personal issues

- non-white male characters are more likely to experience personal problems and are more likely to use physical aggression or violence to solve those problems

The third issue is pursued by Katz and Earp in the documentary *Tough Guise: Violence, Media and the Crisis in Masculinity*, in which, according to Klassen’s review, they suggest that the while the media don’t actually cause physical aggression and violence, there are elements that represent male violence as normal. This violence is particularly evident in media about advertising and sport.

In commercial representations in media advertising, women tend to be presented as “rewards” for men who choose the right product. Such commercials are seen as escapades away from home and family, according to both Craig and Bordo. They operate at the level of fantasy, presenting idealized portrayals of men and women. Beer commercials, for example, portray men who were almost exclusively virile, slim and white, while women were on the periphery, always eager for male companionship. These critics and others suggest that just as traditional advertising has for decades sexually objectified women and their bodies, today’s marketing campaigns are objectifying men in the same way, by portraying them as virile, muscular and powerful.

*Boys to Men: Media Messages about Masculinity*, identifies the most popular stereotypes of male characters as the Joker, the Jock, the Strong Silent Type, the Big Shot and the Action Hero. A further description of these may be revealing, particularly in relation to the forthcoming discussion on the role of sport in a constructing masculinity:

*The Joker* is a very popular character with boys, perhaps because laughter is part of their own “mask of masculinity.” A potential negative consequence of this stereotype is the assumption that boys and men should not be serious or emotional. However, researchers have also argued that humorous roles can be used to expand definitions of masculinity.

*The Jock* is always willing to "compromise his own long-term health; he must fight other men when necessary; he must avoid being soft; and he must be aggressive." By demonstrating his power and strength, the jock wins the approval of other men and the adoration of women.
The Strong Silent Type focuses on "being in charge, acting decisively, containing emotion, and succeeding with women.” This stereotype reinforces the assumption that men and boys should always be in control, and that talking about one’s feelings is a sign of weakness.

The Big Shot is defined by his professional status. He is the "epitome of success, embodying the characteristics and acquiring the possessions that society deems valuable." This stereotype suggests that a real man must be economically powerful and socially successful.

The Action Hero is "strong, but not necessarily silent. He is often angry. Above all, he is aggressive in the extreme and, increasingly over the past several decades, he engages in violent behaviour."

Source: Boys to Men: Media Messages about Masculinity

Research by Messner, Hunt and Dunbar (1999) reinforced this view, particularly in relation to the “Jock.” They note that “traditionally masculine images of speed, danger, and aggression are often used in the sports programming commercials that boys watch.”

The role of sport is therefore, is worthy of closer examination.

2.2 Masculinity and Sport

A number of instances in the literature have linked the construction of masculinity to sport. These include aggression and bullying on the sports field an emphasis on physical strength or toughness being part of a team and involvement or appreciation of sport in Australia. Mills (2001, p. 26) relates the construction of masculinity through sport directly to the school setting.

Now, as then, in many schools sport plays a major role in the school’s ethos. Its importance in the construction of masculinity within the school environment provides many boys with an avenue for establishing their masculinity, but for others their lack of sporting ability and involvement may become a liability.

Those boys who do not measure up, the effeminate, the overweight and the underweight and who do not compensate for this by engaging in other masculine activities, often related to alcohol, motorbikes or cars, are usually made to suffer the consequences of their lack of “masculinity.”
The male preoccupation with sport may have both advantages and disadvantages. On the positive side are the benefits of health, the setting it provides for non-destructive aggression, the development of a person’s reflexes and agility, the promotion of excellence, the development of teamwork, the sense of achievement, and the mastery over weakness and structuring of leisure time. There is also a need to choose the right amount of sport, the right type, the right coach and the right skills and attitudes which are important for male participation in sport.

The negative aspect is that it sport can promote intolerance and that competitions adversely inhibit the co-operative and vulnerable side in men.

A large body of research has been undertaken into establishing sport as a fundamental structured institution, representing a bastion of male domination. According to Messner, sport is the single most important element of the peer status system of the U.S. adolescent male. Others found links between sport, masculinity, peer status and violence while Parker (1996) actually mapped out the relationship between masculinity and boys’ physical education, focussing on issues of violence and aggression. Pollack (1999, p.273) acknowledges the advantages of sport as well as the disadvantages:

As much as they offer a break from the Boy Code, a chance for openness, expression and intimacy, sports can also push boys back to loneliness, shame and vicious competition…they cause some boys who are not involved in sport to feel left out, ashamed and unworthy.

In sport, boys learn to devalue actions that are perceived to reflect weakness and to suppress emotions that reflect softness. Athletics is one of the primary ways in which boys learn to differentiate themselves from girls and to distance themselves from the qualities they perceive to be feminine. This is achieved by bonding around their sense of superiority to and rejection of what they consider to be feminine. This is typically achieved, as with other behaviours considered to be feminine, through homophobic accusation. Examples of this can be found in a number of sources. This quote from one of Parker’s (1996) subjects encapsulated the essence of this notion:

Poofs can’t do anything can they… I mean, y’know. …I mean, a person who is a sort of a poof is a sort of a woman… I mean girl trying to catch a
rock hard ball, kind of thing, has got about the same chance as a poof
catching it... so that’s why you call them a poof...

Plummer commented at length on this saying that sports provide a
microcosm of peer dynamics. If a boy doesn’t play sports or avoids sports,
he is considered a “poofter.” He also refers to the lack of involvement in a
team as a cause for verbal harassment. One of Epstein’s subjects from a
study in 1998 commented that:

Thinking back to when I was 13/14/15, if people weren’t strong enough to
play rugby for the school then my biggest upset was that “oh you’re a
pooflah [sic], you nancy-boy” you know. People who wanted to be in the
school play, rather than play football would get a lashing.

This view finds support in Powys’ autobiography in which he states:

Oh! Those interminable hours when I stood fielding, never being allowed
to bowl a single “over” and finally when my innings came round, always
out for nothing! ...after I had missed a catch at “long-leg” saying to myself
in bitter degradation and complete misery: “O Lord take away my life, for I
am not worthy to live!”

The capacity of the male student to gain the acceptance of his peers
through his athletic ability and involvement in other school activities was
investigated in the early 1960s. Kelly later quantified these ideas, noting
that being an athlete and knowing lots of girls were the most highly ranked
items for peer acceptance.

With regard to what boys talk about, Kelly also offers some
suggestions: 24% talk about sport, 24% talk about girls, 8.5% talk about
school activities, 7.7% talk about cars, 3.5% talk about classes. Talking
about sport and girls brings status to those who can prove their prowess in
both. They help to define heterosexuality and its relationship with sport.
Kelly’s data also clearly indicates the dominant role sport plays in
students’ peer relations.

The role of the coach may likewise play a role in entrenching
homophobic behaviour. Take, for example, the coach refers to a player’s
inferior performance as being like a “girl,” a “sheila” or a “poofter.” This
comment and others like it also help to embed the erroneous assumption
that the feminine and the homosexual are linked. Sport is a powerful
influence on the formative ages of adolescence when boys are encouraged
to participate by peers, school authorities, parents and the media: it is one
of the chief means of socialisation. It is far less important for girls: sport, in the eyes of Cashman (1995) is just one of the areas of female socialisation, along with the arts, music, ballet and domestic activities. Commenting on this in Australian context, McKay (1991, p.170) who comments:

…males are also oppressed physically, emotionally and sexually by sport and those who reject its macho aura are often ostracised or stigmatised by males and females. Male dancers and figure skaters are frequently subjected to ridicule about their manliness from both males and females.

The role of the media has transformed sport by giving it even greater popularity. A further message perpetrated by media coverage is that violent practices are more aligned to entertainment than to violence. This is particularly true of football, boxing and wrestling where the participants refer to entertainment value and in some cases, belong to the relevant entertainment union. As such, it removes real acts of violence from the realm of reality and into fantasy.

There is a hierarchy within sport, with ball sports typically ranked the highest. According to Sabo and Panepinto, football sustains, through ritual, a hegemonic model of masculinity that prioritises competitiveness, success, aggression and superiority to women. Boys who are good at sport have profited from this, while other boys: small, awkward, academic or artistic boys who are not interested in sports have to come to terms with it and find other ways to stake their masculinity.

Sporting status was judged on participation, team nature and whether it was tough or not. Two of Plummer’s subjects from his 1999 (p. 41) study commented on this with remarks such as: “if you didn’t achieve at footy, you were a poofier” and “the ones who weren’t playing sport, more interested in reading, the ones who weren’t doing what everyone else was doing.” In *Louts and Legends*, a study of an Australian, urban, working class, boys' high school, Walker (1988, p. 39) gives support to the notion of hierarchy of masculinities within the school, dominated by “the footballers”:

The superiority of heterosexuality, of machismo demonstrated through athletic and sexual prowess, physical strength, drinking and appropriate verbal display … were the shibboleths of footballer culture.
The sport of rugby union has a specific role in the hierarchy of sports. White and Vagi claim that rugby is a mock-combat sport developed from medieval games designed to affirm masculine aggression and that many other modern combat sports, such as gridiron developed from rugby to sustain these purposes. In the late 19th century as women became an increasing threat to men, the game was developed as a male preserve to bolster masculinity and at the same time “mock, objectify and vilify women.” This reference to mock combat in the academic literature brings to mind a scene from the television series The Young Ones.

* Rik (watching television) – “War, war, bloody war. Why can’t they have stories about love and peace?”

* Vyvyan – “Because it’s sissy, you girlie.”

Examples from the media may assist in illustrating this point. The first is from television. In 2004, a character called Reg Reagan appeared on Australian television. Reg was the brainchild of football commentator Matthew Johns and while it was intended to be humorous, the values espoused by this character only serve to further entrench hegemonic masculinity. In a publication to capitalise on the on-screen success of his character, Johns (2007, p. 4) describes himself as follows:

> To his billions of fans, Reg Reagan typifies some uniquely Australian values: he loves a beer or twenty, is a self-confessed ladies’ man, practises an extreme form of on-field violence, sticks by his mates (until he gets a better offer) and has the most famous mo and mullet since Newk [Australian tennis player John Newcombe] and [Jimmy] Connors shared a post-match shower together.

Here, in a single paragraph, Johns encapsulates all the negative aspects of involvement in sport: the emphasis on drinking to excess, sexual prowess, violence, mateship and homophobia. This information is supported by Reg’s on-screen persona wearing a T-shirt with the words “Bring back the biff” inscribed across the front. This catchphrase took flight at local games and within football culture at large, a sign that grassroots football supporters didn’t understand the irony Johns intended. The ensuing media coverage focussed on whether football had gone “soft” in its approach to the physical aspects of the game.

John’s volume (interestingly classified by its publisher as non-fiction) is packed full of clichés about involvement in sport and compulsory
subscription to hegemonic masculinity. A few excerpts reveal the extent of this. The first is from the introductory paragraph and sums up Johns’ perspectives on his character:

Every Wednesday afternoon I meet up with some old mates at a pub in Sydney’s Surry Hills to sink a quick dozen schooners. We catch up on what’s happening around the traps and swap stories about my legendary life and sporting prowess. One day not so long ago, after a few hours drinking and chatting, it was time for me to leave for my regular appointment at A Touch of Class massage and relaxation centre… the girls there have magic in their fingers and know how to rub those aching muscles away. The massage you form head to toe and find every nook and cranny in between, if you know what I mean.

Drinking, socialising at the pub and womanising feature strongly in this excerpt. The notion of violence, competition and win-at-all-costs mentality is encapsulated in this extract on page 17, in which he describes his on-field behaviour and after-match antics:

I did anything and everything to get an advantage. I grabbed genitals. I used my elbows, knees and fingers to cause maximum damage to my opponents. Once I even used a linesman’s flag to perform what could only be described as a colonoscopy on my opposite number. The crowd swelled as word passed around the district that Ray Reagan’s boys was wreaking havoc at the Cessnock Showground. To cut a long story short, we won. I scored the winning try and even shagged a few of the Maitland cheerleaders around the back of the grandstand after the match.

While, Johns’ intention is to expose the myths of male hegemony through humour and satire, this is never unpacked or extrapolated through exegesis, not even in a postlude to the volume. The average ten-year-old reader is not going to understand the biting sarcasm of the writer and will take this behaviour as acceptable and endeavour to “bring back the biff” in their engagement with sport.

Music is only mentioned peripherally by Johns where he suggests that Cyndi Lauper’s song “Girls just wanna have fun” should have been titled “Girls just wanna have sex.” The interaction of music and sport features more extensive treatment in this second example, this time from the print media. In May and June, 2007 a war of words broke out in the print media surrounding a football series. On one side, there was a coach encouraging his side to make the series as aggressive as possible. The opening salvo came with these words:
If someone is whacking you around, you have to whack them back. Our forwards have to stand up and be stronger, that’s the bottom line. You see a player get up from the ground with blood streaming out of his mouth; someone’s got to pay for that as far as I’m concerned. If your mate gets hit, whack someone back. You’re in camp for ten days with these blokes. You’re playing for your life. (Marshall, 2007, p. 96)

Quite apart from the erroneous assumption that playing a game of football is akin to “playing for your life,” the emphasis on violence of this nature is both unnecessary and contrary to accepted patterns of behaviour off the field.

The response from the opposing team was to label this as “mongrel” behaviour. The public conversation, through the media, centred around how much aggression was acceptable on the football field and concluded with the comment if violence wasn’t part of football, the players must be “choir boys.” The use of this term was accompanied by a digitally altered photo of the team, dressed in choir robes. The inference that choral participation was the antithesis of sporting participation served to further entrench stereotypes and polarize viewpoints of masculinity in these terms.

### 2.3 Music and Sport

The day of the athletics carnival was one of the most challenging days in George’s school calendar. He remembers being dragooned onto the athletics team on some pointless exercise designed to win points for his house, and was allotted the discipline of high jump. What was the point, he thought. Here was a stick two metres above the ground and he, at 150 centimetres was supposed to hurl himself over it. He had three attempts, each a farcical and pointless exercise. Having failed at what he knew to be an impossible task before he started; he slunk off the grandstand, feeling wretched.

While the perception of singing as the antithesis of football has been documented in the exchange above, relatively few researchers have explored the relationship between music and sport in relation to participation. In the 1990s, Cashman (1995) compared the arts and sport as opposites in a binary but I first explored the idea that sport was construed as masculine and music as feminine in *Music versus Sport: What the Score?*, concluding that

Music is losing: losing existing and potential students. The score-line can be improved by addressing one of the reasons for this loss: the respective gendered constructions of sport and music. In addition to addressing this
political issue, strategies can be put into place to support the broader agenda.

There were isolated examples revealed in my research that demonstrated the way in which such strategies could be brought about so that music and sport could work together. One of my participants noted:

I recall in Year 10 there was a senior student who played 3rd clarinet. He was in the first XV Rugby and brought many of the team closer to music.

I explored the ways in which music and sport could be complementary in 2005. In a case study that involved musicians and rugby union players undertaking a tour to Fiji together, the ways in which two “opposing” activities could achieve positive corporate goals were documented. This research, in the words of three teacher participants found that

All involved...had a sincere passion for what they were involved in and they could appreciate others for there shared passion whether it is for sport, music or both.

What was interesting was the obvious respect and appreciation that the boys had for each other’s talents and expertise. This was revealed in the constant support extended by the rugby players and community workers to the musicians when performing and the reciprocal nature of that support...

Generally in other schools a lot of boys who are music students often have perceptions that sport players are meatheads and a lot of the sport players (jocks) have misconceptions of musicians being weird & soft, but I believe here there isn’t a lot of prejudice surrounding whatever students [at this College] choose to do (Harrison 2005, p. 59)

The promotion of excellence, the development of teamwork, and the sense of achievement were clearly evident in this example. The one-off examples had some effect in the media, as one commentator noted in relation to the change in societal attitudes, “years ago these kids with a musical instrument would have been thought of as the lowest form of life, but things have changed” (Curro in Allen, 2005).

I recognised at the time that one or two examples of effective practice don’t bring about complete change, but they provide illustrations of the possibilities and raise awareness of effecting social change. The underlying theme is that sport, through the media continues to contribute to the negative aspects of masculinity while music provides an opportunity...
for the development of more positive attributes. My favourite as quote from Curro in relation to this is “there isn’t a bad side to music making.”

Two more recent accounts of the co-operation of music and sport serve to illustrate this further: one personal and one institutional.

Paul Holley (2008) provides an example of a young man who was both sportsman and singer: Lachlan. Lachlan’s mother, a music teacher, had an expectation that her son should learn music and play rugby league. He began playing football at age four and began trumpet lessons at age nine. After a very short time, Lachlan gave up trumpet and decided to sing. On scholarship at high school, he was expected to contribute to the music programme, play rugby for the school and maintain academic standards. He was also involved in touch football, volleyball, running, cross-country and swimming. In year nine, he successfully auditioned for the school production of Annie. Of this experience he noted:

I copped some flack from the boys at school about singing but my position as captain of the rugby team meant I didn’t get it too tough.

Lachlan’s involvement as a sportsperson brought him status within his school and this provided him with some, but not complete, protection from adverse comment. Not all students are so lucky. In some of my earlier work, I noted this remark from a young man:

All through most of my High School life I had to persevere with a lot of nasty comments and rumours from most of the mainstream students and for a while I was alienated purely because I enjoyed singing. My school wasn’t a place for young male singers (Harrison, 2001, p. 11).

This was not the case in all schools. Anthony Young (2008, in press) maintains that one of the key elements in music making in schools is to achieve a critical mass of students who are involved in both music and sport. He provides some down to earth examples of strategies that worked in his school:

At my school, there has traditionally been a great deal of time and money put into ensuring that almost all of the students are competent Rugby or Soccer players. In addition to curriculum time spent in physical recreation classes, huge numbers of students are transported after school to sports grounds twice a week for training. This culminates in weekly games against other schools on Saturdays. The students playing these games have a strong understanding and appreciation of the skills involved. ... Because
of their own involvement in the activity they have a certain ownership of it. They take pride in their own playing and appreciate the playing of others.

If you teach your school to sing, all of the students can similarly take pride in their own singing and appreciate the singing of others. Because of their own involvement in singing, they have a certain ownership of it. Students will take pride in the sound of their school singing and will actually appreciate and care about how the premier choir of the school is performing.

Young continues this line of reasoning, noting the difficulty of initiating such a program without the infrastructure enjoyed by sport. He encourages teachers to avoid the easy option of teaching those who are already talented in an elite program small “elite” program. He concludes:

I believe that for the health of musicians and music in general in our country, we need to create a situation where musicians are the happy, normal, accepted majority.

2.4 Summary

Sport can therefore contribute substantially to the construction of hegemonic masculinity. Students who avoid sports are subjected to scrutiny and homophobic violence. This is more so if the sport is football, the sole domain of men: women and children are excluded. Along with the home, school are where some of the most striking examples of the masculine construct can be found.
Thinking back to his childhood, George contemplated the role of sport in his early life. How involved was his mum? He remembers his mum taking him home for dinner after the game, watching a little television and then going to bed. His dad stayed at the clubhouse with his team. There was drinking (a fair bit of drinking, George thought at the time) and time to relax with his mates. Years later, his dad would tell him about the great camaraderie he shared at this time: the drinking of beer, the sharing of stories and much more.

Sport was a part of primary school, for George, too. It was a small school and some years, he would be in a class with students from another grade: a composite class. He enjoyed the variety this brought, the opportunity to learn from the older students and to lead the younger students when he was in the older grade. He enjoyed the independence this brought, too. There was a strong emphasis at the school on physical education: swimming in summer and athletics in winter. The school was expected to train boys in the older grades to come through the ranks of the rugby league team: to play like their dads on Saturday afternoon. Tradition and team spirit were all important.
CHAPTER THREE

GENDER RELATIONS IN THE SCHOOL

As a microcosm of society, schools have the responsibility of providing varied opportunities for success, for the acquisition of different skills and the provision of alternate opportunities for crystallizing identity. Ideas presented in this chapter suggest that boys and girls view school differently: girls appear to participate and achieve more successfully than boys, particularly in literary and creative domains. In relation to music, the ratio of females to males is quite high. Teaching is also perceived as a feminised occupation.

One of the central notions of this book is that this gender imbalance is the result of the construction of masculinity that excludes anything that may be perceived as feminine. Particularly, the avoidance of femininity is a key element in the construction of masculinity. If the dominant group, through oppression by bullying and other means, implies that learning is a feminine pursuit, then it is likely to be avoided by males. Furthermore, as there is an established hierarchy of accepted activities and music, as one of the “gentler pursuits” is not highly regarded by males or females; participation in music at school is affected.

3.1 The approach of teachers

The role of teachers in perpetuating gender stereotypes by complacent or active means has been well documented. In addition, it is evident that male authority (by teachers and students) is achieved through the reliance on aggressive, competitive and intimidating patterns of behaviour. This can serve to perpetuate the stereotypical images of “good, quiet girls and tough, naughty boys” and is represented in schools through assemblies, wall displays, stories and attitudes of teachers. Mac An Ghaill (1994) categorizes teachers’ approaches to gender issues into three broad areas: “The Professionals” who emphasize authority, discipline and control; the “Old Collectivists” who engage to some extent in pro-feminist behaviours and have a student-centred approach and the “New Entrepreneurs” who
are ambitious and market orientated. The professionals remain in the majority in schools and while there are increasing numbers of the latter categories, the emphasis on authority is problematic for teachers, students and school communities. Patriarchal tendencies abound, despite the feminisation of the teaching workforce. This balance of sexes in the teaching profession also sends messages to students: at primary level, 22.7% of teachers are male and at secondary level 42.7% of teachers are male (Adams-Jones and Vickers, 2001, p.10). In the preschool years, only 2.9% of teachers are male. Drudy (2008, p. 310) confirms this:

The teaching of young children has long been dominated by women. This global phenomenon is firmly rooted in issues relating to economic development, urbanization, the position of women in society, cultural definitions of masculinity and the value of children and childcare.

This could give students the message that teaching and learning at school are feminine pursuits. As with many professions, however, the gender balance at management level remains in favour of males. In the United States Owen (2008, p. 6) reports that

In the 2006-07 school year, men high school principals outnumbered women 163 to 79. At the middle school level, it was 119 men to 83 women, according to the Oregon Department of Education. National figures paint a similar picture. Statistics from 2004 show 74 percent of all principals in middle and high schools were men, compared to 26 percent women.

The extent to which teachers influence students in relation to musical choices will become clearer in later chapters but of particular attention at this point are the types of teachers outlined here, the effect of the gender balance in the teaching profession and the attitudes of teachers and managers (principals and deputy principals) towards students.

George was taught exclusively by females until the age of twelve. The only male teacher he knew was the principal: an authority figure with whom he had little positive contact. Nevertheless, George liked primary school and his school reports from the time described him as well-behaved, co-operative and understanding of the needs of others.
3.2 The approach of students

It would appear that boys and girls view academic endeavours in different ways and tend to exhibit differences in subject choice and achievement. Apart from the social and academic issues, involvement in the co-curricular life of the learning environment is of particular interest, as much music education takes place in times other than scheduled classes.

Girls tend to have a broader view of school and see it as fulfilling a personal and enrichment role in their development. Some boys view school as a place that focuses on academic achievement. This could be related to each sex’s view of intelligence: females appear to subscribe to the entity theory of intelligence that proposes that you either have it, or you don’t. Males are more likely to subscribe to the incremental theory that says that the harder you work, the more you learn, the smarter you get. Further, females’ self-concept tends to be relationally orientated, while males’ self-concept is individuated. This can mean that females define themselves in terms of social relationships and males in terms of their achievement. Girls are socialized to preserve their relationships with others.

According to much of the literature in this area, girls are seen to communicate and listen and have deeper, more intimate friendships. Boys, on the other hand, base their friendships on mutual interest. Being part of a team was seen to be an important factor in the maintenance of masculinity. Boys learn to be team members through their large group, large motor preference. Within their friendship groups, there is pride, identity development, excitement and status. As suggested earlier in relation to masculine identity, there is often a high price to pay for belonging in terms of individuality and the capacity to express emotion.
George remembers liking Thursdays the best at primary school. This was the day the music teacher visited. The teacher had a circuit of the all the small schools in the district and would turn up in her car, loaded up with all manner of instruments: recorders, xylophones, maracas, castanets and other percussion. There were also two guitars. The teacher played one of these and the older students were allowed to play the other one. George couldn’t wait until he was old enough to play that guitar. He watched the teacher closely and tried to imitate her movements as she changed chords. Most of the music class revolved around singing. They sang songs with the guitar, of course, but also unaccompanied songs and part songs.

After the upheaval at home, one of things that keep George going in these last few primary school years was going to school on Thursday. When he was finally allowed to play the guitar, what a joy it was: to sing and play together; to feel that he was contributing to the accompaniment of the songs in class. Sometimes, their class would sing a song for school assembly and George would accompany them on the guitar. George felt so proud to be expressing himself and leading in this way.

The behaviour of boys in schools could be classified into two areas, according to Forsey (1990): behaviour that results from the power imperative and behaviour that results from denial of self. The power imperative was responsible for such things as aggressive behaviour including domination of space and of others, fighting and competition. This may well be related to the role models displayed by male authority figures in the management of the school and the predominance of “old professionals” within school structures. Denial of self resulted in poor social skills, a fear of exhibiting weakness (read: “being feminine”) and the predominance of boys in virtually all remedial and special classes for intellectual and social problems. Both areas were thought to be responsible for discipline and attitudes to females.

There is recent evidence to suggest that teachers are finding girls who are increasingly acting in ways conventionally associated with particular forms of masculinity. Particularly in relation to music, J. Terry Gates also noted that girls appear to be adopting social values traditionally associated with males. This “de-sexing” of schooling is an interesting phenomenon, the effect of which in relation to music programs will be discussed later.
3.3 Single sex activities

Given that boys and girls have different expectations of schooling and the differences in their experience seems to be great, the question of whether single sex schooling (by choice) or a co-educational learning environment is better for either sex has been the source of recent debate.

Recent US studies of elite independent schools and the Catholic education sector have confirmed that girls now do equally well in single-sex and co-educational schools. Furthermore, Riordan (1990, p. 6) reports that

The academic and developmental consequences of attending one type of school versus another type of school are virtually zero for middle-class and otherwise advantaged students; by contrast, the consequences are significant for students who are or have been historically or traditionally disadvantaged -- minorities, low- and working-class youth, and females (so long as the females are not affluent).

Riordan does not comment on the validity of these findings for other contexts. He refers to studies involving Japan, Belgium, New Zealand and Thailand that noted the impact of single sex schools varies from one country to another and this impact is limited to education systems in which single-sex schools are relatively rare and where the student body is selective. Younger and Warrington (2006, p. 4) provide a strong argument for single-sex schooling, based on their research in the United Kingdom and drawing on findings from projects in the United States and Australia. They found that

Single-sex classes can have beneficial effects on students' learning, motivation, and engagement but only when certain preconditions have been met. Students, particularly, have made the case for the benefits that can be gained in terms of a more conducive classroom environment in which they are able to take opportunities to talk more openly about issues, they can exchange views without fear of embarrassment or of undermining their own image, and they feel less pressure to perform and "showboat" for the benefit of the other sex.

According to Kruse, teachers refer to the establishment of single sex classes as positive, indicating a major advantage for the learning experience of girls. Boys in single sex classes are reported as being less distracted and more willing to contribute to classes and take risks.
George’s mum decided to send George to boarding school in the city. She thought that he needed some male role models around him, to provide a surrogate father. George was sorry to leave his small town. The city wasn’t far away but his school had about the same population as a small town: 1500 students. George was homesick. He missed his mum, his grandparents and his sister. The school was an all-boys school and he found this a challenge. Like home, the school had a strong focus on sport. It was something used to keep the boarders busy after school and on the weekends. His school was good at sport. They prided themselves on their achievements and the sportsmen in the school were held in high regard.

George missed the primary school days when he was honoured for singing and playing the guitar. Music wasn’t really part of the culture of his new school. Routine was important: early rise; then to breakfast in the dining hall. School classes from 9am to 3:30pm, then most boys went to sport practice. George went to the library most afternoons, spending the reading and playing board games. After sports practice it was time for showers, dinner and then study before bed. This routine was repeated each day, each week for the first year at boarding school.

Co-educational primary and secondary schools have piloted single sex classes. With regard to the study of the arts, Watterston found that males in single sex groups in elementary and high school levels were more likely to engage in singing, poetry, drama and language. The experience of Clarkson Primary School in Western Australia indicated that in literacy classes, improvement in academic and social domains was apparent. Specialist teachers reported higher levels of satisfaction. For example, in musical instrument selection, gender lines were more likely to be crossed. Boys did not feel the need to live up to the stereotype and discipline referrals decreased significantly. However, there is a danger that the single sex environment can serve to reinforce stereotypes: that is masculinity can continue to be viewed as the antithesis of femininity. Watterston recognised this but also acknowledged the positive outcomes of the Western Australian experience of single sex classes. He cautioned that the relationship between and amongst the genders needed to be developed positively, enhanced and transformed into co-educational settings.

At Buderim State School, Australia, where single sex classes were offered for the first time in 2000, boys reported being relieved at not having to compete with girls while girls appreciated the opportunity to get on with their work. Anecdotal evidence reported in later chapters verifies this: the fear of living up to gender expectations in front of girls prohibits
freedom of activity. Schools can also inhibit activities through their offerings: Ainley indicates that some single sex schools don’t always offer students as full a range of subjects. For example, subjects stereotypically associated with girls might not be offered in boys’ schools. Situational factors are a significant aspect of single sex schooling and could include the selection of teachers to participate in such endeavours. In the United Kingdom, Gillborn and Gipps (1996) reported that

Single-sex teaching appears most likely to be successful where [the] staff are fully committed to it, where there is extensive preparation of staff and students before these groupings are put in place, where gender-specific teaching strategies are used and evolve, and where there is an ethos of achievement and discipline within the school.

It would appear, therefore, that under some circumstances, single sex activities may result in higher levels of engagement and “better” results for students of both sexes. In relation to musical activities, the most significant finding in this brief review is that of Younger and Warrington: that students would be less embarrassed and would feel under less pressure to perform for the other sex. In the context of the previous chapter, in which males feel the obligation to “live up” to certain expectation, the role of single sex activities with regard to music will be a feature of investigations described in the following chapters.

### 3.4 Achievement and subject choice

In recent years there has been considerable emphasis on the comparative achievement levels of boys and girls. In general, these have tended to focus on the improvement in achievement standards by females, particularly in Maths and Sciences. Boys commonly exhibit more interest and higher results in specific aspects of this subject area, while girls are typically more interested in humanities and achieve more highly in these pursuits. An examination of the data in schools the United Kingdom in recent years may reveal the basis for this trend.

Noble and Bradford (2000) and Bleach et al, (1998) have highlighted concerns about the relatively slow rate of achievement of boys compared with girls in schools. More recently, the UK department of Department of Children, Schools and Families data from 2008 indicates that boys dominate in maths, science and technology at A Level and far more men than women study these subjects in higher education. The UK data reflects
Over ten years ago, New Zealand studies by Fergusson and Horwood found that males under-achieved but that this difference was adequately explained by classroom behaviours (exhibitions of disruptive and inattentive classroom conduct) that consequently prevented progress and led to male disadvantage. In addition to disruptive behaviours, a further explanation for the under-achievement of males can be found in the Australian studies of Bornholt, Goodnow and Cooney (1994). They claim that

Two sources of gender stereotypes explain complex interactions of gender and subject domain for interrelated aspects of achievement: a tendency by males to overestimate specific task performance across domains, and traditional gender stereotypes about "natural talent" for females in English and for males in mathematics. The broad implications for ways we think about mathematics and gender require an understanding of discrete notions of ability and performance, and an acknowledgment of students’ flexible self-categorizations (p. 675)

This data points to boys underachieving at school in the key areas of literacy and numeracy. As discussed in the last chapter, there is evidence to suggest that working hard at school is un-masculine. Boys, according to Frosh, admire other boys who are dominant, in control and swear a lot, even if those character traits lead to poor academic results.

There is little current data that gives an indication of achievement specifically related to music, though a comparison I undertook in 2004 indicated that the single-sex settings contributed significantly to achievement by girls with respect to confidence and achievement in music (e.g., Colley, Comber, & Hargreaves, 1998).

While it is reasonable to assume that there are gender-based reasons for differences in achievement in schools and that these can be the result of contextual and behavioural considerations, the deeper problem is that of engagement. Without baseline engagement in schools, and particularly the arts and music, studies into achievement have little relevance. An examination of the data surrounding participation rates may reveal the core issue facing music educators in relation to gender: getting students to undertake musical activities.
To give an historical perspective on the topic of subject choice, figures for enrolment in subjects in 1980 in the United Kingdom were examined by Mahoney (1985, p.17). In a sample of over 500,000 students, just over 11,000 elected to take music. In this study, music was the subject taken by the smallest number of students by a large margin. Parry (1996, pp.2-3) pointed out that little has changed since Mahoney’s study noting: “Subject choices follow the traditional pattern with girls highly visible in the arts and boys in science.” While the sex anti-discrimination act was introduced in 1975, little had changed with regard to traditional subject choices in the United Kingdom in the intervening 20 years.

Subject choices in Australian schools were the topic of a study by Fullerton and Ainley in 2000. Some of the results of this study are presented in Figure 3.1. This was part of a longitudinal study in which data for 7500 students was collected. Gender was found to be one of the student characteristics accounting for the greatest proportion of variation in student enrolments. Males dominate the areas of mathematics, physical sciences, technical studies, computer studies and physical education. Females dominate in the areas of English, humanities, social sciences, biological sciences, the arts, languages other than English, home sciences and health studies. Of interest here are the enrolments in the arts. Around 30% of the total students enrolled in 1998 elected to take an arts subject, with almost twice the number of girls than boys opting for an arts subject.

For the purposes of this study, Art, Music, Drama, Dance, Theatre Studies, Graphic Communication and Media Studies were included in the Arts Key Learning Area.

Figure 3.1 Year 12, 1998 enrolments by gender

Source: Adapted from Fullerton and Ainley (2000, p.14)
Allen and Bell suggest that the view of examining differences in participation and attainment by gender is itself a somewhat meaningless enterprise and that the most meaningful differences in outcomes are those produced by an analysis of the relationships of gender and socio-economic background or gender and region. Allen and Bell are correct to recommend an analysis of these relationships, but more specific data on music participation needs to be presented in order to form the foundation for the argument. While Fullerton and Ainley (2000) reported that music was taken by 5% of the total student population in Australia, the gender breakdown for music was not available. Figure 3.1 above only gives an indication of the gender balance across a sample of conglomerated subject areas in Australia in 1998.

Specifically in relation to music, Teese, et al. reported that music has been typically taken by a larger proportion of females than males in Australia. Hanley (1998, p.52) supports this with figures from British Columbia where “girls take music in greater numbers and tend to earn higher grades except in composition, strings and jazz.” Hanley’s data raises the issue of specific styles within music and the emphasis on genre-specific gender-related concerns, in other words: what kind of music is being studied by whom? There is little quantitative data about music and even less about the style. This will be addressed tangentially in the following chapters in relation to popular music, but there is room for further detailed research into this topic.

In his paper on the cost of hegemonic masculinity for boys and girls, Martino found that one of his interviewees provided this response with regard to the study of English; “English is more suited to girls because it’s not the way guys think…I hope you aren’t offended by this, but most guys who study English are faggots.” Gilbert and Gilbert also report that in studies of English, women and non-macho boys are often depicted as outcasts and victims in writing class. Teachers report that, in the opinion of many male students, the study of music or certain types of music may fit into the same category.
In year nine, a miracle! The school employed a music teacher. The first music class George went to, they were learning guitar. Because of his experience in primary school, George was able to play a lot of the things they were learning. The teacher recognised this and, instead of George being bored with learning old material, the teacher gave him the opportunity to teach some of the other students. George felt valued. He was making a contribution. The teacher gave him a school guitar to take to his room in the boarding house to practise.

George was good at music and English. He did okay in his other subjects but he really liked music and English. George realised that his interests were more like the girls than the boys. He played guitar, he liked writing his own songs and singing them while he accompanied himself on the guitar. This was a solitary life and he wished he could share his talents with people at school. Outside the music class, there wasn’t much he could do without facing ridicule. His voice hadn’t changed and he liked to sing; he liked to play his guitar. The other boys didn’t always recognise and value George’s talent: the older boys mocked his high voice. On more than one occasion, they hid his guitar. This constant mocking and teasing almost caused George to give up music altogether, but he persevered.

Specifically with regard to choosing music as an academic pursuit, Swanwick made it clear exactly what students think of music in the middle schooling years in the United Kingdom in 1988: music was rated the lowest in popularity of any subject. Swanwick and Lawson (1999) reviewed this data, finding that popularity continued to decline with age and that more girls than boys liked music. Ross and Kamba agreed, finding that, along with physics, music has been the least popular school subject in England in the last 25 years.

Koza (1994) comments that music has been seen as an ornamental subject in the United States for more than 150 years and that ornamental or peripheral status has been given to all subjects taught at female academies in the 19th century and this trend has persisted into this century. Swanwick also refers to this occurring in the United Kingdom at the turn of the 20th century. The baseline measures for taking courses in the United States as reported in Gender Gaps: Where schools still fail our children (1999) indicate that 45% of females and 27% of males had taken or were taking music courses.

Wright sought to discover whether there was any correlation between gender and achievement in music education in Wales. She found that boys in the 11 – 14 year age group outperformed girls in performing and
composing tasks, while girls outperformed boys in appraising tasks. In the 14 – 16 year age group girls consistently outperformed boys, but boys achieved higher grades in music than in other core subjects.

Clearly, in terms of participation and achievement, the data indicates that academic music is the domain of girls. One of the central hypotheses of this volume is that this imbalance is the result of the construction of masculinity that excludes anything that may be perceived as feminine. In the next chapter an argument is put forward, based on the work of Koza, that musical involvement by boys is restricted because it is seen as a peripheral or decorative subject. Underlying Koza’s argument and the justification for music’s inclusion in the curriculum is the notion that it is feminine, and as such part of the undesirable “other”.

It can be concluded that boys generally under achieve at school (though this is reliant on contextual considerations) and the females tend to participate in music to a higher level than boys at all stages of education. Much music-making takes place in environments other than classrooms between 9am and 3pm and indeed beyond educational institutions altogether.

3.5 Co-curricular activities

This chapter has been principally concerned with issues of achievement and participation in classroom practices. Schooling is about more than achievement. The debate as to the value of education beyond achievement has long been on the educational agenda, particularly when knowledge acquisition is defined in terms of those buzz-words of the 21st century: literacy and numeracy. While the data above with regard to achievement is helpful, it needs to be recognized in the context of the current environment: schooling encompasses other domains. As McGraw et al. (1992, p.174) concluded:

School effectiveness is about a great deal more than maximizing academic achievement. Learning and love of learning; personal development and self esteem; life skills, problem solving and learning how to learn; the development of independent thinkers and well rounded confident individuals; all rank highly or more highly as the outcomes of effective schooling as success in a narrow range of academic disciplines.

The case for studying activities beyond the normal academic environment is quite strong. These activities are variously referred to as
non-academic or extra-curricular, though the current discussion should prove that co-curricular is a more desirable term. Such attitudes promote, according to Gender Gaps: Where schools still fail our children (1999, p.93):

Teamwork, individual and group responsibility, physical strength and endurance, competition, diversity and a sense of culture and community;
Students involved in extra curricular activities were three times more likely to perform in the top quartile on a composite math and reading assessment compared with non-participants.

This finds support with Kelly who says that schools should make available varied opportunities for success, for the acquisition of different skills and the provision of alternate opportunities for crystallizing identity. From the students’ point of view, this means the chance of getting involved in a wide variety of activities and to play different roles. Historically, Barker and Gump (1964), Wicker (1968) and Williems (1967) found that it is not the number of opportunities that are provided that is important, but the opportunities for active participation. Participation in the informal structure of the school is a central part of adolescent experience.

George remembers the Combined Music Day which took place in primary school. Once a year, they would get on the bus to join up with the other schools in the district. The five schools would come together and prepare a concert for their parents. George remembers the feeling of belonging as he realised all the other kids in the area were doing the same thing as he was, just at a different time in the week. One of his favourite memories was singing Leonard Cohen’s Alleluia: there was something about that word that, when everyone sang it together, it really meant something.
His mum and grandparents would usually come to the concert. His dad was always too busy and, to be truthful, wasn’t all that interested in George and his music. In his mind, George was expected to grow up just like him: to work in the mine, to play sport as a young man, to learn how to stand up for himself.

Many musical activities, such as George’s combined choir performance, take place beyond the normal academic environment. Evidence cited earlier suggests that music activities may also enhance performance in other subject areas. In addition, data from 1997 in the United States indicates that in the nation’s leading aptitude test, the Scholastic Aptitude Test, students who had studied four years of music scored an average of 32 points higher on verbal exams and 23 points
higher in mathematics. Participation rates in co-curricular activities by gender deserve scrutiny. In the United States in 2002, 25% of female Year 12 students participated in the school band or orchestra: only 15% of male Year 12 students participated.

In the Australian context, where much of the research for this volume has been undertaken, Ainley reported on involvement of students in the arts: 79.6% of all primary students reported some involvement in the arts and 54.8% of all secondary students reported involvement. The breakdown by sex for primary students’ involvement in non-academic activities can be seen in Figure 5. Ireland (1995) supports this, reporting that in terms of participation in Australian schools, debating is almost 100% female, choir is about 90% female and creative and performing arts are almost 70% female. While the data by gender was not available for competitive sport in the primary school, the overall figure for involvement by both genders was 87.9%. The secondary school data reveal this is the only area in which boys’ involvement exceeds that of the girls. Participation in sport continues to dominate out-of-school activities and, until music educators take on this challenge, little will change. As the work of Anthony Young noted in Chapter Two, elitism is the enemy of music education in this regard. It should also be noted that involvement in all activities dropped off in the transition to secondary school. The fall in participation rates by males in the arts is considerable.

Figure 3.2: Participation in non-academic activities for Primary students by sex

Source: Adapted from Ainley (1996, p.77)
In broad terms according to this data, females are engaged in the arts through formal and informal experiences. This is true of the entire community and the school environment.

Australian Bureau of Statistics data from 2006 provides the most up-to-date figures on participation at the time of writing. In 2005, the following statistics outside of school hours’ activities were reported:

- 520,500 (20% of 5 to 14 year olds) played a musical instrument
- 332,600 (12%) had lessons or gave a dance performance
- 147,000 (6%) had lessons or gave a singing performance
- 119,100 (4%) participated in drama.

These activities were more popular with girls than boys. Approximately 44% of girls and 22% of boys were involved in at least one of the selected cultural activities. However, few children were involved in more than one cultural activity: approximately 12% of girls and 3% of boys took part in two or more activities. Involvement in each of the different cultural activities varied by sex: the most obvious example was dancing where 23% of girls were involved compared with 2% of boys. Boys were most interested in playing a musical instrument (18%).

Based on this material and on data from Canada, Adam Adler and I presented the notion of a “Gender Hierarchy of School Subjects and Activities” in 2004. In this hierarchy, sport, information technology, maths and science are rated as more “masculine” pursuits while the arts are more “feminine.” We also presented a hierarchy of music participation, in which marching band ranks highest and non-competitive choir ranks lowest. These notions of gendered participation, that rank the arts as more feminine pursuits, and vocal music as the most feminine within the arts, in central to this volume.

3.6 Music for Music’s sake

An interesting footnote to this discussion is to comment on the role music has played in the educational process and, in fact, in life. It could be inferred from the data above that involvement in music should be encouraged because of the benefits it brings to other aspects of life: the fringe benefits. Music should, of course, be studied for its own sake. The study of the arts has been advocated for many centuries. The brief
chronological summary below is not intended to be exhaustive but rather to serve as a reminder of the value of music for its own sake.

Music is a moral law. It gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and charm and gaiety to life and to everything (Plato)

The ancient world advocated musical training. Plato considered musical order to be analogous to moral order. He maintained that music could better the soul and that a child exposed to the right modes would unconsciously develop discriminating habits and abilities which would allow him or her to distinguish between good and evil. As a philosopher, it is interesting to note that he claimed: “Philosophy is the highest music.”

Early European education featured the liberal arts. A liberal-arts education in contemporary society is perceived as being “impractical” and often refers to academic disciplines that perceived as soft or subjective as opposed to the sciences, which are supposedly based on hard, objective facts. The original meaning is based on the Latin liber, meaning a “free man”, and a “liberal arts” education involved the liberation of the mind.

At this time of Boethius and Cassiodorus, there were seven liberal arts: the three-fold Trivium of Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric, and the four-fold Quadrivium of Arithmetic, Geometry, Music, and Astronomy. Each of the Quadrivial sciences was accompanied by its complementary metaphysical art. Each dealt not only with the outer structures, but also with the inner meanings of its discipline. Music, for example, included not only the study of "practical theory", of nomenclature and technique but also the study of "speculative theory", of the meanings and influences of tones and intervals and scales. Boethius essentially espoused that mathematics, including music, should be used to prepare for the study of philosophy and that music could inspire men to higher learning and bring them closer to true reality. The quadrivial compass (Figure 3.3) was designed to demonstrate the intersection of these four disciplines and by studying through the compass, true reality could be achieved.
Music philosophers in the 20th century advocated music education for its own sake: Swanwick devotes considerable space to the topic in *Music, Mind and Education*. In summary, he says the special function of the arts is to illuminate, to transform and ultimately “to make life worth living”. Colling whose 1992 work was referred to in some detail earlier in relation to sport and music, links the value of music to a broader and healthier view of masculinity. He commented that men might find inspiration in the universal vehicles of self-expression: music, dance, writing, painting, singing and other forms of arts. Songs and dance, he claims, are living history through which men have expressed themselves for centuries.

Music, according to Louise does not merely reflect social and cultural values; it plays a part in shaping those values. The effect of music on the listener appears to be direct and unmediated. Music plays a part in socializing people, transmitting ideologies and shaping patterns of thought and perception through epistemological constructs. Daily life is enhanced because of music, according to Altenmuller et al. (2000, p.51) who concluded that:
… it seems reasonable to assume that large networks tried and trained during music learning may be utilized for other tasks in daily life…

In the 21st century, musicians and music educators advocate the learning of music. Hoffer (2001, p. 7) puts it like this: “Music is important in people’s lives, therefore learning about music is important” while Hennessy (2001, p. 250) states:

Music education is needed for its own sake i.e. the intense pleasure it can generate for listeners and makers; the centrality to all cultures in defining, refining, challenging and celebrating.

3.7 Summary

Teachers are an important influence on students’ developing understanding of gender. In many cases they provide strong and appropriate role models. They can also serve, through active means or by complicity, to enhance and entrench stereotypes. Together with parents and peers, they are regarded as a prime site for the gendering of activities.

Students as individuals have differing perspectives of schooling. Race, socio-economic factors and gender contribute to this view. The data presented in this chapter indicate that boys and girls view school differently and as a result, single sex activities within a coeducational environment were found to have merit. Girls appear to participate and achieve more successfully than boys, particularly in literary and creative domains. The preliminary data presented in this chapter in relation to music supports these broader trends. It was also found that girls are increasingly acting in ways traditionally associated with males, a notion that will be pursued in the coming chapters.

In Chapters One and Two it was argued that an individual as a member of an effectively organized society would be able to examine his or her identity in relation to his or her potential for the development of socially valued talents and traits. These traits would be cultivated through formal and informal educational processes for the betterment of society and the well being of the individual. In this chapter, Kelly (1979) advocated a position where schools provide varied opportunities for success, for the acquisition of different skills and the provision of alternate opportunities for crystallizing identity.
This is connected to the idea of identity as allocated within an ideology as mentioned in Chapter One and draws on the notion of identity capital (Adler 2001). This refers to an individual’s purposeful effort in activities that highlight socially desirable traits, and avoidance of activities that might highlight socially undesirable traits. The traits that are potentially existent in the individual and those that are valued by society are not always in harmony. Williams (1982) purports that this is rarely the case and despite the worth of music as presented in the outline above, the arts are not valued in society and by extension in the school curriculum. Among those who take music as a class subject, the ratio of females to males is quite high. In addition, students view music in school as being without relevance or importance (Swanwick 1988; Swanwick and Lawson 1999).

In terms of participation and achievement, the data indicate that schooling and academic music is the preferred domain of girls. Teaching is also perceived as a feminised occupation. Music is also, according to Green (2007) constructed as feminine and being related to pleasure, indulgence and sensuality; Macgregor and Mills conclude that this causes it to be considered a “girls’ subject” extraordinaire. Boys who study music are sometimes constructed as more like girls than boys, and therefore subjected to homophobic connotations.

One of the central notions of this volume is that gender imbalance is the result of the construction of masculinity that excludes anything that may be perceived as feminine. The avoidance of femininity (defined as everything masculinity “is not”) is a key element in the construction of masculinity. If the dominant group, through bullying and other means, implies that learning is a feminine pursuit, then it is likely to be avoided by males. Furthermore, as there is an established hierarchy of accepted activities and music as one of the “gentler pursuits” is not highly regarded by males or females; participation in music at school is affected. Assisting boys and men in examining the complexity of their own gendered practices, providing them in counter-hegemonic experiences and, as Stoudt (2006, p. 287) suggests

finding potential ways to contest restrictive forms of masculinity, and working with institutions to increasingly create spaces committed to interrupting their hidden masculine curriculum are some strategies that might reduce the embedded practices of male violence and facilitate the stretching of our masculine boundaries.
The exact nature of types of involvement likely to be taboo can be found in the next chapter in which student instrument selection and their attitudes to instrument selection will be discussed.
CHAPTER FOUR

SEX-Stereotyping in Music

The aim of this chapter is to provide an account of stereotyping of musical activities and the gendering of musical participation. Males tend to restrict themselves to a relatively small group of instruments: drums and lower brass are popular choices. Females’ choices range more freely across a wider range of instruments and there is clear evidence that females also assume musical roles traditionally associated with males (Gates 1989; Koza, 1993). Recent data from the field gives an indication of the specific types of instrumental and vocal participation that take place.

4.1 Early studies: The Seventies and Eighties

Early studies into the phenomenon of fewer boys in musical activities centred on stereotyping, particularly that of instruments. Pioneers in the study of instrument preference were Abeles and Porter (1978, p.65), who stated:

The association of gender with musical instruments can, as can stereotyping of any kind, serve to constrict the behaviour and thus the opportunities of individuals. Stereotyping is particularly irrelevant when applied to a group of objects such as the association of maleness with playing the drums and femaleness with playing the violin. The sex-stereotyping of musical instruments therefore tends to limit the range of musical experiences available to male and female musicians in several ways, including participation in instrumental ensembles and selection of vocations in instrumental music.

Abeles and Porter’s interest in the subject grew out of early observations about the predominance of males in band programs and females in orchestra programs. It was based on the observations of Lyon (1973) who reported that less than 10% of the membership of marching bands was female. They were also influenced by Mayer (1976), who studied the teaching of instruments in university in the United States.
Mayer found that, in the period 1972 – 1974, women comprised 25% of string teachers, 3% of brass teachers and 6% of percussion teachers.

Abeles and Porter (1978) found clear evidence that sex-stereotyping occurred for children above the third grade in the USA. In the first of their series of four studies, adults’ musical instrument preferences for children were examined. Abeles and Porter asked 149 adults between the ages of 19 and 52 to select an instrument for their son or daughter from ‘cello, clarinet, flute, drums, saxophone, trombone, trumpet and violin. Participants were more likely to choose a clarinet, flute or violin for their daughter and drums, trombone or trumpet for their son.

In the second study, a paired comparison strategy was employed to place eight instruments on a masculine-feminine continuum. Music majors (n=32) and non-music majors (n=26) were the subjects for this study. Using the eight most common instruments in band programs in the United States, trombone, trumpet and drums were looked upon as masculine while flute, clarinet and violin were seen to be feminine. No strong gender association was found to exist with ‘cello and saxophone at this time.

Abeles and Porter’s (1978) third study attempted to prove at which age sex-stereotyping began. This was achieved by studying children between the ages of 5 and 10. They concluded that boys’ choices remained relatively stable at the masculine end of the continuum from kindergarten through to their choice of instrument, usually at the age of 9 or 10. The girls’ selections moved towards the “feminine” instruments and the difference was most obvious by around the third and fourth grades. Girls also chose a wider variety of instruments, whereas boys chose from a small group of instruments at the masculine end of the scale. The fourth study examined the procedures for presenting instruments to preschool children. The purpose of this was to ascertain the extent to which the role model could be a possible explanation for sex-stereotyping. The results were inconclusive. Abeles and Porter also articulated that the association of gender with an instrument often took place prior to instrument selection and seemed to be a critical factor in instrument selection. This association was deemed to have taken place between the ages of 8 and 12.

In summary, Abeles and Porter set out through this comprehensive early study to identify that sex-stereotyping of instruments existed in the general population (study 1) and that a masculine-feminine continuum could be established across the eight selected instruments (study 2). Boys’
choices (study 3) were consistently stable at the masculine end of the continuum from kindergarten through to their choice of instrument while girls’ choices gradually moved towards the feminine instruments. Perhaps of greater significance in the overall study of gender was the girls’ choice of a wider variety of instruments, and the boys’ narrower selection: boys chose from the “masculine” end of the scale. The fourth study attempted, inconclusively, to demonstrate that instrument choice may be affected by the method of presentation.

Griswold and Chroback (1981) surveyed 89 American college students, of whom 40 were music majors. The students were asked to rate each instrument as more masculine or feminine, using the 10-point Likert scale. In some respects this was similar to Abeles and Porter’s second study but the number of instruments was increased to include piccolo, flute, oboe, clarinet, saxophone, harp, trumpet, French horn, tuba, violin, string bass, ‘cello, guitar, glockenspiel, piano, bass drum, cymbal and two human additions - choral conductor and instrumental conductor. The most feminine instrument was harp, followed by flute, piccolo, glockenspiel, choral conductor, ‘cello, violin, clarinet, piano and French horn. The most masculine instrument was found to be tuba, followed by string bass, trumpet, bass drum, saxophone, instrumental conductor, cymbal and guitar.

Griswold and Chroback concluded that there was a difference between the response of music majors and that of non-music majors: music majors tended to be prone to sex-stereotyping in the masculine direction. They surmised that sex-stereotyping appeared to be related to exposure to the study of music, hence the disparity between music majors and non-music majors.

The sex of the modeller of musical instruments was referred to by Killian (1988). Students in Killian’s study were shown a video of *We are the World* and asked to choose which solos they would do. Sex of the modelled solo was a strong factor, especially among males. Very few males picked any solos by females, with girls choosing modellers of both sexes. The sex of the model affecting male choices is consistent with the research of Abeles and Porter (1978) and Bruce and Kemp (1993) who found that positive role models, particularly for boys, could help to eliminate feminine gender associations of certain instruments.
There was a slight shift in the type of studies undertaken in the 1990s. While sex-stereotyping studies continued, there was a movement towards investigating the reasons behind stereotypical trends. The research of Delzell and Leppla (1992) in the United States contained two main studies. The purpose of the first was to measure the possible changes in sex-stereotyping of musical instruments from earlier research. To ensure some correlation with Abeles and Porter, 222 college students were studied: 68 music majors and 154 non-music majors. The eight instruments of Abeles and Porter were again paired and respondents asked to indicate which instrument in each pair they considered to be more masculine. A comparison of the figures is presented in Table 4.1, with the higher score indicating a higher perception of masculinity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Normalized Gender*</th>
<th>Scale Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flute</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violin</td>
<td>0.824</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarinet</td>
<td>0.775</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Cello</td>
<td>1.276</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saxophone</td>
<td>2.260</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet</td>
<td>2.408</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trombone</td>
<td>2.679</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drum</td>
<td>2.969</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* A higher number indicates a higher perception of masculinity.

Source: Delzell and Leppla (1992)

The binary nature of this type of research process seems to emphasize the stereotypical nature of instrument selection and leaves no option for instruments to be considered neutral. This is where a continuum or model may have been more effective. There was some evidence of a lessening of stereotypical association in Delzell and Leppla’s study: Perhaps teachers’ knowledge and awareness of the work of Abeles and Porter (1978) and Griswold and Chroback (1981) may have had an impact in changing stereotypical attitudes.

The purpose of Delzell and Leppla’s second study was threefold: to estimate current preferences of fourth grade students for selected
Sex Stereotyping In Music

instruments, to gain an understanding of the reasons for preferring certain instruments and to compare students’ perceptions of their peer’s choices to the actual choices made. In this study, the subjects were fourth grade students: 526 female students and 272 male students from 13 elementary schools in city, suburban and rural locations in the United States. The third section of this second study is of particular significance in the context of this volume: students were asked to indicate which of the eight instruments would be their first, second and last choices to play. Students were also asked why they had directed their preferences in this manner. The preferences of boys were, as with Abeles and Porter, limited to a smaller number at the masculine end of the scale, with 51.7% of boys wishing to play drums and 31.5% saxophone. Girls’ preferences were broader – 30.4% wishing to play flute, 21.7% drums, 21.3% saxophone and 15.0%, clarinet. To make a comparison with the Abeles and Porter figures (which were based on college students’ placing instruments on a continuum) and these figures (which are actual choices) is not entirely reasonable. In spite of this difference in arriving at a ranking, the data may reveal some correlation between perception and reality.

While students were able to explain why they allocated their preferences in response to open-ended questions, there was no clear indication of a gender bias from their replies. Delzell and Leplla found timbre to be a significant influence on instrument preference. Delzell and Leplla (p.101) also asked students to indicate their last choice of instrument. This data was not available by sex, but overall ‘cello and violin were the last choice of over 60% of the sample. Reasons for the last choice were “it’s too difficult”, “it’s not fun”, “don’t like it”, “it’s too big” or “I don’t like the sound.” Delzell and Leplla concluded that the effects of stereotyping had been reduced since the earlier studies and that this should continue to occur through teachers’ avoidance of reinforcing preconceived bias.

A sample consisting of 990 band students in sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth grade in the United States was taken by Fortney, Boyle and De Carbo (1993). The purpose of their study was to investigate what middle school band students reported to be their influences in choosing an instrument. While not their central aim, Fortney et al. also examined response differences according to gender and instrument. The data was gathered using a one page, 11-item survey. The survey included both closed and open response items. One of the questions on the survey asked for students’ current instrument, while another asked the student to choose
an instrument they would like to play and an instrument they would least like to play.

Fortney et al. (1993, p.38) concluded that “Females tend to play and indicate a preference for flute and clarinet, while males tend to play and indicate a preference for trumpet, percussion and low brass instruments.” In studying student reasons for choosing particular instruments and in spite of only 3% consciously acknowledging a gender associated reason for their choice, they concluded that “regardless of what students say in response to influence about various factors, males tend to play instruments that are considered masculine and females choose to play instruments that are considered feminine.”

Mizener (1993) surveyed 78 American students from grade three to grade six, asking a number of questions, including “do you like to sing” and “do you want to sing in a choir?” In response to the first question, 87% of girls and 64% of boys gave a positive response. In response to the second question, 55% of girls and 33% of boys wanted to sing in a choir. Students indicated that family and the attitudes of friends and peers were not significant factors in influencing their decisions. While most students thought singing was suited to both sexes, boys were reluctant to say they liked it. Mizener suggested that this was because American males are not encouraged to be recreational singers. To overcome this, Mizener (1993, p.241) advocated the use of role models in singing and raising the awareness of men’s roles in social singing activities to contribute to more positive impressions of singing. The disparity between those who liked singing (64%) and those who were willing to sing in a choir (33%) is noted.

In 1996, O’Neill and Boulton from the United Kingdom conducted a study of 153 children in the North West of England. The purpose of the study was to ascertain whether the divide in terms of girls’ and boys’ preferences for particular instruments remained as strong as in previous studies or whether the trend appeared to be changing. Their main focus was girls’ preferences. This was to determine whether the rise of feminism and affirmative action had produced any effect. The children were shown pictures of six instruments, without performers: flute, violin, drums, trumpet, piano and guitar. Students were then asked to rank the instruments from the one they would most like to play to the one they would least like to play. Girls showed a strong preference for flute, piano and violin and boys preferred drums, guitar and trumpet. Children who
were learning an instrument did not differ significantly from those who were not.

Students were also asked to indicate which instruments girls should not play and which instruments boys should not play. The responses to this are found in Table 4.2. The results would appear to suggest that boys and girls had similar ideas about which instruments were appropriate to each sex. The notion of what not to play is also noted in this research: boys should not play flute; girls should not play guitar and drums.

**Table 4.2 Percentage of students indicating gendered instrument preferences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruments</th>
<th>Female Participants</th>
<th>Male Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Should not be played by…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flute</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piano</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violin</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guitar</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drums</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>61.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: O’Neill and Bouton (1996)

### 4.3. The Noughties (1)

In one of the few Australian studies in this field, Pickering and Repacholi (2001) found that children as young as five years of age displayed gender-typed preferences. The most popular choice among boys at this age was the drum and for girls it was the violin. These results indicate that children tended to prefer those at the extreme end of the masculine-feminine continuum. Influences in relation to instrument choice were found to include parental pressure, their music teacher's advice, or the instruments that are readily available at home/school.

Pickering and Repacholi (2001) also sampled fourth-grade students. About half the girls of this age sampled in their study were found to have selected a masculine instrument. This is consistent with previous research in relation girls’ capacity to engage in cross-gendered activities with
greater ease than boys as found by Mahoney (1985) and Katz and Boswell (1986). Pickering also noted that this may be due to an increased awareness that males have greater status and power (Serbin, Powlishta, & Gulko, 1993). In relation to boys, Pickering and Repacholi found that boys were less receptive to the counterexamples than girls and showed significant preference for the masculine instruments. Such resistance is in line with research indicating that boys experience more negative outcomes than girls for engaging in cross-sex activities (Martin, 1990). Pickering and Repacholi (2001, p.642) concluded that:

The perceived risk associated with playing, or even just circling, a gender-inappropriate instrument was probably much greater for the boys than for the girls. Boys in particular could benefit from exposure to multiple examples of a counter-stereotyped behaviour.

A small number of studies in the last few years have been concerned with the gendering of instrumentation in ensemble and music services. The work of Sheldon and Price (2005) investigated gender and instrumentation in wind and percussion ensembles. In a sample of 8146 children from 25 countries, a clear gender-bias was evident: females dominate in the upper woodwinds while males demonstrated preference for lower brass and percussion. Given the size and diversity of the cohort, the findings are universally applicable, though in Asia female instrumentalists were more common.

As part of a larger study, Hallam, Rogers and Creech (2008, p. 10) collected data on instrument preference from Music Services in England. Their findings indicate that the most gendered instruments were the harp, flute, voice, fife, piccolo and oboe, played by girls while electric guitar, guitar, tuba and drums were played by boys. The least gendered instruments were African drums, cornet, French horn, saxophone and tenor horn. They noted that “The gendered pattern of playing was relatively consistent across all key stages, with some exceptions” (p. 10). Hallam, Rogers and Creech noted that there were three contributors to the choice of instrument: the instrument itself, individual factors and social factors. In relation to individual factors, they observed a correlation between boys and instruments that are struck or require high levels of physical exertion. In my own study reported in 2007, I found that instruments that have wider dynamic ranges, are larger and are lower in pitch are more likely to be played by boys.
Another individual factor concerning Hallam et al was the value that is attached to conforming to gender stereotypes. They commented that “This may be an inhibitory factor for boys, who may come under great pressure from peers if they engage in any activity that is seen as ‘feminine’” (p. 15). They concluded that the social factors related to this individual characteristic include cultural and religious factors, stereotypical expectations, role models, parental influence, peer pressure and sibling influence.

4.4 Summary

By way of drawing together the threads in this chronological account of stereotyping, a diagram representing the place of instruments on a continuum may be a useful aid. This figure combines the results of the literature reviewed in this chapter and, while not absolutely definitive, gives an impression of how instruments stand in relation to one another.

Figure 4.1 Musical instrument stereotype continuum
The significance of this figure is not in the position of the instruments: rather it is in the reasons as to why instruments occupy a particular position. The examination of gendered associations with music participation in the following chapter will explore this idea.
CHAPTER FIVE

GENDER IN MUSIC EDUCATION

This chapter relates to the nature of involvement in music as gendered: that is the relative masculine or feminine attributes associated with a particular activity. In contrast to the previous chapter that examined instrument preference on the basis of biological sex, the emphasis is on the social factors that contribute to these choices.

As I found in 2007 and Hallam et al found in 2008, males can be subjected to peer-pressure for engaging in a so-called “feminine” activity. McGregor and Mills (2006) note that

Boys’ lack of participation in music programs, even in times when gender assumptions unquestioningly privileged males, points to the need to analyze the construction of music as a cultural text and the gender connotations associated with it. (McGregor and Mills 2006, 223)

What can be concluded from this is that there is something about the actual participation in music that affects the perception of music as masculine or feminine.

5.1 Historical Perspectives on Music and Gender

A brief history of the relative masculine and feminine attributes of music may reveal the context for these constructions. At the end of the 19th century, the article “Is the musical idea masculine” (Brower 1894) appeared in the Atlantic Monthly. This early article discussed the idea that musical composition was the domain of the male because of their capacity to express deep emotions more effectively. A century later Wilkinson (1986, p.103) referred to the work of Charles Ives and commented that Ives attempted to debunk “sissy” types of music at the beginning of the 20th century by using “tough guy” themes.
Mackenzie (1991) pointed out that a surprisingly small amount of research had been conducted into why children decide to learn to play particular instruments and avoid others. Mackenzie’s study examined the motivation of 48 students in the United Kingdom to start learning a musical instrument. The students’ responses to the question “Why did you start to learn to play a musical instrument?” were classified into five sub-groupings – social, school, home, personal and other.

Strong gender differences were found to exist in the reasons given by students for selecting a particular instrument. Mackenzie found that social factors were a stronger reason for girls (20.8% of females; 8.3% of males) and school factors (“my teacher wanted me to learn an instrument”) were more significant for boys (33.3% of boys; 20.8% of girls). There were no significant differences in the personal reasons or home influence and only one student gave “other” reasons. Boys gave a slightly wider range of reasons for taking up an instrument than girls.

From this evidence, it is possible to conclude that teachers have a substantial role to play in suggesting a student begin to study an instrument. After personal reasons (“I like music” or “I was interested in learning an instrument”), this was clearly the most important motivational factor. Lamb (1993) concurred stating that music has a long tradition of role models and mentors as the primary means of transmitting culture and knowledge: the mentor/apprentice model occurs most commonly in the applied lesson, but also in composition, conducting and teacher education. Hanley (1998, p.52) also reflected at length on the importance of role models, particularly with regard to musical styles.

The aspect of socialization in Mackenzie’s study is worthy of comment: only two boys out of the 24 surveyed indicated a social reason for their choice of instrument. For girls it was significantly higher. Mackenzie suggests that boys’ socialization may take place in other domains, for example, sport. The evidence presented in the previous chapter shows that girls view school as a place where social interaction takes place. It may also be that boys deny the social nature of either music or the school environment.
5.2. The Nineties Shift (2)

By the mid 1990s, a shift in the style of research in this area became apparent. In reflecting on this change, Falk (1998, p.16) suggested that prior to the 1980s, gender (rather than sex-stereotyping) did not exist in the study of music. The origins of the shift can be found in the work of LeFanu (1987), Herndon (1990) and McClary (1991). English composer Nicola LeFanu challenged the patriarchal hold on music through her compositions and academic comment. In *Master Musician: Impregnable Taboo*, she commented: “Patriarchy is bad for men…people who choose to live their lives, as creative artists tend to be androgynous. Rigid stereotypes will not allow us to develop …balanced culture” (LeFanu 1987, p.7).

Herndon provided a number of examples from non-western traditions where gender stereotypes did not exist. Herndon (1990, p.254) stated that

All human groups take note of biological differences between men and women. Upon these facts, societies construct cultural “realities” or gender roles. Gender roles assign duties; define proper actions and a basic, if not arbitrary matrix for social interaction. Gender concepts limit and shape both men’s and women’s musical activities: it cannot be said that women’s voices, instruments or musical status is always subordinate to men.

Herndon invites an opportunity for the western-art music tradition to learn from other cultures. While this investigation is beyond the scope of this book, this is an area for potential future investigation.

McClary (1991, p.10) suggests that, “it is the fear of the presumably feminine qualities of music and our need to control these that keep it under patriarchal lock and key”. As with the broader study of gender, recognition of this fact is essential for women’s music and the well being of music in general. Patriarchy, as discussed in Chapter One, is as damaging for men as it is for women and the need for equity across sexes cannot be over-emphasised: “Equity in educational opportunity is essential if society is to tap all the possible resources in the shaping of its future and the arts are an integral and undeniable part of the development of this potential” (McClary in Macarthur 1992, p.9). Intolerance of difference and refusal to acknowledge the presence of women in the musical canon are forms of oppression, as is the failure to recognise the difficulties males face in not achieving full participation due to the rigidity of hegemonic masculinity. One of the central issues in McClary’s work has been to establish that
feminist scholarship can be applied to music, as it had been to literary studies and art history for some time.

One of the pioneers in gender and music was Lucy Green. Her work began by addressing the compensatory nature of history in the arts concluding that the problem was partly historical and partly contemporaneous. She also examined the way boys and girls relate to music as a cultural and aesthetic object to discover how gender was perpetuated by schooling in the behaviour of students and the assumptions of teachers.

Green (1993, p.219) surveyed 78 music teachers across England. The purpose of this was to “tap into their common sense and often unspoken assumptions about gender, music and education.” The questions were open-ended and deliberately ambiguous. The first section asked: “In general throughout the school, which group is most successful at playing an instrument, singing, composing, listening and notation.” The second section of the survey asked: “Which group generally prefers to engage in popular music, classical music and other world music.”

Respondents were allowed to interpret what was meant by “success” and “prefer” and no prompting of answers was suggested by these questions. She deliberately avoided asking questions like “do more girls than boys sing in choir?”

Green (1993, p.225) experienced some adverse reaction to her study by participants with responses like: “I can see no differences: academic ability and the ability to concentrate is more important than gender” and “I’ve never found that the sex of a person has dictated the way they feel about musical participation/taste in things.”

In most cases, boys and girls were seen to achieve equal success, though girls enjoyed greater success in the domains of singing and playing. In singing, 64 out of the 78 teachers surveyed indicated that girls were more successful than boys, with more girls taking part in extracurricular activities, sometimes to the exclusion of boys. This appears to correlate with the data presented in Chapter 3 in relation to participation in music in outside-of-class time. In instrumental music, more girls participated, with a higher degree of success. One extreme example involved the flute: out of fifty flautists in one school, all were girls.
Green refers to the idea that women are disadvantaged in almost every musical experience, at the same time acknowledging that boys could be disadvantaged in school music education, as a result of their inability to cross gender lines. Singing provides an exception to the norm: women can become successful singers and have done so for five centuries. She gives two main reasons for this:

  i)  the voice is completely lacking in technology
  ii) the image of a woman performing perpetuates a madonna/whore dichotomy: the woman singer is either a singer of lullabies and picture of maternal care or the sexually available temptress.

Technology is perceived as a masculine pastime. This finds support in the work of Colley et al. (1993). Mason (2008) pursues this further citing evidence in the literature suggesting that information technology has been stereotyped as a masculine subject in schools (Cole, Conlon, Jackson and Welch, 1994; Friedman, 1997; Frenkel, 1990; Ordige, 1996; Spertus, 1991). Specifically Mason found that boys are much more likely to investigate their way around new software to familiarise themselves (Freedman, 1997; Ordige, 1996) and used music as a learning tool in informal environments, and were more confident in using them (Comber et al 1997). McGregor and Mills (2006) argue that:

> Pedagogical practices music teachers deploy in order to encourage boys' engagement with the subject take into account the cultural implications of globalisation, media and music technology and capitalise upon diversity rather than participate in the reproduction of dominant constructions of gender. (p.221)

As a practising teacher with experience in both co-educational and single-sex environments, Scott Mason (2008, in press) made the following observations in his classrooms:

- Boys demonstrate a preference for practical tasks in performing and composing music.
- In composition they have a lot of creative ideas but have difficulty in organizing their thoughts. They enjoy using computer software to do compositions but often want to skip the planning stage – developing ideas, considering structure, timbre and so on, and go straight to entering notes into the software. As a result, they often waste a lot of time and have difficulty getting started.
Many boys have difficulty in working towards a due date. Providing interim due dates for different parts of activities including requiring drafts, assists boys in structuring their approach to tasks.

Boys approach the area of performance with gusto. They particularly enjoy group practical activities though need guidance to target the musical elements. In the single sex school I found a significant number of boys tended to approach practical music making like they play sport – Hard and Fast!

The second proposition of Green focuses on the images of women across time, perpetuated by musical representation as investigated by Herndon (1990), McClary (1991) and Le Fanu (1987). Green (1993, pp.229 - 235) acknowledges that the additional comments from teachers gave the clearest insight into their perceptions. Comments of interest in the current debate included those that referred to acceptable styles of singing – in musicals and in rock or rap: “boys are willing to sing in stage production, because the stage provides a mask and an audience” and “In the top end of the school, boys sing in rock groups.”

Many comments centred on the image of music in schools as being sissy or un-macho (Green 1993, pp.229 – 235):

I suspect it’s a question of “image”– boys can get a considerable amount of mocking from their peer group.

There is much peer pressure amongst boys that music still has a “sissy” stigma. Boys that do have the character to resist the pressure tend to achieve highly.

There was considerable embarrassment about the voice: boys were said to be influenced by negative peer group pressure. Other comments referred to girls being involved in music and boys in sport:

Boys in general still feel more pulled to sports activities and some still suffer torments from other boys about music being “sissy.”

This connects directly with the evidence presented in Chapter Two. Green referred briefly to the significance of the role model. Her respondents indicated male that role models as music teachers have an important part to play in challenging stereotypes. The role of the media is also mentioned briefly by Green. Many teachers indicated that the media, particularly television, helped perpetuate popular discourses about gender.
This is also confirmed in the discussion in Chapter 2. She points out that one of the central notions promoted by the media is that of equal relations between the sexes being the norm. In her conclusion Green (1993, p.248) stated:

Both boys and girls tended to restrict themselves or find themselves restricted to certain musical activities for fear of intruding into the other sex’s territory, where they may have been accused of some sort of musical transvestism.

In 1996, Green pursued her earlier exploratory research with a chapter in *Music Education: Trends and Issues*. In this, she looks at the compensatory history of music and champions women’s role in music across five centuries. She also embraces the idea of gender and musical meaning, citing McClary (1991) and Citron (1993) as the main instigators of this discussion. This concept deals with the notion that music has a gender-related significance that lies beneath the surface of the music. In the search for gendered musical meaning, lyrics, opera plots and absolute music have been put under scrutiny.

Green (in Plummeridge 1996, p.43) refers to McClary’s and Citron’s argument that “music is experienced as a narrative in which the fundamental aspects of our collective cultural and political assumptions are symbolically portrayed.” Green also acknowledged, in line with her earlier research, that music is symbolic of gender through the gender conventions of instrument choice, styles and audiences. Music education, she claimed, is one arena through which a transformation in the gendered meaning of music may take place. She went on to discuss ways in which women’s music could take a higher profile in the curriculum, helping to redress the historical imbalance.

In 1997, Green published *Music Gender Education*. In this she brought together many elements of the earlier research in more detail. One comment in the chapter entitled “Affirming Femininity in the Classroom” drew attention to the role of girls’ attitudes in school music as being constructed as cooperative and conformist. She commented on boys’ attitudes in terms of boys preferring sport to music and reiterates the notions that boys succumb to heavy peer pressure against school music. Furthermore, she stated that certain musical activities are avoided because they are seen to be “sissy” and “un-macho.” She added: “For a boy to engage in slow music, or music that is associated with the classical style in
the school: to join a choir, to play a flute, involves a taking a risk with his symbolic masculinity” (Green 1997, p.185).

The role of the school came under scrutiny (Green 1997, p.192):

It takes part in the perpetuation of subtle definitions of femininity and masculinity as connotations of musical practices, linked to musical styles, in which pupils invest their desires to conform not necessarily to the school only, but to the wider field of gender and sexual politics.

Schools, she intimated, provide a context in which musical experiences contribute to the construction of the sense of self as a gendered being, a sense that takes on the appearance of truth. She also acknowledged the work of Abeles and Porter (1978) and others who provided a body of empirical work that support the statements of her respondents. It also provides the empirical basis for this book. In the area of single-sex verses mixed-sex teaching, she advocated a mixture of single-sex, crossed-over roles and mixed-sex groups as the ideal.

Koza was also an important part of the movement in the mid-1990s that began examining the historical nature of gendered musical knowledge. She was simultaneously conducting research into the same issues as Green, but using a different methodological base.

Her impetus was boys’ reluctance to participate in music education programs, particularly school singing groups. In seeking to find empirical data to support anecdotal evidence, she quoted J. Terry Gates (1989, p.37) who succinctly summed up sex ratios in musical participation in the United States:

Instrumental and vocal music participation in American secondary schools show sharp sex related differences…although the sexes are divided equally in instrumental music involvement; the female percentage in choral activities surpasses the male percentage by greater than a 5:2 margin.

Gates (1989) also warned that girls appear to be adopting social values traditionally associated with males. If this trend were to continue, vocal teachers would witness a gradual drop in choral participation by girls. In response, Koza (1993) noted that if reliance on rigid definitions of masculinity and femininity continue, along with a devaluation of things feminine, there might be dire consequences for choral programs. The
notions of male gender role rigidity and avoidance of femininity have considerable importance here.

Koza conducted a study of the *Music Educators Journal* from the early part of the 20th century to ascertain whether the problem existed at that time and if so, what solutions were offered. Her study was prompted by articles in women’s magazines from the 19th century that indicated boys were less likely to study music than girls. Inherent in these discussions was the notion of sex-stereotyped instruments and activities. Her findings indicate far more interest in the education of boys than of girls.

In Koza’s study, boys were found to be encouraged to take music, because “music and art may make him spiritual” (Winship 1914). This echoes the material on the justification of the place of music in the curriculum referred to in the Chapter Three. Participation rates were problematic in 1915 with Giddings (1915 in Koza 1993) observing a choir with 60 sopranos, 10 altos, 2 basses and no tenors. A further reference to encourage males by observing role models could be seen in this excerpt, from Smith (1918 in Koza 1993, p. 222): “The men who are playing on the Concert Stage [sic] and in the Grand Opera have to be and are men of splendid physical and considerable intellectual attainment. They are the physical equals of the best football players and baseball players.” Koza comments that apparently football players and baseball players were deemed to be paragons of masculinity and to be compared favourably with them was therefore considered high praise.

In 1994 Koza undertook further analysis of her 1993 material, in which she discussed in more detail the contribution of socialist feminism to gender in music. She referred to the view that the popular image of males includes one who is heterosexual, red-blooded, omnipotent, irredeemably sexist and emotionally illiterate. This relates directly to the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity as described earlier.

In her discussion regarding the place of singing in music education, one of the key points she raises is that singing is not considered an appropriately masculine activity. In articles from the early part of last century, one of the reasons given for boys not being involved in singing was that the breaking voice sidetracks boys. Green and Schmidt, almost 100 years later, found similar comments in their research. Green (1993, pp.239, 234) states that “Breaking voices discourage boys from singing” and refers to “the physical changes affecting boys” while Schmidt (1995,
p.327) reports that “in vocal music instruction, gender differences in achievement, motivation, participation and issues such as boys changing voices have been areas of longstanding interest and research.”

Koza looked on many of the “solutions” offered by educators at the beginning of the century as inadequate because they did not address the issues of what constructs the “undesirable other.” This is perhaps harsh judgement, given that the aspects of feminist movement that helped to tackle these issues did not develop until the 1970s. Koza suggested that the solutions offered were flawed because they can serve to reinforce misogyny by reducing boys’ access to the sensitive, gentle, delicate and tender. She encouraged the examination of alternative ways of thinking about gender, males, females, sexual orientation and homophobia.

In spite of this, the avoidance of female activities may be grounded in “gynophobia” and have it roots in activities that are not musical, as found by Askew and Ross (1988). The tags of “sissy”, “feminine” and “unmanly” quickly lead to accusations of homosexuality and subsequent problems with homophobia. The reticence to sing, Koza (1994b, p.50) concludes, is based on “discursive binaries that construct females, femininity and homosexuality in the undesirable other category. Homophobia actually helps to construct masculinity.” This is justification, in part, for the inclusion of homophobia in Figure 1.1 in Chapter One.

5.3 A Popular Music Side-bar

It is at this point in the literature that popular music and gender become evident. Given the specific nature of popular music and the depth with which the recent volume of *Oh boy! Masculinities and Popular Music* (Jarman-Ivens, 2007) dealt with the issue, this subject will be addressed tangentially here. Prior to this, the role of gender in popular music was dealt with to some extent by Horrocks (1995). Through popular culture, Horrocks claims, young men have identified with and have dominated popular music since its inception and its association with subcultures (mods, punks, skinheads etc) provides some insight into masculinities. He further comments that women have always been seen as singers, while men are seen as instrumentalists, composers, engineers and producers. In dance records, he finds a further division: women sing and men (rappers) speak. He makes the connection between singing being more emotional and expressive, while speaking is more declarative. In so saying, he draws heavily on the work of Bradby (1993). Singing, Green (2001) noted was
one of the areas in which boys were not inclined to be involved. Girls undertake choral activities and frequently exclude boys. Boys are responding differently to the contemporary treatment of popular music in schools and, in Green’s study all played or would like to play drums. (Green 2001, p 54). More recently, scholars have also suggested that music is gendered feminine. (Solie 1993; Green, 1997; Koza 1993; Dibben 2002)

Rock has established itself as a place for male friendship in resistive, unregulated life-style where women represented unwelcome demands for routine living (Frith 1981, p 85 -87). While, as Green (2001, p. 142) pointed out

Classical music in schools delineates femininity, and more radically, effeminacy. Popular music, and practices such as playing the drums and electric guitar, delineates masculinity, and machismo. Thus for girls and boys, the delineations of different types of music in various situations can be problematic. Girls do not necessarily wish to “act like boys” and may not feel comfortable engaging in musical activities that consciously or unconsciously are generally regarded as masculine within their peer group, just as many boys do not wish to engage in activities which are seen as “feminine”

The decline in participation rates at various critical stages is perhaps a reflection of the definitions of masculinity and femininity. Particularly at puberty, the relationship between genre and gender is clearly evident in Green’s work. Green reports on both student responses and teachers’ impressions of the masculine and feminine characteristics of various forms of engagement.

Bennett (2000 p. 45) found that despite shifting perceptions of gender, considerable emphasis continues to be placed by the music industry on the promotion of traditional gender stereotypes. The ratio of women who become successful in the music industry, both as performers and employees, remains low compared with that of men. Women, Bennett argues, are in the minority and have to deal with working relationships based around male camaraderie. Men, on the other hand, could indulge their passion for classical music only under highly circumscribed conditions. Bayton (2006, p. 349) concurs that girls are more confident about singing and dancing than are boys but cautions that playing
supposedly masculine instruments works to undermine their (girls) femininity.

While Bayton points out the undermining of girls’ femininity by playing traditionally rock instruments, boys may have experienced higher levels of discouragement than girls. O’Neill also refers to the avoidance of femininity, an aspect of gender relations discussed earlier in reference to the research of Archer (1984) and which Hargreaves, Comber and Colley (1995) also found. Hargreaves et al. reported that girls expressed more positive attitudes to music at all age levels than boys, but this was particularly true at the lower age levels. The attitude of both sexes became more positive with age as found by Green (1993). Hargreaves et al. (1995) also reported girls as having more training in music than boys. Crowther and Durkin (1982) found that girls in the United Kingdom are twice as likely to learn an instrument at school and to take music examinations. Dislike of particular styles of music was also a feature of the study of Hargreaves et al. and the results are given in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1 Students’ expression of dislike for styles of music

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style of Music</th>
<th>% of boys who disliked each style</th>
<th>% of girls who disliked each style</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jazz</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classical</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>36.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folk</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>53.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opera</td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>59.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Hargreaves et al. (1995)

While the percentages for some styles are high, girls were generally more tolerant of styles than boys. Opera, which is principally associated with singing, was disliked by both sexes. Issues of management of opera for students were discussed at length in Harrison (1995). The only popular style cited here ranks the as the most popular.

5.4 Returning to Western Art Music

Hargreaves et al. (1995) also found some evidence of peer group influence in musical preferences. Webster and Hamilton (1981) found this notion hard to support, insisting that parental influence may be of greater importance. Finnas (1987) reflected that students in the 11 to 16 age range hid their musical interests in order to conform to peer group norms.
Children who pursue classical music, because it is unusual, can receive negative feedback with comments such as “weird” and “sissy.” Howe and Slobada (1992) suggested that these comments might cause a student to give up. This is particularly so for students who play non-stereotypical instruments, who receive more negative reactions. Green (1997) reported similar findings. Since some classical instruments (e.g. flute) are seen as girls’ instruments (because they are high or soft), boys may experience higher levels of discouragement if they take these instruments. Positive peer influence along with supportive parents and teachers have therefore been found to influence this impediment to participation.

Elliot (1995) sought to discover if gender and race affected the judgment of a musical performance. In his study, flute and trumpet were used, as earlier studies had shown them to project feminine and masculine associations respectively. Videotapes of performances by four performers on each instrument were presented with a dubbed soundtrack: in other words, the one aural performance was presented with four different visual images. The visual images in each case were a black female, a white female, a black male and a white male. Eighty-eight music majors were asked to judge the performances and rate them from 1 to 9, with nine being the highest. Although he concluded that gender did not have a significant effect, Elliot found that masculine/feminine associations for certain musical instruments exist and that prior expectation could influence how experienced musicians hear and judge performances. He suggested that sensitivity to racial and gender bias become part of the training for musicians and educators.

In 1996, Stollak and Stollak investigated the notion that some music programs focussed on sport-like elements of competition, to the detriment of other factors. In particular, they investigated the notion of “team” versus “family” in choir and the emphasis in winning as a “team” in competition. They surmised that, at times, this short-term goal was chosen instead of giving students a life-long love of the art. Participants appreciated choirs in which the family element was employed more than those which had a team element. By “family,” Stollak and Stollak (1996) mean choir directors who are nurturing and willing to listen to the suggestions of choir members, exert firm control and communicate clearly in a non-manipulative way. Their results correlate with findings regarding the parental effect on child development. Parents who display the above attributes are more likely to rear children who are socialized, independent, self-controlled, assertive and exploratory (Baumrind 1989).
Hanley (1998) took Green’s 1993 English study and applied it in Canada. She used a revised questionnaire to examine 112 teachers’ perceptions of gender issues. Her research, like Green’s, was interested in teachers’ perceptions and hoped to get at the common sense behind gendered musical relationships. As such it tapped into the wealth of combined and practised knowledge inherent in teachers.

She asked questions of music educators, based on Green’s questionnaire, but adding jazz to the list of musical styles. Teachers were asked to circle one of “girls”, “boys”, “both equally” and “no response” in answering.

Teachers were also encouraged to give written responses to supplement their answers. Like Green, some respondents in her study were antagonistic to the extent of denying the existence of gender issues in music. In response, Hanley suggested that music related to real human experiences. She gave the example of the emotions as a human experience that appears to have gender associations.

In analysing the responses to these questions, Hanley sought to find answers to

- teachers’ assumptions about gendered musical relationships;
- the level of gender awareness existent among secondary music educators;
- issues of musical achievement by gender;
- the extent to which educational patterns served to perpetuate stereotypes.

In general terms Hanley (1998, p.54) found that many teachers commented that girls and boys were equally successful: equal but different. Differences were attributed to social circumstances, music teacher, early exposure, the music program, the culture of the community, self-confidence, peer support, genetic predisposition or talent and parental support. One particular response reflects this “I think that self-confidence and peer influence are more relevant to success in music at my level.”

According to Hanley, boys and girls were said to share musical experiences, though girls were considerably more successful at singing than boys. She states: “singing is viewed a feminine activity - boys who engage in singing are feminine by implication” (Hanley 1998, p.58). There were exceptions – aggressive singing was valued. In some cases, singing
in a jazz choir, rock band, bebop band or a musical was deemed acceptable. Green (1993) had reported a similar trend.

Twenty-two respondents presented a negative view of male participation in singing because male peers view singing as “girls’ stuff”, one respondent relating that “they’re hung up on the image that boys don’t sing and those who do are gay or sissies or whatever – weak anyway” (Hanley 1998, p.57). She also commented on the state of instrumental music, with teachers reporting an increased awareness of stereotypes. Some teacher comments belie this statement: “boys prefer guitars”, “girls are vocalists and boys are instrumentalists” (1998, p.59). Hanley also suggested that: “some girls want to be like boys. Boys, however don’t want to be like girls” (1998, p.62).

This assumption of masculine ideas by girls has support in Gates (1989) and Mahoney (1985). As an example, Hanley noted that “more girls are joining traditionally male ensembles like stage bands while boys are not flocking in great numbers to choir (p. 67)” This reflects the idea of gender role rigidity in boys. She also found that teachers suggested girls play woodwind instruments because they are easy to carry home and boys select percussion and brass because they are loud. Classical music was found to be more feminine, because, according to one respondent, it is too slow and boring for boys.

Hanley concluded with a comment on the gender role of the artist in Canadian society – “masculine characteristics such as risk taking and assertiveness seem to be essential to successful musicians in western cultures, yet artists must also have a feminine side that displays artistic and aesthetic sensitivity” (1998, p.67). This field had been addressed earlier in Kemp’s study of androgyny. Further, she suggested that some people continue to see music as effete and its pursuit unmanly.

Maidlow and Bruce (1999) refute the biological argument as an explanation of sex difference in musical achievement. With regard to gender, they note that despite the numerous recommendations that abound in research, they have had little impact on music education, particularly in the field of the learning of instruments.

Parents, teachers and the media perpetuate sex-based stereotypes, according to Maidlow and Bruce. They challenge the reporting of information based purely on physical differences. Maidlow and Bruce
urged researchers in the field to negotiate the “slippery” categories of masculinity and femininity, which affect how we define the function of music. The use of the word “slippery” is interesting in that it echoes the work of Connell (1989), Tsou and Cook (1994) and others who described masculinities as changing within contexts. They also resonate with this author’s queer-straight stance.

Maidlow and Bruce acknowledged that Kemp (1985) was the only researcher to refer to personality traits, including issues of androgyny, in musicians. In 1980, Kemp had found a bias towards extroversion and adjustment in connection with singers. In 1985 he found that according to Bem’s Sex Role Inventory musical women were more “masculine” and men more “feminine”. Androgyny seemed to increase with the length of time in the profession. Children who pursue music into and beyond adolescence were found to be in possession of the kind of personal androgyny, which enables them to disregard socio-cultural expectations. They also possessed the necessary high motivation towards music, which allows them to continue regardless of social and personal cost. Green (1993) reported a similar finding and this has significant implication for the material discussed in later chapters. Garder (1955) had referred to this earlier when he stated that male musicians were less active than their non-musical counterparts, while females were lower in restraint and friendliness. Csikszentmihalyi and Getzels (1973) found similar results maintaining that creative people exhibit more of the characteristic traits of the opposite sex than is usually considered normal. Wubbenhorst (1994, p.73) supported this in his study that indicated 48% of music teachers and 38% of performers were androgynous. Male music teachers seem to retain some of their stereotypes, particularly those who played male-sex typed instruments. Despite an erroneous association in popular culture, androgyny does not imply the presence of homosexuality. Post’s (1994) study of 291 creative artists found only 3.8% of the 52 composers in the study were homosexual. This figure represents half the reported incidence of homosexuality in the general population.

With regard to music, Plummer (1999, p.149) illustrated how different activities can attract homophobic criticism giving this example of the experiences of a singer: “…I used to sing… and that was something that was wussy or pansy, poofer. I used to really like singing and so I was annoyed because everyone else used to persecute me because of it.” Many of Plummer’s subjects commented in similar ways about gender incongruent behaviour.
5.5 The Noughties (2)

A study conducted by Harrison and O’Neill (2000) attempted to change seven and eight year-old children's instrument preferences by manipulating the gender of live adult musicians presenting instrument choices. In relation to the current discussion, their most relevant finding was that girls were less likely to choose the piano after seeing it played by a male. Boys showed less preference for the guitar after seeing a female play guitar. Other counter-examples had minimal impact on children's overall preferences.

A phenomenological investigation of gender and instrument choice was conducted by Conway (2000). In it, she explored factors for the existence of stereotyping in instrumental music. Some of the comments Conway (2000, pp. 8-9) found in her interviews appear to show some agreement with those found by Green (1997) and Hanley (1998). In relation to flute, these include:

I probably would not have started on the flute even if I liked it ’cause I knew it was really a girl thing.

… maybe little boys or something, they don’t want to be associated with the flute, like it’s not masculine or something.

I just can’t see a guy picking up the flute, it’s like such a feminine instrument. It sounds feminine, too.

At the other end of the masculine – feminine continuum, subjects commented on brass in this way:

I thought that low brass is sort of masculine, but it’s not really true at our school, we do have some girls.

The physical features of the players were also mentioned in Conway’s (p.9) study:

All the trombone players [at my school] tend to be pretty big

… the female trombone player in my band is like 6 foot 4 inches.

When asked about the reason for the existence of stereotypes, some students commented that, while they were unwarranted, sound and physical characteristics of instruments were cited in stereotypical terms.
Perhaps of most importance in relation to the current research was that all students who played a cross-gendered instrument talked about having to deal with some questioning about their choice. This correlates with the issue of male gender role rigidity and there is evidence to support the notion of females crossing gender lines more easily than males. Conway’s (2000, p.13) noted:

> All of the students who were asked whether or not they would allow a daughter of theirs in 20 years to play a low brass instrument responded that the child should play whatever she would like. When asked that same question in regards to a son playing the flute, many of the students expressed concern about the teasing that child might experience.

Furthermore, Conway (2000) concurs with Green (1997) in that the barriers for boys are more significant than those for girls and that vocal music is likely to be even more of a problem than instrumental music. She also makes the point that much research has focussed on opportunities for girls and has come from a feminist perspective. This notion was foregrounded in the prologue to this volume and processes are being put in place to rectify this, using an approach to concentrate on the needs of marginalised boys for the benefit of boys and girls.

Martino and Pallotta-Chiarolli (2001, p.9) also found subjects who were persecuted because of their voice. One subject commented:

> …you have to have a deep voice because if you don’t you’ll get hassled. They used to hassle me because of my higher voice, calling me gay.

The relationship of pitch to instrument choice has been a constant throughout this chapter. This instance refers to specifically to singing. The data in relation to tenors’ non-participation (Bartle 1968; Gates 1989) is relevant to this material and will be pursued in the following chapters.

Further weight is added to this argument by White and White (2001, p. 40):

> …though the young man may inwardly enjoy singing, when he sits with his buddies at school or at church, he will not sing if the group believes it is not masculine or “cool.”

Some of the most recent research into this field comes from Adler (1997 and 2001) who proposes that to make singing an experience that
will have positive value for boys involves “examining the issues of school policy, departmental and classroom management, teacher-student relations, peer relations and student self-esteem and self-image”. He summarises the effects of peer disapproval and societal situation by referring to *Social Construction* and *Identity Capital*.

*Social Construction* describes the role of society and the individual in the construction of identity and gender (Bem, 1974). Some gender related traits are perceived as more desirable than others and are nurtured by society. Helgeson (1994) suggested that traits were only desirable when gender roles and gender were the same. From childhood through a process of socialisation, we select traits that we think are valued in order to construct our identity. As discussed earlier regarding methodology, *Identity Capital* is the term used to describe a person’s effort to highlight socially desirable traits and avoid activities that might highlight socially undesirable traits (Cote 1990; Evens and Eder 1993). Participation in gender incongruent activities is socially punished through bullying, loss of self-esteem, social exclusion, verbal and physical abuse.

This classification by Adler (2001) is extremely helpful in the current discussion as it provided recent data closely related to relevant issues. Specifically with regard to vocal music, Adler found that as singing does not construct or defend masculinity it carries with it gender incongruent and therefore homophobic labels. Plummer (1999, p.149) found that the pressure not to pursue artistic activities because of these labels led to them being relinquished:

We had a very enthusiastic brother who was a music teacher. He worked so hard to get us little shits to play in his band and we did. And we disappointed him. We played for about a year and we were getting good, and then we just thought “Oh we’re just going to buggarize around and play sport.” And it broke his heart I’m sure, because it wasn’t the right thing to do. The culture to do other things was just too strong. It was too artistic.

George had similar experiences of homophobic labelling:
In year 11, two events changed George’s life. There were not enough students in George’s year level to warrant timetabling a class for music. The music teacher fought with the school administration. He put forward the argument that in order for the music program to grow, they needed to start with small classes of keen students. The school administration didn’t agree. It was cost-effective, they argued. Undeterred, the music teacher approached the girls’ school across the road to see whether combined classes might be possible. They were amenable to the idea and so music was available to George as a school subject. In addition, the connection with the girls provided some relief from the male-dominated school environment George had experienced for three years. Prior to this, the only engagement with the girls had been through contrived school dances where the rules were so strict (and the boys so inhibited) that little valuable interaction was possible. In some ways, he now felt he had the ideal educational setting: mostly single-sex, with co-educational experiences for the specialist subjects. So four times a week, George and two other boys from his year went across the road for music classes. In these lessons, George was introduced to the world of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Verdi, Wagner and Stravinsky. Classes weren’t restricted to western art music, though: George also had classes on rock, pop, jazz and world music. This was the most anticipated class of the week. There was only one downside: as he and his two colleagues returned to school each day, they would be greeted by a “welcoming” party: “How was music class today, faggot?” one asked. “Did you have a good time with the other girls in music today?” asked another. These taunts rarely turned to physical violence, but the threat was always present. This was a roller-coaster ride of exciting musical experiences tempered with the inane actions of a few lads who thought they were being funny.

For George, he was able to withstand the homophobic abuse and come through the experience. There is evidence to suggest that these behaviours reduce in the senior years of schooling. Some of the other characters we meet in Chapter Seven found this to be the case, while others did not fare so well.

5.6 Summary

The aim of this chapter was to provide a chronological account of research into the gendering of musical participation to date. In broad terms, soft, gentle music is shunned and males avoid the instruments on which such music is performed: flute, clarinet, violin and singing. These instruments were consistently placed at the feminine end of the continuum of instruments at the end of Chapter Four.
Males tended to restrict themselves to a relatively small group of instruments: drums and lower brass were popular choices. Females’ choices ranged more freely across a wider range of instruments and there was clear evidence that females were also assuming musical roles traditionally associated with males. This process was also referred to in Chapters 2 and 3. Gates (1989), Koza (1993) and others established its existence in music in the studies reported in this chapter. A feature of this process is that, while females are pursuing “masculine” endeavours, they are still retaining their participation in traditional “feminine” activities. This gives women the broader base rightly demanded in feminist thought, while marginalizing male participation. Avoidance of femininity is clearly a key element in the restriction of choices of instruments and activities, as is male gender role rigidity as found in the work of Abeles and Porter (1978), Koza (1993,1994) Fortney et al. (1993) and Delzell and Leppla (1992).

Other factors were found to effect the gendering of instrument choice. The role of teacher was reflected upon at the end of Chapter 3. A large number of researchers whose work was examined in this chapter found the role of the music teacher to be important. Teachers were found to be a major influence in the choice of instrument and in maintaining interest in music making. Perseverance, along with androgyny, are typical personality traits found in performers and teachers of music. This is thought to contribute to some students’ successful participation in so-called gender-incongruent musical behaviours.

As identified in Chapter 1, role models were a significant factor in the choice of instrument. Along with teachers, parents, peers and the media presented role models, some of which served to enhance popular discourses about gender. Koza (1993) acknowledged the role sportspersons have played as role models for almost 100 years. The role of sport as contributing to the construction of masculinity has been discussed in earlier chapters. Koza (1993) and Stollack (1996) emphasise that sport can be harnessed as a motivational tool in music, but that this needs to be executed with caution so as to avoid entrenching stereotypes. Single-sex activities were also seen as a positive way of increasing engagement.

With the background to stereotyping and gender in place, the next chapter explores recent developments in the study of stereotyping of music. Three studies investigating primary, secondary and post-secondary
experiences of music are put forward, as way of demonstrating current trends.

George was aware that he was different, even to his own friends and colleagues, he had different interests and different ways of expressing himself through music, fashion and gesture. The homophobic abuse troubled him, but he didn’t think he was gay: he really enjoyed the company of the girls when he went across the road; secretly, he had a crush on one of them. He therefore concluded he was a heterosexual who lived on the margins of “accepted” masculinity.

The second defining event was a week-long residency with a troupe from the city’s opera company. The team from the opera company was comprised of four singers, a piano player and a stage director. Each day, twenty students (a mixture of boys and girls) met with these visiting artists to work on music theatre pieces. The format changed each day but there were combinations of drama games, vocal exercises, learning songs and stagecraft. The opera singers demonstrated some of the more advanced operatic repertoire for us. George had never heard anything like this before. The sheer power and agility of the voice, with no amplification gave him goose bumps. One of his favourites was the *Toreador Song* from Carmen: The swagger of the baritone, the thrill of the melody, the driving rhythm. What a thrill it was to sing the part of the chorus alongside a real professional. By the end of the week, the group had prepared three pieces for public performance: the *Toreador Song*, *The Ballad of Sweeney Todd* and an excerpt from Gilbert and Sullivan’s *The Gondoliers*. George even had a solo line in Sweeney Todd. When the performance came around, George was scared. His peers filed into the school hall and he was expecting the worst. Would they openly mock him during the performance, or would they wait until afterwards to taunt him? The performance was exhilarating. Singing this wonderful music with professional singers was one of the highlights of George’s school life. To his enormous relief, there was no cat-calling during the performance. And afterwards? To his surprise, his peers were supportive and even congratulated him on his singing. The tide was turning and George’s love of music theatre was born.
CHAPTER SIX

RECENT PERSPECTIVES ON STEREOTYPING

This chapter reports on recent research I undertook to ascertain the extent to which stereotypical behaviours in music participation have continued into the 21st century. Through a series of surveys and observations, the following aspects of stereotyping were investigated:

- The choice of musical instruments of primary and secondary school students;
- Level of participation (by sex) in school ensembles;
- Common attitudes of secondary students in respect of instrument selection;
- Opinions of tertiary students in respect of masculine and feminine attributes associated with certain instruments.

Some of the methodology of earlier studies was retained providing, in part, a longitudinal study spanning over twenty years. Of particular interest were student instrument preferences and the reasons given for those preferences. Elements of Abeles and Porter (1978), Griswold and Chroback (1981), Delzell and Leppla (1992) and Fortney, Boyle and De Carbo (1993) were employed to provide structure and comparability with data reported in the earlier chapters. Three studies were implemented:

Study 1: This was a study of primary school age students’ preference for musical instruments. This study asked for primary school students’ first and second choices.

Study 2: This study comprised an 11-item survey asking students’ current instruments, the instruments students would least like to play and the instruments students would most like to play. In open and closed response items, secondary school students were asked to provide reasons for their choices.
Study 3: This study asked music and non-music tertiary students to indicate whether musical instruments were perceived to have masculine or feminine attributes.

**6.1: Primary School Students’ Preferences**

Students were sourced from 50 different primary schools in Brisbane, Australia. Students were shown the instruments, without demonstration. 102 students accepted the survey. Of these, 11 females and 7 males declined to indicate their preference, leaving 44 male respondents and 40 female respondents who indicated their first and second preferences. The raw data was converted to a percentage of the total surveyed for comparison with other studies of a similar nature. In the first iteration, drums/percussion were clearly the first preference of all students, followed by guitar (students were shown acoustic, electric and bass guitars). For males the next preferences were for saxophone and trumpet, followed by piano, singing and violin. Female preferences after drums and guitar were piano, singing, clarinet, violin and flute. There are indications here of the shift towards masculine activity by females as evidenced by the percentage of girls selecting trombone, drums and guitar.

This study was repeated a year later. Again students in primary school were asked to indicate their instrument preference. Students were shown the instruments, without demonstration. In this iteration, 194 students accepted the survey. Of these, 27 females and 48 males declined to indicate their preference, leaving 55 male respondents and 54 female respondents who indicated their first and second preferences. In broad terms, the figures from the second iteration indicate that more boys than girls were involved in the learning of brass and percussion instruments, while more girls than boys learned strings and woodwind. In the strings, the exception was the ‘cello. In the non-orchestral instruments singing, composition and piano are a female domain, though this is more the case with singing and composition than piano.

From the total of 345 subjects across the two iterations, (see table 6.1) the clear choice of instrument for both sexes was drums, followed by guitar, piano, singing, clarinet, saxophone, flute, violin, trumpet and trombone. After drums, which were chosen by a higher proportion of boys, piano and singing were clearly dominated by girls. Clarinet, flute and violin were also nominated by a larger number of girls, while the ranking of saxophone, trumpet and trombone was largely due to boys’ choices.
Table 6.1 Primary students’ instrument preferences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Average % of males</th>
<th>Average % of females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flute</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarinet</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>88.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saxophone</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet</td>
<td>86.1</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trombone</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Horn</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuba</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violin</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>77.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Cello’</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double Bass</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drums/Percussion</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>34.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guitar</td>
<td>72.8</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piano</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>72.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singing</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>84.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This raw data shows that boys generally avoided flute, clarinet, singing and to a lesser extent, piano. Girls consistently avoided trumpet. Both sexes had few respondents electing trombone, French horn, tuba, ‘cello and double bass. The fact that viola was not chosen could stem from a range of reasons, including lack of exposure and lack of positive association.

It would be unwise to claim that gender is the only reason for the choices of instruments outlined in table above. Other issues could include the status of the instrument or ensemble; the band versus orchestra versus choir tensions; director personality; establishment of a culture within the school that supports a range of experiences. There is however, clear evidence in this data that stereotypes exist in the instrument choices of primary school students. Boys chose drums, brass, saxophone, double bass and guitar. Flute, strings (except double bass), piano and singing were chosen by girls.

Boys avoided flute, clarinet and singing, while girls avoided choosing French horn, tuba and double bass. This indicates some support for the notions of avoidance of femininity by boys and male gender role rigidity as outlined in the earlier chapters. It also raises issues in relation to girls’
involvement in music and while this is not part of the brief for this volume, the data is challenging enough to warrant investigation.

### 6.2: Secondary School Students’ Preferences

Secondary school students participating in instrumental and vocal tuition programs in south-east Queensland were surveyed, through music teachers, to ascertain which instrument they played as their first choice. Students’ instrument choice ranged across 19 instruments. Students were enrolled in state and private, co-educational and single-sex secondary schools.

The sample was taken in June 2000. Sixty-five schools across Queensland were given the surveys. 10 schools responded, representing 903 students: 343 males and 560 females.

The first question asked of the students was to indicate their main instrument and the number of years they had been playing that instrument. The results have been converted to a percentage of the total number of students learning each instrument by gender. In analysing the responses by orchestral families, woodwind instruments are played by more females, the only exception being saxophone, which is strongly represented in both sexes. More males play brass instruments; particularly lower brass (tuba and trombone) though euphonium/horn were quite evenly balanced. Percussion is quite strongly male dominated. Outside orchestral families singing and piano are female dominated; guitar is male dominated. This concurs with earlier studies, particularly Hanley’s (1998, p.59) findings in which girls prefer woodwind and boys selected brass and percussion.

In relation to individual instruments, the responses to the question “what is your main instrument?” can be found in Table 6.2. The individual instruments that are highly polarized are worth noting: flute, oboe and singing recorded very high numbers of female participants, while tuba and trombone were the most highly ranked instruments to be played by males. Saxophone, French Horn and Euphonium were evenly represented, though the number of responses for Euphonium was not statistically significant.
A continuum of instruments from those chosen by males to those chosen by females will provide a useful tool for comparison with the literature cited in Chapter Four, though care should be taken in comparing data obtained through different sources.

Table 6.2 Secondary students’ instruments: % of the total participants by sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>% of total surveyed who were Male</th>
<th>% of total surveyed who were Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flute</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>96.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oboe</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarinet</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>72.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saxophone</td>
<td>56.6</td>
<td>43.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bassoon</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>88.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet</td>
<td>64.6</td>
<td>35.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trombone</td>
<td>80.8</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Horn</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euphonium</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuba</td>
<td>90.9</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violin</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>74.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viola</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>63.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Cello</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>62.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double Bass</td>
<td>69.2</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percussion/Drums</td>
<td>66.9</td>
<td>33.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piano</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>85.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singing</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>91.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guitar</td>
<td>72.4</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The instruments played by a high percentage of females through to those played by a high percentage of males could be ranked in the following way: oboe, flute, singing, bassoon, piano, violin, clarinet, viola, ‘cello, euphonium or baritone, French Horn, saxophone, trumpet, percussion, double bass, guitar, trombone, tuba.

Students were also asked to indicate the influences on their choice in the question “What influenced you to take this instrument?” This was a closed question with a number of options from which students could select. “Gender attributes” was not one of the specific options available to students. The aim was to ascertain whether the reasons given could indicate an underlying gender bias and prompting could adversely affect
the responses. Of the 903 students surveyed, 318 responded to this question. The replies are given in Table 6.3 below.

Table 6.3 Influences on secondary students’ instrument choice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is little difference between the genders with regard to responses. The only responses worth noting at this stage are that size was an issue for almost twice the number of boys than girls and that sound was considered more of an issue for girls. Other issues not listed here included personal development, social reasons (to join a band) or the ease of the instrument.

Mackenzie (1991) also pursued the reasons as to why children decide to learn to play particular instruments and avoid others. Mackenzie’s study examined the motivation of 48 students to start learning a musical instrument. The students’ responses to Mackenzie’s question ‘Why did you start to learn to play a musical instrument’ were classified into five sub-groupings – social, school, home, personal and other. In the interests of comparability, the data from the two studies could be observed in this way:
Table 6.4 Comparison of influences instrument choice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mackenzie’s term</th>
<th>Harrison’s term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>Parent/family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>Sound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Availability and other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Overall, “teachers/school” continued to be the second most significant influence. Parents also maintained the position of influence as that Mackenzie found. “Friends” were less inclined to be an articulated influence than in Mackenzie’s studies. The strongest shift from Mackenzie’s study to the current study is in relation to the concept of sound or timbre. This could be affected by the allocation of MacKenzie’s term “personal” to sound in the current study. Delzell and Leppla (1992) and Fortney et al. (1994) had found this to be a significant factor, but not to this extent. Fortney et al. referred to this response as masking a hidden response, so there may be other explanations behind the large numbers of students giving “sound” as a reason. This will be the basis for some further research.

Students were also asked whether anyone in their family had played an instrument. 65 indicated a brother, 65 indicated a sister, 13 indicated their mother, 9 their father and 3 said another member of the family. These family members who played an instrument had in many cases been the same people who were responsible for the choice of an instrument in the section on influences discussed above. The role of the peer and family influences has been discussed in earlier chapters in relation to the work of Abeles and Porter (1978) and Bruce and Kemp (1993). This was also a significant aspect of the author’s own experience as detailed in the opening prologue.

While other family members may be significant, peer influence continues to be one of the most important influences in why instruments are chosen, not chosen or given up. The influence of family members, particularly parents and grandparents is more likely to be a feature in subtly reinforcing stereotypes.
Of the 903 responses, almost 200 also answered the question “If you could choose another instrument to play, what would it be and why?” The purpose of this question was to ascertain the reasons for instrument choice, particularly if the first choice of instrument was not of their doing: in other words a parent or teacher determined the most appropriate first instrument on their behalf. Their responses with regard to instrument choice are given in Table 6.5 below. Given the emphasis in earlier aspects of this volume on the avoidance of femininity, the instruments avoided by both sexes provide make for interesting reading: singing, tuba, voila, French horn and piccolo were avoided by almost all respondents. In comparison with other studies, there are some familiar trends emerging.

Table 6.5 Secondary students’ free choice of instrument

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Number of Males</th>
<th>Number of Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Piccolo</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flute</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oboe</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarinet</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saxophone</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trombone</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Horn</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuba</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violin</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viola</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Cello</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double Bass</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guitar</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drums/Percussion</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piano</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harp</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in Table 6.5 represents a high degree of correlation with the earlier information presented in study 1. Drums, double bass and guitar are the clear choices of males, while flute, saxophone, drums and violin were the choices of females. Males avoided choosing the woodwind instruments, singing and harp, while females avoided lower brass, piccolo,
singing and harp. Study 1 responses also indicate a high level of interest from both sexes in drums and guitar. In response to an open-ended question as to why they had chosen the instruments in Table 6.5, 130 students responded. The results of this question are tabulated in Table 6.6 and demonstrate a strong leaning towards the sound of the instrument: the choice of this word is significant in view of the fact that these were open-ended responses.

Table 6.6 Secondary students’ reasons for choice of instruments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sound</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Attributes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/Family</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy/Fun</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability/Demand</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over a third of respondents (68 students) did not give a reason for their choice. This was due to the design of the question: the survey asked for the name of the instrument and the reason to be given in one space.

In categorising the responses for free choice instruments in Table 5.7, “physical attributes”, “the size” and “look of the instrument” were considered while “style” referred, among other things, to the type of music in which a student may be able to participate as a result of learning that instrument. Other reasons included personal and social development. As mentioned above, sound and ease of instrument were found to be the most frequently given reasons for choice. The selection and implications of choosing sound will discussed later in the chapter, as some gender attributes are inherent in the use of the term.

No student consciously acknowledged a gender-associated reason for his or her choice. It is possible that the phenomenon that Fortney et al. (1993) maintained may be applied here. They concluded that “regardless of what students say in response to influence about various factors, males tend to play instruments that are considered masculine and females choose to play instruments that are considered feminine” (Fortney et al. 1993, p.
In addition, the comments participants made might be euphemisms for the underlying reasons including the lack of a good standard in the school ensemble.

Subjects were asked to answer the question “Which instrument would you least like to play and why.” One of aims was to find which instruments would be deliberately avoided. Their responses appear in Table 6.7.

Table 6.7 Instruments secondary students would least like to play

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Piccolo</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flute</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oboe</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarinet</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saxophone</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trombone</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French horn</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuba</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violin</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Cello</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double Bass</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harp</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drums</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guitar</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recorder</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For many instruments there was little difference between the sexes. The sample size of many instruments is not significant enough to draw conclusions: piccolo, 'cello, harp and guitar had such few responses that no comment can be made. The figures for trumpet and trombone indicate a resistance from females. In the case of the figures for flute the sample is large enough to make a valid assessment. The high numbers for flute in both sexes, but more so in males, send a clear message about the status of the flute. Prior to this study, only males had rejected flute. The avoidance of flute by both genders may be an indication of the trend noted by Gates
Of greater significance are the reasons given for choosing an instrument as the least preferred choice. Student responses to this part of the survey are given in Table 6.8:

Table 6.8 Secondary students’ reasons for choosing least likely instruments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sound</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Attributes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Interesting</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Four students who nominated an instrument (as indicated in Table 6.7) did not indicate a reason for their choice.

The responses again indicated proportional variations with regard to gender. “Style” was one case where significantly more males than females indicated this as a priority and “sound,” where many more males indicated a preference. Difficulty and physical attributes were also skewed in the gendered nature of their response.

Flute, violin and recorder were the instruments that elicited the most detailed reasons within the broad bands of Table 6.7. With regard to recorder, most of the responses referred to the compulsory playing of recorder in the primary school as an off-putting influence. The violin was thought to be “too high” or “too scratchy”. The sound of the solo instrument, in this case, is thought to be less approachable than the sound of violin in ensemble. The physicality of the instrument also provided some useful insights. One male response referred to his choice of least likely instrument as one “they couldn’t hit,” therefore it was not a prospective instrument. A female respondent chose the drums as her least likely instrument because “they make a lot of noise.” A small but significant group of male respondents spoke of their reason for choosing the flute as their least preferred instrument in these terms:
“Because it’s a girl’s instrument”
“It is gay”
“They have a pouncy [sic] sound”
“It is a pansy instrument”
“It’s weak and very girly.”

The use of descriptive language such as “girl’s instrument” and “weak and girly” to express the gendered nature of instrument choice is a confirmation that the earlier findings of Green (1997), Koza (1994) and Hanley (1998) continue to exist. They include males’ unwillingness to be associated with anything that may be considered feminine and therefore “suspect.” It correlates with the findings described above and in those in Chapter One with regard to males not being able to cross gender lines as easily as females.

The use of this language and its effect on the music at large and participants in person has been discussed at length. It will be pursued in more detail in the cases studies in the next chapter. It gives a strong indication of one of the main reasons for non-participation by boys in certain musical activities and helps to provide some perspective on the strong preferences indicated (or not indicated) by boys throughout this chapter and the earlier studies outlined in Chapter Four.

6.3: Tertiary Students’ Perceptions

Two cohorts of tertiary students were involved in this study: undergraduate music students and non-music students from a university in Brisbane, Australia. Music students were those students enrolled predominantly in music subjects, while the non-music students were from disciplines other than music. The study was administered during August and September of 2000. Of the 103 respondents, 5 were discarded as having misunderstood or defaced the questionnaire. Of the remaining 98, 71 were music students (32 males and 39 females) and 27 were non-music Students (9 males and 18 females), giving total 41 male subjects and 57 female subjects.

The test instrument was a 10-point Likert-type scale anchored on the words masculine and feminine, modelled on Griswold-Chroback (1981), but with a reduced number of instruments and including singing for the first time in a study of this nature. In alphabetical order, the names of ten instruments were listed down the left-hand side of the page. These instruments were ‘cello, clarinet, drums, flute, guitar, saxophone, singing,
trumpet, trombone and violin. Each subject was asked to read the alphabetical list and circle the number (1 – 10) that applied to their perception of whether the instrument was associated with masculine or feminine attributes.

Given the attention afforded the concept of the avoidance of femininity in establishing masculinity in the discussion thus far (Brannock 2000; McLean 1985; Plummer 2000; Gilbert 1998), it is also worth considering how instruments gendered masculine and feminine above were rated at the other end of the spectrum. The notion of “otherness” was discussed in Chapter One and this will be pursued in this piece of research: in this instance, I am attempting to apply this principle and the avoidance of femininity to instrument choice. In other words, if a male can avoid an instrument, the stereotypes can be more satisfactorily identified and the social position of the male confirmed. Failing to circle an instrument as masculine or circling the extreme end of the feminine scale are behaviours that may reflect this attitude of avoidance.

For the purpose of comparison, another continuum may be useful. The instruments that were considered most feminine, through to those considered most masculine in this instance were: flute, clarinet, ’cello, singing, violin, saxophone, guitar, trumpet, trombone, drums. This study was replicated seven years later, with the only noticeable difference being in singing, which traded places with ’cello to become identified as significantly more feminine. These findings are described in more detail in other publications (See Harrison 2001, 2007) but the continuum in Figure 6.1 may assist in demonstrating the relative positions of particular instruments:
In response to this behaviour, subjects may have been trying to suggest that an instrument is definitely not one gender by not selecting the opposite end of the scale. In an analysis of the data, only 5% of the sample indicated that flute, singing and violin were possibly feminine while less than 5% chose drums, trombone, guitar and saxophone as possibly having masculine attributes.

One of the significant features of earlier studies is that Abeles and Porter found there was little discernable difference in the responses of music majors and that of non-music majors. Griswold and Chroback (1981) concluded that music majors were more prone to stereotyping than non-music majors. In this study, the music majors produced stronger responses in the absolute extremes than the non-music majors did. In other words, drums were definitely associated with the masculine and flute with the feminine in music students’ responses. The trombone and trumpet were felt to be more masculine by non-music students, while the cello was thought to be more feminine. In defining neutral instruments, non-music students were more highly represented. This is particularly so with regard to the status of singing which stands out as being more obviously neutral according to non-music students than music students.

It is difficult therefore to find support for the Griswold and Chroback (1981) point of view with respect to music students being more prone to stereotyping. It is only true to say that drums and flute, which were thought by all respondents to be at opposite ends of the continuum, were
thought to be slightly more so by music students. Non-music students were more likely to assign neutrality to an instrument than music students. Nor is it possible to fully support Abeles and Porter’s (1978) contention that there are some differences between the music majors and non-music majors. On the basis of the current data, these differences would not be considered significant.

6.4 Summary

The intention of this chapter was to examine the nature of stereotyping associations with instruments within an Australian context, using the background data from the earlier chapters as a starting point. Two themes were explored here: the ways in which schools support hierarchical gender systems and what it means to be male in a feminine discipline.

Using elements of Abeles and Porter (1978, p.72) the author sought to discover whether the association of gender with musical instruments existed in the general population. The data from this chapter indicates that this is the case. It is clear that sex-stereotyping of instruments begins at an early age. This will be investigated further in the next chapter in which subjects are asked to reflect on their early experiences of music.

The use of a masculine feminine continuum, first employed by Abeles and Porter (1978), proved to be a practical tool in providing longitudinal data. The challenges of investigating other variables related to instrument choice including literature, ensemble involvement and the association of music with traditional feminine characteristics as proposed by Abeles and Porter (1978, p.75) were significant in structuring the research method for all the results reported here.

Abeles and Porter (1978); Griswold and Chroback (1981) and Delzell and Leppla (1992) compared the perception of musicians and non-musicians in relation to gender. From the data presented here, it is inconclusive as to whether non-musicians and musicians perceptions are greatly different. Differences appeared to be dependant on situational factors. It should be noted, however, that such factors can be manipulated in a positive way to engage more students. The use of Griswold and Chroback’s 10-point Likert-type scale as a discriminative instrument assisted demonstrating which instruments were avoided on the basis of perceived gender. This tool brought into play the issues of avoidance of femininity as discussed in Chapter 1. It was found that males tend to
restrict themselves to a smaller number of “masculine” instruments. The inclusion of voice as a potential instrument was a highly important feature pursued in this chapter. The voice is one of the major activities in which gender has been a factor, though little research has taken place. The data collected here clearly indicates that the voice is strongly biased towards the feminine. Boys with changed voices rarely return to sing after the change and as a result, the gender bias remains into adulthood. This concept will be pursued in the final chapter that examines issues of engagement for males beyond school.

The data presented in Chapter 3 indicated that music is perceived as feminine and as such does not enjoy high status. The evidence of Chapters 4 and 5 indicated that soft, gentle music is not considered masculine and that males avoid the instruments on which such music is performed. The data from this chapter supports these findings in general terms. A further conclusion is that the avoidance of certain instruments has stifled musical and other experiences available through ensemble involvement.

Through these findings and the material reported in the previous chapters, the profile of individual instruments that were prone to stereotyping can also be viewed through the following summary:

- Flute was on the feminine end of the scale in ten out of the eleven studies;
- Clarinet and violin were either second or third most feminine in eight out of eleven studies;
- Tuba was the most masculine in every study in which it was an option, while drums/percussion were the most masculine in five of the studies;
- Trumpet, trombone, drums and other lower brass were consistently deemed masculine;
- Saxophone was consistently neutral;
- Singing was towards the feminine end in all the studies in which it was an option.

In general, little has changed across the 30 years since Abeles and Porter’s study: flute clarinet, singing and violin occupy the feminine domain and drums/percussion, tuba and trombone the masculine domain. There is some evidence to suggest that percussion may be moving towards a neutral gender position.
Gender associations seem to be related to pitch, size and dynamic level. The “feminine” instruments seem to be higher in pitch, smaller in size and capable of narrower dynamic ranges. It seems almost certain that, based on this data, there are strong gender-related reasons for the musical choices of boys. The playing of the weaker, softer, gentler instruments at the higher end of the pitch range is perceived as being as un-masculine as similar activities in other disciplines.

The fact that some male musicians continue to play “feminine” instruments can be explained in a number of ways. Kemp (1985) studied the personality traits of musicians and offers the suggestion that singers exhibited a bias towards extroversion and adjustment, traits that probably helped to overcome any adverse effects of engaging in non-stereotypical behaviour. Kemp also found that children who pursue music into and beyond adolescence were found to be in possession of a kind of personal androgyny. This allows them to disregard socio-cultural expectations and maintain the necessary high motivation required in music, regardless of social and personal cost. Green (1997) also found that perseverance was likely to be an attribute associated with successful musicians of either sex.

Another theory about boys continuing to engage in gender-incongruent musical behaviours concerns the impact of situation. Some boys will engage in singing and playing the flute and clarinet in all male schools. As in other all male environments (for example, prison) males take on the roles that would in other circumstances be taken by women. There is also the thought that, because there are no women in that particular situation, the need for males to demonstrate their masculinity is removed. Chapter Three discussed the advantages of single-sex activities. The role of situation should not be underestimated.

The data in this chapter has proven conclusively that the stereotyping of musical instruments is a crucial issue in the musical behaviours of males and females in schools. It indicates that there are sex equity issues in ensemble practices that need to be addressed in order for male and females to enjoy the fullest possible musical experience, as espoused by post-feminist theory.

A long-term attitudinal change is required to change the perception of the feminine as being inferior. Along with changing attitudes in the long term, ensemble directors need to look carefully at repertoire that reflects this image. Repertoire and the group that “sounds good” are key elements
in creating a desirable image. In the interim, every possible avenue needs to be pursued to ensure that boys and girls are free to participate in whatever musical activity interactions they genuinely desire. Chapter Seven examines the musical lives of selected individuals in relation to overcoming these stereotypes. As Teese (1995) recommends, it is unwise to measure performance without measuring participation. He also emphasizes the need to examine which boys are engaged in particular activities. Chapter Seven also pursues the cause and effect of these behaviours and examines some strategies for short and long-term change.
This chapter tells the stories of young men who reflect on their experiences of music at school. The stories are divided into themes. The foundation for these themes can be found in the existing literature, the data on stereotyping in earlier chapters and the experience of the author as a music educator. Based on these foundations, the following categories will be used as classifiers throughout the chapter:

- Subjects’ early experience of music
- The emergence of stereotyping and gender issues in musical activities
- Harassment of musicians
- The function of the role model
- Individual coping mechanisms

Each of these categories was found to be significant in the shaping of musical experiences by many respondents. Many reported a family member or teacher as having an influence. In relation to stereotyping and gender issues, a few respondents were unaware of any gender issues associated with their musical experience.

7.1 Early experience of music

Given that gender identity is established at an early age (Kohlerg 1966; Edelbrock and Sugawara 1978; Best et al. 1977) and that by the age of seven, children are as able as adults to label activities as stereotypically masculine or feminine (Urberg 1982), an investigation of early musical experience is warranted.

There was a wide range of responses ranging from those who had experience of music while quite young and those who came to music late in life. The function of the role model will be discussed in more detail.
later, but almost all candidates reported the influence of a close family member or music teacher as having fostered their interest and talent. While Whellams (1973) found that musicality was not influenced by hereditary factors, Sloboda and Howe (1991) found that the role of parents and teachers in the early years was essential in terms of encouragement and support. This would appear to correlate with the findings of Mackenzie (1991), Lamb (1993), Lautzenheiser (1993) and Hanley (1998) who commented specifically on the role teachers play in shaping young musicians’ lives. Many subjects indicated parental influence as a factor in early music making, before contact with teachers through school. For Bruce it was a case of being surrounded by classical music in the preschool years:

Bruce: My first experiences of music were probably as a little boy (3-6 yrs. old) with my parents playing popular Classical Music on the record player. This was the only music that was played.

For two other subjects, the role of music in the early years was a functional one: it was used as a calming device:

Fred: I’ve been told that from an early age I needed noise to help me settle. As a toddler, I was more likely to fall asleep with the music or the TV playing and I had also been given a child drum kit and a keyboard.

Bruce: The only way I would calm down was if dad took me to the window and sang a song that he had made up about me.

In the case of Fred and Bruce, the parents took a more active role in the early musical education of their son, monitoring progress closely.

Fred: From about 4 years of age I remember tinkering occasionally on the piano at home, trying to play small melodies that I knew. Mum noticed these attempts and organised piano lessons for me which I began around 5 years old.

For Brian, the influence of the parent was almost accidental, yet one moment was a defining one:
Brian: I remember dad getting his hands on this video called “The complete Beatles”... There sitting at the back of the band on his little platform, playing away was Ringo. I remember just seeing him and being blown away and thinking, “wow what a great job”. You don’t have to sing or do anything like that, you just play.

The fact that Brian had realized that singing was not part of having to be a good at music was a turning point and part of the reason he chose to develop his musical interests.

The accidental nature of discovering musical interest was not always in the presence of a parent. Other family members also play a pivotal role, as was the case for Brian:

Brian: The following weekend we went to my grandmother’s and a family friend brought his old trumpet around. The first time I picked it up I produced a good solid tone so I found the instrument that was best suited. That weekend grandma and grandad bought me my first trumpet and I sat and blew for hours in their music room, excited that I was able to make a noise and therefore able to play in the band.

While it may be difficult to prove the biological precursors of musical ability the influence of families in providing early musical opportunities was noteworthy.

There has already been considerable discussion relating to the role teachers play as early influencers of musicians. Mackenzie (1991), Lamb (1993), Lautzenheiser (1993), Hanley (1998), and Sloboda and Howe (1991) found that warmth and enthusiasm were crucial in fostering a child’s love of music making. Yang (2002) commented at some length on this attribute. Gary supports this view in describing his first teacher:

Gary: My first guitar teacher was a man who really instilled a love of music in me. He encouraged me to write my own songs and gave me many opportunities to perform these.

There were a disproportionate number of subjects for whom warmth and enthusiasm do not feature in their early recollections. Brian and Craig had strong, but unpleasant memories of their private music lessons:

Brian: In grade three, like my brother I began learning piano from a very old and scary teacher (privately – not involved with the school) who
eventually began to suffer from incontinence, making piano lessons a very aromatic experience.

Craig: When I started school I took up the piano but this was a very short-lived experience as my piano teacher was a particularly nasty woman who also had the most horrible bad breath. I quickly told my parents that I was no longer interested in playing the piano.

These comments serve as a reminder to those in the teaching profession about the long lasting impressions teachers make in the initial stages of learning. For both Brian and Craig, this first experience was twenty years before they made these remarks, yet the memory was quite vivid.

Class music teachers were also subjected to scrutiny and found wanting. In the case of Craig, music in Year 8 was the last general music to which students were exposed before proceeding to elective classes. While it is generally agreed that music making is an enlightening, happy enterprise, this was not the experience of this subject.

Craig: Music was compulsory in Year 8, it was often the worst subject because the Music Director was the angriest teacher in the school.

Bruce could recognise that not all good musicians are necessarily good teachers.

Bruce: My teacher was a high school student who apparently was an excellent musician but lousy teacher. The feedback I was given regarding my playing was less than satisfactory which affected my progress and enthusiasm.

These comments refer only to males’ early or first experiences of music educators. The proportion of negative remarks from subjects who became excellent musicians is a cause for concern and a topic for further research. The role of teachers in later musical experiences, chiefly in regard to the gendered nature of musical participation will be discussed later in the chapter.

### 7.2 Stereotyping and Gender in music activity

Most subjects report some association with gender issues in relation to participation in music.
An instrument’s relationship to hegemonic masculinity was referred to by Green (1997) and Hanley (1998). The instruments of interest here are flute, clarinet and violin, all of which were found to have “feminine” associations in earlier studies. Clearly for Colin, the issue of carrying an instrument to school was problematic:

Colin: maybe carrying a flute and past singing experience did alter people’s opinion of me.

There is evidence in Colin’s comment that the carrying of certain instruments could be a concern for some boys. Evan switched from clarinet to the lower pitched trombone, which was found in earlier studies to be associated with masculinity.

Evan: there must have been some harassment about playing the clarinet because I took up the trombone because I felt it was more manly.

Brian recorded a similar response in respect of pitch being related to whether an instrument was masculine or not:

Brian: In high school about Grade 9 I gave the violin away and took up the Cello, the reason for this was that violin wasn’t seen as a very boy instrument and if I was going to play a stringed instrument it would be the cello as I saw it as more manly, I guess being deeper sounding or something (stupid I know!).

Evan commented, in passing, on the role singing played in other peoples’ perception of him. Four other subjects also commented on singing. David refers to it in relation to his guitar playing which was accepted and his singing in an “unchanged” voice, which was not. The guitar was found in the earlier studies to be slightly preferred by males as an instrument choice and as perceived to have masculine or neutral gender associations. Singing was consistently perceived as a feminine activity. Singing in a high or unchanged voice was certain to bring one’s masculinity into question to the point of attracting homophobic labels (Hanley 1998; Adler 2001; Koza 1993; Green 1993; and Schmidt 1995). Horrocks (1995) makes the connection between singing being emotional and expressive and guitar being seen as a phallic instrument, suited to males. Such was the experience of Craig:

Craig: I feel if I had only played guitar, there would not have been so many people joking about what I did. In my first two years at the school whenever I performed in front of my peers I would be given a hard time
mostly about my singing. When I arrived at the school my voice was not even beginning to ‘break’ and the fact that I was comfortable and willing to stand in front of a large group of students to sing and play my own compositions was too much for some people to handle; the more conviction one has the more open that person is leaving themselves to others’ victimising.

The fact that Craig also performed his own compositions is important. Very few studies into stereotyping have included the study of composition. Those that have investigated this area provide some justification for feminist claim to redress historical imbalances: the Western history of music has been deficient in its recording of the work of female composers.

Situational factors have been discussed in some detail as being important components in constructing gender. Bruce and Brian referred to the place singing held in their school culture:

Bruce: It [my school] wasn't really a place for singers because it wasn't considered 'normal' for a young man to sing.

Brian: Kind of being on the outside of things as a rather odd faggoty person at my school, singing did little to boost my social standing.

The broader cultural perspective of gender was raised earlier. In the same way as other aspects of gender vary; the role of singing can fluctuate according to the situation, even within Australia. The experience of Evan echoes some the comments of Brian, but within a cultural dimension:

Evan: …people heard that I sang opera and they immediately assumed that I was gay. Again, this wasn't a problem, but it goes to show how narrow minded our culture is in Australia that we can't accept "real men" to be artists.

Evan’s use of the term “real men” in relation to artists has some resonance with the idea of “sissy work” explored by Lehne (1995), Levitt and Klassen (1973) and Levine (1995) discussed earlier. They found that certain occupations were considered the domain of homosexuals.

7.3 Harassment of musicians

Some males reported being given a “hard time” because of their association with music. The reporting of this phenomenon varied
according to their experience: some were quite personal, while others responded in a more general way:

David: I think, from observation, that those who pursued music more heavily at school did receive quite a hard time about it.

Of those who gave a personal account, some were quite vivid and had no hesitation in labelling this as “bullying.” David pointed out that there are many factors that contribute to students being a victim of bullying. This concurs with the research of Plummer (1999) and Palotta-Chiarolli (2001) who give indications that it is a combination of behaviours that give other students the opportunity to focus on a victim. One of the key issues found by these researchers is that being “different” is often enough. In the case of Greg, it is not just music that creates this opportunity; it is “the whole package.” In his case, his life revolved around music, so the connection was more obvious.

Greg: My life revolved around music, and when this is the case, it is only natural that you will have a different outlook on things than the vast majority of other people. It was the whole package that made me an excellent target for bullying, a package bound by my love and devotion to music.

Later, Greg referred to the effect bullying had on his school existence and reinforces the view that other behaviours contributed to this situation.

Greg: My first years at the school were very tough, I was constantly bullied and victimised. I would sometimes come home from school and just start crying whilst trying to explain what happened. It was not so the fact that I was a musician that made me a target, more the type of musician/person. Music was a big thing at the school at that time and many boys were involved however, it was not because you were involved with music that made you a target for bullying, it was how much music meant to you.

Greg raises several other issues in this comment including:

- The notion that the first few years at high school were tougher than later years
- Bullying behaviours occurred in spite of the high profile of music in the school.
- Participation in music along with other factors contributed to bullying.
While the relationship between sport and music as ascertained by these individuals will be considered in more detail later, Brian commented that isolation was one of the key elements in which he found he was bullied as a musician. Rigby (1996) found that isolation was one of the prime ways in which bullying occurs. In Chapter One, it was found that it is one of the types of bullying, along with rejection and verbal taunting that can quickly lead to low self-esteem, poor mental health and depression. In this instance, note that the instrument in question is the violin, which he played instead of going to sport:

Brian: In primary school, I didn't remember getting any crap for doing music, but I think it had a profound effect on how I related to the other boys as all of them were playing football while I was playing the violin. It created a real divide between me and the other guys that I think still remains with me now in terms of how I relate to other guys. I didn't really receive much crap from the others kids during high school because the pattern of isolation or the divide that had been formed in primary school continued.

Brian’s view of bullying appeared to include verbal and physical harassment, but he did not consciously see isolation as a form of bullying. Brian and several others go on to describe the depression they experienced later in life, partly as a result of this isolation. The contrast between football, considered having high status in the school and violin, which had a lower status is noteworthy: the scheduling of violin lessons at the same time as football raises important issues of timetabling.

As discussed earlier in relation to Craig and his experience of playing the guitar and singing, the high or unchanged voice appeared to be more likely to attract bullying. The comments discussed earlier were in relation to the gendered nature of instruments. In this instance, the interest focussed specifically on the high incidence of bullying and singing in a high voice. These comments appear to add further weight to the argument.

Colin: The ridicule was based mainly on the fact that my voice hadn't broken at that stage, and was particularly high.

Colin goes on to explain that the long-term effect of this was that performing in those situations deterred him from singing for many years. The role of the older boys in inducting the younger boys into ways of homophobic bullying at the transition into secondary school is evident in
Colin commented on this in relation to another boy at his school who was mocked by the older boys for his high voice:

“Cracking” on a note could also bring ridicule, according to Higgins (1999). Bruce gives some specific examples of bullying in relation to his singing occurred. In his case it persisted through much of his high school experience, though the intensity was greater in the junior school years. In his situation, the bullying was verbal and physical abuse and it took place at lunchtime. This would appear to support the investigations of Parker (1996) who found that name calling of this nature takes place typically in secluded locations, on the sports field and between lessons:

Bruce: All through most of my High School life I had to persevere with a lot of nasty comments and rumours from most of the mainstream students and for a while I was alienated purely because I enjoyed singing. The really sad stuff happened in my earlier years though, Years 9 & 10. I couldn't sit through a lunch-hour or recess without people screaming things at me and throwing pieces of food at me. For a while it was really terrible.

Many responses refer to some type of verbal harassment. Bruce referred to the nasty comments he received for being a singer. Colin reflected on the homophobic content of these comments. Like Bruce, they found the worst times were in Years 9 and 10.

Colin: The fact that I was an artistic and sensitive person, proved something many boys (particularly in first three years) could not handle. I was teased with many slang homosexual names and questioned with regard to my sexuality. There was nothing to warrant this, I was clearly not homosexual but this was the way they dealt with me and the fact that I was a little different.

George: Then came high school in 1988. It was no longer “cool” to do music. From the moment I started high school in 1988 to the year I finished, came the taunting. The name calling started. Poofter, Faggot, Queer. You name it, I copped it. If it wasn't for my passion to do music, I would not be where I am today. For 5 years I put up with this crap even having to change schools in year 10. Unfortunately, nothing changed and
it was then I knew that if I wanted to continue music I would have learn to
deal with the teasing that came along with it.

For some, the accusations didn’t commence until after school finished:

Evan: I never had any trouble at school - the trouble came outside of
school. When I was in first year at the university, other musicians thought
I was gay cause I used to wear a scarf and cords [corduroy] in the cold
weather. I guess I dressed better than other guys there.

7.4 Role Models

A number of men reflected on the influence of teachers, parents and
the institution of school in their choice of instruments and the nature of
their participation in music.

7.4.1 Staff influence

The role of teachers has been discussed in reference to early musical
experience. In this instance the discussion related to later experiences and
the positive effect of role models. For many, this contributed to their
perseverance with music:

David: Through singing I was able to get respect from both students and
staff who had previously thought me worthless - it gave me pride in myself
and a career to aim for...

Craig: Thanks mainly to the music teachers at that time, we were given the
opportunity to do and see things that your average student would not…it
was during this part of my life that I began thinking about continuing
music as a full-time career.

Bruce and Evan noted the importance of having strong relationships
with the individual teacher, the class music teacher and/or the music
director. Bruce notes that competence as well as enthusiasm was relevant.
It has already been recognised that competence without enthusiasm is not
adequate for teachers of music.

Bruce: I loved my lessons with my singing teacher, she taught me about
the fundamentals of good singing. The most important thing I got out of all
of this was I had found something I was enjoying immensely. There’s
another teacher I have a lot of respect for: he worked hard at encouraging
young men to sing and took every opportunity to have us perform, as did my music teacher.

Evan: The director of music … encouraged me to compose more and gave me every performance opportunity he could. He constantly guided me whilst never making me be something I was not.

Several comments related to the notion that some staff actively discouraged involvement in music. This would appear to correlate with the earlier indications of Hillier et al. (1998), Skelton (1996) and Mac An Ghaill (1994) who indicated that staff could assist in entrenching stereotypical views of masculinity by complacency or more vigorous means. Colin reflected on the role of staff and other musicians as having a long-term effect:

Colin: The hardest time I received about being a musician was from staff and other musicians. Staff told me I should ignore musical endeavours and concentrate on my academic pursuits. I followed this idea of not doing music straight out of school, which I really shouldn't have. So this staff pressure did influence my music career.

In two cases, it was purely the teachers who were responsible for bullying:

Craig: …the problems arose from teachers rather then fellow students. I had really two problems [in relation to gender issues and the arts] throughout high school …both times it was with teachers.

Gary: Overall I wasn't given a tough time about being a musician by anyone at school (except for the usual teacher digs about throwing my life away).

Evan felt that a policy would have assisted staff in knowing how to manage bullying behaviours. This is part of a solution to bullying offered by Olweus (1993) and Rigby (1996). Evan commented:

Evan: Although many individuals on staff (and also many students) supported me, it was the ones who sought to use me to gain stature through bullying me who influenced many of those who sat ‘on the fence.’ It is important to understand that, although many members of staff understood what was going on and were concerned for me, there was certainly no official policy or system in place to cater for someone like myself.
Music teachers were seen to inadvertently discourage students in the early stages discussed above. An insensitive music teacher, it was found by Higgins (1999, p.20) could subject a boy to the “risk of humiliation” for a seemingly insignificant event, like cracking on a note when singing or squeaking on a clarinet. For some subjects, the process of discouragement continued in a more active form in secondary school:

Craig: The [next] director of music … went on to do his best to keep me down. He really gave you the impression he was worried about you becoming better than him and made sure that everyone knew how good he was.

The possibility of the student becoming better than the teacher is one some music teachers face in the execution of their duties. In music it is often apparent at a relatively young age. In this instance, it may only be Craig’s interpretation of the situation, but there is little doubt the problem exists and could conceivably be enabled through the abuse of power found in bullying.

Certain teachers were known in Mac An Ghaill’s (1994) study to have a problem with students who don’t participate in competitive sport. They preferred the “yobbo” footballers. They’d be tough with them, at the same time passing on the “boys will be boys” code. Hillier et al. (1998) referred to the compliance of teachers with this image and the contribution it makes to the construction of masculinity by commenting on the cases of homophobic abuse that occurred with the knowledge of teachers and other school authorities.

It could be assumed that musicians would maintain solidarity and that the bullying would come from the population beyond the music students. In the light of Plummer and Messner’s research and the comments below, it is clear there is a hierarchy within the music students exists i.e. some musical activities have higher status than others:

Craig: Even musos [sic] are so quick to judge from a superficial level! It didn't bother me that they thought I was gay because I was always sure in my heterosexuality, but being labelled as gay just because I dressed nicely and I liked opera, by other musicians (!) [subjects exclamation] was amusing to me.

Colin: Secondly, the environment amongst the musicians at school was a reasonably negative one for me. I never really got on that much with the musicians at school and in my life I have never really fitted into hierarchies
(this bands better than that one, this musician better than the other etc.). My peers found this very important and I didn't really have much time for that.

Evan: We were occasionally teased not because we played music but because we were in the lesser groups.

These comments help to emphasize the accepted nature of some music-related activities and the non-acceptance of others. This is also clear in the studies of stereotyping reported earlier. In a positive sense they also provide an opportunity for building or rebuilding a music program: By embracing the positive aspects of the hierarchy the success of the program can be almost guaranteed in the initial stages.

Repertoire selection has also been mentioned as an important factor in students' participation in certain activities. Soft, slow and classical music was reported earlier as being associated with femininity. Higgins (1999, p.21) suggested that the correct choice of music was not just a matter of “getting it right at the technical level.” She goes on to suggest that good repertoire does not have to be emotionally serious and philosophical. Up-tempo music, with a strong rhythmic pulse was perceived to be more masculine. Dress was found by Pallotta-Chiarolli (2001) to have an impact on whether an individual was considered different. Gary refers to ensemble uniforms and (like Evan) the standard of the groups as substantial elements in causing bullying.

Gary: … the stage band had these really good uniforms they were black pants with a black shirt with multi-coloured sleeves. It was classy. The string orchestra went through a series of disgusting uniforms most of them revolting, most of them making you like an idiot. The most horrible one being black pants with a see through white top with puffy sleeves and huge multi-coloured cuffs. This probably provided the most of the bullying opportunities. The string orchestra to a certain extent copped some bullying from other people particularly brass players who were obviously all male. The strings were seen as nowhere near as good.

It is worthy of note that Gary pinpoints that the brass players were “obviously” all male. For him, there was little doubt that the stereotypes found to exist in the earlier studies were a reality. Repertoire, standard, dress and the hierarchy of activities will be among issues discussed in more detail in the next chapter.
7.4.2 Parental influence

Parental influence, as outlined earlier, had a profound effect on some subject’s introduction to music. This was not true of all responses some of whom found that this support did not continue at secondary school and beyond:

Greg: Worst critics of my choice were my parents. My father has only accepted that music can be more than a hobby in the past few years.

Brian: When I reached grade 7 for some reason I decided to give it all up and let it all slide, for reasons unknown to me. I stopped practising and stopped lessons … I wanted a normal and enjoyable childhood. I think this came from the pressures my parents put on me as well as teachers, to succeed and be the best.

This response would appear to further reinforce the views of Levine (1995) and Lehne (1995) with regard to those involved in arts (singer, dancer, musician, artist, actor) as being acceptably “feminine” occupations, described as sissy work. They included singing, acting and dancing:

Brian: I decided to become a Music Theatre performer - to rise above the other dickhead boys at school. I also secretly loved to dance - something which I think was evident when I was very little but my parents didn't encourage it because of its association with homosexuality.

Brian raises the issue of dance and its connection with homosexuality. It should be noted at this point that recent research has taken place in relation to addressing homophobic bullying as a result of participation in dance. There are opportunities for further research encompassing a cross-arts approach to such issues.

Only Evan spoke highly of his parental and school support:

Evan: You never felt uncool being a musician at school and I was only ever given 100% support from home.

7.4.3 School influence

The school context was discussed in some detail earlier in this volume. The comments of Evan and Brian earlier referred to this. There were many positive responses in respect of experiences of school music. For some
they commented on the role music played in the culture of the school: how it was honoured and respected. Ian’s comment is typical in this respect:

    Ian: I think the way the school operated was also significant... In high school the music program was also pretty important. The stage band in particular was very well respected.

There is further evidence in this statement from Brian of the hierarchy that exists among musical activities. Some reflected on the opportunities provided for students and the element of competition. Brian, Fred and Evan found this to be an affirming experience:

    Brian: The school fostered many extra curricular activities and because of competition successes, interstate tours and supportive music staff music became one of the more higher profiled.

    Fred: Music was considered fairly highly in the school community. With many wins in local competitions and the fact that music was such a part of life at school masses, concerts and ceremonies, that music was just another avenue for students to experience.

    Evan: I believe that the school structure was conducive to allowing students to be able to pursue their own interests and provided ample opportunities to further learn and grow.

Two responses reflect a contrary point of view; closer to Keith Swanwick’s (1988, 1997):

    Gordon: The school I went to was definitely not set up with people like me in mind. The school was so big, so middling that it (its students) would attempt to pull anything different into that ‘normal’ area.

    Bruce: My school wasn’t a place for young male singers.

7.5 Individual coping mechanisms

Each subject was able to cope either through personal strategies or through some of the structures set up by the school as outlined above. Homophobic accusation has been found by other scholars to lessen in the final years of schooling. One of Plummer’s (1999, p. 181) subjects reported:
… from year 10 onwards the “faggot” name calling thing just seemed to disperse

Of all the coping mechanisms possible, it was the reported lessening of the bullying in the last two years of secondary school that enabled males to pursue their interests:

Evan: I experienced bullying throughout school as many people do. It was most prevalent in my junior high school years. It tended to lessen as I got to senior.

Bruce: It got better as I went through, and by the time I was in year 12, I was receiving quite the opposite from the other students. They started to have a lot of time for my voice.

Brian: In year 11 and 12 with school productions suddenly music, acting and singing were accepted by the majority of students. I really loved the productions because I had been so lonely.

Craig: By my senior years many things had changed. My classmates were beginning to grow up and started to appreciate what I did. There was also a real shift in the attitude toward bullies…the bullies who did not grow up and change became ostracised. It was much easier to be so involved with music now; people really respected me for it.

Another of the ways in which Plummer (1999) suggests that homophobic accusations can be modified or managed is through reaction to the jibe: knowing what to say or how to respond was critical. Some subjects report the use of verbal response as their best method of coping:

Brian again: Luckily I was prepared to use a bit of acid tongue and they tended to leave me alone.

Craig: [referring to an Italian boy who copped flack for his singing] But he was a wog – with blonde hair and a big mouth and he turned any ridicule to his advantage quickly using his notoriety to become well known and popular with everyone else.

For some, this was combined with a respect gained from other students because he was performing at a high level and earning money:

Brian: However the most interesting things that allowed me to have a life free of hassles were two fold. One was that I was good at what I did and I was earning money for doing it. Funny enough you can be a total faggot
singer at my school but if you are earning money from doing it, well that is ok.

The issue of performing at a high standard is one that has been referred to incidentally by some subjects above and employed by schools discussed in the next chapter. Donald gave this response, indicating some students engage in activities after school hours to overcome issues of harassment.

Donald: I didn't cop any shit at school because there was no music at school. All my music was done outside school environment. Certainly there were no structures in place to overcome such things.

7.6 Summary

As these men reflected on their experiences of school music, a number of themes emerged. The first of these was the importance of early experiences in the home and at school. Many men could identify critical moments in childhood that led them to participation in music. All had some exposure to stereotyping, though in many instances these were removed from their own experiences. Some of these men had experienced physical and psychological harassment as a result of their involvement in music. Role models were a significant contributor to musical choices and, in some cases resulted in decisions to not to participate. Finally, this chapter presented some individual coping mechanisms, with a view to providing an insight for other individuals whose experiences mirror those expressed here.
CHAPTER EIGHT
PRINCIPLES FOR CHANGE

The material presented thus far provides some challenges for music and music education. The sex stereotyping of instruments has remained static for at least the last 30 years, with flute, violin and singing particularly susceptible to the negative effects of stereotyping for boys. The reasons for the perpetuation of this phenomenon are complex. Of particular interest are the gendered associations with instruments i.e. those that are considered “feminine” are avoided by males. This is related to the broader concepts of avoidance of femininity and gender role rigidity. These are, in turn controlled by patriarchy, homophobia and compulsory heterosexuality. Historical constructions of masculinity, sustained through media image, family influence, peer interactions and educational institutions contribute to the lack to opportunities for males to fully engage in music. In addition, attempts to critically interrogate males’ involvement with music have been hampered by a divided community of gender researchers in music.

8.1 Macro Change

Any gender reform will need to involve macro change: the process involves the entire community. The responsibility for change rests with the general community, teachers, parents and students. In the broadest sense, Connell insists that the community needs to take responsibility for changing sexist attitudes. Connell provides a list of tangible ways in which this can occur. These include a desire to contest misogyny and homophobia in the media and popular culture; challenge sexual harassment and the need to talk among men to make domestic violence, gay-bashing and sexual assault discreditable. Sabo also recognised the necessity to make the lives of marginalised groups of men better and to take steps stop male violence against men.

One of the ways in which men are marginalised is through male gender role rigidity. Forsey (1990) advocates the identification of the constraints
placed on males by masculine ethos to gain an understanding of why boys behave the way they do. She also provides some guidelines for changing masculine ethos:

- Identifying the limitations of sex-role expectations;
- Develop skills in co-operation, sharing, intimacy and caring;
- Devise strategies for dealing with conflict, peer pressure and aggression;
- Encourage an acceptance and expression of feelings, thought and aspirations.

The importance of starting the process of gender reform early cannot be overstated, as gender roles are established early in life. The family is recognised as the first main influence on a child’s life in most cases. Those in the home, particularly parents, need to question their own lifestyle to look at prejudices and to challenge institutions in which their children may be involved (schools, churches, sporting clubs). This will assist in the process of reducing assumptions about sex-based stereotyping and increase inclusive practices.

As boys grow older, they can be charged with the responsibility to take control of their body, health and sexuality. The development of independence in all facets of life rests with the individual supported by families, schools and other social institutions who can help men and boys find challenges and learn new ways to relate to others.

8.2 School Change

As one of the agents of change, schools have a responsibility to scrutinize their beliefs and practices. The empowerment of schools and teachers is central in allowing them to facilitate changes in boys’ behaviour. Particularly in relation to sex-based discrimination, schools must introduce ways to prevent “sissies” from being targets: the cycle that currently pervades schools has to be interrupted and confronted. As the case studies in Chapter Seven demonstrated, failure to challenge student attitude and behaviour in this way is tantamount to complicity. As Griffiths (1995, p.17) commented earlier, students believe that as few as 25% of teachers deal effectively with bullying incidents in the classroom. This is clearly well below an acceptable level.
An examination of the overt and covert ways in which schools promote the value of certain activities over other should be interrogated, along with challenging the tendency to honour certain kinds of achievement in boys and ignore other kinds of achievement. Boys who do not enjoy or wish to participate in activities that focus on perpetuating rigid forms of masculinity should be given a range of alternative options.

The provision of a safe learning environment is of great importance in this process. Embracing the principles of anti-oppressive education espoused in the Prelude is an essential aspect of this course of action, including Kumashiro’s suggestion that teachers look at

… encompassing approaches to education that actively challenge different forms of oppression, including racism, classism, sexism and heterosexism… Anti-oppressive education makes a commitment to exploring perspectives on education that do not conform to what has become “common sense” in the field of education… Anti-oppressive education expects to be different, perhaps uncomfortable, and even controversial. (2001, p. 26)

While North (2007) cautioned against substituting one oppressive discourse for another, the more practical advice is that of Woodford (2004) described in the Prelude and reiterated here. He asks that teachers question their musical and pedagogical practices to ensure they are not denying students access to music on the basis of gender. Classes need to be conducted an overt message that sexist or homophobic attitudes are not acceptable: the use of non-judgemental language will assist in achieving this. The underlying philosophy of the learning environment embraces themes of social justice that deal with issues of marginality, prejudice and discrimination. As much of the damage is seen to be done outside the classroom, adequate supervision of an attractive playground can significantly reduce violence in “out of class” time.

These strategies recognise that the strongest agents of change within schools are the staff. While professional development in schools may increase awareness and provide the knowledge to establish policy, the role of teacher education is deserving of scrutiny. Selection of teacher trainees and appropriate pre-service programs addressing gender issues are small but significant steps in this process. Teacher educator awareness would also assist as they construct university curricula that model inclusive practices of all kinds, including gender. Teacher identity research identifies that the desirable qualities for beginning teachers to be enhanced
through pre-service education include being continually enthusiastic, believing in students, providing students with generic life skills and allowing them to become independent learners. The following chapters provide examples of teachers who have embraced these ideas.

The remodelling of school curricula must encompass all attempts to teach in schools. As stated earlier, any such remodelling needs to be a consultative process involving the entire learning community. The responsibility for change rests with the community, teachers, parents and the students themselves. They have the capacity to create safe learning environments, to ensure equity occurs in practice in their engagement with students and to develop the potential of all the students in their care. While higher education bears some of the responsibility for producing teachers with the characteristics outlined above, as mature and responsible adults, teachers themselves must embrace skills, attitudes necessary for change.

An interesting tangent to this discussion regarding curriculum is that the arts are a site for oppression and also provide an opportunity to probe the issues surrounding sex-based discrimination and bullying. Martin Mills (2001) suggests that the role expressive arts can play in reducing violence and the work of O’Toole, Burton and Plunkett (2005) in using drama as a way of managing conflict in schools provides an excellent model for interrupting existing bullying practices.

8.3 Change in Music Education

There are a multitude of documents detailing how a “good” music program can be achieved. Of these, few talk specifically of the role of boys. Much of the research into boys’ involvement in music has been dedicated to the negative aspects of boys’ non-involvement. This has been reviewed thoroughly in earlier chapters. The purpose of this section is to examine some suggestions for involving students and particularly boys.

Some of the most specific best practice ideas in this field came from Ray Willis, Principal of Melbourne High School in Australia. Willis was a strong advocate for a sensory approach to learning and argues that boys are less opposed to education that excites their senses to the level they require. Sensory aspects of teaching are often put on the backburner in order to maintain discipline, control and to make the task of educating more manageable, measurable and politically understandable. This can make learning for boys too passive, more sedate, bookish and less noisy.
The arts are critical to developing this sensory approach because they provide opportunities for:

- Physical involvement in learning
- Sensual stimulation, tactile learning
- Allowing connections between the logical and the creative
- Accepting expression of sensitivity
- Allowing for the creation of different stereotypes and the moderation of old stereotypes
- Group and team expression of creativity and solidarity
- Risk taking in non physical ways
- “Acceptable” showing off
- Connections between sexes around intellectual and creative activity
- Communication in non verbal ways
- One on one learning
- Practical expressions of intellect
- Cultural appreciation, not mass culture
- Expression of heroic thoughts, warmth, emotion and flights of fancy
- Ritual through drama, dance and music in particular

Willis put many of these principles into action at Melbourne High School. Involvement in the arts in a range of activities is available at the school. The effect of this on school culture has been documented in *More Than Just Marks* (Prideaux, 2005) and *Singing throughout Life* (Bayliss et al, 2008).

Throughout this book and particularly through the overarching ideas espoused in this chapter in relation to gender reform, it is possible to arrive at practical ways in which male participation in music can be enhanced. This is by no means an exhaustive list but it provides a starting point for bringing about change.

### 8.3.1 Valuing and recognising the arts

While this is a concept that requires macro change in society, including increased funding for all art-forms and improved access through free programs and broader media coverage, schools can begin the process by investing time, human and physical resources in the arts. Some of the simplest strategies include recognition of achievements on school
assemblies and in newsletters. Students also appreciate the personal investment of teachers in complementing their achievements one to one. Role models also serve to enhance the status of music for boys. Schools who encourage teachers, distinguished members of the community and boys with high status within the school to become involved in music frequently report higher levels of engagement. This notion finds support in the research literature, particularly in Killian (1988) and White and White (2001, p.43) who state:

Through the use of roles models, gender-specific ensembles and creative performing opportunities, young men can experience singing in a choir as a rewarding, masculine activity.

8.3.2 Provision of a wide range of high quality opportunities

One of the strategies for getting boys involved is to show that the music program is of the highest quality. To achieve this, teachers have to ensure that public performances by boys are well rehearsed and not above their level of competence. Students know almost instinctively if something is not up to standard and ridicule can ensue on this basis. Providing a wide range of activities also assists boys (and girls) in finding their niche: failure to provide a choir, for example, may prevent students’ full engagement.

8.3.3 Flexible scheduling

Related to the above is the notion that scheduling needs to allow for maximum involvement. Flexible scheduling was a concept that allowed students the opportunity to engage in large groups, small group and individualised modes of learning. This notion is enjoying renewed support in recent times through on-line learning, particularly in universities, but also in some of the cases in Chapter Nine below, where the specifics will be discussed in more detail. Students who participate in multiple activities bring kudos to those activities and, on an individual level, this process allows for personal achievement. Scheduling should take into account as many activities as possible, so that a student playing rugby can, for example, also sing in the choir. This raises the next issue, music and sport.
8.3.4 Music and sport

The interaction of these two co-curricular elements of school can be beneficial to both parties, as demonstrated in the examples revealed in Chapter Two. Music teachers can cultivate good relationships with athletic coaches (and vice-versa) to help bridge the gap between music and sport. Koza’s work on *Music Supervisors Journal* found that getting role models, including getting athletes and student leaders into the choral program was advocated in the journals of that time. This also raised the issue of the physical aspects of involvement in both activities. One of the major sites for boys concern is the voice change and fear about the timing of the change and squeaking throughout the transition. Singing teachers are in agreement that a physiological approach to singing, rather than a song-based approach to keep boys engaged. In this way, singing can be viewed as a more physical activity, with emphasis on the co-ordination aspects, akin to physical education and sport.

8.3.5 Repertoire selection

This was identified as a critical area for improving engagement in the words of the men interviewed for Chapter Seven. The selection of inappropriate repertoire could lead to significant challenges for boys in schools. Similarly the selection of suitable repertoire can bring students to music and result in the provision of high quality, high status musical activities within a school.

8.3.6 Critical Mass

The work of Anthony Young referred to in Chapter Two suggests that music teachers can be elitist and that this approach is counter-productive in the long term. The sheer number of boys involved in music can assist in reducing the perception that it is a marginalised activity. This has proven to be the case at Melbourne High School, where every boy sings and in other programs featured in Chapter Nine. The achievement of critical mass means that musical boys are no longer in the minority.

8.4 Summary

The purpose of this volume has been to examine the influence of the constructs masculinity and femininity on males’ engagement with music. The notions that boys are more likely to be discouraged from engaging in
feminine behaviours than girls for engaging in masculine behaviour are part of the construction of hegemonic masculinity. Boys are determined at all costs not to be female and the notion of avoidance of femininity has been a significant feature in the construction of masculinity.

In seeking, through a queer-straight perspective, to provide an opportunity for gender-just society, the comments of marginalised men are significant. These males are disempowered and are at risk for abuse and neglect. Many of the males in Chapter Seven recounted details of their “at riskness” and recalled a sense of disempowerment. Others provided coping mechanisms that led to new initiatives that could be applied in other circumstances.

It is clear that harassment and other forms of oppression are significant factors in the lives of male musicians. It was stated earlier that bullying is one of the ways in which gender role rigidity is maintained for boys. Boys are marginalised through this behaviour and bullying behaviours present a real threat to the gender order in music education and have a direct negative impact on students of music. Schools and teachers were found to reinforce this marginalisation through active and complacent behaviours. This resulted in non-participation in specific activities such as singing and playing flute.

From the evidence presented thus far it is clear that

- Stereotyping of musical activities continues to exist
- Boys are restricted in their participation in music because of the gendering of certain activities as “feminine”
- Some students are victimized because of their musical choices
- Avoidance of femininity, gender role rigidity, patriarchy, homophobia and compulsory heterosexuality contribute to this victimisation
- Historical constructions of masculinity, media image, family influence peer interactions educational institutions
- Progress is hampered by divisions and infighting by gender researchers

Change in necessary in order to ensure that both males and females can participate as fully as possible in the arts. Issues involving this level of complexity cannot be solved immediately, but change can be brought about through the a range of broad contributions of
• Challenging community attitude, particularly through political awareness and media influence
• Working towards agreement among gender researchers, even if it is only agreement to differ
• Recognising the importance of early experiences in family and school
• School policy, with practical guidelines for the implementation of policy
• Initial and ongoing professional training of teachers

These broad areas of concern can be supported through specific strategies for schools and the broader community. This is not an exhaustive list and it hoped that many other strategies will emerge from practitioners stimulated by these thoughts. Many of these ideas have been put into practice already by those whose work is described in the following chapters. Specific strategies can include

• Valuing and recognising the arts
• Provision of a wide range of high quality opportunities
• Flexible scheduling to allow student access to maximum involvement
• Recognition of the interaction of sport and music
• Repertoire selection
• Achieving critical mass in involvement
The opinions of academics and the voices of George and other men are of little value without tangible strategies. In order to address this, four real-life cases of work with boys are presented here for consideration. They represent diverse contexts (rural, metropolitan, national and remote) and are designed to provide practical examples of the principles espoused in the last chapter. The first of these is from an all-boys school in which a concerted approach has been taken to develop a music program over almost twenty years. The second example is a nation-wide initiative, not necessarily aimed only at boys, but one that has produced substantial benefits for disengaged school-age males. The third example is from a remote setting while the fourth is from a rural school setting and demonstrates what can be achieved with meagre physical resource and large doses of enthusiasm and networking.

9.1 Building a school music program

Marist College Ashgrove was founded by the Marist Brothers as a day and boarding College in 1940. At the time of writing, there were 1400 students enrolled from Years 5 to 12, of whom approximately 200 live on site. Marist College has a long history of excellence in Music Education. All boys enrolled at the college are encouraged to be involved in a large variety of ensembles encompassing many standards, musical styles and genres. Over the last twenty years, the college has been at the forefront of music education in Queensland, Australia, with over a third of the students from Grades 5 to 12 participating in performances, national and international tours, camps and competitions as well as playing a vital role in the performing and liturgical life of the college. The co-curricular program runs in conjunction with an extensive classroom music program, of which there are currently a large number of students participating from Grade's 5 to 12. In 2007, there were 5 classes of Senior Music.
Evidence of the program’s success is evident in the achievements of past students who have gone on to perform, record and compose professionally with various national and international classical artists and ensembles including *The Queensland Orchestra, The Sydney Symphony Orchestra, The Ten Tenors and Nigel Kennedy*, as well as collaborating and performing with Australia jazz, rock and contemporary artists such as James Morrison and rock group *George*.

These achievements were brought about through a gradual process. Twenty years ago, the school prided itself on its academic and sporting excellence: it is particularly in strong in the sport of Rugby Union, having provided many students to state and national representation. In 1987, the decision to appoint a person to guide the musical life of the college was pivotal in bringing about a change in priorities and opportunities for boys at the college. Other human resource investments were also critical: the music teachers, together with other staff and the college administration consciously worked at changing the accepted view of masculinity in the college. The technique of including students with high profiles in other activities was employed: for example, boys who played rugby were also part of the choir.

Capital investment was also a major influence. After working in under-crofts and storerooms, the first purpose-built facility was completed in 1988. A further building program was completed in 1995, when dedicated rehearsal spaces, recording studios and teaching rooms completed. Such was the pace of growth that an integrated visual and performing arts centre was opened ten years later, with facilities designed to enable students to “unleash their creativity in performing arts, visual arts, drama and dance, film and television, and music.” Music spaces include four rehearsal and eleven practice rooms for music, along with a recording studio, music studios, teaching spaces and instrumental storage.

Supporting the capital and human resource investments was an awareness of the need to challenge existing stereotypes within the school community. Before the program was established, the balance of instrumentation was as reported in the chapters above: very few students playing strings, upper woodwind or singing. The initial approach was to initiate a jazz program, through which music gained status in the school. A music theatre program followed reinforcing the findings in literature that boys are willing to perform in popular styles and in stage productions. From this, string orchestras, symphony orchestras and choirs gradually
evolved and, over time, typically “feminine” instruments were accepted. Singing was also readily accepted by the general school population and was led by the example of boarding students and teachers. Full school singing at public events and liturgies are a feature of the fabric of the school.

A supportive administration was critical to the development of the arts within this site. Successive generations of principals and assistant principals made it possible to invest in teachers, resources and, perhaps most significantly, attitudinal change.

9. 2 Musical Futures: Not just for the boys

The Paul Hamlyn Foundation’s Musical Futures Project embraces new and imaginative ways of engaging young people in music activities for all 11-19 year olds. The following information, garnered from the Musical Futures website, pamphlets published through the course of the project (Transforming Musical Leadership and Musical Futures: a Summary of Key Findings) along with discussions with David Price, Musical Futures Project Leader reveals the original design of the project which was:

- To understand the factors affecting young people’s commitment to, and sustained engagement in, music
- To develop ways in which the diverse musical needs of young people can be met and their experience of music-making enhanced
- To realise viable, sustainable and transferable models which can support a national strategy for music and young people
- To investigate, and make recommendations on, the most appropriate methods of mentoring and supporting young people’s preferences and skills
- To find ways of validating and (where appropriate) accrediting all forms of young people’s musical experiences, including those undertaken without supervision
- To facilitate support for music trainees, leaders, teachers and performers/composers through the provision of development opportunities which highlight collaborative working practices

Source: extracted from Transforming Musical Leadership
One of the main principles throughout the project has been the need to develop models that are sustainable and replicable elsewhere, making its inclusion here essential.

In terms of gender, Musical Futures recognised the concern over the long-standing stereotypes associated with instruments: data in the United Kingdom indicated that nine times as many girls learn to play the flute than do boys. Data also showed that there is a mismatch between instruments boys want to learn and those that were available: typically rock and pop instruments such as drum kit and electric guitar were preferred but upper woodwind, strings and brass were available. Furthermore, only 40% of those aged 11 to 16 in receipt of instrumental tuition are boys.

An emphasis, in part, on Western art music, traditional modes of delivery and traditional theory and notation in the initial stages of learning have proved to be a disincentive to many young people participating in music. Musical Futures seems to have turned this around, as this extract with male students from one of the schools demonstrates.

James: Music is probably my favourite lesson at the moment.  
Interviewer: Was it your favourite lesson last year?  
All: No!  
Paul: Last year was xylophones!  
Andy: Last year it was the most boring lesson, I dreaded it….  
James: Triangles going ding ding …  
David: Falling asleep in it …  
Paul: Detentions every week …  
Andy: Yeah, like on Monday now it’s like “oh I can’t wait until music”, but last year it was like “oh, music, how fun”  
Andy: “I’m going to have so much fun playing the xylophone”  
Mark: And the triangle!  
Paul: Now it’s like “we’re ready to rock”!

Source: *Transforming Musical Leadership*

Classroom teachers have similarly been inspired to change their approach to the profession. As Price points out, some of the best classroom teachers have understood the importance of challenges within the school system and responded imaginatively, through acquiring new skills themselves, bringing other music leaders into the classroom, or simply recognising the skills-base within their own students. Others, he notes, have found the pressure to re-engage students’ interests in the face of
external competition and the accumulated internal constraints led to a loss of professional confidence and disenchantment with teaching as a career. One of the case studies reported in the course of the project reveals this conundrum:

At the age of 15, I had decided I wanted to become a teacher. Strangely enough, I was not inspired by any one particular teacher – more the opposite! I decided that I wouldn’t treat pupils in the way I’d been treated. It was a kind if reverse psychology. It made me very determined to succeed in getting to college. I did a Bachelor of Education, and was prepared well to cope with teaching. It was the lack of depth in music education that was the key issue… Working with Musical Futures has changed my whole approach to teaching year 9. I still believe in many of the good things we do with years 7 and 8, building skills at drums, keyboard, guitar, composing, form and structure etc, but now, with Musical Futures they are using their skills independently, they are deciding what skills they will use to complete a particular task. I have seen difficult pupils working with motivation. I see students engaging in their work, which has real meaning and purpose.

Another teacher reflected on the importance of continuing professional development in realising that his own teaching strategies needed to change:

I tried to teach music the way I had always taught, but did not feel pupils were making the progress I was hoping for. The Musical Futures Continuing Professional Development day was a turning point. I knew I could not use any of my old schemes of work again. … The immediate impact has been a massive increase in engagement with the subject in lessons, greater active involvement in extracurricular music and double the normal number of Year Nine students wanting to choose music …. By modelling my own independent learning skills, I help pupils to develop theirs. Senior Management have been most supportive.

Source: Musical Futures: a Summary of Key Findings

This teacher proceeds to delineate his plan for Year Seven students, so that by the time they are in Year Eight they can tackle the informal learning model with sufficient maturity and independence. He also explains his desire to work with peripatetic staff more usefully and to involve musical parents and community musicians for more input.

The review of the program undertaken in 2007 discovered that outcomes from the project to date have been found to include:
Significantly enhanced motivation to learn and improve;

Increased self-confidence in assessing their learning skills and in setting future targets (learning to learn);

Better music listening skills, gained through playing music, with consequent willingness to try new musical forms;

Improved school behaviour, at least in music classes;

A marked improvement in self-esteem, especially for those whose musical skills had not been illuminated through traditional teaching methods;

A greater aptitude in collaborating in team-based tasks – students consistently tell us that they have become better teamworkers; and we have also seen the emergence of group leaders in students more usually defined by their detention records;

Increased desire to own musical instruments.

Source: Musical Futures A Summary of Key Findings

The final word on this project comes from three Year Ten students who participated in Musical Futures:

Chris: I think a big thing about Musical Futures is learning to perform your piece. If you get the opportunity to perform, then it gives more of an incentive to work harder because you know that you’re going to be put on show and almost rivalling against your fellow peers and stuff, but it’s good fun.

Dylan: You’ve got to get into a group where there’s evenly matched areas of expertise, so different instruments, different advice to give really, it’s just different things, everything has to be different, it can’t be the same – that’s what makes a good Musical Futures group. Luckily for us, our group of friends, the four of us, was actually quite well balanced, even though three of them were taking guitar, I wasn’t, we were all still balancing up pretty well because he took saxophone, he took flute, I took piano, I covered drums sometimes and they all played guitar, we could all cover each other almost. In a way I do miss music even though I did give it up, I didn’t think it would be important, I do miss it.

Taylor: I think whether people like music or not is just a matter of opinion but I think that there’s a huge amount to like about music, it’s one of the best subjects in the school.

Source: Extract from the transcript of a filmed interview for Musical Futures, December 2006
9.3 Engaging Boys in Remote Communities

This is the story of Liz who, in 2004, was asked to manage a middle school boys’ music group. The group was part of a larger project “Boys Business” described by its founder, Bob Smith in 2004 as

An experimental program that positively encourages middle-years boys to engage with education and life. The project began when teachers noted that middle years' boys-only music groups seemed to function more effectively for boys than mixed gender groups.

In the *International Journal of Music Education*, Smith (2004, p. 231), delves further into the details of the factors underpinning Boys Business:

The program operates in part from a belief that boys themselves are actually alright but that they seek affirmation in their engagement with an increasingly challenging world. Literacy may provide one such challenge, constraining many boys’ learning. The program addresses this, as it encourages acquisition of oral and emotional literacy through music making and related activities.

A critical factor in the success of the program was finding teachers who enjoyed the engagement with boys and was prepared to “make changes in their own beliefs and practices” (Veel, 2004). Teachers needed to be able to recognise their own strengths and be prepared to let go of rigid beliefs about the traditional learner-teacher relationship.

The context for this case is the Northern Territory of Australian. Liz works in Darwin, a community whose population commingles Anglo, European and Asian cultural communities. It also has Australia’s proportionately largest indigenous population: over 25 percent. The middle school boys’ music group Liz was asked to manage was comprised of a large number of students who were perceived to have behaviour problems. Prior to taking this challenge, Liz had considerable experience and success in working with girls or predominantly girls’ ensembles and was confident she could engage with successful choral music practices. She was aware that, while she was working in a school climate that encouraged innovation and change, some issues with negative self-image remained and these were adversely affecting the boys' performance and co-operative behaviours.

Liz explained her process at a workshop in 2004:
The weekly one-hour session was run in class time. The boys clearly enjoyed being there but a range of disruptive behaviour patterns presented themselves. Many of the boys in the group came originally to sing "to get out of work". A lack of peer group co-operation and cohesion was limiting confidence, self-worth and fulfilment of the group. The practices that I employed with the girls would clearly not have the same successes with the boys. I had already realised that it would take changes in my teaching practice to empower the boys to view music education as a more positive force in their lives.

Together with Bob, Liz employed a range of different strategies and a sense of humour to engage these boys more positively. These strategies are explained in more detail in *Boys will be boys: engaging middle years' boys through music*. Bob and Liz initially spent a session democratically establishing rules, with the boys thinking out the rules and a dominant student acting as the chairperson. The consensus of the peer group was that co-operation and care was needed for the group to reach its potential. Specifically, co-operative behaviour, care and one hundred percent effort would receive a positive reward at the end of the session, to be negotiated by the group. Particularly as a result of the use of humour, the "tone and atmosphere" of the group was also lightened. Over time, the interactions become stronger and more positive, allowing more effective listening and learning to take place. They all liked being in the singing group, they started to care about its success and were willing to try to negotiate to change. One boy commented, having set these parameters: “I can express myself freely without being embarrassed.”

A weekly peer compliment session was also introduced. Half of the boys formed an audience, while the other half sang. The audience half had to compliment someone in the singing half on their performance and to give reasons why they had sung well. Comments like "I think Jack sang really well because he knows the words and sings the notes clearly", "David looks cool when he's singing." This brought about changes to the boys in singing and performance and the increase in musical self-confidence has manifested itself in other areas of the boys' schooling. At school camp it was the boys who were the leaders in communal singing and were a highlight of the campfire sessions.

Having established the working pattern for the ensemble, there were also musical benefits. Students were able to focus on sounding good and the tone and timbre of the boys singing improved. This has also been evidenced by the increasing capacity of the boys to learn more complex
What About Boys? songs and harmonies and the material became progressively more challenging in terms of musicality. Specifically in relation to repertoire, the songs and chants have been chosen to reflect the culturally diverse backgrounds within the ensemble. Material includes

- Be True (Bacharach)
- Tribal Voice (Yothu Yindi)
- Stand up and Be Counted (Warrumpi)
- Wap Bam Boogie
- Titi Toria (a passing stick game from the South Pacific)

In a similar vein to the processes described in Musical Futures, the boys are encouraged to negotiate the content of their sessions and this has resulted in more responsible attitudes and increasing commitment.

9.4 In the Deep End

Deepwater Public School is the base school for the Small Schools Marimba Ensemble. The program, which involves twelve schools from four regions around the New England area of rural New South Wales, Australia, is one way in which students from isolated schools can participate in musical performance and access a quality music program.

The aim of the program was to provide a new focus for the school based on musical performance. Creating their own set of marimbas and a range of other exotic instruments, students quickly developed into a quality performing group. The instruments were constructed using a range of basic materials following designs created specifically for use in primary schools. Students began by performing for parents on school assemblies, expanding to presentations for Senior Citizens and community events, for which they received payment. The funds were deployed for the purpose of extending the program which culminated in performances at the Sydney Opera House.

The schools involved in the program work with parents to make percussion instruments such as Marimbas and new stringed/bowed inventions called “echocellos.” While each school runs its own individual music program, the collaborative aspect of the program that seems to have the most positive impact on schooling. Danny Spillane, Principal at Deepwater Public school comments on the significance of this facet:
Important social networks have been set up between schools as a result of this program. These are incredibly important as some of the schools have as few as four [male] students and the development of larger peer groups is a key issue. In over 25 years’ teaching, I have yet to see a more effective school program that develops school spirit, harmony and an abundance of self-esteem. This is particularly applicable to small schools.

The impetus for the schools developing the Marimba initiate was to use music to change school climate and increase boys’ success rates at school. This strategy had a major focus on developing student confidence through the provision of opportunities for success. Through this, it was felt that many of the school’s fundamental problems could be addressed, that boys would begin to achieve success more in line with their female peers and that a more positive school climate would be developed. Ownership and involvement by the staff, parents and the village community was deemed to be an integral factor in the success of the programs to be implemented. Spillane commented further on the effect of programs for other learning areas:

Having had previous involvement in the implementation of similar programs that had achieved high levels of success and been accompanied by improved student academic results in both boys and girls, particularly when incorporating aspects of the performing arts, I felt confident that through achieving student success, developing confidence and encouraging a positive school culture, improvements in other learning areas would follow.

In assessing the success of the program, some of the strengths identified include

- the whole school involvement of the program i.e. all students K-6 take part, with boys equally involved as opposed to just an elite group;
- the low cost to the school with each instrument being made for less than the cost of a day’s casual teacher relief;
- the high number of behavioural “turn-arounds” from students who want to be involved and who are keen to experience the rewards of being involved;
- the level of participation of boys as performers and their fathers in the construction phase (as well as that of girls and their mothers!).
• the improvement of attitudes towards music by boys who often perceive playing a musical instrument as a girl’s habit, a belief particularly evident in more rural environments;

While the change in stereotypical attitudes is of significance in this volume, additional benefits have included growth in literacy among boys and a substantial reduction in school suspensions. Further details of this project can be seen in Spillane, 2008.

Danny Spillane’s work has been recognised through national teaching awards and the award of a Churchill Fellowship to undertake further study in South Africa and Botswana to investigate linking traditional African music to New South Wales small schools.
Particularly observant readers may have noted an emphasis on the education of boys throughout much of this volume. This is due, in part, to the assumption that if educational reform takes place, males leaving school may have different views of masculinity and engage with music in a different way. Such reform will take time and, in the interim, there are many men who are likely to miss out on full engagement with music. This last chapter then, is for the men. What became of George in adulthood?

When school was finished, George decided to pursue training in music at tertiary level. He learned languages, stagecraft, musicianship and had weekly singing lessons. He was fortunate enough to gain employment as a chorister in the local opera company: the same company that had been such a defining influence on him at school. George recalls one performance when he came into the dressing room, before the show. Most of the other singers were playing cards, talking about their day jobs, their families or the performance ahead. George didn’t say much but (in the opinion of his colleagues) took a little too much care putting on his make-up and spoke with the faintest hint of a lisp. As he readied himself for the performance and went up to the stage, he heard one of the other singers comment “He a bit of a poof, isn’t he?” Even in the world of opera, George found the same attitudes he had experienced in his school days.

After a period of almost 20 years, George decided to look up his father. His dad had remarried and separated again in the intervening period. He didn’t really understand George’s decision to go into the arts but tried to support him regardless. He was still fond of a drink but didn’t have the camaraderie of his football mates anymore: he was lost without his football and his family. Gradually, George set about rebuilding his relationship with his dad. It took time, but eventually, George convinced his dad to come and see his performance as Cinderella’s Prince in Sondheim’s Into the Woods. Throughout the performance, his father laughed and cried with his son as he portrayed the hapless prince. Afterwards, over a drink or two, he quietly said to George “I understand.” This was reward enough for George.
What About Men, along with the accounts in Chapter Seven, is the narratives of adult males, many of whom participated in music at school and beyond. Their reflections of school experience were designed to assist in challenging and rejuvenating school experiences for men beyond school. Their adult engagement with music, together with examples of other successful male experiences can shed some light for males reading this who are asking “What about me?”

Four cases are presented here for consideration. Three of these involve vocal music making. So as not to exclude instrumentalists but allow readers to see themselves involved in music without the years of training typically required of instrumentalists, there is also an example of instrumental music. The first example is about men having fun, but also making serious music. The second is for young men, some of whom are school age, who were provided with an opportunity to sing without the constraints of school and university. The third example is for the older man and how, after the business of mid-life, musical engagement is still possible. The final example also looks at midlife to older life, but also transcends musical and age-based boundaries. It also speaks of the rejuvenation of music through bridging the generational divide: how music-making can be possible for all men.

10.1 Men just want to have fun

The Spooky Men come down from the Mountains like a wolf on the fold. Forged in the red-hot cauldron of Georgian table singing, where anvil strikes bread and like their brothers of old they raise the morning sun with uplifted arms, their ecumenical embrace now extends to songs Paulian and Johnian. They sing paeans in praise of hardware yet are unafraid to face the existential angst that stares up at them from the debris of breakfast. In confronting the big questions facing men today (are they not pretty enough?), the Spooky Men strike while the irony is hot.

This is the introduction on the website of The Spooky Men's Chorale (www.spookymen.com.au). This ensemble is a group of 15 Australian male singers from the Blue Mountains in New South Wales comprised of dads and teachers, carpenters and architects. Stephen Taberner assembled the ensemble as a novelty act for a gig in 2001 and now writes or arranges their material, much of which is based on traditional Gregorian music. Taberner repertoire has developed to include covers of the songs by Queen, ABBA and other popular artists. There is a strong emphasis on humour and challenge to the traditional male stereotype.
There is no academic writing that examines the phenomenon of the Spooky Men’s Chorale. The popular press provides some insights into their style and appeal. Concerning repertoire and presentation this, from their website:

The repertoire is largely inspired by the pointless grandeur of everyday maleness, in the shower, in the shed and after breakfast. Stage presence is imposing, black and foolishly statuesque, with a cunning taste in hats. Their studied deadpan is no act: like most blokes, they’ve only got the faintest idea of what's going on...

Their style is also a significant feature. Far from the “black pants with a see through white top with puffy sleeves and huge multi-coloured cuffs” described by Gary in Chapter Six, performances by The Spooky Men are described by (Shand 2006) as having

no chintz, no bling and no kitsch in their routine. Instead this rugby team-size choir of boofy blokes settles for a healthy blend of eccentricity, scariness and laughs.

Repertoire includes the original tunes such as Spooky Theme, Don't Stand Between Man and his Tool and Vote the Bastards Out. Inherent in the lyrical content and bizarre performance practice:

there is a level of deadly seriousness: only good singers are capable of fulfilling Taberner's nightmare, and they also have to look a bit spooky and be blessed with the right sense of humour.

A review by Greenman (2005) described the experience of learning Gregorian Chant with the Spooky Men:

The Spooky Men were teaching a crowd of about 200 a Georgian chant. Given that this was a male choir teaching a male song it was somewhat perplexing that there were quite so many women amongst the participants but they were allowed to stay as long as they pretended to have beards and spoke in low voices.

In another review, Noonan (2004) agreed:

You are standing at the tent door listening to what sounds like archangels singing ethereal harmonies. But it's a bunch of 40 boofy men from the Blue Mountains with a wise guy out the front wearing a furry deerstalker hat… If you have preconceived ideas about choirs leave them at the tent flap.
This sound is sexy, powerful, at times impossibly gentle and sad, unmistakably male.

Taberner (2008) believes men's choirs are wonderful ways of exploring the place between thug and wimp. “We come together to do work, not socialise or bond. There is no pussyfooting around, no niceties. It's about the music.”

Perhaps the most poignant aspect of Noonan’s critique of the Spooky Men is in this simple statement:

School choir was never like this.

### 10.2 Young Adult Community Choir

School choirs, according to Noonan, have a certain stigma attached to them. For some men who want to sing, the best option is to undertake these activities outside school. As Donald noted in Chapter Seven:

I didn't cop any shit at school because there was no music at school. All my music was done outside the school environment.

There is clearly a demand in the community to provide musical opportunities for males (and females), without the pressures of conforming to school administrative and social expectations. The Birralee Blokes was established with this in mind. One of its members commented that:

In school choirs it can be embarrassing singing in front of people who see choirs as “gay” or “lame”. The Blokes gets rid of that stupid stereotype. (Connolly, 2006)

The parent choir of the Birralee Blokes, The Brisbane Birralee Voices, had its beginnings almost 15 years ago. The choir quickly expanded into several ensembles. In 2003 it became apparent that a separate choir for adolescent boys was required. Initially seventeen teenaged boys showed interest. The group has grown steadily to a membership of 42 and now includes boys aged from early high school to early twenties. The group is directed by Paul Holley, a well-know Australian conductor who reflected on the purpose of the ensemble:

Birralee Blokes is … a community where a group of young men enjoy singing together for the experience of creating and performing beautiful
music and for the fun that they have doing it. I firmly believe that choral singing is fun and that as a conductor I should make the experience of music making as enjoyable as possible for all those who sing in my choir (Holley, 2008 in press).

Connolly (2006), in observing the choir in rehearsal, confirms that this is what actually occurs within the group:

Paul encourages a relaxed mood and emphasises there must be an element of trust that they will sing the best they can, this gives them a sense of freedom to have little fear of singing confidently. He encourages an energised and relatively homogenous sound without losing the individuality of the performers.

The main qualities that make the choir successful are, according to Holley (2008) a “relaxed, rewarding and empowering environment.” Holley asked the young men themselves what they thought and Stu responded:

Since joining the Blokes my confidence has increased, I have learnt to sing and I have created wonderful friendships. I also cannot believe what the group has achieved and the opportunities I have been given. I have travelled overseas to sing at international festivals, I have sung with and for some amazing people as well as giving performances around Australia. I have learnt so many life skills and become a better musician. Each year I figure I must be too old to keep singing in the Blokes but so far I have kept coming back. Although unable to do music as a career, I love music so much that I won’t let anything take it away from me.

Holley identifies two issues as critical to the maintenance and development of male singing. The first is the lack of repertoire for the changing or recently changed voice. In 2008, a festival was established to address this problem. Eight composers were commissioned to write new works for male voice ensembles, adding substantially to the suitable material available. The second issue identified by Holley is the paucity of primary school teachers who know how to manage the male voice change. This is connected to the feminisation of the school teaching workforce, as noted in Chapter 3. Holley sees himself as someone who can bring about change in this regard:

I guess my big picture of the future has me in some position where I can try and get training to primary school teachers who are looking after choirs. This training would be about helping them encourage every kid to sing. I am not saying primary teachers are failing, they mostly don’t know
what to do with boys when their voices change. But to get a teenage boy back who has been told that he can’t sing is nigh on impossible (Holley in Connolly, 2004)

One of the implicit messages from the Birralee Blokes message is to keep males singing throughout the voice change, using material that is appropriate and teaching methods that engaged and inspire. One of the members commented:

The group has let me discover an area of music I probably wouldn’t have otherwise. I have been able to make great friends with a common interest in music and singing. Also, being in the friendly and open environment that the Blokes provided, helped me to easier traverse that awkward part of life; thus giving me greater social confidence. Coincidentally I now direct two high school male voice choirs (James in Holley, 2008)

Connelly concludes her assessment of the Birralee Blokes with these poignant words:

It is apparent that here is a place where adolescent boys can grow in safety emotionally, musically, psychologically and spiritually. What more could any parent want for their son, what more could a boy who enjoys singing ask for? What a welcome change from the days when boys were cast out from a choir at the onset of their approaching manhood. If every young male could be offered the opportunity of learning and becoming involved in music instead of using violence and guns what a better world it would be.

**10.3 Old rockers never die**

Sponsored by the Music Industries Association, the Weekend Warriors programme operates in Australia, New Zealand, The United States and the United Kingdom. Bob McMahon recently described the process to me:

If you've ever dreamt of being Mick Jagger, Janis Joplin or Jimmy Hendrix here's an idea for you. A music program called Weekend Warriors is bringing together complete strangers off the street, and placing them into their own rock bands.

Weekend Warriors focuses on two things, playing great music and having fun. The Weekend Warrior program provides instruments, the rehearsal space, a coach and even the other band members. After an initial jam session, rehearsal one night a week for four weeks the “product” is
presented as a gig in a local club for your friends, family and fellow Warriors. Membership is not restricted to males, but given the gendered nature of popular music, many of the participants are males who have day jobs from tradesmen to psychologists, bankers and teachers. This is an opportunity to return to days of youth for many middle-aged Baby Boomers, there are younger products of the idol phenomenon and, as McMahon notes, older participants who are capable of really enjoying the experience:

I have had a rather elderly gentleman, who hadn’t been in a band for 40 years, get up and sing and when he came off that stage he radiated pure joy

Morris encapsulates the essence of why men are engaging with Weekend Warriors:

They needed to revisit what made them feel really good, which was playing music. They have obviously got spare time on their hands now and can do it with a bit of love. You have the camaraderie of the other guys in the band. It's like going down to play local cricket. It's almost akin to playing in the local football or cricket team and you play on the weekend. You do it, then you have a few beers afterwards. It's a wonderful experience, a great emotional experience and a wonderful connection with you and your mates, because you feel like a team … a team that is doing something together, conquering something.

In addition to males engaging in rock groups, there are a plethora of “adult starter” orchestras, concert band and brass band available in similar locations with similar results, as Helen recounts

I thought it was hilarious, the idea that you could play with an orchestra after a couple of hours, I thought it was the funniest thing I'd ever heard. I always assumed I was musically illiterate. Well, I still am, but I love it, I really do, although it's hellish hard work. I love the people. I'm ashamed that I'm not better, but I get self-conscious if I practise at home in case the neighbours hear and I'm not getting it right. You can hide in the orchestra, and knowing you can hide gives you confidence.

Stylistically miles away, participants in the male voice movement express similar reasons for engaging in music…
10.4 Music for all ages

The male voice choir tradition in Cornwall, England has been a significant part of cultural life and there are currently about thirty-four male voice choirs singing in the County. Cornwall International Male Voice Choral Festival, an event celebrating this tradition, was established in the early part of the 21st century with the aim of bringing male voice choirs from outside Cornwall together with Cornish choirs in a spirit of musical friendship and song. In the first two Festivals, choirs from England, Wales, Holland, Germany, Italy, Hungary, Estonia, Latvia, Switzerland, Finland, Eire, and Australia, as well as many Cornish choirs, took part.

An important aspect of the festival is to focus on the rejuvenation of the male voice movement. Many of the choirs are literally dying out through natural attrition of aging members, and so a strategy was developed to include younger members, new repertoire and aspects of vocal training. The establishment of a 50 strong Cornwall Boys Choir funded by the County Music Service has been a critical step in the renewal process. The next phase of development will be the setting up of a teenage boys’ choir (which won’t be called a “choir). In a feature that harks back to chapter 2 in relation to co-curricular activity, it will recruit during school time but meet outside school. Beyond school age, there is a need to develop a twenty-something choir. This initiative has been enhanced by the profile of "Only Men Aloud," a male choir who feature on the BBC program Last Choir Standing. In addition to their performance profile, they undertake workshops for teenagers in their home valleys of South Wales.

An academic component to the festival was added in 2007, and scholars from around the world meet to critically analyse the male voice movement. Similar events are now being held throughout the world, with the first Australian Male Voice Festival held in April 2008.

One of the problems within the male voice choir movement is that men sing in a choir and then move on to be the director. They frequently direct the same repertoire as they sang, are largely untrained and, by the law of whispers, whatever they have learned becomes diluted and sometimes even corrupted by time and repetition. Much like the male voice movement in Australia, new repertoire is being commissioned, recorded and broadcast with a view to challenging this trend.
To give an example of the nature of the ensembles involved in this movement, a profile of one of the choirs: *Colne Valley Male Voice Choir*. This vignette gives an insight into the type of choir attracted to the festival:

Our greatest pleasure comes from performing in front of an appreciative public, from giving of our best, from translating the hard work of rehearsal into a stage performance of high quality and then hearing the response, knowing that we have, in turn, given so much pleasure to others, through sharing fine music with them.

So states the introduction to the Colne Valley Male Voice Choir on their website. As the winning choir in 2007 Cornwall International Male Voice Choral Festival they enter competitions to challenge themselves and to maintain high standards of music making.

The choir was established in 1922 at Slaithwaite, west of Huddersfield, and the choir has established a reputation both as a premier competition and concert choir. In keeping with the comments above relating to musical directors in these choirs, the ensemble has only had six conductors in that period. This is seen as a stabilising influence, but can also cause the entrenched repertoire trends to be maintained. Thom Meredith, the current music director, has kept the choir abreast of modern trends without sacrificing tradition: each season’s programme includes an average of 60 different items, all performed from memory. The essence of the ensemble is best summed up by Crowther (1972) who also encapsulates the essence of this volume and the underpinning philosophy for males’ participation in music:

For them, music is a natural form of expression. It is a quest for sweetness and light, an enlargement of the human spirit. They are true amateurs - and we must remember that that word really means lovers. They sing because they are lovers of song, and it is such a love that is - must be - a foundation of a healthy musical life, if music is to be of the people.
POSTLUDE

The final drafts of this volume were completed during the Beijing Olympics in China. I was swamped with the overwhelming presence of sport in the media and the imperative to embrace the ideal of "Swifter, Higher, Stronger." I asked myself whether images of masculinity had changed much since the models of the ancient world: the emphasis on athletic ability, physical strength, of reaching the goal faster than the next man. Sport and media seem to have conspired to rid our society of the value of the arts. Sport now equals entertainment, so there seems to be little point engaging in the arts. Educational institutions seem to have contributed to this situation.

The gendering of musical activities, with their foundation in stereotyping of instruments, has remained constant for at least thirty years: men continue to be inhibited in their musical choices. One of the ways to address this is by taking the examples of “what works” posited in the final chapters of this book and applying them to new contexts. I encourage you to consider this and to find new ways of engaging men in music-making. Why, you ask?

Wrong Question! The question that needs to be asked – and answered – is not “Why do men need to be involved in music?” but rather “What happens to men if they’re not?” Shakespeare captured the essence of mankind without music when he was writing The Merchant of Venice:

The man that hath no music in himself
Nor is not move’d with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus:
Let no such man be trusted.

This dark alternative seems too awful to contemplate. Returning to China, I found a more positive view. Men should engage in music because, in the words of Confucius:

Music produces a kind of pleasure which human nature cannot do without.


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