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UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

THE EFFECT OF TAIWANESE PIANO EDUCATION FROM THE  
PERSPECTIVES OF COLLGE SENIOR PIANO MAJORS

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

CHIN-WEN LI

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Norman, Oklahoma

2001

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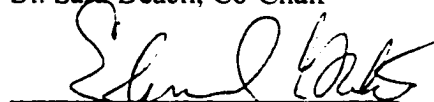
THE EFFECT OF TAIWANESE PIANO EDUCATION FROM THE  
PERSPECTIVES OF COLLEGE SENIOR PIANO MAJORS

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE  
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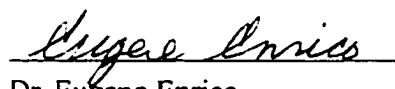
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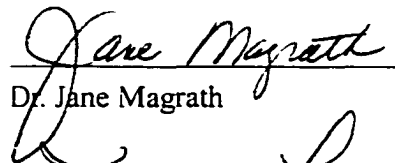
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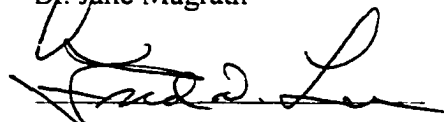
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~ 以此論文獻給我親愛的父母親 ~

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## ABSTRACT

### THE EFFECT OF TAIWANESE PIANO EDUCATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF COLLEGE SENIOR PIANO MAJORS

By: Chin-wen Li

Major Professors: Dr. Sara Beach  
Dr. Edward Gates

The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of Taiwanese piano education by identifying the meaning of piano playing to college senior piano majors. Four categories of research questions were addressed: 1) Why and how did the participants begin and continue playing the piano? 2) What are the feelings and meanings of piano playing, including performing and practicing, to the participants? 3) How do the participants live their lives as musicians? and 4) How do the participants evaluate their own piano playing ability, musical training and environment?

A qualitative methodology was adopted in this study. Eleven participants from three different universities and colleges in Taiwan were purposively chosen for this study. Three sources were used to collect data during April and May, 2000: individual interviews, questionnaires, and group interviews. Codes were developed by the researcher after analysis of transcripts of all questionnaires and interviews.

Interpretation of the findings was made under the four categories of research questions. External influences were important to the participants' beginning and continuing piano playing. Most of the participants held a passive attitude about their future. The participants were mostly ambivalent and uncertain about their feelings

and the meanings of piano playing. Specifically, more had a negative or ambivalent attitude about performing and practicing than liked it. The majority did not think they had lives as musicians. A more negative than positive evaluation of their playing ability was evident in this study. The majority of them were dissatisfied with their overall musical training and environment.

This study implies that the reasons so many participants did not hold certain and positive attitudes toward piano playing, their playing ability, their identities as musicians, and their future piano teaching career was due to their lack of self-initiation, internalization and actualization of their piano playing.

Taiwanese parents and educators should first acknowledge what the students really need, then provide an environment which can help and guide them to internalize and actualize their beliefs in piano playing and nurture the connectedness between their musical lives and their lives as a whole. Thus, more self-assured and devoted musicians will benefit Taiwanese society.

# THE EFFECT OF TAIWANESE PIANO EDUCATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF COLLEGE SENIOR PIANO MAJORS

## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

In the second half of the twentieth century, under the thrust of economic prosperity and political transference, the culture of Taiwan and its educational system flourished. Even before that, western music had been a main element in Taiwanese music education. The study of piano remains one of the most popular and fashionable extra-curricular activities in Taiwan. Many new college-level music departments and music graduate programs have been established during the last decade to meet the demand for more piano educators. During recent years, under the promotion of the Taiwanese government, music education, both general and professional, has gradually been gaining in importance.

### General Attitude about Education and Music in Taiwan

The major objective of Taiwanese education is to reach a balance among moral education, intellectual education, physical education, social education and esthetic education. Today, there is still an influence from Confucius on the function of music education in Taiwan. Chinese still believe that music can be so powerful as to nurture or undermine the human spirit. The function of music is to help people establish well-rounded personalities in order to stabilize our society. Since piano

education is part of music education, there is no doubt that through piano training the objective of music education can also be obtained.

The authoritative (teacher-centered) type of teaching, which has dominated Taiwanese education for a long time, usually gives students very limited space to reflect on what they really need or gain from education. Though an improvement of education has been undertaken in Taiwan, the educational issues are often acknowledged but seldom made a priority. The emphasis on the education of knowledge rather than the education of personality still predominates throughout the educational system. Under the huge demand of academic work, the growth of a student's independence and self-awareness is seldom made a priority in school. Students are used to following orders and being judged by adults, most often by their teachers and parents.

However, education is essential in developing self-realization. Usually an innovative movement is initiated by a small group of self-realized people who are awakened by a need in a particular circumstance. Solutions to current problems in Taiwanese piano education and its future direction require long-term planning and ideas from different perspectives. The formation of a good and practical educational system cannot be decided just by a group of "experts." The voices from teachers who are practicing in education and students who are in the education system need to be taken seriously.

### Piano Education and the Music Gifted Program in Taiwan

Most of the children in Taiwan start their general music training in one of the popular pre-school music programs: Yamaha, Kawai, Orff, or Kodály. They often begin to play piano at this time. However, some children start piano lessons without attending any pre-school music program. After years of music study, some students are encouraged to enter the Music Gifted Program, if they show some talent and interest in piano.

The Music Gifted Program (MGP) is a program developed during the 1960s by the Ministry of Education in Taiwan. The goals of the MGP have been modified several times. The latest version, revised in 1997, based on the Art Education Laws, is as follows:

- 1) To discover musically gifted students at an early stage; to give them a systematic education; to fully develop their potential; and to develop them into superior musicians.
- 2) To improve those students' musical knowledge, performance, creativity and appreciation; and to nourish their refined aesthetic values and their balanced, well-founded personalities.
- 3) To advocate the importance of a good musical learning environment among the common people; to uplift the overall musical standard; and to establish well-founded cultural development in Taiwan.

The MGP is a program affiliated with schools from the elementary level to the high-school level. Students who want to join this program must take an entrance

exam, including a music aptitude test, a music theory test, and an applied instrument audition. Students can enter or drop out of the program at any level. In addition to the regular academic curricula, MGP students are given musical training, consisting of music theory, music history, harmony and analysis, ensemble playing, and applied study. The principal guide for the music curricula for the MGP is set by the Ministry of Education. Based on this guide, every school can adjust its curriculum according to the faculty and facilities that it has.

Due to the increasing number of schools which offer MGPs, entrance into the program is not as competitive as it once was. Students who want to take music study seriously often enter the program. Today, more than half of the music majors in most colleges and universities are from MGPs. The influence of this program on Taiwanese music education is undeniable.

Basically, piano instruction in Taiwan is on a one-on-one basis. Private studio teaching, piano teaching in the MGPs and college piano teaching all use this type of instruction. Western piano music from the Baroque era to the contemporary era is the major teaching repertoire at all levels of piano education. In recent years, piano works composed by Chinese or Taiwanese composers have been integrated into the exam requirements at some schools and into some piano competitions. In general, though, western piano repertoire is still the major body of music that piano students study.

Among the 18 universities and colleges in Taiwan that have music departments or music graduate programs, the majority offer degrees in performance or music



education. So far, there is only one graduate program that offers a piano pedagogy degree. In general, most of the music programs are performance-oriented. Although there is a great demand for piano teachers in Taiwan, pedagogy is still normally taken as only a single course in school and not as a major.

Piano students. Although taking piano lessons is one of the popular after-school activities for children in Taiwan, most students eventually quit piano learning mostly due to the academic demands of school. Piano students who continue their piano learning after entering junior high school are usually those who begin to take piano learning seriously and have the potential to become music majors in the future. Upon deciding to pursue a piano career, most of those students try to enter the MGP or have private musical training. Those who decide to become piano majors not only must continue intensive musical training but also must meet the academic requirements of school.

Although there are alternative examinations besides the joint entrance exam offered to potential college music majors, both academic and musical subjects are required to enter college. Under all of these musical and academic demands, piano students seldom have time to join in other activities as the other students do.

Not only the children who want to be musicians need to make an early and serious commitment, but the parents also need to make the commitment to help and support them in many ways. Parents who send their children to learn an instrument are mostly those parents who highly value their children's education and future. According to the researcher's teaching experience, there is a difference between a

family that has a child playing an instrument as a hobby and the family devoted to educating a future musician. It is not uncommon to see these devoted parents become over-caring and even controlling over their children.

Compared with the general students in Taiwan, the piano-major-to-be students seem to have a very different growing-up process. Their expectation for their future probably will be different from the general students. Thus, their views about their devotion to piano and their expectations for the future are worthy of research.

### The Piano Profession in Taiwan

Performing-arts agencies are still at their early developmental stage in Taiwan. Inviting distinguished foreign performing artists is their main strategy to secure business. This leaves the domestic performing artists very limited opportunity to perform. For Taiwanese pianists, teaching piano is a more dependable survival skill, compared with an insecure performing career. The majority of Taiwanese pianists go into teaching, including both teaching in schools and independent studio teaching.

Since there are not enough full-time teaching jobs, most performance graduates hold one or more part-time jobs (Chong, 1992). Teaching in an independent studio is very common for pianists. Those who both teach and perform must spend a certain amount of practicing time maintaining their performance skills (Chong, 1992). But part-time jobs and performance schedules are not very predictable. Such a job situation can be viewed as flexible and also as unstable.

In Taiwanese society teaching piano and being a concert pianist are both recognized as admirable vocations, especially for females. The society gives people in these fields positive recognition. In a highly material world, music is especially respected for its spiritual quality. People in this field are often viewed from a spiritual perspective. Teaching and performing piano have the function of cultivating the musical ability of students and the appreciation of the general public. Because of the popularity of piano learning, piano education is the greatest part of instrumental education in Taiwan. The effect of piano education will directly influence the overall musical education and also the cultural quality of Taiwanese society.

Because of the requirement of a specialized education and the subsequent job situation, students in the piano field may have particular views about their training and their career possibilities. Because of the special expectation from the people in and outside the field and their importance in music education and in cultural cultivation in Taiwan, the piano profession and piano education require additional attention.

### Responsibilities and Difficulties for Taiwanese Pianists

Musicians, including pianists, are often criticized as people in an ivory tower. The inclination to indulge oneself in music for music's sake stems from the western Romantic esthetic. It is inevitable that pianists are influenced by the thought of the nineteenth century, which was the flowering period of piano music in the western

world. In Chinese culture, intellectuals (including musicians) are entrusted with considerable responsibility for the society. These people, who are trained professionally, should contribute their knowledge to the general public, just as described in an old Chinese saying—"The joy of sharing music with others is always greater than just playing by oneself."

There are two major difficulties that classical pianists in Taiwan have confronted continuously. One is the overwhelming influence of popular music. The other is the issue of learning a western instrument in an oriental culture. The direct transplantation of the whole of western classical music into Taiwanese culture has proven inappropriate and insufficient. It is the job of professional musicians to undertake the task of integrating this part of western culture into our culture—to root piano music in the earth of Chinese culture. Piano educators can then start to stress the importance of piano education in Taiwan with confidence. If we have the faith and the direction to lead the piano education of our students, the strong tide of popular music will no longer be a threat to classical music.

During the last century, the Taiwanese have witnessed immense influence from the western world in many areas. These influences have brought prosperous development and also decay to Taiwan. Since this influence will continue, it becomes an important issue for Taiwanese to discriminate and extract the outside influences cautiously. Western classical music has its own cultural value and deserves to be kept. Continuously absorbing progressive and appropriate

philosophies of music from the western world while searching for ways to develop our own music will remain an important issue for Taiwanese music education.

### Need for the Study

Classical piano music is one of the long-treasured traditions in the western world. If we, as Taiwanese, want to plant and grow this good tradition in our land, research into the education of pianists is where we should start. Although piano education began a half century ago in Taiwan, there are very few research studies done on Taiwanese piano education: 郭曉玲's (Kuo, Hsiao-ling) *Piano Pedagogy in Taiwan: a Course Design*, Jennifer Lim's *An Examination of Piano Study in Selected Public Junior and Senior High Music Preparatory Programs in Taiwan, the Republic of China* (1990), Tzeng, Chen-li's *The Development of Piano Pedagogy in Taiwan, with Portraits of Eight Important Teachers* (1994), Chang, Chin-chiu's *Approach to Basic Piano Teaching in the Elementary School in Taiwan* (1993), and Kou, Mei-ling Lai's *Secondary Piano Instruction in the Colleges and Universities of the Republic of China with Recommendations for Incorporating American Group Piano Instructional Methods into the Curricula* (1985). The majority of piano-related research consists of studies about specific pieces of music, such as 黃宇韻's (Hwang, U-in) *Analysis of Bartok's Piano Concerto* (1990), and 蔡佩樺's (Tsai, Pei-hwa) *A Study of Schuman's Piano Concerto, op. 54* (1993). So far there has been no research into the specific effects of Taiwanese piano education on its students.

There are many ways for a researcher to determine the effects of an educational system. For example, the effect of Taiwanese piano education can be assessed in terms of piano students' accomplishments—more winners from competitions, higher degrees earned, etc. The present study chooses to define the effects of Taiwanese piano education by examining the meaning of piano playing to graduating college piano students. This research is based on the assumption that a real accomplishment is a good balance of inner need and outside fulfillment. It is the inner urge which drives people to reach their goals. As we know, the function of personal development, one of the important essences of education, is to enlighten peoples' awareness of themselves and cultivate their decision-making ability. It is important for Taiwanese educators to begin to pay attention to the views of learners. Thus, it is crucial to examine piano education from students' perspectives. By understanding their perceptions about piano playing, piano educators can obtain better insight into improving piano education in Taiwan. The outcomes of this study should contribute valuable information to piano educators in Taiwan.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of Taiwanese piano education by identifying the meaning of piano playing to college senior piano majors. The following categories of questions are addressed in this study to identify the meaning of piano playing to these students.

### Research Questions

1. Why and how do the participants begin and continue playing the piano?
2. What are the feelings and meanings of piano playing, including performing and practicing, to the participants?
3. How do the participants live their lives as musicians?
4. How do the participants evaluate their own piano playing ability, musical training and environment?

## CHAPTER II

### RELATED LITERATURE

Throughout its evolution western music has continued to play an important role in peoples' lives. Though the reliance on music varies among different people, no one would easily deny its importance. Among the arts, music carries the vaguest form. Its presentation relates to sound and time, which are very hard to grasp. At the same time, it is very powerful. In both western and eastern cultures, there are myths and stories that depict the power of music over human beings. The discussion and dispute about music in many facets, which include its value, function, elements, and origin, began long before the Christian era. It will always be a topic about which people ceaselessly converse.

#### The Value of Music Education

Music education has been discussed throughout western intellectual history since the time of ancient Greece. In his ideal society Plato (B.C. 427-347) valued music education highly in maintaining the values and traditions of a culture (Mark, 1996).

Plato wrote in *Protagoras*:

The music masters by analogous methods instill self-control and deter the young from evil-doing. And when they have learned to play the Lyre, they teach them the works of good poets of another sort, namely the lyrical which they accompany on the Lyre, familiarizing the minds of the children with the rhythms and melodies. By this means they become more civilized, more balanced, and better adjusted in themselves and so more capable in whatever they say or do,



for rhythms and harmonious adjustment are essential to the whole of human life. (Mark, 1996, p. 56).

Plato believed that music could function as a balance between gymnastics and letters. He believed that music enables a child to construct a formidable character.

Aristotle (B.C. 384-322) thought that education is a sensitizing process, not merely a collection of facts. Education not only tempers the emotion but also steels the mind. He also believed that music is an educational discipline that has the power to mold emotions and engraft virtuous habits in the malleable soul of the child (Portnoy, 1973).

The most influential thinker and educator in Chinese intellectual history, Confucius (551-479 B.C.), highly valued music in the education of a well-rounded person. 禮樂射御書數 (Rites, Music, Archery, Driving a chariot, Learning letters, Mathematics) were known as the "Six Arts," which ancient scholars were required to master. The first two characters "Le" and "Music" are always combined together in music education. "Le" means propriety, civility, courtesy and rites. It is used to restrict and mold people's behaviors. Music is used to cultivate and nourish people's personality. The ideal music education is to reach a harmony between "Le" and "Music." Confucius put the "Music" above the "Le." He believed music is the ultimate accomplishment of a personality (徐復觀, Hsu, Fu-guan, 1976).

The philosophy of Chinese music can be applied to the individual and also to the society. Music can help individuals reach a balance between emotion and intellect. Further, music can enhance the relationship among people in a society and harmonize

the order of a society. Eventually, it will lead the society to a status of universal brotherhood (張玉柱, Jang, U-tsu, 1985).

During the past century, Taiwanese culture has constantly fluctuated with unstable political situations. The important development of western music in Taiwan began in the second half of the nineteenth century. Western missionaries built music into the curricula at several schools in Taiwan for their religious purposes. During the Japanese colonial period in the first half of the twentieth century, western music was officially and systematically included in different levels of schools in Taiwan. Western music was encouraged by the Japanese government for the main purpose of cultivating Taiwanese people's behaviors. Musical creativity, research, and education reformation were not encouraged at all (陳郁秀 Chen, U-shio, 1999, p. 13), but western music became the mainstream of music education in Taiwan. During the time in which martial law was enforced (1949-1987), despite the suppression of cultural activities and creativity, western music still remained as the mainstream of both general and higher music education in Taiwan.

With the sudden release of bondage, which martial law had imposed on Taiwanese culture for almost four decades, the chaos in Taiwanese culture was expected. The rise of Taiwanese ethnomusicology has also made a re-evaluation of the role of western music necessary. At the same time the values of music education in Chinese tradition still influence the objectives of music at different levels of schools in Taiwan. Cultivating a well-rounded personality, enriching spiritual life,

and further enhancing the quality of life are still the common objectives of music education.

Today, western music in Taiwan is facing its real time of trial. Though not many Taiwanese musicians or music educators have begun to acknowledge it, the strong tide of the search for true Taiwanese music and traditional expectations of music education has forced western music, which had dominated Taiwanese music education for a century, to relocate itself in this land. Nevertheless, it is now a crucial and difficult issue for musicians and music educators in Taiwan to search for ways to infuse and balance western music, including piano music, with real needs, which have evolved from traditional Chinese values and Taiwanese history. Without the previous political enforcement, we need to see how the values of western piano education can benefit Taiwanese culture. By examining the perspectives of professionally trained musicians, the first step to reevaluating western music might take place.

### Theories of Music Education

The Taiwanese educational system has been influenced by that of the United States since the last century. The American school system of elementary, junior high, and senior high was adopted in Taiwan in 1921 and is still in use. It is unavoidable to see the influence of American educational philosophies on Taiwanese education. Therefore, it is valuable for Taiwanese music educators to pay attention to the important philosophies of music education in America.

In the first half of the twentieth century, there was no coherent philosophy of music education. American music education was still based on the utilitarian rationale, where music was used to develop human nature intellectually, morally and physically. Although progressive education gave music a secure place in the curriculum, its effectiveness, which was to develop socialization skills in children, was still subject to a utilitarian justification (Mark, 1996, p. 57). Only by the middle of the twentieth century was there more or less a withdrawal from the utilitarian philosophy of music education. Instead, a philosophy based on the aesthetic component of music became prominent. Allen Britton and Charles Leonhard were the foremost early leaders who steered music education philosophy away from a utilitarian purpose. In the 1970s, controversy over utilitarian-versus-aesthetic philosophical positions reemerged with some arguments reflecting the need to maintain some utilitarian beliefs in the ancillary values of music education.

Aesthetic philosophy. The aesthetic philosophy of music education has been the strongest influence on American music education in the second half of the twentieth century. Bennett Reimer, the major figure of the aesthetic philosophy, incorporated the ideas of John Dewey, Susanne Langer and Leonard Meyer. He based his philosophy on “absolute expressionism”, which connected the aesthetic components of an art work with the quality of all inherent human experience. Reimer believed that when one shared the aesthetic quality in an art work, one was also sharing the qualities of which all human experience was made (Reimer, 1970, p. 25). Further, he pointed out that aesthetic education could be taken as the education

of a human's feelings, because the aesthetic forms and patterns in art capture and present modes of human feeling (Reimer, 1970). As he states in his *A Philosophy of Music Education*,

The major function of art is to make objective, and therefore conceivable, the subjective realm of human responsiveness. Art does this by capturing and presenting in its aesthetic qualities the patterns and forms of human feelingfulness. The major function of aesthetic education is to make accessible the insights into human feelingfulness contained in the aesthetic qualities of things. Aesthetic education, then, can be regarded as the education of feeling (Reimer, 1970, p. 39).

Reimer's (1970) basic premise was that a systematic statement of a philosophy of music education must be the result of a systematic investigation of the nature and value of music itself. Reimer adopted Leonard B. Meyer's idea about the process of expressive sound:

"[W]hen a system of sound-relationships—a piece of music—is experienced aesthetically, the tonal matrix of tensions and resolutions produces tensions and resolutions within the experiencer, and these are 'significant' because they are analogous to the modes of human feeling" (Reimer, 1970, p. 100).

He believed that good values of music are those that combine the highest content, and "[t]he more of the qualities of greatness that a person can experience the more can his sense of 'humanness' be refined" (Reimer, 1970, p. 104). He believed that "The better the work of art, the more it transcends its time of creation and is relevant to human experience in general" (Reimer, 1970, p. 105). His idea denied the notion that art works should be regarded merely as an expression of their time.

Reimer himself described the aesthetic experience as intrinsic, disinterested, distanced and also involved, outgoing, and responsive. "Empathy" and "tension in

repose” were also ideas he used to describe the aesthetic experience. When a person immersed himself in the aesthetic experience, known as the “empathy status,” he identified with or self-projected himself into the qualities of the thing to which he was responding (Reimer, 1970). Six characteristics of aesthetic experience, which were proposed by Abeles, Hoffer and Klotman, provided a more comprehensive explanation about aesthetic experience. An aesthetic experience

1. Possesses no practical or utilitarian purpose; it is an end itself.
2. Involves feelings; there is a reaction to what is heard or seen.
3. Involves intellect; the mind consciously contemplates an object.
4. Focuses or centers attention on an object.
5. Is experienced; no one can successfully tell another about an aesthetic experience.
6. Makes life fuller and more meaningful (Abeles, Hoffer, & Klotman, 1994. p. 90-91)

Reimer also stated that music education had a dual obligation to society. One obligation is to develop the talents of those who are musically gifted. The second obligation is to develop the aesthetic musical sensitivity of all people. He believed that general music is “extensive” and “comprehensive” in its approach to the art of music, while performance is “intensive” and “selective” in its approach to the art of music (Reimer, 1989).

Elliott’s theory. While the direction taken in the 1990s by a larger number of music philosophers was the study of aesthetics and its application to music education, David Elliott’s *Music Matters: A New Philosophy of Music Education* formulated a new direction (Mark, 1996). He described his philosophy as a praxial philosophy in a cultural context: “[M]usic ought to be understood in relation to the meanings and

values evidenced in actual music making and music listening in specific cultural contexts” (Elliott, 1995, p. 14). He defined music as a human activity, or something that people do. He viewed music as a complementary four-dimensional concept which involves 1) a doer, 2) some kind of doing, 3) something done, and 4) the complete context in which doers do what they do. Elliott emphasized that, through performing, human beings could be offered profound values, which he called “life values”: self-growth, self-knowledge, self-esteem, and enjoyment, or optimal experience.

Elliot integrated some contemporary scholars’ ways of thinking, which are rooted in Aristotle’s thought, with his own. He promoted the values of music making and provided ways of achieving those values. Elliott echoed especially the thinking of Csikszentmihalyi. Csikszentmihalyi’s “flow” experience is stressed more than others’ ideas. In *Flow* Csikszentmihalyi’s summarizes decades of research on the positive aspects of human experience—joy, creativity, and the process of total involvement with life, which he called “flow”. Csikszentmihalyi thought that people seek optimal experience. “They [optimal experiences] are situations in which attention can be freely invested to achieve a person’s goals, because there is no disorder to straighten out, no threat for the self to defend against.” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 40) He encouraged people to pursue enjoyment, which is challenging and requires skills, instead of pleasure. Csikszentmihalyi discovered that all flow activities have certain aspects in common:

[Flow] provided a sense of discovery, a creative feeling of transporting the person into a new reality. It pushed the person to higher levels of performance,

and led to previously undreamed-of states of consciousness. In short, it transformed the self by making it more complex. In this growth of the self lies the key to flow activities (1990, p.74).

Csikszentmihalyi stressed that in order to enjoy music one must pay attention to it (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). He believes that listening to a live performance will more likely result in flow than listening to recorded music. Though flow could arise from listening, he stated: “[E]ven greater rewards are open to those who learn to *make music* [italics added]” (1990, p. 111).

Based on the “flow” theory, Elliott echoes the belief that most musical practices are “optimal experiences,” because most musical practices offer music makers two necessary conditions for achieving life values: 1) they are multi-dimensional musical challenges and 2) they provide the musicianship required to meet the challenges of musical practice. When one’s level of musicianship is matched with a congruent level of musical challenge, the powers of consciousness are completely engaged, and one is involved in an optimal experience (Elliott, 1995). As Elliott states, “Consciousness and action merge to take us up into the actions of musicing” (1995, p. 122). It is of significant value when a person totally engages in music making, because it propels the person to a higher level of complexity (Elliott, 1995). Elliott believes that by developing students’ musicianship through progressive music making, music education can reach its primary goals: improvement of student’s self-growth, self-knowledge, and music enjoyment. He states:

“The task of music education is not to develop the various forms of musical knowledge as ends in themselves but to develop the musicianship of learners through progressive musical problem solving in balanced relation to appropriate musical challenges every step of the way... It is the balancing or matching of



musicianship with carefully selected musical challenges that results in students' self-growth, enjoyment, and self-knowledge. Self-growth, self-knowledge, and musical enjoyment are the aims of music education overall and the primary goals of every music teaching-learning episode" (1995, p. 122).

Though based on different philosophies and using diverse approaches, both Reimer's and Elliott's philosophies have a similar intention in their educational objectives—to improve the quality of peoples' lives through music.

Theories applied to piano education in Taiwan. Organized piano education in Taiwan did not really begin until the first music department was established in 1946. At the beginning of the new millennium, Taiwanese piano education is still in the process of development, and a philosophy of its own is needed. In developing this philosophy, it will always be beneficial for music educators in Taiwan to observe more progressive and important philosophies from the other countries.

Aesthetic education already had an influence on fine arts education in Taiwan decades ago, but not in the field of music education. Since aesthetic education is one of the five important objectives in the Taiwanese educational system, it is worthwhile to examine the potential aesthetic value of music within Taiwanese culture. According to the Art Education Law in Taiwan, which was announced in 1997, art education is divided into three major systems: professional art education in schools, general art education in schools and art education in the society. There are some ideas shared between Reimer's dual obligations of music education and the objectives of the three divisions of art education in Taiwan. One of the obligations, developing the talent of gifted people in Reimer's philosophy of music education, echoes the objectives of the Music Gifted Program in Taiwan, which belongs to the

professional art education at schools. Both of the programs have similar functions, which are to develop musically talented people and serve the social needs. Aesthetic value is also emphasized in both programs.

Reimer's beliefs—that music education is the education of feelings, that the nature of music is analogous to human modes of feelings, and that a good art work transcends its time and is relevant to human experience in general—give very strong support to the growth of western culture in an oriental society.

Elliott's praxial view of music education could shed a different light on Taiwanese piano education. He placed more value on instrumental playing. He believed that life values could be enriched by music making for both novice and professional players. Elliot's ideas provide Taiwanese pianists, who are trained mostly in performance, a different perspective on their profession and a different angle on the meaning of piano playing.

The intrinsicality and empathy of aesthetic experience outlined by Reimer and the optimal experience emphasized by Elliott are identical situations that most performing artists describe in their best performances. While Reimer claims that people can have those particular experiences through listening to music, Elliott insists that music making is the best way to achieve "flow." No matter what way we choose, those experiences are ones music educators would encourage people to pursue.

Facing the wealth of philosophies of music education that are developing in America, we cannot help but wonder what is truly the philosophy of music education

in Taiwan, or is there one sound philosophy? While adopting and absorbing the philosophies from the western world, we are in a need of grounding philosophy, which can be applied to Taiwan's current and future needs. The researcher believes that there is no more direct way to evaluate the influence of a philosophy of music education on the music profession than examining the products of its educational system—college music students.

#### Research about College Students in Taiwan

Since this study is about music college students' perspectives about piano playing—which are also related to their reasons for choosing it and their views about their future—their psychological needs, their reasons for choosing music in higher education, their reasons for choosing certain majors, and their views about job value are worth being investigated.

According to the *Reports on the Youth's Status Survey Taiwan Area, Republic of China* (1999), the desire among youths (age 15-24) to pursue higher education had increased to 76.63% by 1999. The main reason for this was their desire for a better educational background to prepare them for a better future career. There were two main reasons that caused the youths not to be satisfied with their lives: their families' insufficient income and their inability to find an appropriate job. In general, they cared mostly about their future careers, which could possibly bring them economic stability. Gaining a higher education means gaining a better chance of better future career, which also indicates a better living.

In *大學生科系選擇的分析 – 以中央大學與政治大學為例 (An Analysis of College Students' Choosing of Majors—Using Chen-chi University and National Central University as Examples)* (1997), 吳毓津 (Wu, Yu-chin) pointed out that the economic concern and job opportunity were the prominent influences when the college students chose their majors. Among the influential psychological elements, self-expectation (high expectation from oneself), interest, and ability were most important.

李華璋's (Li, Hua-zhang) research, *大學生工作價值觀之評量研究 (A Study Evaluating College Students' Views of Job Value)* (1989), indicated that college students cared mostly about growth and appropriateness in their jobs. The formation of their views of job value evolved from their self-expectation, self-actualization, personal needs, passive avoidance of troubles, approval from society, and security and comfort. They also expected their future jobs to offer the opportunity for self-development, to provide for their basic needs, and to help them gain positive acceptance by society. 李坤崇 (Li, Kun-chong), in *我國大學生心理需求之評量研究 (A Study Evaluating Taiwanese College Student's Psychological Needs)* (1985) also found that self-fulfillment was the most important psychological need among Taiwanese college students.

馮汝康 (Feng, Ju-kang), in his study titled - *大學應屆畢業生的事業目標及其形成背景 (Career Goal and it's Developmental Process: An Inquiry Study of Undergraduate Senior Students)* (1994), pointed out the order of important considerations for college students choosing jobs: 1) development of personal

potential 2) possible development of future career 3) stable income 4) flexibility and convenience of working schedule and location.

Based on these studies, it seems that college students are concerned with both their personal internal needs and extrinsic requirements when they choose their majors and their jobs. Although most of the studies indicate that the personal internal needs are put before the extrinsic requirements, disregard of any of the factors would not result in the full picture of the real desires of college students in Taiwan.

The only research into job satisfaction related to the music population was conducted by 叢培娣 (Chong, Pei-ti) in 1992-1993, *Job Satisfaction of Performance Graduates* (1992). The participants in this study were those who had majored in music performance in college or graduate schools in or outside of Taiwan between 1978 and 1992 and were working in the field of music while this study was conducted. According to this study, the respondents generally were not satisfied with their career preparation at the music schools they had attended. Most of the respondents indicated that they would choose the same applied instrument again if they were given a second opportunity.

The respondents in this study on average held one and one-half different part-time jobs concurrently. The majority of the respondents were satisfied with their career choice and felt optimistic about their future in music, although they were not fully employed or earning high incomes. Chong interpreted this to mean that the respondents derived satisfaction in their jobs from intrinsic rewards from their

jobs rather than extrinsic factors. Chong also pointed out that the love for an instrument and the desire to play it could result in high job satisfaction. The majority of the respondents admitted that the musician's life was not easy, but they still found it was extremely rewarding and found satisfaction from their jobs. However, many respondents thought that chances for future musicians to establish a performing career in music were very unrealistic. They mostly advised future musicians to think of music as beautiful art form but not a tool for making money. The findings of this study also suggest that it is possible for musicians to find satisfaction in a music career other than performance.

Chong's conclusions were twofold. First, music performance majors need to be advised about the reality of the music business and how to prepare for it. Second, music students should go into music only because they love music and have made a strong commitment to it. Only then could they find satisfaction and fulfillment in their jobs.

In summary, Chong's study indicates that the musicians' career satisfaction relies almost completely on the intrinsic rewards from their jobs. Studies about the general college students' career goals and views about job values, found that the extrinsic needs that a future career can provide were also an undeniable factor to consider for the college students in Taiwan. Feng's study also indicates that there is a difference in career goal setting, job scheduling, and income expectation among different occupations. College senior piano majors' viewpoints about their future

career and their expectations from that career, then, need to be investigated to see how they converge or diverge.

Parental role. In the second half of twentieth century, traditional moral and family values in Taiwanese society have been transformed under the influence from western society and the tide of modernization. Although the traditional beliefs that “filial piety is the most important of all virtues” and “parents are never wrong” have been modified and are no longer faithfully followed by the young generation, parents still play an influential role in educating children in Taiwanese society.

According to 溫錦真’s (Wen, Jing-jeng) research, *A Narrative Approach to College Student’s Self Identity* (1997), the two most important external influences on college students’ self-identity are the joint entrance exam system, which most of the students have to go through at different levels of schools, and their parents. Wu, Yu-chin (1997) also found that parents play an important role as nurture interest and provide information to the students when choosing their majors.

Davison, Howe and Sloboda, in “Environmental Factors in the Development of Musical Performance Skill over the Life Span” (1996), pointed out that parents have a crucial influence on the child’s progress in musical acquisition. There is other evidence in the same study that supports the importance of parents’ roles on musically gifted persons: “[M]usically outstanding individuals tend to have parents who attend lessons and support practice” (p. 198).

If parental support is crucial to children’s musical growth, “how to support” and “what kind of support is appropriate” are issues that need to be addressed. In

*Individual Differences in Musical Behavior*, Kemp (1997) considered the musical development, upbringing, and educational environment for musicians. He found that developmental patterns of musicians change from secondary-school age to conservatory age. The traits of a good nurturing environment showed in their secondary school age: children appeared to benefit from an encouraging and supporting environment. The reverse was true after they entered conservatory: they lacked conscientiousness, suffered from low self-sentiment, and were more “dominant” (Hargreaves, 1997). Kemp concluded that, at an early stage, young musicians depend on parental support, which can instill good working habits and a good attitude of practicing; but later on, achieving musicians have to go through a period of time to allow them to internalize their own musical values, which might appear as a rejection of any external forms of control.

Although the study by Davidson, *et al.* (1996) has shown that parental encouragement has great influence on most successful young musician, Freeman (1991) suggests that such benefits might be very short term and that early promise is not always prolonged. Kemp’s study (1997) indicates that a young musician requires not only a supportive environment comprised of sensitive encouragement but also personal space and freedom in which creativity and autonomy might blossom.

A good parental role can be defined from different perspectives in different cultural contexts. Cultivating a “little Mozart” in a family, parents have to pay extra attention to the child’s musical growth besides meeting the child’s basic growing needs. Since the participants of the present study have been in the musical



professional field and possibly will have music as their future careers, the parents might be taken as successful musical parents. However, it will be useful to learn how the participants view the influence from their parents on their journey of musical learning.

### Literature on Piano Playing

Piano performance as an independent art began with Franz Liszt and Clara Schumann in the Romantic era. Since then virtuosity— exceptional physical and intellectual ability— has been an important element that attracts the audience to attend a solo performance. Dazzling technique is always the first thing that young piano players desperately want to conquer. The charisma of successful pianists somehow covers this profession with a mysterious veil. Piano players and teachers endeavor to reveal the secrets behind it. People have written and still are writing books about piano playing in order to provide insight into the “secrets.”

According to *The Well-Tempered Keyboard Teacher*, there are four basic influences on the history of the pedagogy of playing keyboard instruments: “1) the aesthetics and function of the keyboard music itself; 2) the physical characteristics of the instruments for which the music was written; 3) the research interest of a given period; and 4) the philosophical base of a given period” (Uszler, Gordon and Mach, 1991, p. 293).

The third influence is especially shown in pedagogical writings in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. The industrial revolution influenced piano pedagogues

to adopt “scientific” approaches. Science had proven that people can save great amounts of time and energy by using various systematized principles in their fields. And under the influence of industrialization, which emphasized producing a lot in a short period of time, people have looked for a “fast” way to solve problems. Many musicians became convinced that understanding and applying scientific principles to piano playing would help them gain technical power in a short period of time. The scientific approaches applied to piano playing have involved the physics of mechanics, anatomy, psychology, and neurophysiology (Uszler et al., 1991).

Rudolf Maria Breithaupt’s (1873-1945) writings epitomize the concept of the use of arm weight at the keyboard. The foundations of his method are concepts of freedom of motion, relaxation, and weight. Tobias Matthay (1858-1945) developed his own special view of relaxation, defined rotation as forearm movement, and viewed the use of arm weight as a mixed blessing. Otto Rudolf Ortmann (1899-1979) was a controversial figure in the research into piano technique. He dedicated himself to the scientific approach to examine pianist’s problems. His theories, which suggested that the only factors operating in the production of a given tone at the piano are intensity and duration, thus questioning a long-cherished tradition of tone production. He believed that physics can serve as the basis of psychology in piano playing. Uszler et al. explain:

In his preface [to *The Physiological Mechanics of Piano Technique*] he argues that clear understanding of the physics attending tone production at the piano and the physiological process used in playing the piano is the only logical basis from which to arrive at psychological suggestion (1991, p. 335).

Though criticized in many respects, Ortmann did force piano pedagogues to

examine piano playing from a new angle.

In retrospect Ortmann's work was a heroic effort to bring rationality and an attitude of impartial investigation to piano pedagogy at a time when prevailing doctrine was steeped in subjective imagery of a pseudo-physiological nature.... The segment of investigation he did complete, however, stands as an intelligent body of work that goes a considerable distance in helping us understand how we play the instrument (Uszler et al., 1991, p. 340).

Within the prevailing physiological approach, there was another emerging direction aimed at looking for solutions for pianistic problems. This direction was in the realm of intellect and psychology. Kotchevitsky (1888-1964) said that, "...technical training from the 'outside' must be replaced by technical training from the 'inside.'" Grigori Kogan called this... "the psycho-technical school" (1967, p. 14). Kochevitsky argued that the idea that the mind is important to technical development is nothing completely new. It could be traced back a century earlier, when Igraz Moscheles claimed that the mind should practice more than the fingers (Kochevitsky, 1967). According to Kochevitsky, consciousness plays a great role in the process of the pianists' preparatory work and that mechanical practicing is irrational.

Representatives of the psycho-technical school are less concerned with abstract finger agility than with the musical substance of the piece being performed. Since the pianist's real problems are musical rather than technical, [Ferruccio] Busoni suggests that, until the musical meaning becomes clear, one must not touch the instrument (Kochevitsky, 1967, p. 16).

Representatives of this school seldom talk about technique. Their main purpose is the development of the student's musicianship, not the development of his mechanism. They demonstrate their artistic ideas at the piano, trying to inspire their students in

this way. Ferruccio Busoni, Leopold Godowsky, Artur Schnabel, Grigori Kogan, Heinrich Neuhaus and Luigi Bonpensiere are the representatives mentioned in Kochevitsky's writing (Kochevitsky, 1967). Kochevitsky's own approach focuses on the role of the central nervous system in piano playing. His theory was influenced by the Russian school of neurophysiologists and the Pavlovian school of reflexology. In the foreword of his *The Art of Piano Playing*, Summer Goldenthal, M.D. states:

[T]hough there is not yet complete agreement among neurophysiologists as to the workings of the central nervous system, there are relatively firm conclusions on many aspects of voluntary motor activity that can be applied to musical performance (Uszler et al., 1991, p. 353).

Inner aural activity is repeatedly emphasized in Kochevitsky's book. He pointed out that live demonstration, which carries strong auditory perception, is more effective than written theory. He considered "relaxation" and "weight playing" dangerous terms. He stated that there is constant muscular contraction and relaxation in piano playing and that the use of the larger playing units must be coordinated with finger movement and strength (Uszler et al., 1991).

At about the same time, Abby Whiteside (1881-1956) questioned traditional concepts of "tone quality", "touch", "rotation, relaxation, and weight technique," though she grew out of the weight-technique school. She offered an approach which attempts to integrate the entire playing organism into movement driven by inner aural images and basic rhythmic impulse (Uszler et al., 1991).

Several decades later, Gyorgy Sandor's *On Piano Playing* (1981) was published. Though this book was highly influenced by weight-school doctrines, Sandor digests

the complicated theories and presents technical concepts in a simpler way. In the preface to his book, Sandor states: "The coordination of the human mechanism is based on simple common-sense principles of physiology and the force of gravity" (1981). He encourages piano players to take all the apparatuses involving in piano playing as a whole instead of separate components: "It is the totality of piano playing that must be understood and described and not just some of its components" (Sandor, 1981, preface). Sandor also specifies the connection between motion and emotion: "In music, as in any kinesthetic art, emotions are expressed" (Sandor, 1981, preface).

In 1974, *The Inner Game of Tennis*, by Timothy Gallwey was published. Its influence is not just limited to the field of sports. Musicians found that the concepts in the "inner game" are also applicable to their field. Following this development, *The Inner Game of Music* by Barry Green and Timothy Gallwey was published in 1986. The basic theory of the "inner game" is that, in order to fully express human potential, mental interferences have to be reduced. "Self 1" and "self 2" are used to indicate two sides of thinking. "Awareness," "will," and "trust" are three important inner skills used to develop potential. These concepts and skills do not just offer help for musical or athletic performance but also demonstrate how to reach one's potential in general. Since musicians had been used to separating the problems of music playing from their daily life problems, the ideas of the inner game were new to many musicians. Treating music performance as a problem dealing with developing human potential in the "inner game" books addresses a new facet of piano pedagogy.

Seymour Bernstein's *With Your Own Two Hands* (1981) is a book that particularly emphasizes the importance of practicing. Bernstein believes that practicing and performing music can promote one's self-integration. Productive practicing is the key to good integration, which also influences other aspects of life: "Since music constantly integrates thought and feeling, it demands of the practicer a continuous coordination of reason and emotion. And it is this very kind of coordination of our innermost faculties that makes self-integration possible" (Bernstein, 1981, p. 7). In the first section of his book, "Who am I," he states: "[T]he more fully one develops one's talent, the greater one's powers ought to become in all the other aspects of his life. This seemed to me to be the real purpose of studying music" (Bernstein, 1981, p. 4).

*A Soprano on Her Head* (1982) by Eloise Ristad is a book which deals with problems of making music in a more spiritual way. The author even indicates that it is a book not limited to musicians. Ristad offers experiences from sensitively observing daily life and teaching. She emphasizes individuality, learning through one's own discovery, and exploring one's own inner world. She believes that absorbing any great knowledge without discriminating according to one's own need is wasting energy and unnecessary: "We often spend untold quantities of energy, first in trying to listen and stuff into our head all these assorted theories on piano technique or staying healthy or investing our money, and second in feeling guilty that we somehow didn't manage to" (Ristad, 1982, p. 127). There are no analytical methods

used in this book to approach issues of piano playing. Rather she goes into deeper layers of the human spirit in order to offer more useful ways to solve problems.

*The Art of Practicing—A Guide to Making Music from the Heart*” (1997) is another book that uses a spiritual approach. According to the author, Madeline Bruser, it is a book about “how to free ourselves from physical and emotional tension as we practice so that we can unleash our innate musical talent” (Bruser, 1997, p. 2). Bruser encourages meditative discipline, which consists of focusing on sounds, sensation, emotions, and thoughts in the present moment.

The ongoing publication of books dealing with piano playing indicates at least two things. One is that it shows some musicians are still not satisfied with the solutions they have been offered. The other is that people are still interested in piano playing and they want to know how to do it better. For which ever reason, we can expect more research in this field.

Hardly any of the books on piano playing were based on just one pure theory. Most of them carry on the old traditions, while incorporating new concepts and experiences from teaching. Some of them are influenced by the prevailing theories of their time. Some of them bring forward new and seemingly unexpected ideas, which are actually reactions to the extremes of the previous tradition.

Facing this wealth of knowledge, which is an accumulation of many people’s wisdom, we cannot judge their correctness anymore. Instead, we are facing the problem of choosing what we need. Before deciding what we need in Taiwanese piano education, “what we are” and “what we have” need to be answered. Due to

the performance-oriented programs in every music department in Taiwan, the piano majors are asked to pursue perfect performance at school. They are motivated by this sole goal. At the same time, most of them realize that there is little chance to pursue a career as a performer. This dichotomy of real life and academic life has existed for a long time. It is one of the major causes of student anxiety at the time of graduation. What students need is a guide which allows them to embrace the enjoyment of music without its conflicting with their lives. This guide needs to promote broader views of piano playing and also link piano playing with their daily lives. For example, taking piano playing as a means of self-expression instead of work toward a perfect recital can release piano majors from their unnecessary burden. The idea of that practicing is not just a way of improving technique but also a way of improving quality of life can make the connection between piano playing and their daily lives stronger. They should realize that boredom during practice is not a necessity that pianists have to endure in order to play well. Piano majors have to know that the enjoyment of piano playing should begin with the process—practicing. Too much emphasis on product-oriented training can easily diminish the progress and neglect the true value of music, which is to enjoy it.

Piano pedagogues have done a tremendous amount of research aimed at revealing the mystery of those successful artists who are just a small portion among the piano-playing population. The belief that piano playing belongs not just to the elite changes the purpose and the methods of piano education. Not until the second half of the twentieth century did people in the western world begin to acknowledge a



holistic way of integrating piano playing with daily life. This holistic way of thinking, which broadens the western pianist's view of piano playing, can also influence the rest of the world.

There have been more than three hundred years of evolution and development of piano playing techniques and theories in the western world. If piano educators seriously care about the development of piano education in Taiwan, theories and writings derived and developed from Taiwanese pianists' needs and perspectives should be highly encouraged. Even today, most of the writings about piano playing in Taiwan are translations of important works from other countries or adopt important theories from others. While searching for a direction for Taiwanese piano education, piano educators can gain insights from keyboard pedagogy in the western world. But before incorporating any good concepts or theories, we need to scrutinize our own problems, not ignore our culture.

### Interviews with Pianists

Performance is an art of recreation. Some people might argue that the performer is not as important as the composer in terms of producing music. But in modern music practice, the intermediary role that the performer plays is no less crucial than that of the composer. Without a skillful performer, superb music can become inferior. A performer's interpretation can change the character of a composition to an extreme degree.

Since the time of legendary figures such as Niccolò Paganini and Franz Liszt , people have been fascinated by the stories of performing artists. Research into the nature of talent, the qualifications of successful pianists, and the relative importance of nature and nurture demonstrate people's interest in performance and its importance in the field of music.

Very few performers have published books which portray their ideas about piano playing and performance. Interviews with these successful artists provide a major source for understanding this profession. Through conversation, we might only gather partial information about the artist, but information from interviews is more direct and lively and influences readers in a way that even other insightful writings cannot.

As we know, there is an unlimited variety of talent among performing artists. Based on their talent, the artists interviewed in these books suggest ways of dealing with piano technique, interpretation, and performance from their own points of view. Piano players can get inspiration from these artists and hope to improve their playing by following the artists' suggestions. However, individualities need to be emphasized more than formalities when it comes to the training of a musician. As Vladimir Horowitz said: "I think each pianist must ultimately carve his own way, technically and stylistically" (Uszler et al., 1991, p. 365). Artur Rubinstein emphasized individuality in a more direct way:

You see we all have different fingers, different bodies, different minds, [and] different brains. We are different, aren't we?...we wouldn't approach the piano in the same way... Methods are sheer, stupid nonsense. A real professor would be a great man, or is a great man, if he knows how to discern in very young

talent its capacities and incapacities, its possibilities and impossibilities (Elder, 1994, p. 4).

Despite the different qualities among the artists, we notice that they all have a very strong sense of self-awareness. Because of this strong sense of awareness, they made a serious commitment to music at a certain point of their lives, mostly at an early age. For them, the essential reason to pursue music devotedly is the endless feedback from music itself—enjoyment and satisfaction.

Some pianists sense their own talent at early ages and have no doubt about it. As Stephen Hough said, “[F]rom the moment I started playing, I never thought of doing anything” (Mach 1988, p. 130). Lili Kraus said, “[E]ver since I can remember—music was in my blood, in every fiber of my body and in every recess of my soul and spirit” (Dubal, 1984, p. 65). Claudio Arrau said, “I never doubted for a minute that [music] was the thing I was going to do in life” (Dubal, 1984, p. 18).

Some pianists, though talented, go through numerous struggles before really acknowledging their commitments. Garrick Ohlsson described his turning point:

So that was actually, I would say, the decisive turning point...And that’s when internally my work took on a seriousness in me. There is no other way to explain it. I said, ‘I’m a man, I’m grown up now, and I know that I have to do, and I can do it, even though I know how hard it is (Mach, 1988, p. 177).

Murray Perahia explained why he left his teacher:

At age 17, I abruptly broke off. For eleven years I had been playing for a teacher every week, and playing pretty much the way she wanted me to play,...Now I felt I had to make my own judgments; I had to play for myself, and I had to decide for myself exactly in which manner I would play....the music had to make a kind of sense to me; I had to know what to do to make the piece of music come alive for me. I have to have, in other words, some values that were really my own, totally my own (Mach, 1988, p. 242).

Ivo Pogorelich believed that nothing can stop a person once he believes in something:

The one thing that I want young people to learn from this is that if you believe in something and have faith in yourself, nothing can stop you—not the world, not countries, not nations, not politics, not system. Nothing (Mach, 1988, p. 236).

Misha Dichter had a blind belief in himself:

Most of all I remember the belief I had in myself. I see now that success is a combination of destiny, luck, and hard work; but in those days, I was too young even to consider that it might not work...I think there was some sort of inner consciousness that something was there even though I had a great deal to accomplish pianistically; but there was still a blind belief in myself and in my abilities (Mach, 1980, p. 64).

Except for their own strong sense of self-awareness, intrinsic rewards are the main reason that these pianists devoted themselves to this demanding career. While expressing themselves through playing, they feel the enjoyment of being able to communicate with the composers and the audience. They surround their lives with music, because music helps their self-growth and self-development. Paul Badura-Skoda said: "Music is a language which communicates experience" (Mach, 1988, p. 8). Gina Bachauer even included self-expression as part of talent: "Talent, for me, includes that great urge to express yourself. Somehow...there is a desire within, which has to get out" (Marcus, 1979, p. 18). Leon Fleisher described the life of a gifted person: "[T]he gifted person is the one totally committed to music, enlivened by music, and thoroughly able to communicate his or hers excitement with music. The gifted person, in our field, must truly be immersed in the music" (Mach, 1988, p. 105).

Certainly, there are pianists playing for pure enjoyment. As Alicia De Larrocha stated about her early years, “It was difficult to convince her [mother] that I played because I wanted to and because it gave me pleasure...and for three years I did nothing but play for myself and write a little music, again only for myself” (Mach, 1980, p. 55). Murray Perahia stated how musical growth and a person’s growth are inseparable:

They should think in terms of music growth, and that’s a rather difficult line to take, because when you are confronted with great music you are also confronted with limitless possibilities. Those possibilities point not only to the growth in the music, but also to the growth of the individual artist as a human being, internally, emotionally, and this is something you know in your consciousness, you can tell yourself whether you’re in touch with the music or whether you’re not, and it’s to grow in that direction that is the important thing in an artist’s life (Mach, 1980, p. 222).

In *Modern Masters of the Keyboard*, Ignaz Friedman, described by the author as a pianist with a complete musical personality, talked about mastery of piano literature:

When one has worked through all the important material of this nature [technique], it is only the outside shell after all. It is the proper assimilation of all this material which will adequately equip the artist; it is what he makes out of it; it is what the artist does for himself. No one can do this for him; no teacher, no set of études, no mass of finger gymnastics. It is self-instruction—self-development (Brower, 1926, p. 50).

Self-awareness, self-development and self-expression are not characteristics that only people with special talent can develop. They are characteristics that educators encourage everyone to nurture. Using music to express oneself and communicate with others is not limited to certain privileged people. It can be applied to different levels of pianists. Enjoyment and satisfaction are the original values that music can

offer to laymen, not just to the artists. If the motivations and ultimate goals of those accomplished pianists are not so different from those of average piano players, why should any piano player not step forward to reach his or her dream with confidence? One of the major differences between a musician and a layman is that a musician chooses music as an avenue to pursue his or her life goal. It will be very valuable to find out if the pianists in Taiwan carry this seemingly unreachable but actually quite practical goal in mind on their journeys of pursuing their musical goals.

### Summary

Reimer's and Elliott's different philosophies designate the same function of music—enriching the quality of life, which is also a universal need. The evolution of piano technique in the western world, from the analytical approach toward a more holistic approach, has brought it closer to the philosophy of the eastern world. This gives us, who are in the eastern world, encouragement to value our own culture. From the interviews with successful pianists, we notice that the ideas of reciprocation between musical growth and personal growth and taking piano playing as a venue for self-expression emphasize the importance of self-evaluation. The purpose of this study is to bring attention to the importance of self-awareness and self-evaluation of young pianists in Taiwan. By awakening that importance, Taiwanese music education can expect a more promising future.

Facing the unsettled situations in Taiwanese music education, the researcher believes that we are not lacking knowledge of the purposes and functions of music

education; instead we have an urge to find practical and approachable ways to deal with the problems. Since piano music is a treasure from the western world and its growth in Taiwan has tangled with political, historical and cultural issues in Taiwan, it is and will be an ongoing process to find the place for piano music in Taiwanese culture. Looking at the patterns from the past, we can see we have tended to follow or copy the methods of teaching piano from other countries. Though making some necessary adjustment according the need from the society, we seem to have lacked a foresight about piano education in Taiwan. The researcher believes that a good educational system is one that builds on the base of its own culture before beginning to adopt any external influence. While Taiwanese piano educators are searching for a direction and position for piano music in Taiwan, beginning to examine the effect of previous piano education at the same time can be practical and helpful for piano educators in Taiwan. Understanding the college piano senior's perspectives about the past, present and future of their piano learning, which is the purpose of this study, can provide a practical angle to examine the piano education in Taiwan.

### CHAPTER III

#### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to examine the outcomes of Taiwanese piano education from the perspectives of college senior piano majors. Their views about piano playing can provide a valuable angle to investigate the outcome of Taiwanese piano education. A qualitative methodology is chosen for this study to serve this purpose.

##### Participants

The college senior piano majors' views about piano playing comprise not only their assessment of their piano playing and training, but also a reflection of themselves as musicians and intellectual persons. The information collected in this study bestows important messages in two ways: demonstrating the outcome of Taiwanese music education, especially focusing on piano education, and showing the influence on future piano education which these college piano seniors will practice in the near future.

The college years are the beginning of learning true independence for adolescents in Taiwan. One of the functions of college training is building students' ability to think critically. During their four-year college education, the students' decision-making ability develops. In general, students at this age have more mature personalities than before entering college. They possess a more well-rounded ability to reflect on their own views about piano learning. Though education reform has



been undertaken recently, for most of the students in Taiwan, entering college is still the only important goal that they strive for. For them, being able to enter college is one major way to demonstrate their ability, which also leads to their self-assurance. College is the first period of time for students to receive education without too many external expectations being imposed on them. Their evaluation of themselves starts to come from the other directions. They begin to build different goals for their musical learning.

After four years of professional musical training, students become more well-rounded musicians. Since piano majors devote most of their time to improving their piano playing, it is likely that they have certain expectations of themselves and have a serious attitude toward piano playing. Their views about their training in piano, including both before and after entering college, will provide a practical perspective to review Taiwanese professional piano education.

College senior piano majors who are also the products of Taiwanese music education will soon play influential roles in piano education, either as educators or as performers. Their understanding of music and the execution of piano technique will directly influence their students and audience. Understanding their views can bring forward valuable suggestions for the improvement of Taiwanese piano education. The integration of college professional training and a more full-fledged attitude about life helps college seniors perceive music with a more comprehensive understanding. Because of the maturity they possess, the responsibility they carry, and the

expectations they face, it is important to investigate their perspectives about their field.

The participants for this research are senior piano majors from four-year colleges in Taiwan. For the Music Gifted Program (MGP) students, college musical training is a continuation of the training in the MGP. For non-MGP students, college provides their first complete musical training. The MGP students and non-MGP students are from different musical environments but they share a similar musical environment in college. After being in the same musical environment for a period of time, the differences in musical ability between these two types of students gradually decrease.

#### Participants' Schools

In Taiwan, there are 16 colleges and universities within the college entrance system that have music departments — two normal universities, four regular universities, nine teachers' colleges, and one art college. Both the normal university and teachers' college are schools for training teachers in high, junior high and elementary schools. The art college concentrates on training students with specialties in the arts, which include music, fine arts, dance, drama, film etc.

The joint entrance exam scores used in this research were announced by the Joint Entrance Exam Board in 1996. The joint entrance exam in Taiwan is the nationwide exam that is held annually for those high school graduates who want to attend colleges or universities. Three schools were chosen for this study to provide

a variety of types of institutions and joint entrance exam scores. They are the National Cee-tou Normal University (NCNU)\*, the National Ken-ting University (NKU) and the National U-san Teachers College (NUTC). NCNU's average entrance exam score for piano majors in 1996 was within the high range. NKU's average exam score for piano majors in 1996 was within the low range. NUTC's average exam score for music majors in 1996 was within the medium range.

NCNU is a teacher university located in a large city in Taiwan. The music department of NCNU was established in 1994. Its objectives are to produce outstanding musical composers, performers and researchers and to cultivate well-rounded music teachers of junior high and high schools. Additionally it has a mid-term goal of improving the musical environment of the school and community by holding recitals, lectures and conferences and encouraging students and teachers to participate in musical activities, and a long-term plan of planning a new music building and a music graduate school for educating advanced musicians and for providing more opportunity for continuing education in southern Taiwan.

NKU is a national university, also located in a large city. The music department and music graduate school were established in 1989 and 1994 respectively. The main objective of NKU is to train and cultivate professional performers and researchers.

Despite the long history of NUTC, its music department was established only a decade ago (1992). The music graduate school was established in the fall of 2000.

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\* Pseudonyms are used for all the universities and colleges.

The objectives of the music department of NUTC are to cultivate future elementary school music teachers to be well-rounded teachers who have complete training and devoted spirit, further raising the musical level at elementary schools, and to cultivate students to become music educators and musicians with both local and worldwide vision.

Choosing of participants. In order to identify the different perspectives between the MGP students and non-MGP students, the participants of this research were chosen purposively from these two groups. The definition “MGP student” in this study is a student who attended the program for six or more years. Table One shows how many piano majors who are MGP graduates and non-MGP graduates at each university or college.

Table 1

Number of Senior Piano Majors by University and Type

Institutions	MGP graduates (Total/Chosen)	Non-MGP graduates (Total/Chosen)	Total piano majors (Total/Chosen)
National Cee-tou Normal University	4/2	2/2	6/4
National Keng-ting University	3/2	4/2	7/4
National U-san Teachers College	4/2	1/1	5/3

From the NCNU, two students were randomly chosen from the MGP group. Both of the non-MGP graduates were asked to participate so that there was an equal number

of students from each group. At the NKU, two students were randomly chosen from each group of graduates. From the NUTC, two students from the MGP group were randomly chosen. The non-MGP graduate was asked to participate.

### Description of the Participants

Pseudonyms were chosen by the participants to use in this report. Four participants from NKU engaged in this study: Jeff, Jenny, Snoopy, and Kellen. Jeff, who is from a town close to the eastern coast of Taiwan, was musically inspired by Richard Clayderman's music during his junior high school years. His love of pop music gradually turned to classical music after entering college, but he still kept a dream of becoming a superstar on the stage. He did not have any MGP training. During the interview, Jeff seemed to need more direct guidance when answering the questions. He tended to have some responses which were uncertain, conflicting and immature.

Jenny, who had the complete MGP training before college, strongly stated that she was not fond of piano playing at the beginning of the interview. She seemed to know what she really wanted to do for her future. She acted and spoke quite bluntly and did not hesitate to make extreme statements. Jenny enjoyed speaking out her on almost any subject that the researcher provided. Relationships with friends were very crucial for Jenny. They were mentioned constantly during the interview.

Snoopy seemed to have a very strong and conflicting personality. Her views about piano playing and about life were the most pessimistic and dark among all the

participants. According to her, she was a loner. She received complete MGP training before college. She tended to give contradictory answers about the same issues during the interview.

Kellen, who did not have any MGP training before college, once wanted to be a mathematics major. She enjoyed performing for people. It seemed that she enjoyed pop music, especially karaoke, more than classical music. Though she looked more reserved and obedient on the surface, she had her own opinions once she was provided the chance to express them.

At NCNU, four participants engaged in this study: Pierce, Jennifer, Catherine, and Cindy. Pierce's parents owned a music store. He was exposed to this musical environment early. Besides music, he was also fond of art. He did not take piano playing seriously until he decided to be a music major in college. In order to enable himself to become a music major in college more easily, he had violin as his major instrument in the entrance exam. After entering college, he switched back to piano, which he liked better. He had no MGP training. Pierce tended to give short answers during the interview and did not like to elaborate.

Jennifer, who had complete MGP training, was the most articulate and mature thinker of the participants. Having struggled with the decision to continue or discontinue piano playing during her junior high and high school years, she became more certain about what the role of piano playing was going to be in her life. During the interview, she expressed her views deliberately.

Catherine's fate of studying piano was related to fortune telling in her early childhood. Her mother was told by a fortuneteller that music would be a promising career for Catherine. She was in the MGP for six years. She tended to be more prudent and reserved in the interview. Her perceptions were more practical than the other participants.

Cindy seemed to have a contented mind. She seemed to be satisfied with where and what she was and would be. She had no difficulty expressing what she thought. According to her, the three years of MGP training in high school were a very positive experience for her piano learning.

At NUTC, three participants engaged in this study: Pinny, Amy and Katy. Pinny seemed to be quite obedient about her parents' decision for her to study piano. Her love of playing the piano grew immensely during her college years. She had no MGP training before college. Her responses about piano playing were all very certain and clear.

Amy seemed to be a confident person. She had received seven years of MGP training before entering college. Her experience of violin playing seemed to be more positive than her experience with piano playing. She tended to elaborate on her opinions quite a lot during the interview.

Katy was from the MGP as well. Her mother seemed to have a great influence on her way of studying music. Playing the piano was one of the most enjoyable things in her life. Her dream was to become a good piano teacher. She spoke in a soft but certain tone during the interview.

According to the researcher's own observation, the participants of NUTC were more contented with what they were and more certain about what they were going to be. The participants at NKU, on the other hand, had more diverse opinions during the interviews. Their responses showed uncertainty and doubt. They tended to complain and feel dissatisfied with their present situation more than the other participants at the other two schools. Compared with the participants at NKU and NUTC, the participants at NCNU seemed to be more moderate. They did not have as sharp reactions as those participants at NKU about their dissatisfaction. At the same time, they were not as contented and certain as NUTC's participants about their present situations and their futures.

#### Researcher's Background

In qualitative research, the researcher's background and knowledge about the study intervene in the formatting, proceeding and concluding of the study. The qualitative researcher is considered an important tool of the study. It is necessary for the researcher to provide his or her background information—in this case, the teaching and educational background and expectations and opinions about Taiwanese piano education—in order to offer more complete information about reasons for conducting this study and choosing certain aspects in this study.

Before entering college as a piano performance major, the only exposure to music for me was taking piano lessons and singing in choirs. The MGP was not available in my hometown. Four years of college were the beginning of my musical



training. It was also the first time I was surrounded by a classical-music environment. Under the encouragement of teachers in college, I came to America to pursue my graduate study in the field of piano pedagogy. After finishing the master's program, I went back to my hometown to teach. Ten years of teaching experience pushed me to look at music from a very different angle and helped me realize that teaching was truly the beginning of learning.

Through more than two decades of piano learning, I experienced different styles and approaches to piano playing from different teachers, which included both negative and positive experiences. I believe that a single piano lesson can make a student's life miserable, especially for one who takes piano playing seriously. The best experience that I have had comes when piano playing is a journey of self-discovery and self-awareness.

During my ten years of teaching, I taught in the MGP from the elementary level through the high school level. I also taught piano majors at the college level. In the MGP, I was involved with many intelligent students who had an abundance of potential, not limited just to the field of music. Under the high pressure, from both academic and music areas, most of the students struggled to get through every exam without really having any spare energy to enjoy learning or even their lives. I believe that ten years of MGP training are a crucial period of time for establishing a student's musical foundation, which includes good technical training and enjoyable musical experiences.

Students in college begin to experience musical learning without the previous externally imposed pressure. They learn, idealize, and gradually build up their own views about music. As a teacher, I think that four years of college are a critical time for educating good future musicians and music educators in Taiwan.

Based on my experiences, which include learning and teaching piano and living in the society of Taiwan, I found that music—western classical music—is taken mostly as a means of obtaining extrinsic success. For example, it is a tool for getting into a higher school, winning competitions, making money and even upgrading one's social status. At the opposite extreme, it is taken as a pure art form, which belongs only to a certain elite group of people and not to laymen. There are a lot of issues we need to deal with before incorporating western classical music into Taiwanese society, if we realize that the origin and the evolution of western classical music did not connect to an oriental culture directly. However, I deeply believe that it is inappropriate and unfortunate to treat western classical music merely as a material means to advance Taiwanese education and society.

#### Data.

Rationale. The purpose of this research is to examine the participants' perception and experience of piano playing. Qualitative research methods were chosen because of their humanistic nature. Qualitative research deals with participants' perspectives. According to Bodgan and Biklen: "*Meaning* is of essential concern to the qualitative approach. Researchers who use this approach are

interested in how different people make sense of their lives. In other words, qualitative researchers are concerned with what are called *participant perspectives*" (Bodgan & Biklen, 1998, p. 7). Qualitative research also allows the researcher to explore the topic in more depth. Creswell (1998) gave some compelling reasons to undertake qualitative research. First, the research question in qualitative research often starts with a *how* or a *what*, so that initial forays into the topic describe what is going on. Second, a qualitative study is chosen because the topic needs to be *explored*. Third, a qualitative study is used because of the need to present a *detailed view* of the topic (Creswell, 1998).

In qualitative research, there are four basic types of data sources: observation, interviews, documents and audio-visual material (Creswell, 1998). More than one type of data-collecting technique is usually used to validate the data. Triangulation is the term that some researchers use to convey the idea that establishing a fact requires more than one source of information. Just as a surveyor locates points on a map by triangulating several sites, so a qualitative researcher pinpoints the accuracy of conclusions drawn by triangulating several sources of data. According to Lecompte, Preissle, & Tesch, "Triangulation prevents the researcher from accepting too readily the validity of initial impressions; it enhances the scope, density, and clarity of constructs developed during the course of the investigation. It also assists in correcting biases that occur when the qualitative researcher is the only observer of the phenomenon under investigation" (1993, p. 48). For these reasons, several types of data were collected for this study.

Sources. The three data sources for this study were: individual in-depth interviews, a questionnaire, and group interviews. An important point in a perspective-seeking study is to describe the meaning of a small number of individuals who have experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 1998). In this study, the design of the questions in the individual interview and questionnaire let the participants reflect on their personal experience. The questions in the group interview focused on a general attitude with a bigger scope.

The individual in-depth interviews gathered more direct and personal information from the participants. They let the participants elaborate on their experience in a free manner. Since the purpose of this study was to further understand the participants' perceptions about piano playing, the individual in-depth interview was used as the primary tool of data collection. The questions in the individual interview were open-ended (See Appendix A for questions). The format of the interview was partially structured. Krathwohl's definition of partially structured interview was adopted in this study: "Area is chosen and formulated but order is up to interviewer and interviewer may add questions or modify them as deemed appropriate. Questions are open-ended, and responses are recorded nearly verbatim, possibly taped" (Krathwohl, 1993, p. 368).

Though both the face-to-face interview and written questionnaire have a common advantage, that the revelation of information is guided by the researcher, the individual interview allowed the researcher to obtain direct data through elicitation and personal interaction with the interviewee. However, due to the more reactive or

intrusive nature of the interview, the possibility exists for the respondents to supply false or misleading data, either deliberately or unconsciously. This disadvantage of individual interviews was ameliorated by other forms of data collection in this study (LeCompte et al., 1993), namely the group interview and questionnaire.

The written questionnaire (See Appendix B for questions), done without specifying participants' identities, was less intrusive. It also gave more privacy and time for the participants to reflect on the questions. In the questionnaire, the respondents could offer their own ideas about issues without interference from others. For those respondents who were prone to be affected by the investigator in the interview situation, the questionnaire could bring out more true reflections of their own opinions. The types of questions in the questionnaire included Likert scale, open-ended, and multiple-choice questions.

The group interview was partially structured and the questions were open-ended (See Appendix C for questions). As Bodgan & Biklen stated: "Group interviews are particularly useful if you are studying adolescents' perspectives on particular issues...young people are often stimulated to talk more expansively when others of their age join them" (Bodgan & Biklen, 1998, p. 100). In a group setting, the participants discover their own different levels of thinking by observing the others' thoughts. Especially for young people, the straightforward responses from the other participants encourage them to bring forward their ideas. The interaction among all the participants and the researcher induced more diverse thinking from the participants themselves. By discussing different opinions on the same issues in a

group setting, the participants could revisit their original opinions. The researcher gathered a more general perspective from the participants in the group interview.

Question development. The categories of survey questions in this study, which include questionnaire and interview questions, were formed by integrating interviews with famous pianists and books about piano playing. As described in the following sections, the researcher identified several important categories from interviews with successful pianists. These categories include identification of talent, environment for piano learning, early commitment to piano, influential people, feelings when performing, communication through playing, and devotion to practicing. For example, Zoltán Kocsis said, “They tell me my talent was discovered when I was three” (Mach, 1988, p. 159), while Garrick Ohlsson said, “I think in this profession one has to be gifted...the gifted person is the one totally committed to music, enlivened by music, and thoroughly able to communicate his or her excitement with music. The gifted person, in our field, must truly be immersed in the music” (Mach, 1988, p. 105). Stephen Hough identified both early commitment and influential people when he said, “[b]ut from the moment I started playing, I never thought of doing anything else....and he [Gordon Green] was one of the most marvelous influences in my life” (Mach, 1988, p. 130-131). Garrick Ohlsson exemplified a pianist’s devotion in practice:

In two hours (practicing) I can work through a lot internally, externally and be involved in music, and if I get that I’ve had my musical jollies, and by jollies I don’t mean superficial jollies at all; I mean, the profound pleasure of connection with this art form which has been such a big part of my life, and with my

participation in it and with an improvement of myself and with my probing into the nature of music and stuff (Mach, 1988p. 185).

Murray Perahia gave a defining example of feelings when performing:

Playing the piece in public brings me the opportunity to experience great compositions...many times under different conditions, and in different situations. This to me is extremely exciting and of utmost importance, because I can see a transformation take place (Mach, 1988, p. 215).

Paul Badura-Skoda described the environment for music that influenced him: "I think we all owe to Vienna this enormous musical culture, this musical tradition. One grows up really surrounded by music there" (Mach, 1988, p. 10).

Through the information gathered from the interviews with successful pianists about their views of piano playing, the researcher was convinced that it was important to identify the participants' reasons for choosing piano playing (why and how), their commitment in different stages, how they came to this commitment, and their own observations about their playing ability. Questions dealing with playing ability address categories identified in books written by experts on the important aspects of piano playing, including technique, interpretation, sight reading, memorization and performance.

The questions for all data sources were divided into four groups. The first group included questions about participants' reasons for playing piano. Specifically, questions address 'how' the participants began their piano learning, 'why' they keep on playing, and the participants' future goals of piano playing. The second group was about what piano playing had brought to the participants, including their positive and negative experiences of performing and practicing. The third group was about

the participants' approach to their lives as a musician. It includes their attitude about practicing, their regular musical activities and their experience of overcoming difficulties. The fourth group of questions asked participants to evaluate their own talent, their musical environment, their piano training, and their playing ability.

### Procedures.

Questionnaire translation and data-collecting practice. Since the study was about the perspectives of senior college piano students in Taiwan, the data-collection processes were conducted in Mandarin. The questionnaire was written in English and translated into Mandarin by the researcher. In order to prevent losing the accuracy of the language during translation, the researcher asked a native Mandarin-speaking friend, who received her doctoral degree in communication from the University of Oklahoma, to translate the questionnaire at the same time. Differences of translation between the researcher and the second translator were discussed until agreement was reached. The final version of the questionnaire in Mandarin then was used for the data-collection in Taiwan.

The researcher piloted the interview protocol before the actual data-collection began. One undergraduate Taiwanese student who was studying at the University of Oklahoma and two college piano majors in Taiwan were asked to answer the questionnaire and were interviewed by the researcher. The purpose of doing this was to insure that the questions were clearly presented and to allow the researcher to practice her skills of interviewing. After finishing the questionnaire, the participants



all agreed that the questions were clearly presented. During the pilot interview, the researcher practiced to become familiar with the interaction with the interviewees and to enhance the flow of the conversation. This practice helped the researcher to be prepared for the actual data-collection process.

Data-collecting process and data transcribing. Data collection for this research occurred in April 2000. Since it was during the end of the participants' college years, they were not around campus frequently. After receiving the lists of all senior piano students from each school, the researcher then began and continued to contact the potential participants individually until she got the agreement from the required number of participants for this study. It took much negotiation to set a time for all the participants for the first meeting at each school.

Since this study was volunteer work for the participants, they were not very enthusiastic about it at first. This attitude was fully expressed by having the researcher wait for more than a half hour for every one to show up for the first meeting at each school.

To establish rapport at the first meeting, the researcher spent time introducing herself, the study, why and how the research evolved, and how data-collection would take place. The researcher also guaranteed the confidentiality of participants in the study by using pseudonyms for every participant and their schools, and showed her appreciation to the participants. At the same time, the consent forms were given to the participants and were signed afterward.

The researcher spent three days at NKU. The questionnaire and one individual interview were finished on the first day. Three individual interviews continued on the second day. The group interview was conducted on the third day. At NCNU, two individual interviews were arranged after finishing the questionnaire on the first day. The group interview was conducted in the afternoon after finishing two individual interviews in the morning of the second day. Since all the participants at NUTC were doing student-teaching, data-collection could only be arranged in the evenings. The questionnaire and one individual interview were conducted on the first evening. Two other individual interviews and group interviews were finished late in the evening of the second day.

All the interviews and the completion of the questionnaire were held in classrooms and/or practice rooms, which provided privacy and prevented unnecessary disturbance. On average, the participants were able to finish the questionnaire within one hour. Each individual interview lasted approximately one hour. Each group interview lasted approximately one and a half to two hours at each school.

The individual interviews were partially structured. They were conducted in a conversational style. The researcher briefly read the answers from each participant's questionnaire before proceeding with the individual interview and began the conversation with the parts that needed further explanation from the participant. Based on possible probing questions, which were prepared beforehand, the researcher tried to create an atmosphere which allowed the participants to fully express their thoughts and feelings about different issues during the interviews. Depending on the

different personalities of the participants, the researcher encouraged and led the participants to focus on the issues pertinent to this study. Through answering all the questions, the participants were encouraged to revisit their thoughts about piano playing, which was beneficial to both the researcher and the participants. The researcher approached the interviewing based on this belief. In general, the participants seemed very sincere and open-minded during the individual interview. After the individual interviews, the participants became more familiar with this research and the process.

The goal of the group interviews was to collect data through vigorous interaction among the members in each group. However, most Taiwanese students are not used to openly expressing what they think in a group setting. If there is one person who is more willing to speak up, the rest of the students normally let this person be in charge of the conversation. Bearing this in mind, the researcher had to conduct the group interviews by distributing the interaction more evenly among the participants. At NKU, the students sometimes were not very focused on the issues important the researcher. Jenny tended to control the conversation. Jenny and Kellen had not talked with each other for some reason for a while. Kellen usually did not join the conversation if Jenny was in control. Snoopy was the quiet one. Sometimes, the researcher had to purposefully and skillfully ask for everyone's opinions instead of just listening to Jenny's speech. At NCNU, the interaction among the participants was more evenly distributed, except that Pierce needed to be encouraged to talk. This group could carry the conversation quite well by

themselves once the researcher initiated the topics. Everyone expressed their different opinions freely and the group interview proceeded quite smoothly. At NUTC, everyone acknowledged the other's opinions before expressing different ones. Maybe because these participants had received teaching training, they could express their thinking verbally with more ease. At the end of data collection at each school, the researcher concluded by expressing her appreciation to the participants and her expectations for this research in the future.

All the individual interviews and group interviews were audiotaped with the permission of the participants. After all the data was transcribed verbatim from the audiotapes, the researcher reviewed all the transcripts to insure fidelity with the tapes.

Data analysis and code development. The researcher randomly chose two individual interviews to begin the code development. The four categories used for developing the questions for collecting data were used as major categories in developing codes. Under these four categories there are sub-categories derived from the probing questions used in the individual interviews. The sub-categories were refined during the process of coding. The major categories and sub-categories are shown in Table 2 at the end of this chapter.

The preliminary codes were developed from the first two individual interview transcripts. Based on these codes, the researcher continued to review the rest of the individual and group interview transcripts and also the questionnaires under these major categories and sub-categories. During the reviewing process, some new codes emerged while other codes were deleted or refined.

In order to grasp the context as a whole, the researcher read through each transcript several times before beginning to analyze data. While reading repeatedly through the related questions asked by the researcher and answers by the participants in the transcripts, the researcher coded each paragraph or sentence. The codes are either words or simple sentences. Review of the transcripts continued until every piece of data in each transcript was designated a certain code or several codes. The developing codes from the individual interview transcripts was done as inclusively as possible. While developing codes inclusively, the researcher aggregated the codes which have similar attributes at the same time. Working like a detective, the researcher speculated and reached conclusion about each piece of data with codes, which were faithfully derived from the participants' words. This intellectual work is similar to our daily cognitive activities. As Lecompte, Preissle and Tesch states, "Data analysis depends on theorizing; it is the fundamental tool of any researcher... Many investigators have difficulty describing what they do when they are theorizing, but the intellectual tasks are similar to everyday cognitive activities. Formally, the tasks of theorizing are perceiving, comparing, contrasting, aggregating, ordering, establishing linkages and relationships, and speculating" (LeCompte et al., 1993, p. 239-240). Data treatment usually includes data description, data analysis and data interpretation. According to Wolcott, these three categories are not mutually exclusive at all. They are often combined or even used interchangeably. The process of dealing with data is dialectic instead of linear (Wolcott, 1994). The

“spiral analysis” offered by Creswell (1998, p. 143) was also used as a reference by the researcher.

Data authenticity, validity and reliability. In order to prevent corruption of the data by translating it into English, the transcripts were kept in Mandarin as the researcher analyzed them. The codes were translated into English for the convenience of the researcher’s major professors to review.

Validity and reliability are two common words used in the quantitative research to indicate that the research is accurate. In the field of qualitative research, different researchers use different approaches to prove that their work is creditable, accountable, reliable or understandable. In this study, several methods were adopted to verify its quality during the process of collecting and analyzing the data. The researcher had taught piano at the college level for ten years and had always been concerned about the issues of Taiwanese piano education. This teaching experience helped the researcher to interact with the participants more naturally and conduct the interviews more skillfully. Being born and raised in Taiwanese society, the researcher was shaped by the culture, which also made her reflect on some of the needs and problems of Taiwanese piano education with insight. In *Qualitative Data Analysis*, the authors state: “In qualitative research, issues of instrument validity and reliability ride largely on the skills of the researcher” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 38). Further, they list some markers of a good qualitative researcher-as-instrument: “1) some familiarity with the phenomenon and the setting under study; 2) strong conceptual interests; 3) a multidisciplinary approach, as opposed to a narrow

grounding or focus in a single discipline; and 4) Good ‘investigative’ skills, including doggedness, the ability to draw people out, and the ability to ward off premature closure” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 38).

Multiple data, referred to as *triangulation* by some researchers, was used in this research. These multiple sources led to a fuller understanding of the phenomena pertinent to this study. The data sources included in this study are individual interviews, questionnaire, and group interviews. The consistency among these three kinds of data were high after the researcher triangulated all the data.

During the process of analyzing data and developing codes, the researcher constantly discussed the codes with her major advisor. The researcher’s major advisor served as an external check which was one way, as stated by Creswell, that could be used to insure the reliability of a study (Creswell, 1998, p. 202).

A second coder was asked to audit the codes developed by the researcher. The researcher showed this person the codes and explained the meanings of the codes by giving examples derived from the transcripts. Then a transcript was used to show the second coder how to analyze the data by using the codes developed by the researcher. After the short training period, this trained coder was given two individual interview transcripts at a time, which were randomly chosen by the researcher each time. The trained coder used the researcher’s codes to label the transcripts. The disagreements were discussed between the researcher and the trained coder until the agreement (reliability) on two different transcripts reached over 90%. Miles and Huberman recommended using an outside coder to check the

reliability of codes developed by the researcher: “Check-coding not only aids definitional clarity but also is a good reliability check” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 64). Miles and Huberman also provide a formula to calculate the reliability:

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{\text{Number of agreements}}{\text{Total number of agreements + disagreements}}$$

In Summary, the participants were purposefully chosen in order to meet the needs of this study. Since this study adopted qualitative research methods, three data sources were used, questions in the questionnaire were mostly open-ended, and all the interviews were partially structured. The process of collecting data was carefully planned and executed in order to collect the data as inclusively as possible. Not only the validity and reliability of the study were insured during analysis of the data but also the language authenticity. The researcher believes that presenting as faithfully and precisely as possible the participants’ reactions and interactions is the foundation of understanding their perspectives



Table 2

Categories, subcategories, and codes

Category	Subcategory	Code
<i>I. Why do you play piano?</i>		
Influential persons and motivations at the beginning of piano playing.	Persons	Parents decided/expected, Mother's colleagues, Myself,
	Motivations	Can't recall, Siblings/relatives/other kids were taking lessons, It was fun/it seemed fun, Chance to get out of town,
Reasons for continuing piano playing.	Persons	Influential/supportive piano teachers, Family/parent expected/ supported /influenced/forced,
	Motivations	Had interest, Wanted to further understand good music, Supportive environment (friends), Wanted to get into/got into MGP or college, It was fun, Music was worth knowing for my whole life, No other options, Had talent, Wanted to be a piano teacher,
Reasons for entering college as music majors.		Inspired by music, Wanted/longed to be a piano major, The other majors were too difficult for me to get into college/not fun, Parents expectation/support/ encouragement/influence, Let me get into better college, Teacher's influence/support, Continuation from MGP, More familiar with music than the others,
Reasons for quitting piano playing, thinking about quitting piano playing, and continuing piano playing.	Quitting	Academic demands from school, Teacher's improper training, Did not get into MGP, Moving,

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Thinking about quitting	Failed in exam, Can't memorize my pieces, Can't deal with piano playing and academic pressure at the same time, Trying to figure out what music meant to me, Feeling inferiority,
Reasons for continuing	Music was something that can fulfill my life/I knew I still liked music, Did not want to give in, Mother insisted/influenced, Music was something I was more familiar with/I did not have any other talent except music, Had to wait until graduating from college, Gained confidence gradually,
Future goals.	Piano/music teacher, Go to music graduate school, Something not music related/exploring the other arts, Get graduated, Enrich my life with piano, Have more varieties in my life other than piano, Maintain my playing ability, Not sure, Find a job, I do not know, Learn more about piano playing and teaching,
Dreams.	Have solo pop concert, Release my own album, Be a good music teacher, Have music as my hobby instead of my major profession, Take a trip to Europe, Have a healthy life, Musical therapist, Piano professor, Own a music store, Go to graduate school,
Important persons or inspiration on the journey of learning of learning piano.	Piano teacher, Concert performer, Parents, Particular music,

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II. *What does piano playing mean and bring to you?*

Feelings and meanings of piano playing.	Feelings	Frustration/difficulty/hard work/ loneliness/isolation/dissatisfaction/ pressure, Frustration/dissatisfaction and satisfaction coexisted, Feeling of inferiority, Physical discomfort, Sense of accomplishment/self-fulfillment, Entertainment/fun/enjoyment,
	Meanings	Can't do what I want, Good performance, Spending a lot of money, Something I like (need) /keeps from boredom, Responsibility, Habit/routine, Confining (environment/future choice), Playing the piece/music I like, Communicate/move audience, Important tool of making money/good job/promising future, Expressing thoughts and emotions, Expanding life experience and imagination/life long subject/ self-enlightenment, An ability to have further study, Understanding music better, Enhanced social quality, Meet school requirements, Following imagination,
Meanings and feelings of performance.	Feelings	Nervous/unprepared/stressed/scared/frustrated/ blank/panicky, Sense of accomplishment/happiness/ fulfillment, Displeasure about been judged, Dislike,
	Meanings	Can't be perfect, Attention from others/showing off, Outcome of my practice, Doesn't really present what I think, Sharing/communicating music with the audience, I hope my playing can be accepted by others,

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	No	Do not explore more things other than music, Do not practice like crazy, Have not devoted my life totally to music, Lack pedagogy knowledge, Should be very knowledgeable in music,
Ways of dealing with difficulties and frustration.		Get stimulation from superior performance, Consult with teachers and friends, Let it be, Listen to CDs, Practice more, Deal with it by myself,
Reasons for not practicing enough.		Teaching is taking up time, Hanging out is more fun, Laziness, Cannot concentrate long enough, I do not have enough time, Feel annoyed/exhausted, Physically uncomfortable, I am not willing to,
Ways of pursuing future life as a musician.		Become a piano teacher, Open a music store, Go to graduate school, Continue to play, Piano will be a major part of my life,
<i>IV Self-evaluation</i>		
Evaluation of one's own piano training.	Overall	Teachers are not bad, Lack performing experience/training, Not enough training, compared with MGP students, Lack systematic technical training, Not easy to find a good teacher, Curricula design is not good enough. Lack integration, Not enough training, Exam/goal-oriented,

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Evaluation of playing ability.	Before entering college	<p>Not serious enough,  Improper, losing interest of playing,  Not establishing good foundation/playing limited repertoire/playing notes only, no interpretation/do not know right way of playing,  Joining MGP was good for me,  Gaining basic musical training,  Great influence on personality,  Teacher used to give specific instruction of practicing technique,</p>
	After entering college	<p>Learn more/more professional/more refined/  broader repertoire/more varieties in training,  Accumulated more performing experience,  Helped to establish views of life, and esthetic value,  Become more independent/improved,  Less exam-oriented,  Lack performing art class/pedagogy class/  piano literature class,</p>
		<p>OK/musicality is OK/listening ability is OK/  sight-reading is OK/have some talent,  After college, play better/more refined in performing,  Would play better, if it is the music I like,  Interpretation is not so bad,  Interpretation/performance/memorization ability is good,  Can't play what I think/want,  Low confidence,  Not good enough to be a performer,  Memorizing is slow,  Technique is my shortcoming,  More withdrawn on the stage,  Not talented,  Sight-reading is bad,  Inferior to MGP students,  Do not know enough repertoire,  Not rational enough,  Do not have pianist's hands,  Have no patience,  Being slow,  Personality is not suitable for piano playing,</p>

Evaluation of musical environment.	<p>Lack cultural atmosphere/concert and lecture,          Too isolated,          Not enough for my musical growth,          Too many distractions around me,          Not professional enough,          Too focused on the importance of technique,          Competitive, exam-oriented,          MGP system can't really identify students' ability,          School library does not provide enough information/performing environment is not good enough/teachers mostly only do their duty for school,          My classmates are not really into music/people around me are not very passionate about music/students do not practice as much as students of the other schools,          Since it is teacher's college: music training is not as much as in regular schools, too many non-music requirements taking up too much time,          Confined/not liberal enough, compared with other countries' environments,          It is OK for cultivating a music teacher, but not a real musician,          OK,          Do not have supportive environment at home.          Personal environment is OK/library is OK,          Helping me to get interested in piano playing more,          Spending a lot of money,</p>
Opinions about talent and hard work.	<p>Hard work is more important: if one wants to be a teacher,          90% of difficulties can be solved,          Talent is more important:          can save a lot of energy on hard work, if one wants to be a concert performer,          Rubinstein can play well without practicing,          My opinion changes constantly,          It depends on the age,          Both are very important,</p>

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

After analyzing and coding the transcripts of interviews and the questionnaire, the researcher started looking for the meanings of the data and the ways to interpret and present what was found in the study. Miles and Huberman (1994) listed a variety of strategies which can be used by a researcher to draw out and verify the conclusions for a study. The strategies used in this study included noting patterns and themes, seeing plausibility, counting, making contrasts and comparisons, subsuming particulars into the general, building a logical chain of evidence, and making conceptual and theoretical coherence.

The findings of this study are presented under the following four categories: I) Why and how the participants began and continued piano playing, and what the participants' future goals are; II) Meanings and feelings of piano playing, performing, and practicing for the participants, and the participants' reasons/motivations for performing and practicing; III) How the participants approached their lives as musicians; and IV) Participants' self-evaluation about their piano training, playing ability and musical environments.



I) Why and How the Participants Began and Continued Piano Playing, and What the Participants' Future Goals Are

Beginning and continuing piano playing. External influences, which were mainly from parents, were the major elements for the participants' beginning and continuing piano playing. Teachers, another external influence, began to play an influential role as the participants continued piano playing. Though the participants began and continued piano playing mainly due to external influences, most of the participants began to cultivate interest in piano playing at a certain point. Wanting to get into or already being in the MGP or college became the major motivations for the participants to continue their piano playing. At this time of the interviews, parents and teachers still played significant roles. Teachers' support and advice became almost as important as parents' as the participants continued piano playing. Cindy and Jeff talked about how they began and continued piano playing.

Cindy: "...Mother asked me if I wanted to learn piano. Then she found me a teacher. That was how I started....In junior high school years, considering the demand of the entrance exam of high school, I needed to decide if I wanted to quit piano playing or not. My piano teacher suggested to me to try the MGP in high school. So, I continued piano learning and prepared for entering the MGP in high school...It was because of her [the piano teacher] that I chose to join the MGP and become a music major" (Individual interview, p. 1, 14-18, p. 2, 1, 4/18/00).

Jeff: "Every family had their kids learn an instrument. My parents thought that was not a bad thing having children learn an extra skill, but they never asked me if I wanted to...I was forced to take piano lessons... It was because of Richard Clayderman's music that I began to have an interest in piano playing in junior high school years...Gradually, piano playing became something fun for me...I was totally against it at the very beginning" (Individual interview, p. 1, 14-30, p. 2, 1-6, p. 4, 3-13, 4/10/00).

Majoring in music in college. In this study, no clear pattern can be found in the participants' reasons for choosing music as their major in college. The reasons provided by the participants were: parents' and teachers' influences, a major in music being the best choice for getting into college, and the participant's personal decision. There were few participants who chose to be music majors because of their love of music.

At the current stage, almost half of the participants play piano because they choose or want to and almost half play piano solely under parents' or teachers' expectations or in combination with their own desire. Katy talked about how her mother influenced her about choosing a major.

Katy: "If my mother did not insist, I could have given up piano in junior high school. I could not take care of school work and piano at the same time—too much pressure. My mother told me that it was a pity to give up piano playing after so many years of learning. She thought I could

manage it and I should continue, and maybe I could be a music teacher in the future. From the discussion with my mother in junior high school, the decision was already made” (Individual interview, p. 1, 8-18, p. 3, 3, 4/24/00).

Quitting or continuing piano playing. Academic pressure from school was the common cause for the participants to quit or think about quitting piano playing. Some participants quit piano playing for a while and then resumed it. More than half of the participants thought about quitting but did not. There were external and internal pressures for those participants who thought about quitting. Academic pressure and failing to meet school requirements were two main external pressures. Trying to figure out what piano playing meant to them and feelings of inferiority were two major internal pressures. There were both active and passive reasons that they finally continued to play. The active reasons included realizing music was something they wanted to pursue and gradually gaining confidence in piano playing. The passive reasons included parental decision or influence and there being no better choice than staying in piano, which they were familiar with. Jennifer mentioned her struggle of searching for the meaning of piano playing to her. Snoopy, on the other hand, demonstrated a very passive reason for staying in the field of music.

Jennifer: “...So far, I thought that music was the only thing that I was good at.

I began to search for the meaning of music to me. If I feel suffering, why should I continue playing?...During the period of searching and adjusting, my grades dropped a lot, since I knew I was facing a crucial

issue, so it was ok. There have been a lot of adjustments and changes during these past six years in terms of my attitude toward piano playing. I chose music for myself. I am not doing it just to show people how well I can play. It is really a matter of enriching my life” (Individual interview, p. 1, 20, p. 3, 4, 4/17/00).

Snoopy: “I thought people like us, MGP students, had no other talent except playing piano. Well, that is what we are...Of course, I had thought about giving up, but I did not have another talent” (Individual interview, p. 2, 27, p. 12, 29, 4/12/00).

Future goals. Becoming a piano teacher and going to graduate school were the two first choices when the participants were asked about their future goals. All the participants agreed that teaching piano would be the best future career. But when they were further asked to supply the reasons, most of the reasons they gave tended to be passive, such as they had no other choice and music was the only thing they could do. The reasons for those participants who wanted to go to graduate school were diverse, but none of them was active. For example, they wanted to go to graduate school because everyone else did or because it was their parents’ arrangement.

Most of the participants’ dreams were music-related, such as becoming a music therapist or releasing a personal album. Among these dreams, having music as a hobby instead of an occupation was mentioned most. Cindy talked about how and why she chose piano teaching as her future goal.

Researcher: “Why do you want to be a piano teacher?”

Cindy "Because I think that is the only thing I can do."

R: "The only thing you can do?"

C: "I did think about doing something else besides music before entering the MGP. But after entering the MGP, it seemed to me that I could not be involved with so many other things any more. For instance, my friend is interested in photography and he wants to be a photographer of concert performances. I would like to learn taking picture, too. But I did not have the basic skill; it seems impossible for me to learn that now."

R: "It seems that your future goals are all very practically considered."

C: "Yes, you may say so."

R: "It is perfectly fine to set practical goals for yourself. You are positive about your choice. Are you?"

C: "Well, I think I will be a piano teacher, either teaching at school or home. Or ideally, I can do things I like during daytime, and teach students at night. At least, I need to be able to support myself."

C: "I have come such a long way. That is the way it has to be and will be. Though I would like to change my career, I was never involved in subjects other than music. What else I can do? Accounting? I know nothing about it! To be honest, I really do not know what else I can do [except music]"

R: "Are you saying that if you had another skill, you would change your profession?"

C: "Yes!" (Individual interview, p. 7, 11-16, P. 14, 15-16, p. 15, 20-21, 4/17/ 00).

Catherine also talked about her career choice.

Researcher: "Tell me, why did you make such a choice [be a music teacher]?"

Catherine: "Because I have learned music all my life. I think it is not easy for me to change to another profession."

R: "If you had a choice, would you still want to be a music teacher?"

C: "Maybe not!"

R: "What exactly do you want to do?"

C: "If I could choose, I would wish for a different career. Playing piano can be a hobby or something purely for fun, not necessary a way to make a living" (Individual interview, p. 4, 5-14, 4/18/00).

The major way that the participants provided for reaching their future goals of piano playing was further study. All the participants believed that piano playing would be part of their lives. More than half of the participants believed this because they thought their futures would be piano-related. Almost half of the participants would continue piano playing under any circumstance.

When the participants were asked about their future and their dreams, they expressed conflicts and struggles about what they could do, what they should do, and what they wanted to do. They thought that teaching piano would be a good career for them, but they still wished that piano playing could be just a hobby instead a career. Though most of the participants' dreams were music-related and most of them would like to continue piano playing, most of the participants still thought they had to stay with piano playing just because teaching piano would be the most possible

career. They pointed out that one major way to reach their future goal of piano playing was further study, possibly including graduate school. Although some want to go to graduate school, the reasons tended to be external—everyone did or parents expected it.

## II) Meanings and Feelings of Piano Playing, Performing, and Practicing to the Participants, and the Participants' Reasons/Motivations for Performing and Practicing

All the participants ranked piano playing as very important in their lives, but they did not offer very active reasons. Reasons they provided included piano playing as a routine or responsibility, meeting school requirements, and preparing for the future. The participants who took piano playing as something they needed or liked also mostly thought piano playing was a responsibility and had already become a routine or habit to them. Most of the participants' feelings about piano playing were not clearly distinguished between what they needed or liked and what they had to do. Pinny talked about how she liked and also felt responsible for piano playing.

Researcher: "Anyhow, you still like piano playing?"

Pinny: "Yes, I do."

R: "What does piano playing mean to you?"

P: "The meaning of piano playing? Hm...It is really hard to describe. I think it is something I need anyway."

R: "Suppose [piano playing] were taken away from your daily life. How would you feel?"

P: "I would feel funny."

R: "Feel funny?"

P: "Yeah, I would be questioned about not practicing, since I am music major."

R: "How would everyone know you are music major, if you didn't tell?"

P: "At least, I feel I am responsible for it."

R: "So you think it is your responsibility?"

P: "In a way, it is."

R: "Does this sense of responsibility mix with your fondness for it?"

P: "Yes."

R: "Which one is more, responsibility or fondness?"

P: "Fondness is more!" (Individual interview, p. 4, 7-28, 4/23/00).

Feelings about piano playing. There was no extremely positive or negative feeling about piano playing for the participants. The participants' positive feelings—fun, enjoyment and a sense of accomplishment—were accompanied by the negative feelings—frustration, difficulty, isolation, dissatisfaction, pressure and boredom. The majority of the participants felt a sense of enjoyment, satisfaction and responsibility about piano playing. All the participants felt fulfilled or very fulfilled about piano playing when they were asked to rank their fulfillment in the questionnaire. But, there was no obvious indication shown in the interview that the participants felt a strong sense of fulfillment about piano playing.

Meanings of piano playing. Piano playing had brought both material and spiritual advantages to the participants. All the participants acknowledged that



piano teaching would be a promising career for them. It would provide a good living and enhance their social status. The majority thought that piano playing could express their thoughts and feelings. Some of the participants thought that piano playing could expand their life experiences and their imagination and it also could be a means to self-enlightenment. The participants who thought that piano playing could bring them material advantages also mostly acknowledged the internal values of piano playing. The participants who took piano playing as something they had to do or a routine also felt the internal values of piano playing.

Both Amy and Katy acknowledged the advantages they had from piano playing.

Amy: "It [teaching piano] is an important tool for making money. Seriously, if I did not study piano, I do not think I could make it to college with another major...It also can serve as a way to express my emotions...and it can be entertaining for me and others; it is not bad at all. There was also a plus which I did not write in the questionnaire. Playing piano can be a good lure to attract people [a husband] in the society...It is embarrassing to admit it though" (Individual interview, p. 19, 18-30, 4/23/00).

Katy: "Playing piano has become a habit for me... After entering high school, I started to play more difficult pieces, which were quite challenging to me. That also brought me quite a sense of accomplishment...And it can relieve my emotions...It also gives me a better educational background,

which will be helpful for my future career” (Individual interview, p. 4, 15-22, p. 7, 6-9, 4/24/00).

When the participants were asked about the disadvantages of piano playing, they stressed the confined environment, the confined future and their becoming narrow-minded. Physical discomfort was also mentioned by several participants among the disadvantages of piano playing.

Performing. Less than half of the participants liked performing. Most of the participants either did not like performing or had an ambivalent attitude about it. The majority had experienced negative feelings in performing. They felt nervous, unprepared, stressed, scared, frustrated, blank, or panicky when performing. Besides these negative feelings, not being well-prepared, disliking being judged, and not having a suitable personality for performing were also given as reasons for not liking performing. For those participants who liked performing, a sense of enjoyment and happiness were what they felt in performing. They also got attention from others and were able to show off when performing. Showing off and feeling a sense of accomplishment or happiness were strong motivations for the participants who enjoyed performing. The participants who thought that performance meant communicating or sharing music with people did not necessarily enjoy performing. The participants who liked performing mostly had negative feelings about performing at the same time. Some of the participants liked performing despite their dislike of being judged for their performance. Kellen explained why she liked performing.

Kellen: “I have always liked performance, but I do not like playing for exams.

I feel that I am compared with the other people, which I do not like. I enjoyed playing for people when I was in high school because I could feel a great sense of accomplishment and happiness...But it was different after entering college. We are music majors. I cannot play whatever I want the way I could in high school. We have to play for a jury. There was pressure, which I do not like, to play for the jury...But I still enjoy getting attention from others by performing" (Individual interview, p. 1, 1-20, 4/12/00).

Every participant had a worst-performance experience but not necessarily a best-performance experience. Their worst experiences were mostly related to memory slips. The majority of the best performing experiences happened when the participants felt well-prepared. It seemed that all the participants had high expectations from themselves in performing. Several participants even said that their best performances had not happened yet.

No dominant motivation for performing for the participants could be found among the participants. The motivations were varied: meeting school requirements, presenting music to and sharing music with others, gaining a sense of completion or accomplishment, showing off, or accumulating experience that is necessary for a performer or simply that it was the purpose of practicing. There was not much difference in the motivation for performing between the participants who liked performing and those who did not. Pierce talked about why he thought performance is necessary and how he felt about performing.

Pierce: "It is necessary to perform... You need to present it in front of people besides practicing by yourself. At least, you would get the chance to let the other people evaluate your playing; otherwise your playing is not complete... After all, music is a form of art, which needs to be presented in front of people. Besides, performance also can push me to perfect my pieces... But I do not think I really need to do it, because I always feel nervous and unprepared... I know it is impossible to be perfect on the stage, but I always feel like I have a lump in my throat whenever I think about performance" (Individual interview, p. 8, 20-37, p. 9, 1-23, 4/18/00).

Practicing. Less than half of the participants said they liked practicing. More than half were either ambivalent or did not like practicing. The majority made both positive and negative statements about practicing. The positive feelings included a sense of fulfillment or accomplishment, fun, enjoyment and excitement; the negative feelings were frustration, annoyance, boredom, physical discomfort, being lazy, and not being able to concentrate.

The participants who liked practicing and those who were ambivalent mostly expressed both positive and negative feelings about practicing. Those who did not like practicing expressed only negative feelings. A sense of accomplishment and enjoyment was experienced by those who liked practicing but not by those who dislike practicing.

The participants were motivated to practice by both external pressures or requirements and internal needs or values. The external pressures or requirements included meeting school requirements, preparing for lessons or performances, long-term preparation for future career or study, and parents' expectations. The internal needs or values included wanting to play better, enjoying the fun of practicing, emotional relief, expressing varieties of feelings, discovering oneself through practicing, and having a routine in one's life.

The participants who liked practicing were mainly motivated by internal needs or values. Those who were ambivalent or did not like practicing were motivated mainly by external pressures or requirements.

Jeff talked about his ambivalent feelings about practicing.

Jeff: "I get bored if I need to drill on difficult spots so many times. It is so boring to do that...I feel isolated when practicing."

Researcher: "So, you do not like practicing. Do you?"

J: "Yes, I do like practicing, but not drilling on certain spots. It is so annoying and I have no patience."

J: "After entering college, it seemed that I practice mostly for preparing the exam. It became a routine, which I have to do everyday."

R: "How about before college?"

J: "I practiced totally because I liked it! If there is no exam, I can play whatever I like. Since there are exams [now], I have to do what the teacher tells me."

R: "What is the most important motivation for you to practice?"

J: "The fun of doing it" (Individual interview, p. 3, 12-15, p. 8, 32-34, p. 10, 15-20, p. 13, 13-14, 4/10/00).

Pinny's experience of practicing was very positive.

Pinny: "I like practicing... It is fun. It brings me so many varieties of feelings every time. I feel happy when I practice...It is the most pleasurable thing of my daily life" (Individual interview, p. 1, 20, p. 9, 13, p. 10, 25, 4/23/00).

Jenny talked about her experience and motivation in practicing.

Jenny: "In my freshman year, I seldom stepped into practicing room. The atmosphere there was weird. The only time I went was to practice for jury. I practice totally for meeting school requirements"

Researcher: "How about before entering college?"

J: "No particular feeling. It was a routine for me. I was not against it, but never thought about liking it or not."

R: "What is your motivation for practicing?"

J: "I guess I practice because of my mother. She has spent so much money on me. I should have practiced whenever I thought about her. But sometimes, I would forget..." (Individual interview, p. 3, 12, p. 4, 14, p. 6, 1, 4/11/00).

### III) How the Participants Approached Their Lives as Musicians

Life as a musician. When they were asked about their life as a musician, the majority of the participants did not have a positive answer. Most of the participants thought they were not living lives as musicians because they did not devote their lives totally to music and they did not practice hard enough. Kellen did not think she was having the life a musician should have.

Researcher: "Do you think that you are living a life as a musician?"

Kellen: "Not exactly!"

R: "Why do you say so?"

K: "A musician's life should just concentrate on practicing and reading books related to music, especially if one wants to be a performer. Now, I mostly practice for meeting school requirements. I am too lazy. I should have practiced more and read more books about music."

R: "Why are you not doing it?"

K: "I like having fun... shopping."

R: "Have you thought about changing or improving your musical life?"

K: "Yes, I tried once to buy a lot of classical CDs and made myself listen to them. It almost drove my roommates, including myself, crazy. Then we decided to switch back to pop music" (Individual interview, p. 4, 20-33, p. 10, 13-14, 4/12/00).

Not practicing enough. The majority of the participants did not think they practiced enough. Reasons for this were all personal: hanging out with friends,

being lazy, not being able to concentrate long enough, etc. Most of the reasons for not practicing enough that the participants provided were self-discipline related. Those specific reasons held by those participants from the teachers college and normal university were about school requirements of non-music courses and student teaching taking up too much of their time. Amy and students at NCNU (the normal university) complained about not having enough time for practicing because of the demands of non-music requirements from school.

Amy: "... We, music education students in this teachers college, have to take a lot of [non-music] requirements. We do not have the musical environment that the other regular universities have."

Researcher: "Are you saying you are not very devoted [to music]?"

A: "No, I am not. I have heard that it is very common for a music student in regular college to practice for a whole morning. It is impossible to do this in our department, because most of the students have to go to class and study, and they would like to hang out sometimes. I am lucky enough to be able to practice for one to two hours every day. It is even worse when we have to do student teaching or have exams" (Individual interview, p. 14, 20-22, 4/23/00)

Pierce: "Like us, students in the normal university never practiced enough during the first two college years."

Cindy: "Because our curriculum does not emphasize performance. We need to take a lot of pedagogical and educational courses at the same time"



(Group interview at NCNU, p. 17, 1-4, 4/18/00).

Jenny explained why she did not like practicing.

Jenny: "I am the kind of person with less discipline. I already talked about this with my piano teacher in my freshman year. I told her that I did not care about being the best, I just wanted to pass. She could not do anything about it. Mostly, I like to have fun, hanging out with friends. I do not like practicing. What is even worse is that most of my classmates do not practice as they should, which makes me feel that it does not matter too much that I do not practice. I know I am the one who is responsible for not practicing, not any one else, but..."

(Individual interview, p. 3, 12, 4/11/00).

Musical activities. Going to concerts and listening to music were the two musical activities most mentioned by the participants. But the participants did not particularly emphasize that the activities they did after school were related to their majors. They enjoyed dancing, KTV, and movies as much as most Taiwanese young people do. They did not mention any art-related activities that we might expect a musician would like to participate in.

Dealing with difficulties. There were three ways that the participants mostly used to deal with the difficulties of piano playing: consulting with teacher and friends, dealing with it by themselves, and practicing more. The teachers and friends were available when the participants needed them. At the same time, the participants

were learning to deal with their problems independently. Jennifer talked about how she usually solved her problems of piano playing.

Jennifer: “Usually I would consult with my piano teachers or try to figure out ways by myself. For some of the [technical] problems that needed to be solved immediately, I would go to teachers. Some of the long term problems might be a blind spot in my own thinking process or even related to my personality. That will take a longer time to resolve” (Individual interview, p. 8, 16, 4/17/00).

In summary, the participants had contradictory thoughts when they were asked about life as a musician. They did not think they had a musician’s life because they thought they did not practice and devote their lives to music enough. The reasons they offered for not practicing enough were ones that could be managed with adequate determination. There were many ways for a musician to enrich his or her musical life, such as attending art- or music-related activities. In this study, there was no other activity related to music or art mentioned by the participants except going to concerts and listening to music. It seemed that the participants were not enthusiastically searching for ways of enriching their musical lives.

#### IV) Participants’ Self-Evaluation of Their Piano Training, Talent, Playing Ability and Musical Environments

Overall training. The majority of the participants thought that they had not received complete piano training. They mostly complained of a lack of technical

training. Lacking performing and pedagogy training were also mentioned by several participants, yet the majority of the participants agreed that piano teachers in Taiwan were not bad.

Training before college. More than half of the participants, which included two MGP students and all the participants who had no MGP training, had negative impression about their piano training before college, because the training did not help them establish the required foundation of piano playing. Some participants, including most of the MGP students and one participant who had three years of MGP training, all agreed that the MGP helped them gain basic musical training. All the participants who had positive impressions about their training before college indicated that their positive experience was related to their piano teachers. Pinny mentioned her dissatisfaction with piano training before college.

Pinny: "Before entering college, it seemed that my playing was all about playing the right notes. Teachers used to give me the impression that that was what piano playing was about. Actually, I thought that was quite boring—just playing the right notes. And it is not so hard to get all the notes right. I think it is the interpretation that can carry you to the further depths of a piece, which is the hard part" (Individual interview, p. 7, 14, 4/23/00).

Snoopy talked about how piano teachers could influence her.

Snoopy: "I did not have any particular feeling about piano playing at the beginning. I just did what the adults told me to."

Researcher: “When did you begin to like piano playing?”

Snoopy: “After I entered junior high school. I switched to another piano teacher. That teacher spurred my interest in piano. The teacher began with fundamental technical training and helped me realize what musicality is. I was inspired to study piano music which I never listened to. I would go to buy recordings and books, and I compared the differences of playing among famous pianists.”

R: “How about after junior high school?”

S: “I changed to a different teacher again. I still practiced, but not as enthusiastically as I used to.”

R: “Why not?”

S: “It was the teacher... After entering college, I changed piano teachers twice. My practicing was not stable. Sometimes I would like to do it; sometimes I just did not want to touch the piano at all. And I am not even going to any concerts” (Individual interview, p. 3, 1-19, 4/12/00).

MGP training. All the participants agreed that there were advantages and disadvantages of MGP training. The advantages included receiving more systematic musical training, which could not be gained by just private learning. The disadvantages included being too goal-and exam-oriented, which made the environment very competitive, and therefore students easily became narrow-minded and lacking in social skills. Cindy and students at NKU (the National University) talked about their different experiences and opinions about MGP training.

Cindy: "I got into MGP in high school...There were a lot of my classmates who had been in MGP since their primary schools. It seemed like they were mostly tired of staying in the same environment and with the same teacher for so long. I think MGP training is necessary. It established my foundations of playing technique and also musical training, like aural training. I think it would be too late to start that basic training after entering college. So, my high school MGP training was really important and necessary for me" (Individual interview, p. 5, 6-16, 4/17/00).

Jeff: "I used to think it was good to be in MGP. Students in the program were better."

Snoopy: "I think people in MGP rarely spent time with people outside of the music field."

Jenny: "Yeah, we are isolated from the world. We are in Shangri-La. I liked it, though."

Snoopy: "But you get to know so few people."

Jeff: "I still think it would be good for me if I had had MGP training from my primary school years."

Snoopy: "Your playing technique would improve."

Kellen: "I think the training is more consistent [in MGP]—not like us, who study privately. The training we received was not as systematic as what you had in MGP."

Jenny: “There were some disadvantages about MGP. For example, the administrative system was too goal-oriented. The thing that really mattered to them was how many students could get into good colleges from their program.”

Jeff: “I think most of the girls in the MGP are quite stuck up. They know nothing but playing piano!” (Group interview at NKU, p. 16-18, 4/14/00).

College training. The majority of the participants had positive attitudes about their training in college. They gained more varied and professional training. They improved and became more independent in their thinking and practicing. Jennifer identified the difference after entering college.

Jennifer: “The difference of training between entering college and before entering college was that I got to do what I wanted to...It included what pieces I wanted to play, and how to practice. It all depends on yourself... It is not like the junior high school years when the teacher used to accompany me while I was practicing and tell me what to do, almost baby-sitting me. It is different now. I only see my piano teacher once a week. The teacher is playing a role as a consultant. It mostly depends on me to decide the process...” (Individual interview, p. 11, 11, 4/17/00).

Self-evaluation of talent. More than half of the participants thought they had some talent but not much. The majority of the limitations to their talent were those they had no control over—not having good pianist’s hands, being slow, having a

personality not suitable for piano playing, and not being well-trained—or those they thought they had no control over—being nervous in performing, lacking technique, and not being able to memorize well. Several participants mentioned limitations that could be controlled: not practicing enough and having no patience. Few participants had strong confidence in their talent.

All the participants could evaluate their playing ability quite explicitly, especially in terms of their shortcomings. They showed negative attitudes when evaluating their playing ability.

Hard work and talent. There were more participants, but still less than half, who thought that talent was more important than those who thought hard work was more important. Those participants who thought hard work was more important believed that through hard work one can solve most difficulties and reach beyond one's talent, and hard work was important if one wanted to be a teacher. The participants who took talent as more important believed that with talent one can save a lot of energy to reach one's potential, and talent was necessary for one who wanted to be a performer. Snoopy and Pierce expressed their different opinions about talent.

Snoopy: "Of course, talent is more important, though you still need some hard work. I think those people who are talented do not need to spend so much time practicing" (Individual interview, p. 7, 31, 4/12/00).

Pierce: "I think hard work is more important. At least ninety percent of problems would be solved, if one worked hard enough" (Individual interview, p. 11, 11-17, 4/18/00).

There was no clear correlation between the participants' attitudes about talent verses hard work and their evaluation of their own talent. The participants who thought that talent was more important did not necessarily rank their talent as high or low. The self-evaluation of talent of the participants who thought that hard work was more important was also distributed at different levels. More than one participant pointed out that talent was very important if one wanted to have a performing career, but it was not so necessary if one "just" wanted to be a music teacher. Catherine talked about her viewpoints about talent.

Researcher: "Which one is more important for a successful musician—talent or hard work?"

Catherine: "Both are needed."

R: "How do you think about your talent?"

C: "Me? I think I am not very talented, and I do not practice hard enough."

R: "What are you going to do with yourself?"

C: "Well, I can at least be a music teacher."

R: "Do you agree that people who want to be a teacher are inferior to those who want to be a performer?"

C: "I think performance skills of people majoring in education should be inferior to those majoring in performance."

R: "Really?"

C: "Yes, that is how I feel. But don't we say that if you want to teach piano well, you have to play well?"



R: "Yes, I agree. It seems that there is conflict in what you just said."

C: "But, why would people who are good at performing want to teach piano instead?"

R: "So, why do you believe that performers are superior to educators?"

C: "Maybe it is because I have heard a lot of famous pianists but not a lot of educators!" (Individual interview, p. 5, 24-32, p. 6, 1-18, 4/18/00).

Self-evaluation of playing ability. All the participants could evaluate their playing ability quite explicitly, especially their shortcomings. The majority of the participants had negative attitudes when evaluating playing ability. More obvious patterns could be identified in the participants' evaluations of their interpretative ability and technique. The majority of the participants had low confidence in their technique. Most of the participants either were positive or very positive about their interpretation ability. None of the participants had very strong confidence in their sight-reading ability and technique. Among the participants who had strong confidence in interpretation, more than half had low confidence in technique. Even the participants who evaluated their performance ability as high did not have confidence in their technique. Not having good technique concerned the majority of the participants very much.

There was no obvious pattern in the connection between the performance ability and interpretive ability, technique, sight-reading ability, or memorizing ability among those who had strong confidence in performing or low confidence in performing. The participants who had high confidence in their interpretative ability and low

confidence in their technique could feel either very confident or not confident about their performing ability. There were participants who had strong confidence in interpretative ability but low confidence in performance ability and vice versa. The participants who had strong confidence in performance were not necessarily good at memorizing.

Not every participant who liked performance ranked his or hers performing ability as high. All the participants were self-critical and lacked confidence when evaluating themselves. They all had high expectations of themselves.

Evaluation of environments. The participants all agreed that a good teacher and a good environment were two crucial elements for educating a good pianist. The majority of the participants were dissatisfied with their environments. There was a tendency toward low confidence in Taiwanese musical and educational environments and high admiration of cultural and education environment in the other countries, especially those in Europe. This was discussed in the group interviews at NUTC (the Teachers College) and NKU (the National University).

Amy: "As to the piano teaching in Taiwan, this is just my personal opinion. I always think it is not liberal enough... It seems that there is always a goal which has to be obtained in learning piano—for instance, reaching a certain level of playing or a entering a higher school. Otherwise, you are just wasting your time."

Pinny: "Yes, even for people like me, took piano privately before entering college. I used to practice a certain piece just to prepare for the college

entrance exam. To be honest, conquering a difficult piece for an exam does not mean you learn what you should have.”

Katy: “I feel that because of this pressure to get into a higher school, most of the parents and teachers tend to judge a student’s ability by grades or the school they got in. As we know, there are so many ways to determine a person’s ability. It is not right to judge a person’s ability by one exam, even if it is an important one.”

Pinny: “I don’t think that we have the environment to cultivate a musically gifted kid well.”

Amy: “Because they [the talented kids] still need to face the pressures to get into a higher school eventually.”

Katy: “Most of the teachers would encourage the talented students to go abroad. They are not encouraged to stay in Taiwan.”

Amy: “Because, if they stay, their talent will most likely be suppressed and drained away in the end”

(Group interview at NUTC, p. 1, 14-22, 4/24/00).

Jenny: “I think it is all about the cultural level in a society. For example, although my folks support me fully to be a classical music major, they usually cannot stand watching a concert program on PBS for more than five minutes. Usually, they switch to the other channel which has more entertaining shows.”

Jeff: “But I do not think that is the general situation now in Taiwan.”

Kellen: "I think we have improved."

Snoopy: "For people in Vienna or Russia, going to concerts is part of their life.

People here go to concerts to show that they have good artistic taste."

Researcher: "It sounds as if it is almost impossible to cultivate a musician or a pianist in Taiwan."

Snoopy: "Right, it is impossible. There are no musicians in Taiwan. They all went abroad. Like Yo-yo Ma."

Jeff: "Is it because of the pressure of getting into higher school? Or too much academic demand from school?"

Snoopy: "I think it is the [educational] system."

Jenny: "I think the educational system in Europe is more ideal. Students do not have to be scheduled to take an English test this week and a mathematics exam next week. And they are not required to take certain courses, [as we are here]."

Kellen: "The whole system needs to be changed." (Group interview at NKU, p. 6-8, 4/14/00).

Catherine criticized the musical learning environment in Taiwan.

Catherine: "The musical learning environment [in Taiwan], unlike the ones in other countries, is not on the right track. Students have to go to after-school intensive institutes for improving the subjects that are required in the entrance exam, such as music theory, harmony, etc. . .

It is too confined, not liberal enough” (Individual interview, p. 3, 4-6, 4/18/00).

The participants’ major complaints about the overall musical environment in Taiwan were not having enough cultural activities, being isolated or confined within the field of music, being narrow-minded, and being performance- or exam-oriented and being charged high lesson fees.

Students at NCNU (the Normal University) complained about high lesson fees.

Jennifer: “I have always wondered why we, music learners [in Taiwan], always have to spend so much money on learning music. I do not know how this high lesson-fee cycle started.”

Catherine: “Private lesson fee is too high.”

Jennifer: “If one already spends so much money on learning piano, it is almost impossible to ask him or her to charge only ten dollars a lesson in the future.”

Cindy: “The whole high lesson fee has become a vicious cycle!”

Jennifer: “It seems that there is a hidden power to sustain this high lesson-fee situation. Basically, we understand that we have to spend quite a lot money on purchasing an instrument. But I do not think that it is reasonable to ask us to pay so much for everything, including the lesson fee” (Group interview at NCNU, p. 11-12, 4/18/00)

The participants from both the normal university and the teachers college had common complaints: too many non-music requirements taking up much of their time

and not receiving as much musical training as the music students from regular universities. The participants at NKU (the national university) said that the music students at their school were not very interested or passionate about music.

The reasons that the participants gave about not being able to cultivate successful pianists in Taiwan were: 1) the average cultural level in Taiwan was not high enough; 2) the exam-oriented educational system suppressed the development of individuals, especially the talented ones; and 3) school alone could not provide complete training for a well-rounded musician.

#### MGP Students vs. Non-MGP Students

In general, there was no major difference in the feelings and perceptions of MGP students and non-MGP students in this study. However, there were some interesting viewpoints worth presenting. Besides sharing some common reasons for continuing piano learning and choosing piano as their major in college, the MGP students held another more passive reason—music was something with which they were very familiar. Some of the non-MGP participants, on the other hand, chose music because they were once inspired by music or longed for a musician's life. The participants who would prefer not to have careers in music or who actually will leave the field were all MGP students. Some of the non-MGP students felt inferior to those who had been in the MGP. These non-MGP students were also the few who chose music because of their love of it.

Most participants ranked their talent as mediocre. Interestingly, the only two participants who ranked their talent at an extreme level, one highest and one lowest, were MGP students.

### Summary

For the majority of the participants, external influences were the most important motivation to begin and continue their piano learning. Academic pressure from school was the main reason for those participants who quit or thought about quitting. Mostly passive reasons were offered for choosing the two foremost future careers—piano teacher and graduate school.

Participants' feelings about piano playing were mostly ambivalent and uncertain, though the majority of them acknowledged both spiritual and material advantages from piano playing. There were more participants who disliked or had ambivalent attitudes about performing and practicing than those who liked performing and practicing. The motivations for performing and practicing to them were both external and internal.

The majority of the participants did not think they were living lives as musicians, because they thought they did not devote their lives totally to music and did not practice hard enough. The reasons that the participants offered for not practicing enough were mostly self-discipline related, which were under their control. Except for going to concerts and listening to music, it seemed that the participants did not actively participate in art-related activities.

A majority of the participants did not think they received a complete piano training. Lacking good technique was a main concern of most of the participants. Yet a majority of the participants said they were satisfied with their training in college and acknowledged the importance of pre-college training.

The majority of the participants had some confidence about their talent. There were more negative evaluations than positive evaluations about their playing abilities. They were not confident with their technique and sight-reading abilities but quite confident about their interpretative ability. All the participants showed no faith in the cultural and educational environment in Taiwan. They thought that there was little chance to educate a well-rounded musician in Taiwan. The isolated musical training environment, exam-oriented educational system and low cultural level were the issues mostly criticized by the participants.



## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS

Music has been taken as a form of beauty or a path to reach truth, goodness and beauty since ancient times, both in the western and eastern worlds. The philosophers, literary men and educators, in both eastern and western worlds praise its functions from different perspectives. Their experiences lead us, especially musicians and music educators, to pursue those sublime goals devotedly. Because of this belief in music and our high expectation for music education, Taiwanese piano educators must confront important issues about the reality of piano teaching in Taiwan. Through this study, I hope to uncover some of the real needs of piano learners, and initiate a search for better approaches to piano teaching in Taiwan. In order to capture the delicate and varied nature of music and the people who practice it, a qualitative methodology was adopted to serve the need of this study.

#### Interrelationship

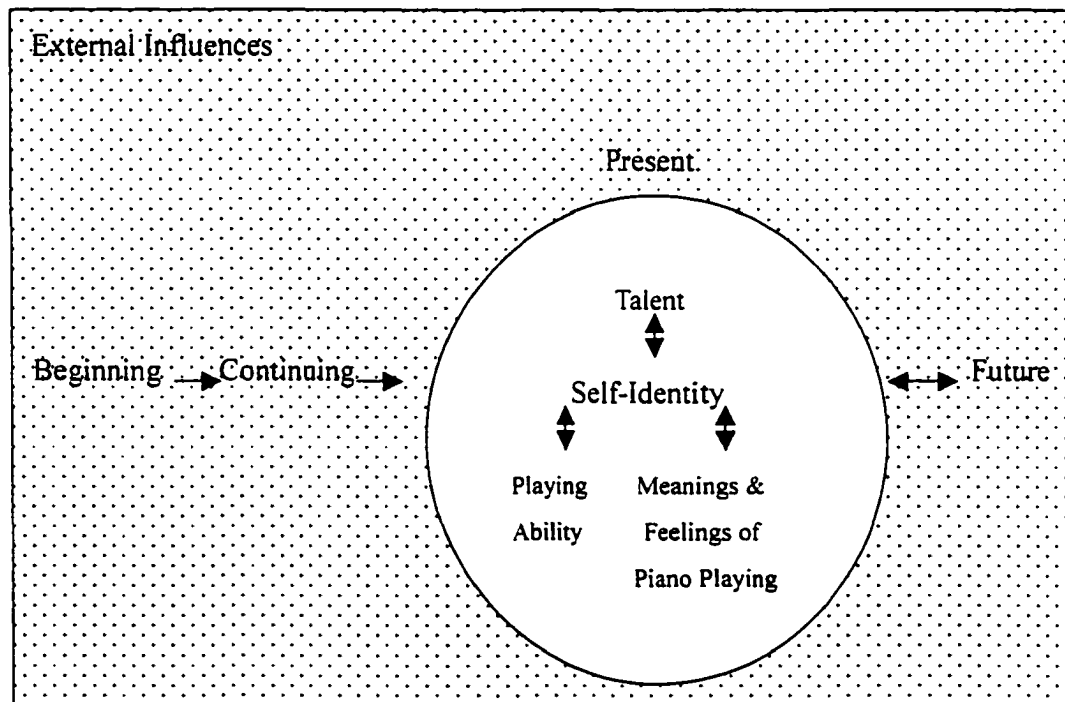
There are many interrelationships among the four categories of findings: I) Why and how the participants began and continued piano playing, and what the participants' future goals are; II) Meanings and feelings of piano playing, performing, and practicing for the participants, and the participants' reasons/motivations for performing and practicing; III) How the participants approached their lives as musicians; and IV) Participants' self-evaluation about their piano training, playing

ability and musical environments. These interrelationships address the ongoing process of forming and educating a musician and the interaction between the perception of a musician himself and the music he practices.

For the participants, what they are at their current stage is the accumulation of how and why they began and continued piano playing. Who they are right now influences their future decisions. How they view their future also affects who they are right now. Their self-identity as musicians affects how they evaluate their playing ability and their talent as well as their feelings about piano playing and what it means to them. Their talent, playing ability and feelings about piano playing and what it means to them also influence their self-identity as musicians. The formation and the development of the participants as a musician was, is and will be affected by external influences, which include the people with whom they interact and their environment. Figure 1 shows the interrelationship.

Figure 1

The Interrelationship of the Participants' Beginning, Continuing Piano Playing, Self-Identity, Feelings and Meanings of Piano Playing, Self-Evaluation and Choosing of Future



### Why Piano Playing

In this study, I found that the influences of other people (parents, teachers) and external considerations (getting into a higher school, no other choice) dominated their decision to begin and continue piano playing and their choice of their college major and future career. The participants' internal needs from piano playing seemingly did not play an important role when they made those important decisions. It seems that there was a lack of self-initiation when they made important choices about their piano playing, and also a lack of internalization of the intrinsic values of piano playing.

The participants' passive attitude when choosing their futures as piano teachers could result from this non-self-initiation and lack of an internalized learning process. This passive attitude may also affect their satisfaction with the piano teaching career most of them will have.

Parents and the examination system. Like other Taiwanese college students (Wen 1997), the participants were highly influenced by their parents and the joint entrance examination system. There were not many options for the participants to choose except getting through the joint exam system, if they wanted to have a higher education. Both their academic and their musical training were geared toward this examination system.

Parents played an influential role on the participants' beginning and continuing piano playing, as well as choosing their college major. Parents' involvement probably gave the participants important support at an early age, according to Davison, Howe and Sloboda's study (1996). But, for the majority of the participants, it seems that there was a lack of any internalization process. Kemp (1997) emphasizes that this is a process needed for educating musicians during their piano learning. The participants were seemingly most concerned about getting into a higher school and then meeting school requirements. Their struggle was mostly about surviving under the examination system instead of making the personal commitment to piano that most accomplished pianists have.

With this examination-oriented training and the influence of parents, it seems that the participants were not allowed or encouraged to initiate any decisions or to

internalize musical meanings for themselves. It is possible that after trying to manage those external pressure and requirements, there was not much energy left for the participants to take care of their internal needs.

Commitment. The participants' reasons for entering the music profession seem very different from those of most accomplished pianists. For accomplished pianists, the commitment to piano is strongly self-initiated. They choose to commit to it based on the intrinsic values they found in piano playing. In this study, the majority of the participants passively committed to the piano profession. Their choice of continuing piano playing, being a music major and being a piano teacher depended mostly on practical consideration of circumstance or parental influence. It seems that most of the participants had to make those choices instead of those that they wanted to make. The participants' passive attitudes toward piano playing and a piano teaching career do not indicate a strong commitment to the piano profession.

Intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. All the participants agreed that teaching piano would be the best future career, and they all acknowledged the spiritual and material advantages of piano playing. Similar to the other Taiwanese college students' views about job values, choosing majors, and careers (Feng, 1994; Li, 1989; Wu, 1997), the participants cared about both intrinsic and extrinsic elements when considering their future career. However, the reasons that the participants offered for choosing piano teaching career were mostly passive—they had no other choice. This passive attitude probably will affect their future job satisfaction. According to Chong's study (1992), the job satisfaction of performance graduates relies mostly on intrinsic

values. Chong also strongly suggested that music students should only go into music because their love of it and that they should make a strong commitment to it. Accomplished pianists identify their love of piano and their self-directed commitment to it. In this study, it seems that the participants were more certain about the extrinsic values of piano playing than intrinsic values. The intrinsic values were not taken as major reasons for the participants when continuing piano playing and choosing their college major and a piano-teaching career.

Suggestions. As one of the participants said, she would prefer to have piano playing as a hobby instead of a profession, if she could choose. There will be a hidden crisis in Taiwanese piano education if piano students who are also promising piano teachers don't choose this profession for its intrinsic values. In order to prevent this crisis and, instead, cultivate devoted musicians in the piano field, piano educators and parents should help students experience the intrinsic values of music and internalize the values for themselves. If they could establish their own views about piano playing, they might develop their own commitment to music. The adults in a student's life can support and encourage but not decide the development of a musician. The commitment to this profession ought to be initiated by the piano students themselves. Taiwanese piano education should gear itself toward providing students ample time and space to develop some personal autonomy in piano learning. More truly committed musicians could then be expected in the Taiwanese piano profession.

Further studies. Since Taiwanese parents play important roles in educating musicians, further studies need to be done on their influence on their children's musical learning and the children's views on parental influence. Studies about how and when music students internalize their musical values are needed. More studies about the piano profession are also needed to provide promising piano teachers a clear vision of the profession.

### Meanings and Feelings of Piano Playing

Meanings. The participants had a practical perspective when evaluating the meanings of piano playing to them. This attitude may have resulted from influential external elements—the exam system and parents. They acknowledged that piano playing was important in their lives, because it was a responsibility to them and they had to meet school requirements or prepare for their future. The majority of the participants tended to be more certain about the extrinsic advantages of piano playing than the intrinsic ones.

It seems that there is a distance between the meanings of piano playing to the participants and the intended purpose of music education. Music education has emphasized the intrinsic qualities of music study: molding emotion, accomplishing a personality, refining a sense of humanness, helping self-growth and self-development (Aristotle B.C. 384-322; Confucius B.C. 551-479; Elliott, 1995; Reimer 1970,). An important meaning of piano playing for accomplished pianists is that it helps their self-growth and self-development. In order to shorten the distance between the

students and the intended purpose of music education, piano students should acknowledge the essential meanings of music instead of limiting themselves only to external requirements and extrinsic values. Piano educators and parents need to provide a musical environment and establish a learning process which will help students appreciate and focus more on the real intrinsic values of music.

Feelings. The participants generally did not show extreme feelings about piano playing. It was possible that they held a reserved attitude when evaluating their feelings or that they were uncertain about their feelings. Many of them seemed to be ambivalent about piano playing. For accomplished pianists, experiencing difficulties before really gaining enjoyment from music is almost unavoidable. For them, going through struggles and conquering obstacles are necessary to get the ultimate reward from piano playing. It is those values that sustain them in their piano profession. Elliott (1995) encouraged optimal experience, which is also pursuing enjoyment. But it is not merely a pleasure; it is an enjoyment after going through a challenge.

For piano learners, it is important to differentiate between mere pleasure and real enjoyment, as explained by Elliott, and strive for real enjoyment during the learning process. Piano educators need to understand and acknowledge piano students' feelings, both positive and negative; they need to help them understand that there are challenges to go through before realizing real enjoyment from piano playing. Piano students need to be encouraged to have positive feelings during the process of piano learning.



Further studies. Further studies about intrinsic and extrinsic values of piano learners would be useful. A comparison between piano learners' and piano teachers' views about the intrinsic and extrinsic values of piano playing could provide a better picture for piano educators. More research into piano students' feelings about piano playing would be valuable.

#### Attitude toward Performance and Practice

This study found that there were more participants who disliked or had ambivalent attitudes about performing and practicing than those who liked performing and practicing. This finding should seriously concern Taiwanese piano educators, since all the participants are piano performance majors who had received intensive piano training and will be expected to play important roles in the piano field.

In terms of performance, there was no difference in motivation between those who liked performing and those who did not or had an ambivalent attitude. Their motivations could be either external requirements or their internal needs. In terms of practicing, the motivations of those who liked practicing were more internal—enjoyment and emotional relief. The motivations for those who disliked or had ambivalent attitudes about practicing were more passive—meeting requirements or responsibility.

In the literature on musical playing, the coalescence and reciprocity of musical growth and personal growth is emphasized. Pedagogues point out a broad

perspective for music playing. Elliott's (1995) praxial philosophy of music education points out an ultimate goal for instrumental players to pursue: having self-growth, self-knowledge and enjoyment in music making. The optimal experience "flow" can be gained from music making, which includes both performing and practicing. The experiences accomplished pianists gain from piano playing are self-awareness, self-growth and enjoyment. The skills discussed in the *Inner Game of Music* (1986) help people explore their potential through performance. Bernstein (1981) emphasizes the importance of practicing, which is to help one's self-integration. Bruser (1997) stresses that the purpose of practicing is to free one's physical and emotional tension and develop one's innate musical talent.

It is possible that the participants, especially those who did not like performance and practice, could not enjoy performance and practice as much as they should because they lacked experiences in connecting the broader meanings of performance and practice with their actual experience. All the participants had experienced negative feelings in performance and practice. However, those who liked performance and practice also had positive feelings which exceeded the negatives ones. These positive experiences were crucial to their fondness for performance and practice

Piano students' attitude toward performance and practice is a gradual accumulation through educational process, in which schools and teachers play very important roles. In this study, the external requirements and pressure were the important motivations for the participants to perform and practice. The exam and

competition systems in Taiwan need to be geared toward providing students positive experiences and helping them establish a broader perspective about performance and practice. Parents and teachers have to encourage and guide students to make music a means to reach their potential and help their personal growth. Performing is not just pursuing perfection or a high score; practicing is not just drilling one's technical skills. They are the processes of creating optimal experience and exploring and developing one's potential.

Further Studies. The approaches of performance and practice which are crucial to piano players and the negative and the ambivalent attitudes about them found in this study both urge the need to have further studies to understand how Taiwanese piano students practice and how they prepare for performance. Studies of the methods, philosophies and strategies that Taiwanese piano teachers use to help students' performance and practice will also be helpful for these important issues in the piano field.

#### Life as a Musician

After graduating from college, the participants in this study will be identified as professionally trained musicians. Unfortunately, in this study we found that their self-identity as musician was not congruent with this perception from others. Most of the participants did not think they were living as musicians. They thought they did not devote their lives to music enough. Not practicing enough was one important reason that they provided. Interestingly, reasons that were offered for not

practicing were self-discipline related, which could be improved if the participants were more determined. In this study, we also found no particular indication that the participants were actively involved in arts-related after-school activities. It seems that they were not enthusiastically searching for ways to enrich their musical lives, though they felt guilty about not devoting their lives totally to music.

An obvious disconnection was found in this study between the participants' actual living style and the life they thought they should have as musicians. Several possibilities could explain this lack of connection. They may have an ideal image of musicians, which is impractical and unapproachable for them. It is possible that they do not really want to or are not capable of pursuing such a musician's life. There might also be other difficulties that they have encountered in pursuing their musical life.

The participants' image of themselves as musicians and their actual lives need to be connected. Elliott's (1995) four-dimensional "musicing" philosophy points out that without the dialectical relationship between the music doer and his contextual surroundings the "musicing" is not complete. Ristad's (1982) holistic approach of embracing music in one's life emphasizes the importance of connection between music and musician's lives. Murray Perahia (pianist) said that his musical growth and personal growth are inseparable. Garrick Ohlsson (pianist) said that his profound pleasure was the connection between his life and music.

It is crucial for piano students to have an assured image of themselves as musicians. In order to have that assuredness, they need to figure out what they

really want to pursue and set practical goals and plans to actualize that. Taiwanese piano educators and parents need to recognize the importance of the growth of autonomy during the learning process and help students to search out their own musical values. Then they can help students actualize those beliefs in their real lives.

Piano students should be encouraged as early as possible to find a practical way to fuse their piano learning with their lives. Taiwanese piano education should emphasize helping students recognize their particular talents and guide them to establish their own models instead of imposing some impractical pianist image on them. Piano teachers are very significant musical role models to their students, because they have practiced western music in the Taiwanese cultural environment for a longer period of time than their students. They have more direct, though maybe not obviously recognized, influence on their students' views of their musical lives and futures than other, perhaps more famous musicians.

Because of the remoteness of time and space from western classical music, Taiwanese western classical musicians have to confront complicated issues. Reimer's (1970) philosophy—that a good work of art can transcend the moment of its creation and is relevant to human experience in general—applies also human cultures, and thus offer encouragement for Taiwanese western classical musicians. It is possible for piano learners in Taiwan to actualize their beliefs about music in their lives. However, extra effort and well-grounded beliefs are necessary for Taiwanese piano educators and piano students in Taiwan to find success.

Further studies. Since self-identity as a musician is important in educating a musician, it would be helpful to have further studies about a music student's sense of identity at different levels of study, in order to provide Taiwanese piano educators with insights that can help their students establish a more positive image of themselves. Studies on piano teachers' influences on their student's self-identity as musicians could contribute valuable information for educating future musicians in Taiwan.

### Evaluation

Talent. The majority of the participants thought that they had ordinary talent. Talent is generally taken as a more crucial requirement in the music profession than in other professions. Some participants in this study even suggested that talent is more necessary for a person who wants to be a piano performer than a person who wants to be a piano teacher. In this circumstance, students who doubt their talent and passively choose teaching career will hardly become devoted teachers. It is definitely important for piano students to recognize their talent before pursuing their musical careers. But if students have an absolute standard of talent, based only on famous musicians and pianists, their enjoyment of music will be reduced by their trying to reach that standard without discovering their own merits first.

What we need to learn most from famous pianists, who are recognized as highly talented people, is not about their astonishing playing ability, but about their attitude toward their own talent and the approaches they adopt to compensate for their

deficiencies. Their attitude toward talent and musical growth are more important for piano learners than just their talent alone. Taiwanese piano educators ought to focus on helping piano students establish a positive attitude toward their talents. Thus, we would have more self-assured piano learners, no matter what future careers they choose for themselves.

Playing ability. A critical attitude was shown when the participants were asked to evaluate their playing ability. They had more negative evaluations of their playing ability than positive ones. Their high ideals could come from themselves or the influence of others—school and parents. They had low confidence in technique, but high evaluations of their interpretative ability. This conflict could easily result in frustration in piano playing, especially if they had unreasonably high expectations for their playing.

The critical evaluations of their technique also possibly indicate that the participants rate technical ability as more important than other playing abilities. Though technique is a necessary and important tool to reach excellence in piano playing, it is never considered the final goal for accomplished pianists. Successful pianists use their astonishing technique to portray their musical ideas in their performance. Piano students should strive for that approach and not consider technique as an end in itself. And they should keep exploring different approaches in order to improve their playing and gain confidence about their playing ability. Piano competitions and piano examinations at schools should gear themselves toward encouraging students' overall musicality. Piano educators also need to help students

obtain more “optimal experience” from playing by giving them an appropriate and balanced repertoire.

Training. The majority of the participants thought their overall musical training was insufficient. They were satisfied with their college training but not necessary with their pre-college training. Those who were satisfied with their pre-college training were mostly MGP students. All the participants felt the need for thorough early musical training.

Many accomplished pianists begin their musical training at an early age. Making an early commitment to piano is not uncommon in this profession. Piano educators agree that the earlier piano training begins, the better for the student (Bastien 1988; Uszler, Gordon and Mach 1991). The popularity of early childhood methods supports this view.

Though both piano students and piano teachers in Taiwan recognize the importance of early musical training and most of the piano students do begin their musical training early, the Taiwanese education system and the joint entrance exam system do not really nurture their musical growth. Before entering college, music students have the same academic pressures as other students in addition to their musical training, which does not allow them enough time to concentrate on their musical studies or enough space for their musical growth. The education system needs to be modified so that it doesn't inhibit or delay students' musical growth.

The MGP was established to serve the purpose of early musical training for the music gifted students in Taiwan. All the participants in this study favored the



musical training in the MGP, but not its social environment, which is generally recognized as the major disadvantage of the program. This disadvantage has led many piano educators to question why it has lost the purpose of piano education—the well-rounded musician. Ways need to be found to improve this competitive and confined environment.

The participants at the teacher's college and the normal university complained about not having sufficient musical training and practicing time, because they were required to take too many non-music courses. It seems that these participants did not fully realize when choosing a college that the design of the teacher colleges and normal universities emphasizes more the education of a music teacher than a performer. Although under the competitive entrance exam system, being able to enter a college comes before anything else for the students, teachers and parents can still guide students to make appropriate choices for themselves by providing information about different types of schools in terms of possible future careers.

Environment. The majority of the participants were dissatisfied with their environment, both musical and cultural. They felt isolated and confined in their musical environment. They all showed admiration for cultural and musical environments in the other countries, especially those in Europe. They had low confidence in cultivating good musicianship in Taiwan. In one of the group interviews, the participants pointed out that classical piano music was, after all, a “foreign art.” This attitude emphasized the need to face complicated issues in incorporating a western art into Taiwanese culture. The participants complained

about the overall musical environment in Taiwan in terms of its lack of cultural activity, its being confined or isolated, its narrow-mindedness and its orientation toward performance and exams alone.

Western classical pianists, especially those who benefit from their cultural settings, all acknowledge the importance of their musical surroundings which nurture their musical growth. Extra effort is required for Taiwanese western-music learners, if they acknowledge the necessity of interaction between musicians and their contextual surroundings (Elliott 1995). It is true that Taiwanese culture does not support very strongly the music that classically trained piano students practice every day. The ground that is provided for Taiwanese classical music learners is limited and is not as fertile as the ground where western classical music originated. However, western classical music has indeed dominated Taiwanese music education for a long period of time. Many people still believe that any good music can be of ultimate value to people in diverse cultures.

More research is needed into the overall cultural and musical environment in Taiwan in order to sort out these complicated issues and provide suggestions. Though there are no easy solutions, piano students, especially those who will be in this profession, need to recognize the difficulties they are facing. Rather than complaining about the lack of a good musical environment in Taiwan, students and teachers can at least work to establish their own musical surroundings, which will require extra effort and patience. The process of music education could focus on guiding students to appreciate the true value of music, which is defined by Reimer

(1970) as a value which can transcend its time and refine one's "humanness".

The isolation that the participants felt in their musical environment could be due to the unfamiliarity that people generally have about the piano field. People in this field have not put enough effort into introducing the field to the general public. They tend to limit themselves within the field. In any case, people in the piano field are responsible for helping more people get familiar with piano music and the piano profession. By opening up and reaching outside of their field, their feelings of isolation might be reduced.

The piano students' dissatisfaction with the Taiwanese cultural and musical environment delivers a warning message to Taiwanese educators. As they try to figure out the reasons and search out strategies, music educators and parents can help students redirect their dissatisfaction toward a more positive attitude and work toward improving themselves instead of losing confidence.

Further studies. Since in this study we could not find an obvious correlation between the participants' evaluation of their performance ability and their other playing abilities, further studies about piano learners' perceptions of their performance are needed. A comparative study of piano students' self-evaluations of their talent and technique versus their teachers' evaluations could be very useful. Further studies also need to focus on how to improve the social environment of the MGP.

### Two Different Groups of Participants

There was a wide range of attitudes among the participants. Interestingly, two groups seemed to emerge at extremes. One group, which included Jenny and Snoopy, showed totally negative attitudes toward piano playing. The other group, which included Jennifer, Pinny and Katy, showed very positive attitudes toward piano playing. The participants from these two groups all began piano playing due to parental influence. Except for Pinny, all of the participants in these two groups went through the MGP program. The major difference between the two groups seems to be that the positive group went through a process of internalizing their own values of piano playing, while the negative group allowed external influences—parents, teachers and friends to totally control their musical learning. Lacking this crucial internalizing process, Jenny now had no interest in piano playing and could not wait to change her major. Snoopy, who thought piano playing was meaningless, still chose to stay in the piano field, because she thought she had no other option. Both Jenny and Snoopy had extremely negative attitudes about piano playing. The three students in the positive group felt more certain about the role of piano playing in their lives. Most of the participants who fall between these two groups had an uncertain attitude toward piano playing.

Educating musicians demands a lot of devotion from students, teachers and parents. This study shows that the outcome of this devotion may be admirable or regrettable. The extreme cases of this study reveal a tip of the iceberg of Taiwanese piano education, which delivers a message of hope and warning at the same time.

They also exemplify what Taiwanese piano education wants to both achieve and avoid.

### Limitations of the Study

Since the students, parents and teachers all play important roles in Taiwanese piano education the effect of piano education in Taiwan cannot be completed just examining it from student's perspectives. Further studies need to investigate parents' and teachers' perspectives about piano education in Taiwan. Piano playing is a long evolving process; in order to gather broader and more complete information of educating a pianist, further studies need to expand to the other levels of piano students. Since a small number of participants was used in this study for obtaining more in depth information, further studies need to expand the amount of participants in order to gather more generalizable information.

### Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of Taiwanese piano education by identifying the meanings of piano playing to college piano major seniors. Under the four research questions, the outcomes of this study are as follow: 1) External influences and elements mostly dominated the beginning and the process of the participants' piano learning. Reasons for choosing a piano teaching career or further study were mainly passive. 2) Most of the participants were ambivalent and uncertain about the meanings of piano playing and their feelings about it. There

were fewer participants who liked practicing and performing than those who did not or had an ambivalent attitude toward them. 3) The majority were not certain about their musical identities. There was conflict between the lives they were leading and their ideal of a musician's life. 4) There were more negative evaluations than positive evaluations about their playing ability. The majority of them did not express confidence with their overall musical training or satisfaction with their musical and cultural environments.

There were many interrelationships among the outcomes of this study. Since most of the participants had low confidence in their playing ability and their feelings about piano playing were ambivalent or uncertain, their self-identity as musicians was in doubt and their choice of future career was passive. They lacked self motivation at the beginning of piano study and when choosing a college major and a future career. They had not internalized their musical beliefs, actualized them in their performing and practicing, or connected them to their lives. This seems to have resulted in an uncertain musical identity, an ambivalent attitude about piano playing, and a passive attitude about the future.

Though the overall outcome of this study is not optimistic, the few participants in this study who presented a positive outlook can give Taiwanese piano educators hope and encouragement. Western music learners in Taiwan need to have a broad view of music, which can embrace and connect their surroundings with the art they pursue. While Taiwanese educators are searching for ways to improve the educational system, parents, teachers and the students themselves should try to

initiate small but positive changes in their teaching approach, thinking process, and interaction patterns. Parents and teachers have to limit their roles to guiding and assisting young musicians but not deciding for them. With help and guidance, young musicians can begin to define the values that music has for them, to enjoy the process of music making, and to have music as a means to reach the purpose of music education—a well-rounded personality.

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APPENDIX A

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW

### **Individual interview**

- Let's talk about your history of piano playing: Tell me about why and how you began, and about your piano training.

#### Possible probing questions.

1. How did persons or events encourage you to begin your piano learning?  
Did you want to study piano when you began piano lessons?
  2. Why did you choose piano as your major in college?  
Is it your personal decision? If not, who or what influenced you to make the choice?
  3. Who are the persons supporting your piano learning? How?
  4. Was there any important inspiration that you had on your journey of learning piano?  
(Persons, performance, event, etc.)
  5. Talk about your piano training before and after college.  
Do you think that you have received good piano training?  
Do you feel you have missed anything?
- What does piano playing mean to you?

#### Possible probing questions.

1. What would you tell your students or friends are the advantages and disadvantages of piano playing? How about your personal experience?
2. What does performance mean to you?

Why do you need to do it?

3. What does practicing mean to you? Why do you need to do it?
- How are you pursuing your life as a pianist right now?

Possible probing questions.

1. Do you think that you practice enough?

What helps you practice?

What keeps you from practicing?

How do you motivate yourself to practice?

2. How do you motivate yourself to perform?

3. Describe your experience participating in competitions.

Do you think competitions are a necessary and (good) experience for you?

4. How does one person devote himself to piano playing?

How about yourself?

5. How do you enrich your musical life? Musical activities (concerts, CDs, books, arts..), interactions with people.

- What do you think about your playing ability?

Possible probing questions.

1. Which is more important to become a pianist, talent or hard work? Why?

How about yourself?

2. Talk about your playing ability.

Technique, Interpretation, Sight Reading, Memorization, Performance.

3. Talk about your piano training before and after college.

Do you think that you have received good piano training?

Do you feel you have missed anything?

- How about your dreams about piano playing—what are they? Any turning points in them?

Possible probing questions.

1. What have been your dreams about piano playing?

Are your dreams still the same now?

2. How did you reach your dreams?

Do you think you are on your way to your dreams now?

How will you reach your dreams?

What do you still need to do to reach your dreams?

Will piano playing be part of your life? How?

3. Did you ever stray from your piano study?

How did you come back to it? Did any important person influence you?

4. Have you ever thought about quitting?

How did you get through it?

Why do you want to continue?

- Let's talk about your goals of your life. What goals do you have for yourself or your piano playing?

Possible probing questions.

1. What is the role of piano playing in your life now? Has it ever changed?

Why?

2. What are the priorities of your life now? Has piano playing always been your priority?

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE



## Questionnaire

- 1 How long have you played piano?
- 2 How did you start it? Did any person or event influenced you?
- 3 What is the major reason that you keep on playing piano?  
1) Personal choice. 2) Other people's expectation (parents, teachers, etc.). 3)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4 Name some influential persons or events on your journey of playing piano.  
How did they influence you?
- 5 What were your goals of piano playing before?
- 6 What are your goals of piano playing now? Short term and long term.
- 7 Describe some best and worst performance experiences.
- 8 Do you like performing? Why and why not?
- 9 Do you like practicing? Why and why not?
- 10 How does piano playing rank in value among all the other things you do in your life? Explain it.
- 11 What does piano playing bring to you.

	Low				High
Enjoyment	1	2	3	4	5
Satisfaction	1	2	3	4	5
Fulfillment	1	2	3	4	5
Frustration	1	2	3	4	5
Responsibility	1	2	3	4	5

12 Does piano playing serve as one of your ways to express yourself? Describe it.

13 How many hours do you practice per day?

14 How are you going to pursue your goals of piano playing?

15 Have you ever confronted with difficulties in your piano learning?

How did you resolve it?

16 What kind of musical activities do you usually do? Do you enjoy it?

Is your lifestyle close to a ideal pianist's lifestyle? What are you missing?

17 How would you rank your talent of piano playing?

Low

High

1    2    3    4    5

18 What are the limitations of your piano playing talent?

19 Rank your piano playing ability according to the following categories in order

from weakest to strongest.

Technique, Interpretation, Sight Reading, Memorization, Performance.

Weakest

Strongest

\_\_\_\_\_

20 When did you have your most complete piano training?

What is the difference in your piano training after you entered college?

Do you think that you are well-trained ?

APPENDIX C

GROUP INTERVIEW

## **Group Interview**

1. How does one become a good pianist?

How does one educate a good pianist? Talent, Commitment, Environment,  
Training.

2. Talk about Taiwanese Piano Education.

MGP program, Piano training in general.

How would you evaluate it?

3. Name advantages and disadvantages of being a musician in this society.

What is the future for a piano major?

4. How does one encourage people to study piano?

5. Why would you encourage people to study piano?

## APPENDIX D

### PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

### **Participant Consent Form**

#### **The Effect of Taiwanese Piano Education from the Perspectives of College Senior Piano Majors**

A doctoral dissertation being conducted under the auspices of the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus

Chin-wen Li, a doctoral student in the school of music at the University of Oklahoma, majors in Piano Pedagogy/Music Education, is conducting this study.

The Purpose of this study is to examine the effect of Taiwanese piano education from the perspectives of senior piano majors in college. If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to write answers to a questionnaire and attend an individual interview and a group interview. The questions that you will be asked are about your perception of piano playing. The individual interview and group interview will last approximately one and half hours and two hours respectively. The interviews will be audio taped under your permission. The recording will be transcribed. The tapes and transcriptions will be kept in locked file cabinets. Only the researcher and her advisors will have access to the tapes or transcriptions.

There are no potential risks for you of participating in this study. Through your participation, you will have a chance to reflect on what piano playing really means to you. You will also help us determine whether piano instruction in Taiwan is meeting the needs of the students.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may discontinue at any time. A pseudonym will be given to you so that your real name will not be disclosed. You will be given a copy of this consent form for your records.

If you have any question at any time, please contact Chin-wen Li at 2517968, 2213879, or faculty advisors Dr. Sara Beach 002-1-405-3251498, or Dr. Edward Gates 002-1-405-3253454. Questions regarding your rights as a research participant may be directed to the Office of Research Administration at 002-1-405-3254757

I hereby agree to participate in the above-described research. I understand my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_