

Lecture I: Who Am I?

At the root of artistic development is a true awareness of one's self. All the energy it takes to become a musician comes from inside, hence the very personal nature of the profession. Knowing where you came from, how got to where you are, and most importantly, why you want to be a musician are perhaps the most important intellectual and human assets that an aspiring musician can possess.

Below you will find two tables. The second is your own worksheet to fill out. Immediately below, as an example, I filled out one for myself so that you can see how I imagine this exercise to be useful.

Part I: Where do I come from?

Question	Answers	Opportunities/Actions
<p>What compels me to play music?</p> <p>This is a question that is probably good to ask and answer every day, especially when the going is tough. It can calm nerves before performance, influence decisions, change priorities, and even change our character, including our attitude towards what we do. We may find differing answers among us here, and our own answers may change from time to time. But in the end, it is the answer to this question which guides us and it is essentially why the industry and the public are interested in us.</p>	<p>I play music because I enjoy being a part of something I love. I play because I have convictions about how things should be played and sound. I can bring a lot of joy to people. It is immensely gratifying. I know that I am making a difference in the world and in peoples' lives.</p>	<p>I should make sure that this basic love of music comes through in everything I do, especially because I am so visible these days as an administrator and music business person. I should probably make people even more aware of how grateful I am. Perhaps wearing my passion for music on my sleeve more might lead to even more opportunities.</p>
<p>When and how did I decide to be a musician?</p> <p>Often there are precise moments or events that changed our lives. People love to hear about them. They are always wonderful stories worth remembering and sharing.</p>	<p>I never made a decision to become a musician; I always knew I would be one.</p>	<p>I should remember to pursue these stories among the musicians I present in order to bring them even closer to audiences. I also don't recall ever talking to anyone about this part of my life – maybe it would be of interest or worth some kind of comparative article.</p>
<p>Why do I want to be a musician?</p> <p>Many who know the music business is tough will be curious as to why you are being a musician. Your answers have to be stronger than the obstacles in front of you. Are you willing to go down with the ship?</p>	<p>In the first place, playing the cello has always been the thing I do best. It gave me a strong identity when I was a kid. I didn't know better about the difficulties of a career when I was 12. But now I want to be a musician because my opportunities are so wonderful and I can make such a difference.</p>	<p>From time to time I should make sure – because I'm so busy – that what I'm actually doing really lines up with why I'm doing it. And I should be forceful and vocal about the real reasons I'm a musician so that people don't just think it's a vanity exercise or to make money.</p>
<p>How did I get to where I am</p>	<p>I was a big fish in a small pond – New Jersey – but got out of there just in time to realize</p>	<p>I've just been through a big life-changing milestone, and yet I haven't even had much</p>

<p>now?</p> <p>Every musician has a different life story – they are some of the most fascinating I’ve ever heard. I wish I had time to hear every one of yours, but remember that while many of you play the same instruments and the same music, that your stories are all different. And they are worth sharing. People care about how you got where you are now, and maybe would be inspired to help you get to the next level.</p>	<p>that I wouldn’t necessarily win every competition and have people offering me concerts right and left. After one year of college I left and started freelancing in Philadelphia, but kept my job in the Colonial Symphony – tell story all the way to post - ESQ</p>	<p>chance to reflect on it. I do need to take the time to think more proactively about where I am going, because it’s all part of the same story. Where I’ve come from has a lot to do with my future, and I’d do best to view it as a kind of continuum.</p>
<p>Is my family musical?</p> <p>There are advantages from coming from both musical and non-musical families. If you are the family’s first musician, then all the more remarkable that you are a good player. If you came from a musical environment, then you have heritage and tradition that influenced you and that play a part in your musical personality. All interesting.</p>	<p>My parent’s story – was taught what my father hadn’t learned. Love and appreciate great jazz but can’t do it. Learned to love music instinctively like my parents.</p>	<p>I haven’t really paid much attention to my family’s musical history or tied it to my own in a visible way. I might take advantage of being in such a family instead of always focusing on myself as an individual.</p>
<p>What has been my musical education?</p> <p>From the very first time you picked up an instrument, or started to learn about music, your training began. Who were your teachers? What did you learn from each? Have institutions played a significant part? And how do you think your education has made you different?</p>	<p>My training was both conventional and unorthodox at the same time. My father was as do-it-yourself kind of guy and I tended to teach myself, inventing all my own exercises. I was rebellious except with my idol Rostropovich. I learned to play the cello from him and really how to play music in the Emerson Quartet. And now I’m learning a lot more music outside the quartet and it’s great.</p>	<p>It’s a good time for me to look back on all my training and to identify areas of weakness. Now I have the time to correct them!</p>

Part II: What are my assets?

<p>Am I equipped instrumentally to achieve my goals? What do I lack?</p> <p>You’ve got to be your own toughest critic or someone else will do it for you! Compare your ability relentlessly with the best in the world, measure the distance between, and figure out what you need and how to get it.</p>	<p>No, I’m not equipped technically to do everything I want.</p>	<p>Through a change of repertoire – away from chamber music and duo repertoire to concertos and virtuoso pieces – I am addressing some technical concerns that have haunted me for a long time and although it’s not easy I feel like I’m making some real instrumental progress right now.</p>
<p>Do I have the musical knowledge it takes? Repertoire?</p> <p>Everyone should make a list of the pieces they have performed, studied, and in addition, of the great works of music that they’ve maybe never heard, like the great symphonies and operas. The best musicians around all know a lot of music – and I mean musicians, not just instrumentalists.</p>	<p>I have enough repertoire knowledge to get by but I’d be a better musician if I knew more, and I’d have more confidence in myself.</p>	<p>This year I’m going to try to go to hear the Ring Cycle. Repertoire like this, so famous and known by so many, really haunts me. I’m going to spend more time listening and perhaps make myself a learning schedule.</p>

<p>How much experience do I have?</p> <p>Some people get more experience than others just by luck or circumstance. There really is no substitute for experience. Often one should take advantage of opportunities to get experience even if the playing situation – or the pay – is not great or non-existent. It's hard to get real experience in school but if you are aggressive you can make it happen.</p>	<p>I have a lot of experience but I'd always like more. In some ways I'm too comfortable doing the things I have done for many years and not comfortable enough – in relation – with new repertoire and challenges.</p>	<p>Now's my chance to go after opportunities that will broaden my experience as a musician. Even giving this course is a completely new challenge and while it's been a real chore to put it together, it's been very, very good for me.</p>
<p>Do I have any special interests and skills and can they play a part?</p> <p>Those interests could be certain repertoire, teaching young or older players, writing, presenting, playing different kinds of music. Once again, look for things that you love that make you different than others, and use them – as long as they are really relevant to your musical career.</p>	<p>I've always had a lot of hobbies. I loved photography from the age of 10 and have subsequently gotten involved in graphic design, which is especially useful to me as an artistic director responsible for the look and feel of an organization.</p>	<p>Although I have a lot of interests outside music, I really should identify some more musical specialties of mine and concentrate on them. It would be easier for the public to keep track of me, and would lead to more specific projects and add focus to my life.</p>
<p>How much do I know about the music industry?</p> <p>There are ways to learn about the music industry. We can understand it better from looking at this chart I made: It helps to know what's going on. There's no reason not to know.</p>	<p>I know a lot but I could certainly learn more.</p>	<p>I'd like to begin reading all the music publications more regularly, like BBC Music magazine and looking at web sites like Arts Journal and Musical America. I could keep up much better that way and probable grab good ideas.</p>
<p>Who are my friends and colleagues? You are not in music alone, thank God. Sometimes your friends are your competitors, but more often than not they are your allies. It makes a great deal of difference who you hang out with, and anyone can easily see that in retrospect. The trick is to learn how to do it in the present tense. You have much to learn from your friends and colleagues.</p>	<p>I have great friends and colleagues and I'm really lucky. I've learned more from them than I could possibly describe. I owe my colleagues practically everything.</p>	<p>I have the chance now to make even more friends, and that's something I look forward to doing. I know that I will become a more interesting and productive person as a result.</p>
<p>Who are my mentors?</p> <p>Everyone needs good mentors. Go get the very best. There isn't time to waste. Your mentors will not only guide you musically but in career and life decisions, and even if they don't, you can learn from them and follow their examples.</p>	<p>I've had unbelievably great influences, from my early years right through now. I am still inspired by hem, even many of them are now gone. I'll always remember things that I heard them say or things I watched them do.</p>	<p>I am by no means finished learning and am eager to devote some time to studying the work of great musicians whose artistry is legendary. For example, I'm very familiar with the violin playing of Jascha Heifetz, but not yet with that of Josef Szigeti. I know I'll learn something great from his recordings and I can't wait to listen.</p>
<p>Do I have any other special assets?</p> <p>For everyone this answer will be different, but try to think outside the box and be creative. It might simply be a personality trait, or maybe it's a special relationship, or</p>	<p>I must, I just can't think of them at the moment.</p>	<p>Maybe it's time for me to dig around for some possibly hidden talents. I risk being disappointed, but I'm a lot older than you all and have been using a lot of my arsenal for many years. But maybe there's more. I should spend more time dreaming and following some instinctive leads.</p>

some link to a culture or another part of the world that could come into play as you build your career.		
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Part III: How do I look?

<p>Do others see me as I want them to?</p> <p>This is one of the toughest questions one can either ask or answer but we all should do it. You can have really nice friends who love you but that doesn't mean they'll come out and tell you if you are behaving like a jerk or looking like a bum. You have to ask. You have to see yourself in the mirror. You have to hear yourself on recordings. You have to see yourself in video. Then you'll begin to see yourself as others do, and most of us will mighty surprised by one thing or another.</p>	<p>I am suspicious that others don't really see me as I want them to. I often wonder, if I died tomorrow and were able to attend my own funeral, what would people say about me in the speeches? I worry it would not be what I want.</p>	<p>Like anyone, I should make sure that my behavior and the way I present myself really reflects who I am and not something or someone else, like, for example, what people may expect of me. And I should keep checking my playing all the time from recordings and videos.</p>
<p>Do I have a reputation, an image?</p> <p>You probably already have a reputation of some kind. In the music business, people get put into categories very quickly. If you can step outside yourself to have a look, make sure that your reputation is what you want. Ask you best friends: who am I? What do you think is important to me? Etc.</p>	<p>I sure do have a reputation but it's probably not ideal. People tend to forget I'm a musician first and an administrator second or even third.</p>	<p>If I am to maintain my identity as a performer, I need to make sure that part of me is front and center in everything I do.</p>
<p>Do people know me and my work?</p> <p>Often, artists work in closets, doing wonderful things, and no one knows or cares. These days it would seem easy to get your work noticed but there's a lot of competition. Just ask yourself: What am I doing these days, and who knows about it? You'll have some quick answers right away. Half the battle of a career is having people know you even exist. (Julian Fifer NY story)</p>	<p>Yes, but it's hard to keep track of because I do so many – perhaps too many – different things. I also do things in the closet like Cello Talks which I don't naturally brag about.</p>	<p>I should make sure I don't just work in the closet and don't tell anyone. I'm naturally shy so it's good for me to professional help to publicize my work.</p>
<p>What is my basic personality? How does it affect my career?</p> <p>Because most of you are interpreters, you need to be like great actors who can play all kinds of roles. The music demands it – in a single work of Beethoven, for example, you are called upon to be everything from the sublime to the ridiculous. Your basic personality affects your ability to achieve a wide range of characters in music. If you are reserved, it's hard for you to play music in an over the top, letting everything go way. If you are always over the top as a person, it's</p>	<p>I'm naturally shy. I don't like to be in the spotlight. Certain aspects of my career have been very difficult because of it. I can still get very nervous on stage, not because of the music I'm playing, but because of who may be in the audience or that I'm just self-conscious.</p>	<p>As I have always done, I push myself to fulfill the demands of the stage and the music even though they may not come naturally to me. The public doesn't care and I shouldn't burden them with my own issues. I'm out there at the service of the music and that's what I tell myself, concert after concert.</p>

<p>tougher to capture Viennese grace and elegance. We do say sometimes that people play like they are and vice versa, but we can't let that stop our progress to become great performing artists.</p>		
<p>How often do I take chances? Every performance is a chance-taking event. We have to get used to that. You can never prepare so thoroughly that you know exactly how it's going to go, and anyway, the public doesn't come to hear that anyway. They pay to hear you take chances, and you have to be prepared to deliver. And in your life and career, taking chances will probably be the way you get from one level to the next, so look for the chances and regard them as opportunities. I've heard it said by a famous doctor that it's good for you to do one thing that scares you every day.</p>	<p>If I'm in really good shape and well prepared, I will take more chances.</p>	<p>Being a lot better prepared for my concerts will help me to take more risks on stage. At least I know this about myself and look forward to working on as long as I'm front of the public. And I'll keep thinking as big as I can about all the other projects I do, and make sure that I'm regularly taking prudent risks and keeping myself on the edge.</p>

Part IV: My Future

<p>What are my dreams? Are they attainable? The distance between your dreams and reality is the area of your life's work. One pulls you forward, the other backward. Unrealistic dreams will cause that backward pull to feel stronger and more frustrating, while dreams that are not ambitious enough will not exert the inspiring pull of ones that are really exciting and maybe just out of reach. Finding the right balance takes experience, but I would recommend erring on the side of shooting too high. One can more easily learn to shrug off failure, and disappointments can actually build strength and character. Look at all the inspiring people in the world who succeeded in spite of incredible obstacles, who never gave up. Don't you want to be one of them?</p>	<p>I have already attained more than I had ever dreamt of, but that's certainly no reason to stop dreaming.</p>	<p>These days I dream more for the future beyond my own time, for musicians like you, for the future of the planet, for my friends' children, and for health of the institutions I've served. And I work hard to make sure those dreams have the best chance of coming true.</p>
<p>How do I see myself in ten years? This is a great question. It's very much like asking someone what they would do with a billion dollars. We should all be able to answer that. Consider the alternative: If you have no destination, how do you know which direction to turn at the next corner? Life often happens by chance, but that's no reason to let the tail wag the dog. Set a course and try for it. You will be admired and respected, even if your goal is very ambitious.</p>	<p>If I can sit up in bed in ten years I'll be happy. Actually, I'd love to be doing just what I'm doing now, only better.</p>	<p>I do think and plan a lot for the future. I hope to have a lot more students ten years from now, and I'll work at that. I'm making sure that all the institutions I run could run themselves without me just in case. That lets me sleep at night.</p>

<p>If I could construct my own musical path, where would it go?</p> <p>A career path is often just a fantasy as careers often are made just by luck or being in the right place at the right time. But you try putting yourself in a position where those opportunities are more likely to come your way. It does not hurt to make a calendar and put things in it that you want to do. Maybe it's to take a lesson from someone, to enter a competition, to present a program yourself, to attend a class or lecture or summer program, to form an ensemble. It can be done with intelligence and is not a silly exercise at all. There's no guarantee your musical life will go that way, but it doesn't hurt to know what you'd ideally like to see happen.</p>	<p>My path needs to follow the repertoire I am most interested to learn. I don't really have career considerations but I would like to perform in some countries where I never have.</p>	<p>We have hired a PR firm based in Berlin and London to help expose European audiences to our work, and in March Wu Han and I will journey to Berlin to perform the five Beethoven sonatas in the chamber music hall of the Berlin Philharmonie. We are presented the concert ourselves with the help of our agent and taking the risk.</p>
<p>How can I support myself?</p> <p>So that you don't get stuck having to make money in some way that means nothing to your career, you should plan ahead. There are financial programs that let you budget on the computer and do projections. Save. Be smart. Nobody pays you to practice and study, but you need to keep that part of your life.</p>	<p>Since I left the quartet of course I gave up that income but have managed to more than make it up with increased solo, duo and chamber concerts. But I am very lucky and in a different place in my life than any of you.</p>	<p>I do need to think about the day when I can't play the cello well anymore and I have to stop. So I'm building my reputation as a teacher and slowly taking on more administrative opportunities.</p>
<p>Where do I want to live?</p> <p>Some people can live in Hell and be happy. Are you one of them? If not, balance your priorities. If green grass means more to you than a career, go live in the middle of Pennsylvania, but don't expect a thriving cultural life. In general, creative artists live in places that stimulate their imaginations. Performing artists and teachers need to live where the work is. But unless your goal is unrealistic (Antarctica) maybe you should select a location that will satisfy all your needs.</p>	<p>I live where I want to right now but I'd like a country house with a barbecue, a tennis court and a swimming pool and a garden. But that's no concern of yours or the public.</p>	<p>I tell everybody I want a country house with a pool and a tennis court and a garden and a barbecue and maybe someone will find one for me.</p>
<p>What will I do after graduation?</p> <p>I doubt it's too soon to start thinking about this no matter what year you are in. I believe that in some ways people begin building their careers – certainly their musical reputations – from their earliest days of study. It's healthy and wise to imagine yourself on the day after graduation. Will you have a place to go and live and hopefully work? Is there anyone who could help you with this? What can you do about it now to plan for this big change in your life?</p>	<p>After I didn't graduate from the Manhattan School I went right into freelancing so I didn't have that moment. I found work more attractive than school.</p>	<p>One of my dreams is to go back to school. So I might actually graduate from somewhere, someday.</p>

Part V: My Priorities.

This part of the document is for you to sort out everything that you will write above. Decide which items are most urgent and plot a course of action. Even if it's a step at a time, if you start now, you'll get there sooner.

I would recommend finding a balance between the major sections:

1. Choose some ways to articulate why you are a musician and remind yourself often of this.
2. Take stock of your assets, identify your areas of greatest need and go for them methodically.
3. Begin some habits of self-evaluation – gently – that will gain you the reputation you desire.
4. Look into the future, both near and far, with courage, imagination and intelligence. You'll sleep better at night.

Lecture I: Who Am I? (worksheet)

Part I: Where did I come from?

Question	Answers	Opportunities/Actions
What compels me to play music?		
When and how did I decide to be a musician?		

Why do I want to be a musician?		
How did I get to where I am now?		
Is my family musical?		
What has been my musical education?		

Part II: What are my assets?

Am I equipped instrumentally to achieve my goals? What do I lack?		
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Do I have the musical knowledge it takes? Repertoire?		
How much experience do I have?		
Do I have any special interests and skills and can they play a part?		
How much do I know about the music industry?		
Who are my friends and colleagues?		
Who are my mentors?		

Do I have any other special assets?		

Part III: How do I look?

Do others see me as I want them to?		
Do I have a reputation, an image?		
Do people know me and my work?		

What is my basic personality? How does it affect my career?		
How often do I take chances?		

Part IV: My future

What are my dreams? Are they attainable?		
How do I see myself in ten years?		
If I could construct my own musical path, where would it go?		

How can I support myself?		
Where do I want to live?		
What will I do after graduation?		

Part V: My Priorities