Perceptions of Music Teachers Associated with Musically-Gifted Primary School Graduates Seeking Entry to an Elite Music High School in Sydney, Australia

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Abstract

Current selection test procedures for any higher-learning program rely on evidence of attainment in a specific domain (Gagné, 1995; Boyle & Radocy, 1987; Subotnik, & Jarvin, 2005). Pertinent to the assessment and selection of gifted young musicians for elite programs is the notion of obvious talent being due to all or a combination of factors of ability, practice, opportunity, personality, and/or passion and as such presents complex issues around the question of skill maintenance and/or skill loss (Simonton, 2005). This paper outlines the issues surrounding testing for the selection of musically-gifted primary graduates to elite secondary school music programs. A single case study of initial findings of a multi-phase research project where past and present music teachers reflect on entry test experiences is presented. The data collected through an online questionnaire and a semi-structured interview offers a representative framework for the investigation. The main purpose in gathering this narrative data is to track and gain understanding of entry test processes from 1980 to 2014 at a specialist music high school in Sydney, Australia. Results to date demonstrate an evolving test design model characterized by pedagogic influences, shifts in student recruitment emphasis, and innovative curriculum change. Strategies for further refinement of a process for high stakes selection and placement that are both fair and reliable are at the core of the subsequent phases of research and will be explored in this paper.

***Keywords*:** Ability; music aptitude and assessment; entry test procedures; teacher perceptions.

Introduction

In 2013 music teachers associated with an Australian specialist music high school since the mid-1980s, were invited to complete an online questionnaire about their opinions on aspects of entry-test procedures to select from some eighty applicants, around thirty musically-gifted primary graduates for placement into Year seven (12-year-olds, for the first year of Junior High). This phase of the study was used to inform the semi-structured recorded interviews that followed. The responses revealed a general consensus that a mix of both subjective and objective measures, despite the impact of change, should be at the core of the testing process. Elements such as shifts in direction, curriculum, demographics, applicant numbers, and the introduction of a junior vocal stream in 2012 underpin the need for appraisal and review.

The impact of music teachers' perceptions of strategies used to identify and select gifted young applicants is presented in this paper through the story of one of twelve case studies of music teachers who have been associated with the entry test during this period of time. Bresler (1992) notes that interviews, the use of archival materials, and immersion in the case, have long been important tools in music education, performance, and musicology. Within a multiple cross-site application of narratives unique "vignettes of dynamic moments" can be provided (Bresler, 1992, p.71).

The case study reports on the processes undertaken to develop the topics and sub-topics of both the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. It would appear that while the main ethos of the

school, embedded in pedagogic philosophies remains, the entry-test strategies and tools have evolved, been modified, or changed. Further, the case study participants reveal aspects about the nature of change in this context:

> Type and abilities of incoming students over this period have not changed but perhaps what we are looking for, has [participant 1]
> The focus is enrichment rather than talent….as music teachers we engage with the whole person, the whole thinking, the whole body [participant 8]

It is expected that findings from the complete study can assist in forging crucial links between policy and practice in the domain of music education.

Methodology

In order to track and define the purpose for entry testing to a specialist music high school, online questionnaires (Appendix 1) and follow-up semi-structured interviews based on sample questions (Appendix 2) were conducted with past and current music teachers associated with an Australian specialist music high school. Nine of the ten participants who completed the questionnaires agreed to be interviewed. Approximately 40 minute face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted to elicit the music teachers' perceptions about entry test tools, change, and criteria. The resulting narratives or stories offer a dynamic form of communication.

The case study here is one of ten wherein the intended phenomenon is bounded and linked to the data collection. Being a finite number of case studies, categorization of the phenomenon as a case study is allowed and therefore avoids some of the practical issues of participant availability, external deadlines and manageability of data if a boundary is not established (Torrance & Stark, 2005). This paper presents background information on the construct of both gifted and talented, general and music specific identification, and presents a case study of one music teacher noting the contexts and the impacts of change on entry-test procedures.

Gifted behaviour

This section examines the role of the development of gifts and talents as a complex component in the identification of musical ability and provides the background to the study. Persson (2009) refers to musical behaviour as most likely being both general and specific. He suggests that musical giftedness is beyond doubt, multi-dimensional. Simonton (2005) posits that while forms of giftedness are domain-specific, genetic components may be generic. Like Persson (2009), he suggests that musical behaviour is both general and specific in referring to the two interrelated perspectives of emergenic inheritance and epigenetic development. Simonton (2005) outlines the criteria of the categories conceived as "additive" and "multiplicative dimensions of giftedness" (p. 279). An additive gift such as perfect pitch is easy to identify early in the schema of development onset. It follows that the identification problem becomes more difficult for complex, multiplicative types of giftedness. While this paper does not have the capacity to fully encapsulate his outline of optimal forms of giftedness being subject to change and instability within an additive (development aligning with first genetic component) or multiplicative (development beginning with the last genetic component) model, the Simonton multi-dimensional theory (2005) underpins principles of identification in the context of this study.

Rating scales & observation

The focus for the frequency tables within the questionnaire reported on in this phase of the study was specific to music ability and entry-test content. The questionnaire was designed and delivered through email with a link to *Survey Monkey*. The notion of musical ability is perceived differently among people and is not easy to define (McPherson, 1997). Both musicians and non-musicians concur that music aptitude is multifactorial, categorized, by pitch and rhythm (McPherson, 1997; Hallam & Shaw, 2003). The literature reports the use of both research-based published rating scales and inventories (Haroutounian, 2000; Hallam, 2006, Hallam & Shaw, 2003) and in-house school

rating scale templates and checklists for gifted identification, with few including adequate assessment tools in the arts (Mönks & Pflüger, 2005; Haroutounian, 2000; SADECD, 2011).

Hallam & Shaw (2003) found that the ability to sing or to play an instrument was the category most shared by both adult musicians and non-musicians in rating their perceptions about musical ability in young children. Personal traits were rated high amongst the musicians from the list of 19 criteria to identify musical ability.

Similarly, Haroutounian (2000) in the course of her research in developing the *Indicators of Potential Talent in Music Inventory* found that the community, in their perceptions of the traits indicative of musically-able children, considered some general behaviours such as "sustained interest" and "self-discipline" as more important than some that were domain specific (p. 9).

Akin to the research of Haroutounin (2000) and that of Hallam & Shaw (2003), sections of the questionnaire reported on in this paper, were designed to elicit a respondent's opinions about generally-accepted criteria of musical ability in the context of purposive selection as reported in this paper.

Hallam (2006) reports that the Hallam & Shaw 2003 study in developing rating scales for identifying musical gifts revealed that from the sample cohort of both non-and professional musicians, the latter were in strong agreement that "communication and being able to play in a group", "emotional sensitivity" and the "organization of sound" as the skills crucial to the highest level of expertise (pp.100-102).

Musicians and other groups alike shared the category of "being able to sing or play an instrument" as "the largest response", being especially high among "children who did not take part in extracurricular music" (p.101). Musical ability as a genetic factor was not a general conception among the sample cohort.

The experienced music teachers reported upon in this paper, rated "high music aptitude" and "high music ability" and "high aural test scores", as important criteria in considering the identification of musical potential. Further, criteria such as "music aptitude test"; "aural memory exercise" and "audition" from the questionnaire were ranked as of highest importance as entry-test tools by the respondents.

For the purposes of this study, additional labelling based on the Munich Model of Giftedness (MMG, Heller, 2004) was applied. Heller (2004), like Simonton (1999) posits that identification is only effective when considering individual developmental and learning processes alongside environmental influences such as social settings.

In the Heller MMG model (2005) "musicality", a talent factor (i.e., a "predictor" or domain) transitions through "moderators" (or catalysts) towards "music", a criteria variable (pp.149-151). Some twelve environmental and six non-cognitive personality characteristics were considered as moderating factors that may influence success or non-success.

Certain of these have been adapted as labels for the study reported on in this paper to assist in the differentiation and the classification of the criteria emerging from both the teachers' questionnaires and their interviews. For example, "music specific" factors (classified either as 'environmental' – E and/or 'innate' - I) and "general suitability" factors (as either "social" – S and/or "potential" - P and/or "achieving" - A) provide factor differentiation. In addition, the term "suitability" is used to describe an applicant considered to be appropriate for the context of the school reported on in this paper.

There was label nomination overlap but overall the questionnaire reported the responses with 13 criteria as *Developmental Environmental* traits and seven as *Developmental Innate* traits. *Suitability Social* traits were six in number, *Suitability Potential* traits were nine, and *Suitability Achievement* traits were five. Further classification was applied to the criteria listed above where most respondents rated "high music ability" (I/P), "high aural test scores" (E/P) and "high music aptitude" (I/P) as high. Interestingly, the respondents rated the criteria "interest in music competitions" (E/S/A), "family music background" (E/S) and "interest

in improvising" and "leadership qualities" (E/S/P) as low.

Gifted musical behaviour

The literature reports the impact of certain conditions relating to exceptional musical behaviour (Shavinia, 2010; Subotnik et al., 2011; Haroutounian, 2002; Rados et al., 2003). For example, ability and interest/commitment, coupled with an intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for performance, are necessary for giftedness but not sufficient for development of special talent. Further, the percentage of eminent adults is less than that of musical children with gifted potential.

Finally, while particular age-sensitive developmental periods impact on the gifted to talented process, interrelated factors of musical aptitude remain an important causal factor in outstanding long-term achievement in music (Shavinina, 2010; Simonton, 2005). Research addresses the issue of the prodigy and superior musical performance in adolescents and adults (McPherson, 1997; Shavinina, 2010) yet there has been little investigation into issues around the transition from novice to early practitioner as in the case of the musically precocious primary school graduates into specialist high school music programs.

Like Shavinina (2010), Rados et al., (2003) in their work with students aged between six and twelve years across five specialized music schools in Belgrade, concluded that certain critical agents were at the core of success of formal instrumental learning. They nominated personality motivation as a driver towards success. For example, being disciplined and organized, emotionally stable, relaxed, independent, and self-confident were personal and emotional traits that characterized students with high- level playing ability. It would seem that the participant data reported upon in this study reveals much of the same sentiment for the post-threshold cohort of 12-year olds.

Measuring musical ability

Haroutounian (2000) and others note that while music aptitude measures musical potential, musical talent is realized through performance, which she concedes, is most commonly assessed through audition. Notions of giving "shivers up the spine", (Haroutounian, 2002, p. 7), to describe the effect of a child's exemplary performance is echoed in the stories of the adult participants.

> We know talent when we see it! [participant 3]
> It is easy to spot the child who has it all…. [participant 10]

Experienced examiners, like concertgoers, easily agree on outstanding performances (Subotnik & Jarvin, 2005; McPherson, 1997). However, in referring to high-stakes assessment procedures linked to the need to compare musical competencies, Kimpton & Harnisch (2008) suggest that both holistic or analytic methods and comparability of judgment are required. They further posit that 'tightly specified criteria' and 'inter-rater reliability' (pp. 63-64) are crucial elements in high-stakes assessment contexts. It is reported that the two main purposes for music assessment are for recruitment and diagnosis (Kimpton & Harnisch, 2008) where the former is most often gauged by performance (Boyle & Radocy, 1987; Kimpton & Harnisch, 2008; McPherson, 1997).

The literature supports the view that over-reliance on skills acquisition alone to identify and place gifted young musicians into music academies is contrary to the intent of published policy, practice, and theory (Boyle & Radocy, 1987; Gagne, 1995, 2011; McPherson, 1997; Mönks., & Pflüger, 2005; NSW DET, 1991, rev. 2004; SA DECD, 2010 updated 2011).

The interview

This section refers to the interview, *Phase 1b* of the study reported upon in this paper, where the same named and nominated adult stakeholders were invited to participate in individual semi-structured recorded interviews based on sample questions (Appendix 2). While each interview was shaped according to the sample questions participants extended their opinions towards general factors not associated specifically to the main topic of the entry test. Some of the participants interviewed considered their music teaching at the specialist music school as a "privilege and a joy" (Participant 4). They mostly found strategies of acceleration, enrichment, and compacting to be useful to the spiral

curriculum model for these gifted young musicians. John (a pseudonym), one participant in the case study that follows, noted that "whole cohort" acceleration, a practice introduced recently, needed further review. He also commented that his early music teaching experiences, which began in a country high school, were not enjoyable and it was only in the context of this school that he felt the passion of his vocation. The whole data set of the collective case study of music teachers is in preparation for analysis and eventual publication.

Table 1 shows the seven interview topics, which were assigned sub-topics arising from the questionnaire responses.

Table 1: Summary of Interview topics and their sub-topics.

Question type	Number of sub-topics
Topic 1: Participant details	6
Topic 2: Gifted construct	3
Topic 3: Current involvement	6
Topic 4: Test	11
Topic 5: Changes over time	8
Topic 6: Successful candidate/student characteristics	6
Topic 7: Other	10

This paper reports John's story in response to two topics and their sub-topics. The interview began with John answering:

Can you tell me a little about your background as a music teacher? [Interviewer]

He answered this question directly which is reported here accordingly.

> I am head music teacher here full time and have been for some years. Actually I started here in 1986 one day per week as a 'casual'. This became permanent part-time then full time. I also am certified to teach Mathematics which I do from time to time. I have participated in the design, implementation and facilitation of the entry tests since the mid 1980s. I am on the selection panel.

The data for sub-topic "gifted traits in Year seven" from Topic 3, "current involvement" gives a snapshot of how John caters for the differences between the students he sees during a performance workshop (PW) lesson.

> The main divider is superior performance, beyond age and not specific to gender… more so in keyboard, also violin…you could call them the 'stars' - compared to mainstream – i.e. the schools I taught in years ago, when I first started teaching. In catering for differences in PW I feel it is important to avoid making individual comparisons – more helpful to 'compare across pieces' discuss the difficulties that arise in the repertoire - this is more relevant to these students – to get feedback on aspects of their playing of a piece, or section of a piece 'facts they take to their practice and to their teachers'…

John spoke at length about Topic 4 "Test" and the sub-topic "Workshop".

> In the 1990s a university music education consultant came and helped us devise the test. For 2 years he led the diagnostic workshop activities; the music staff would observe the kids; we needed to come up with a profile for each student, a mark even – and with about 12 students in a circle playing xylophones set up in pentatonics with lots of echo playing; we would write down comments then work out marks according to some rubrics later, together; at times there was individual playing and singing; the xylophones were dropped from the test….in late 1990s; I think – it was considered that the keyboardists had an unfair advantage, using the xylophones. There have been a 'number of changes over the time' – different things are evolving all the time…it

> really depended on the particular group (of kids) and what we needed at the school. We will be losing our good brass players soon….
>
> I think the workshop did become more prescribed – still with a couple of teachers observing and then taking it in turns to facilitate some activities – the creative activities such as rhythm clapping in simple time and compound time - we needed to increase difficulty to discriminate: 1 bar of 4/4 and 1 bar of 12/8 (they found this difficult) - echo clapping and pitch dialogues, question and answer – singing some 5 notes - pentatonic to see if student could hold pitch - 'soh-me-lah-soh –me-soh-soh'; simple folk song material – group then individual memorisation of 4 phrases – we dropped this component recently – difficult to quantify.

For Topic 6 "traits typical of the successful candidate" John gave a list that could be classified as "innate", "developmental" and "personality" traits.

> Students with high level instrumental acumen and who could maintain this after entry and beyond; also with aural ability as shown up in the Gordon tests results; 'good music reading skills; also being fairly stable seems to be important - emotionally stable' - they seem to fair better at our school – perhaps they are able to make the transition more easily from primary school…….our school isn't easy – it is a music performance school, elite, with a dual purpose – having all the demands of a good academic high school and then there's the performances, concerts - some activities here are unique within the state. Also children with better than average social skills tend to fare better in our school and can progress quickly, if they are alert, bright and passionate.

For the sub-topic 'non-successful traits' John spoke briefly, mainly about performance.

> Students displaying average executant ability; nothing self-expressive about the playing, maybe enthusiastic in other subject areas but tend to become rather stuck in their progress as a performer; also of 'average musical intelligence and a 'kid who does not seem to carry the passion through the six years'.

For the sub-topic "Other", John focused on the creative aspect that was part of the workshop component, a tool considered important more so in the past than currently.

> The creative task we used to have had three phases – 'play/improvise/write'. These phases only applied to the older applicants, other than for year 7; especially the ones wanting to enter year 11 – they had to have advanced musicianship levels – notation skills to get up to the standard of our year 11s. So in a group with the teachers the activity comprised an 8-16 bar melody in compound time for improvising on the instrument – then play individually – then write what you created; the year 7s would devise a movement/sound improvisation in pairs modelled by the teacher in simple time. Of the five components of the original workshop not many remain; we haven't lost them fully – I think they are embedded in other tools.

For sub-topic "Historic" within Topic 5 "Changes over time", John gave a snapshot of the test profile over at least a decade.

> I remember in the late 80s - that early audition asked for' only two pieces'; this has become more prescribed and has 'expanded in the number of components - two contrasting pieces, technical (scales, sight reading) aural memory singing exercise at start and to repeat at end (audition); audition was the only component but now is the primary thing'.

Once again he mentioned the "old" workshop and the use of some Dalcroze-styled techniques. Azzara, (1998) concurs with the Dalcroze applications of practical and experiential activities framed through movement, solfege, and improvisation. Music thinking skills linked to improvisation he

posits, rely on techniques that impact on the achievements of young instrumentalists. John has completed many Dalcroze workshops in Sydney, Australia and Geneva, Switzerland and has completed the examination for the Swiss Institute's certificate which allows him to practice associated "movement-sound" activities within his classroom music practice.

> The workshop of the 1990s was changed a bit – we used more Dalcroze-based activities - 'movement/soundscape activities in groups - perhaps an influence from the performing arts high school collaboration'; that's when more selective and specialist schools came on the scene here.

A post-data analysis of the *Phase 1* material, adapting the Framework Thematic Analysis (FTA) model of Ritchie & Lewis, (2003) is currently underway assisted by considerations of Heller's Munich Gifted Model (MGM, 2004) supported by the Simonton (2005) gifted-identification schema which, while contributing to the field, confirm the complexity and problems associated with identification and talent development.

The importance of the study

The importance of the study is linked to the identification of musical giftedness in the context of a multi-factorial approach. Persson (2009) suggests that identification is underpinned by objective and general factors on the one hand and subjective and individual factors on the other. He concurs with Walters, (1990) in that the core skills (pitch and rhythm) are intrinsic to psychometric tests (e.g., Gordon's Advanced Measure of Music Audiation, 1989) and that the key skills (voice/instrument performance; composing/arranging and conducting) differentiate applicants. The potential impact of results from this proposed study not only has the capacity to create a purposeful platform through a definition of "needs and supply" as considered by the music teachers interviewed but also to recommend a defined, balanced weighting of objective and subjective entry-test components which may go some way towards addressing issues of a fair and equitable process.

Potential significance

Today's music students, it is internationally recognized, gain entry to their study through an entrance examination not grounded in test theory or psychometrics (Wolf, Platz & Kopiez, 2012). Additional measures for specific subject areas nominate screening, the more objective stage taking in a combination of strategies to identify potential (Haroutounian, 2002).

Waters (2010) states that standardized tests, norm-referenced by design mostly measuring aptitude and achievement are created to make comparisons between students along specified measurements. Gordon (1999) found that music aptitude, like general ability, has a normal distribution meaning that 2% of the population has high music aptitude and 14 % having above-average music aptitude.

Assessment of musical attainment, typically individually orientated, is considered a subjective measure. Duerksen (2011), Haroutounian (2002), and McPherson (1997) report that high-level music aptitude (citing the Gordon tests, 1985, 1991) and high- academic grades benefit those music students enjoying success beyond high school. While a Year 7 cohort such as that reported on in this study would be considered musically gifted, not all students are equally so.

Phase 2 of the research refers to the primary school gradutes' entry test results on Gordon's objective aural test – the AMMA (Advanced Measures of Music Audiation), (1989) demonstrating individual musical acumen (pitch and rhythm) and Gordon's Iowa Test of Music Literacy (ITML), (1970, rev. 1991) level five demonstrating individual music literacy (pitch and rhythm). *Phase 3* is the administration of the ITML level six, after entry, demonstrating individual music learning and progress. The study reported upon in this paper will compare the ITML tests and correlate them with the AMMA results. There is the suggestion that such test results offer a degree of predictability and further, have the capacity to confirm superior ability and skills, and to identify at-risk students within

the first year of music high school. High results on the AMMA and both of the ITML tests coupled with a high-level audition could be defined as essential criteria for a candidate having the capacity to maintain a successful profile at a music specialist high school.

Conclusion

In seeking to understand the development of musical ability and predictions for ongoing success, the literature refers often to the opinions and experiences of leading professional musicians and music educators. According to music professionals, Hallam (2006) noted that certain social and developmental elements of musical ability were crucial for professional musicians. The experienced music teachers surveyed and interviewed for this study concur to generally accepted criteria in the identification of musically gifted youth. However the rationale for further investigation as reported in this paper is based on not only the context of high stakes purposive selection but also on the typology of changes that have occurred on site. For John, while the perceived musical ability of a gifted primary school graduate taking up the challenge of advanced music training has remained unchanged over time, the ways of defining and of identifying that ability is linked to the purposeful and evolving nature of circumstances. He concedes that while musical aptitude as measured by high levels of aural ability in the comprehension of key competencies such as pitch and rhythm, it is the passion for music and high-level performance that more closely defines the successful applicant upon exit.

The trajectory for the development of musical gifts and talents is subject to a plethora of conditions and traits making predictions for ongoing success fragile. For entry to the school in the context of the study reported on in this paper the audition seems to have been of primary consideration. The case study reported here significantly supports the need for the inclusion of a balanced measure of both subjective and objective tools underpinned by an ever developing body of research dedicated to the refinement of gifted theory and schema in the music education arena.

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About the Author

Felicity Andreasen, a doctoral student at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music continues to combine the reality of teaching high school music in research contexts. She currently teaches at the Conservatorium High school in Sydney. Her publication with Dr. John Geake (SCU), entitled 'musically gifted students in the first year of secondary school: identification and curriculum differentiation' (1998, NSW AGT) led her into the then controversial field of gifted education which underpins her reexamination of the gifted theme in the domain of music education. Her current interest has expanded into a study based at the capstone of music development where the focus is a case of musically gifted applicants to specialist music high schools.

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Appendix 1

Adult participant Questionnaire

Title: Musically gifted youth: testing for entry to specialized music secondary schools.

This questionnaire was conducted online (Survey Monkey) with nominated and named adult stakeholders (past and present music teachers).

- Complete this questionnaire only if you have participated in the design and/or implementation of testing procedures for advanced music training.
- Please answer questions honestly
- Please answer every question
- Check the box or indicate the number that best represents your response.
- This survey is divided into three sections:

Question 1: What language do you mainly speak at home?

- ❑ English
- ❑ Spanish
- ❑ Chinese
- ❑ Russian
- ❑ Other (please explain)

Question 2: What is the context in which you have taught music? You can check more than one box:

- ❑ Private studio
- ❑ High school general music
- ❑ High school elective music
- ❑ High school specialist music
- ❑ In-house performance
- ❑ Public performance
- ❑ Post-secondary
- ❑ Music industry
- ❑ AMEB examiner
- ❑ HSC Examiner
- ❑ Other (please explain)

Question 3: When were you associated with the entry test at the Conservatorium High School in the following years: (tick any number of boxes that apply)

- ❑ 2006-2013
- ❑ 2000-2005
- ❑ 1995-1999
- ❑ 1990-1994
- ❑ 1985-1989
- ❑ 1980-1984
- ❑ Other (please explain)

Question 4: 1n which of the following aspects of the entry test did you participate (you can check more than one box):

- ❑ Task design
- ❑ Workshop
- ❑ Implementation: modelling a task
- ❑ Implementation: Scoring
- ❑ Implementation: Grading
- ❑ Recommendation for entry
- ❑ Other (please explain)

Question 5: How would you rate the inclusion of each of the following factors for entry of Year 6 applicants to the Con High (rising scale 1- 5)

- ❑ Interest in improvising
- ❑ Confidence at audition
- ❑ Confidence in performing

- ❑ Perfect pitch
- ❑ interest in music activities at school
- ❑ Interest in music outside school
- ❑ Interest in performing
- ❑ Perfect pitch
- ❑ High scores on aural test
- ❑ High scores on music aptitude test
- ❑ A team player
- ❑ High scores on music achievement test
- ❑ Informal training
- ❑ Interest in writing about music
- ❑ Family musical background
- ❑ Leadership qualities
- ❑ High music ability
- ❑ Interest in making music at school
- ❑ Interest in making music at home
- ❑ Average academic ability
- ❑ Average music ability
- ❑ Interest in music competitions
- ❑ Formal training
- ❑ High academic ability

Question 6: How would you rank the inclusion of the following items on an elective entry test for year 6 applicants to the Con High (rank 1 - 8)?

- ❑ Music aptitude test (pitch and rhythm)
- ❑ Music achievement test (pitch and rhythm)
- ❑ Music theory
- ❑ Audition
- ❑ Aural memory
- ❑ Sight reading
- ❑ Improvising
- ❑ Moving to music

Question 7: In reference to Question 6 please state why you have ranked an item the highest (1)
(Comment)

Question 8: In reference to Q.6 please state why you have ranked an item the lowest (8)
(Comment)

Question 9: How can we improve entry test design?
(Comment)

Question 10: Please tick the box and provide your preferred contact details if you are willing to participate in a short 20 minute recorded interview at you convenience

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

End of Questionnaire

Thank you for completing the questionnaire.

Appendix 2

Sample Interview Questions conducted with adult stakeholders (current and past teachers associated with the Con High):

1. First could you tell me about your background in music teaching?
2. Do you have particular views/philosophies about music teaching?
3. What do you feel about giftedness in general and current gifted and talented models?
4. How do these models apply in reality in the context of the Con High?
5. In relation to the entry test (at Con High) how would you describe your main responsibility?
6. How would you describe the key components of the test
7. Do you think music pedagogies (Orff; Kodaly; Dalcroze) have influenced the test design?
8. Can you comment on any changes you may have observed in the test components?
9. Do the test components identify the musical strengths of applicants?
10. In your opinion how does the test design identify the musical weaknesses of the applicants?
11. Tell me about your involvement with teaching the current year 7 students;
12. To what extent are the items on the test subjective measures?
13. To what extent are the items on the test objective measures?
14. What items successfully identify the better students?
15. In your opinion does the test design meet the demands of differentiating among applicants?
16. How would you describe the successful Con High candidate; and those that would not make the grade?
17. In your opinion how would you describe the successful Conservatorium High School student on entry at year 7?
18. In your opinion how could you nominate some to be more gifted than others? How do you cater for the differences?
19. Is there anything you would like to add; what would you want to say to test designers today?