Humans of Street Music:

Telling the Stories of Public Performance

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June 4th, 2017

Senior Project Write-up

Community, Environment, and Planning 2017

Abstract

Though people of Seattle get to see street music all around them, many will never get to know the origins or stories that bring those musicians to the street. My project unearthed these experiences to humanize the performances, to share the stories of buskers with my communities, and to foster a deeper appreciation for this unique form of public art. In the first half of the project, I learned about the busking experience firsthand through a personal exploration of street music and a collection of interviews with ten buskers. I then compiled these interviews together to extract general themes and ideas common among them. For the second half, I composed a new piece of music inspired by these themes, the history, and the emotion of street music. I debuted this piece of music at a formal senior project recital; I brought the atmosphere of street music inside a concert hall where I could more vulnerably showcase the human element of my research. Attendees of my recital should have walked away feeling a deeper understanding of and appreciation for street musicians. In the future, my composition will be published so that other groups of musicians can also perform and connect with my work.

Introduction

Take a walk through the city of Seattle, and chances are you'll see a street musician. They play on street corners, in bus stations, and within earshot of almost any given spot in Pike Place Market. You may have heard them called buskers, a common slang title. Unlike in a concert hall, street music can be a very social experience where the boundary between performer and audience becomes undefined. Thousands of people see these people perform for the public every day, but only a few of those passersby stop to hear the music, and even fewer will be able to have a conversation with the person behind the instrument.

This separation between the buskers and the public motivated my research. Having seen so many people ignore the world around them, all I wanted to do was encourage people to open their eyes. So, I asked myself: how do I increase appreciation for street musicianship in my community? I deconstructed that question to think about how people come to appreciate each other in general, and decided that the easiest way to connect the audience with the musician would be to humanize the musician. If the average citizen looked upon these musicians as fellow humans instead of as unexpected noise, they might be more inclined to pay attention, even if only briefly.

To answer my question, I set out on a journey to connect with buskers more intimately. I would meet them myself, learn their stories, understand what makes them tick, and share that with my own community. I brought my trombone to jams and played alongside practicing street musicians and then grabbed coffee with them after to talk about life. I learned their stories well enough that I could properly communicate them through a music recital of my own, and at this recital I invited them to come to the stage and tell a few stories themselves.

All this served the final goal of helping people connect with the musicians pouring their hearts out on the streets.

A lot of my own personal background inspired a project of this nature. I've been playing trombone consistently since 2005, so music has remained a part of my identity as I've grown up. Even in college, music remains a huge part of my life; I have played or performed in at least 16 different ensembles through the course of my college career. Being in the Husky Marching Band almost entirely defined my college experience and friend groups. In addition, I've had a lot of time to appreciate the rich music culture that exists within Seattle, past and present both.

I also gained a lot of insight from my major – Community, Environment, and Planning (CEP) – to refine what this project meant to me. I discovered my passion for community engagement within this major, which I never realized I'd been practicing all along in various places. Being a section leader with Husky Band, excelling in a freshman year technical communication class, working with transportation services, and other similar experiences all pointed towards my event planning and community development skills. When I figured that out, I solidified the scope of my project to focus on the people involved in street music.

The combination of passions in music and community gives me a unique perspective on arts in the city. Culture in a city often manifests itself in artistry and expression, and should be recognized as an asset worth promoting. Luckily, Seattle does show appreciation for buskers in some ways, including signage at Pike Place Market: "Street performers have long entertained shoppers and added to the Market ambiance. Make sure to offer them a tip!" Sure enough, buskers play all around the Market in high traffic areas and receive generous tips for their work.

Seattle wasn't always so friendly to buskers though. Prior to 1974, you could not play music on the streets unless you had a handicap and a permit (Reader, 2013). A legal battle in 1974 fought by Jim Page changed that course; he won in court on grounds of first amendment rights, setting a precedent for street music as freedom of speech. Another legal battle in 2005 won by "Magic Mike" against Westlake Center determined that buskers could not be classified as vendors on the same first amendment grounds as before. Thanks to these battles, street musicians have a lot of freedom in Seattle. Musicians can play most places if they don't obstruct traffic, exceed decibel limits, or play after certain hours. Places like Pike Place have more rules, like requiring buskers to have a permit and share the space with other buskers. Overall, the laws tend to be friendly towards buskers.

While my project does not research implicit bias towards buskers, I did want to ensure that citizens view them as humans instead of beggars. I know from personal experience that perceptions can lead to assumptions. A future project could exist in studying what these perceptions and assumptions may be, but my project can still promote an overall positive perception regardless of preconceived notions.

Festivals

Genres

Literature Review

Because I am looking at the intersection of two very different elements of the same urban landscape, my research by consequence will concern a diverse array of concepts and ideas. Decades of famous thinkers have already explained and analyzed the first element: place making as an academic classroom concept. Literature about the second element, busking in the city, does not reach the same breadth or depth. Writers on the topic have made minimal conclusions around this highly politicized topic area. Within these elements individually and where they collide, a multitude of critical discussions exist. I will be focusing on three primary topics that compose the multidisciplinary nature of my research. The first and most fundamental concept is an overview of what place making really is and how we measure the impacts of place making tactics. Second will be a look at policy decisions both within Seattle and around the world. Lastly is a discussion about how busking is perceived as a benefit or a detriment. Each of these categories has its own discussion that I will explore.

Place making as a concept surfaced long before anyone had a name for it. “Although PPS [Project for Public Spaces] began consistently using the term ‘Placemaking’ in the mid-1990s to describe our approach, the thinking behind Placemaking gained traction in the 1960s, when PPS mentors like Jane Jacobs and William H. Whyte introduced groundbreaking ideas about designing cities for people, not just cars and shopping centers” (What is Placemaking?, n.d.). These thinkers aspired to create rich and diverse communities where the needs of citizens were easily accessible to all and communities developed on foot instead of via car.

For example, Whyte’s 1980 film, Social Life of Small Urban Spaces, enlightened us to his discovery that some people just want a place to sit down and relax (Whyte, 1980). These ideas were put to action for the first time at Paley Park and Bryant Park in New York, where Whyte proposed putting out a slew of small movable chairs. Critics worried that this could only result in theft, but the model proved to be instrumental in the revitalization of the parks (Manshel, 1988).

These are ideas widely accepted by the academic community, but movers and shakers in the field disagree on how we are measuring these outcomes. Major non-profit ArtPlace specializes in providing funding for projects in community arts engagement and creative place making. They provide a set of vibrancy indicators that they use to measure if a project they funded finds any success, such as walkability, job opportunities, small business, and population density: “Cortright and his colleagues selected attributes (such as employment rates) that could be accurately measured in communities anywhere in the country… By comparing analyses done before and after completion of each project, the organization hopes to quantify the value of its investments” (Hart, 2014). Critics argue that ArtPlace’s vibrancy indicators place too much emphasis on economic output and hard numbers. Because the success of unique creative place making projects are measured in economic value, “It doesn’t give us the tools to go back and analyze why certain projects did and didn’t work” (Moss, 2012). In addition, economic indicators such as property values often lead to difficult consequences, such as gentrification, creating more questions about whether this type of “vibrancy” isn’t ideal for communities. “Is ArtPlace’s “vibrancy” outcome really coded

language for gentrification and the displacement of people that often accompanies it?" (Essig, Issues of Outcome and Measurement, 26)

In Seattle, local policy does not encounter a lot of debate. The victories for busking rights in 1974 and 2005 encouraged many policies and programs in Seattle that support public performance opportunities. Pike Place Market supports one of the largest community of buskers downtown. Their program details an organized system on where to play, how big the group can be, what instruments are allowed, how and where to get permitted, and even about their historic nature (Pike Place Market, 2016). Sound Transit also manages a program for buskers to perform "adopting this pilot program for a 6-month period to assess the feasibility of adopting a permanent policy regarding performances by buskers" (Sound Transit, 2016).

Governments around the world are still looking for the right answers though. "Some busking supporters believe it is impossible because busking and regulation are like 'oil and water,'" but findings show that "Buskers accept local council busking laws as a legitimate part of the urban environment, and many see advantages in the rules" (McNamara & Quilter, 2016). Cities encounter their biggest conflicts between buskers and law enforcement. Since the first amendment protects busking, a police officer legally cannot shut down a performance; "And half the time, even if shutting down a street show is illegal, they'll still make up some other reason to cite you" (Hartnell, 2014). A study in Australia did not find the same problem though: "The 'magic ingredient' of busking rules in Sydney and Melbourne is that enforcement is handled sensitively and flexibly rather than harshly… Fines are only issued where 'all the other avenues have been exhausted.'" (McNamara & Quilter, 2016).

Busking itself in theory holds high benefits for society. A look at studies in early childhood education draws several connections to music and intelligence. This American study drew positive conclusions about the benefits of music: "Seventy classes of children had the number of music lessons they took increased from one or two to five a week – an increase that was made at the expense of teaching mathematics and languages. Thirty-five classes continued on the old syllabus. After three years, and despite the reduction in the amount of teaching they had received in the subject, the 'musicians' were as good as the controls at maths, and better at languages" (The Food of the Gods, 1996). Another detailed study concluded that "Music teaches children about themselves even as it teaches them about aspects of the elements, or the integral parts, of music" (Nichols & Honig, 1997).

Despite these connections between music and education, the issue of lacking place making metrics still mystifies the measurable place making benefits of busking. Some members of the public believe that buskers create a negative impact on public space; "Some people stereotype buskers as being unemployed, homeless or beggars. Most buskers are none of those things. Some people will heckle buskers and stigmatize them as such, regardless of the busker's social status" (What is Busking?, n.d.). In addition, buskers aren't always interested in contributing art to society as much as making money. A reputable San Francisco busker admits, "I'd be lying if I told you it's not about the money – it's San Francisco and I have to make rent" (Sandusky, 2015).

Methodology

Though my interests are rooted in music and community inherently, I geared my vision specifically towards increasing community appreciation of street musicians. I developed two main phases to focus my efforts and reach that goal. The first half consisted of outreach and research tactics, gathering information and conducting interviews with musicians. The second half consisted of the composition, organizing, networking, and event planning that went into the final product: a recital conveying the research I'd done through a multimedia presentation involving music, storytelling, and videography.

The Interview Process

I began my interviews with informality in mind. When I spoke with street musicians, I looked to achieve two primary goals: to hear their stories, and to understand what motivates them to busk. Stories provided deep insight into what matters to each of these musicians. By hearing their experiences through a certain perspective, I could understand their perception and disposition towards their work. Asking about memories also helped me ease into more introspective and insightful questioning about their passions. These were the questions that I asked, usually in the following order:

- What kind of music you play?
- Where do you like to perform?
- If you play in a band, how did you all meet each other?
- How did you first get into music?
- How did you first get into street music?
- How do people treat you as a street musician?
- What's one positive and one negative experience you had with another person while performing?
- Why do you busk? What motivates you?
- How much is money a factor?
- Do you also play at gigs or venues?
- Why choose the street scene over the gig scene?

I often went into an interview encouraging the musician to go off on tangents and tell unrelated stories. I did not plan to do much to control the course of the interview. Overall, I aimed to spend the time with each musician getting to know who they are, understanding their craft, and exploring what motivates them.

Some people could not meet with me in person, so I also engaged in email interviews when necessary. Email interviews do have their limitations: musicians don't get the same opportunity to dig into more intimate topics, nor do we get to expand together on interesting comments and memories. Conversations in person were the best way to gather the information that I needed from musicians.

Once I had completed the interviews, I followed up with a story analysis. Over the course of the interview process, I began picking out distinct and recurrent themes among the musicians. For some of the themes that I picked out early, I brought them up in future interviews, to gauge agreement or disagreement from other musicians. I continued to listen

for these themes as I reviewed the tapes and emails. By the end of the interview phase, I had a full list of themes assembled to inspire the second phase of the project.

Results

Theme 1

Theme 2

Theme 3

Theme 4

ETC

Interesting thoughts or experiences

The Recital Process

I began work on the recital early by starting to plan logistics. I booked the venue first so that I could start to recruit musicians to perform. Once the UW School of Music confirmed my recital date, I also reserved rehearsal spaces on Wednesday evenings. I primarily used my own network to source the performers for this project, with a focus on musicians who have performed brass band music before. I had a general idea of what instrumentation I wanted for my music compositions so that I could create a proper roster in advance. I knew that I wanted the composition to have different movements with unique styles: brass band, acoustic blues, and orchestral. I came up with the title "Humans of Street Music" and named each movement after a deconstruction of the title, starting with "Humans," then "Street," then the simply titled "Music" at the end. I assembled 16 musicians total to eventually bring the music to life.

I had to create a lot of content to effectively communicate the stories of the street musicians. All the themes that I discovered in my interviews needed to be portrayed through my music writing. To write the music, I used a music notation software that I purchased called Finale. I started with the first movement because I could write it the easiest and rehearse it the soonest: I'd already had experience with arranging existing music elsewhere, I knew that the harmonies and melodies would not be too complicated, and a lot of the music could be written as open-ended solo sections.

I picked a handful of classic brass band tunes to arrange in a medley. I selected ones that would capture a variety of different styles within the genre: "Saint James Infirmary," a classic slow blues tune; "Lil' Liza Jane," a song reminiscent of old brass parade music; and "When the Saints Go Marching In," a gospel original that has since been adopted as a brass band staple. I also selected these pieces because I wanted to eventually publish this music. Because all of those songs are open source, I knew that I wouldn't get into legal trouble with copyright laws. The following is the program description of the first movement:

> *"Humans" captures the sounds of brass bands on the street and brings them together to play a medley of classic tunes, aptly named to indicate that the performer makes this kind of music come to life more than any other factor. Though reminiscent of the sounds of New Orleans, the feeling should draw inspiration directly from Seattle brass bands, of which there*

are many. This movement should be fun more than anything else, closely reflecting the party atmosphere that follows so many brass bands. The music opens with a standard, "When the Saints Go Marching In," that is revisited later in the piece. The trumpet player introduces the piece with as much expression and ornamentation as he can muster. The band comes in on "Saint James Infirmary" with a solo opportunity, followed by "Lil' Liza Jane" incorporating call and response singing by the band. The band reunites on the first tune again, riffing over melodies and soloing together through to the end. In general, the music for this movement should be a suggestion. Like all great brass bands, the performers are encouraged to improvise, riff, solo, rewrite, and reorganize what is on the page as necessary to best allow them to express themselves. At the end of the movement, the musicians hit the final chords, but fade out in a chaotic fashion instead of resolving the final chord. This should give the listener an experience similar to turning a street corner and being greeted by an entirely new musician or band.

When we started rehearsals on this piece, I specifically told them all that I gave them music as a general roadmap and asked each performer to take their own liberties with it to create something unique together. I also intentionally encouraged them to figure out amongst themselves a set of cues and signals, so that I would not have to conduct them at the recital.

I began composing the third movement next. I did not want to start writing lyrics for the second movement yet until I had completely compiled and refined the interview themes, but I could easily incorporate the big picture themes into the third movement. To begin the immense task of a full original composition, I drew inspiration from melodies and progressions that I had experimented with for fun in the past. I had a sort of musical sketch pad that led me to craft the piece's melodic theme. From there, I just let the creative juices flow, sometimes writing just what sounded good to the ear, but often writing with a certain message in mind. See the description for the third movement:

"Music" communicates the inspirations for this project in the most musically intricate way, uniting all the major themes together through a joyous and reflective composition. Simple major chord progressions permeate throughout the song, with the main theme built on simple root and dominant chords. Sudden transitions between sections, sometimes immediate, simulates once again the experience of turning a street corner. Solo sections sometimes seem somber and expressive but often gain confidence as fellow musicians rejoin. In many cases, two melodies are competing for space, whether that be in a fugue, through contrapuntal movement, or sometimes just two themes coexisting simultaneously. Though the musicians experience plenty of conflict along the way, it is music that brings them together in the end, and "Music" communicates that with a final reprise of the theme. The piece tells a story of street music, full of emotion, conflict, and beauty. In the end, we should all realize together that street musicians love sharing their music with the world, and that ultimately it is music that unites us.

As the most musically challenging and technically complicated movement, I found myself initially struggling to effectively teach the piece. I brought in a music education graduate to help with conducting and with running rehearsals. With him up front and me directly behind him consulting, the performers gained a lot from rehearsal time. We came to agreements on tempo alterations, we dug into finely adjusting sound quality, and I helped everyone understand the message behind the music.

For each week that we rehearsed the piece, I had to change and rewrite certain parts of the music. Some parts weren't written in reasonable range and a few sections sounded imbalanced because I had never done a composition of this caliber. Halfway through the rehearsal process, I had to bring in a second flute player because the flute parts were getting lost in the thick brass texture. I ended up rewriting an entire section early on because an idea I experimented with did not translate well into the band: I tried my hand at adding an improvisation section to this piece, but the musicians found challenge in forming ideas amid such intricate orchestration and irregular meter. However, I gained inspiration and ideas each time that I changed the music, which led to a more moving composition.

Because the second movement consisted of only acoustic guitar and harmonica, I focused on creating a moderately simple chord progression centered around switching between major and minor keys (e.g. the song is written in C-minor but the chorus is in Eb-major). The movement intended to capture a grittier or more difficult side of street music, but still aimed to include positive vibes as well. I started working on the chord progression before I finished refining the interview themes and saved the lyrics for last.

In the last week before the recital, I sat down with the guitarist for a lyric-writing workshop together. I provided a rough draft of lyrics which we edited to fit both the meter of the song and his vocal style. The lyrics captured several ideas and themes from the interviews, as well as including experiences I had meeting other musicians too busy for my project. I've included the description for this movement below:

> *"Street" reflects on more emotional themes through a sound you may hear from folk musicians in downtown Seattle. The duo of the guitar and harmonica should express themselves and improvise accordingly, because musicians traditionally don't write down this type of music. It's recommended that the performers for this movement memorize the chords and lyrics, and play this song with feeling. The guitarist can be free to add in guitar licks and intermittent solos to vary the sounds of the song. Melodic lines are provided for the harmonica, but the player should focus on adding subtle bluesy lines around lyrics and expressive melodic lines with the guitar. The lyrics cover several themes, such as: childhood introductions to music along with the subsequent lifelong passion, the importance of money to some folks in competitive spaces, the impact of political climate on street music, and the connections and inspirations between musicians around the street scene. Though this piece conveys more emotional topics, the song overall should remind us that sharing music in public and bringing joy to the community can be fulfilling. With the outro chord progression written for the guitar, the ending can transition seamlessly into the final movement.*

The guitarist for the second movement served the most instrumental role for the transitions. He essentially played a vamp on a single chord between each movement until the next movement began. I included the vamping both as a method to connect extremely different genres of music and as space for me to include more content in my recital. We rehearsed this effect at our last rehearsal, where we finally tied and polished all the movements together and added some finishing touches to the entire piece of music.

Because storytelling was so important to this project, I used the space in between movements to bring in street musicians that I interviewed to speak to the audience. While the guitarist strummed, the speakers came up to the microphone and shared a short anecdote or life experience with the audience, filling about 60-90 seconds worth of time. I deliberately gave them as little prompt as I could to keep the speech very natural and human. I selected the two speakers based on my interviews, aiming to pick two people with very different experiences and perceptions to speak from.

Throughout the performance, I planned to have a video silently playing in the background of buskers performing in Seattle. I shot several of the videos in Pike Place market, where there are consistently musicians playing every day, but I also wanted to make sure that every clip showed a different location. I stood in a single spot with my camera and filmed the location that the street musician performed in, getting the music, the passerby, and the setting all within the shot. I filmed each spot without moving for about 3-6 minutes each. Once I had enough video to fill 25 minutes, I stitched them together with simple fade transitions and low volume using Adobe Premiere Pro.

Outside of the music performance itself, I wanted to give a short presentation on my project; this ended up being a shortened version of what I presented at CEP senior project night. I covered the interview process, a short score analysis, and my conclusions drawn from the project. I also wanted to finish the recital with a question and answer panel, to give the audience members an opportunity to ask practicing street musicians questions about their work. I came up with a few prompt questions for when questioning became stale and left the time limit open ended, so that I could adjust the session in real-time based on audience engagement. Lastly, I prepared a stack of programs to hand out at the event to attendees.

To get people to attend, I launched a small marketing campaign that utilized posters around campus, social media, and networking. I created a Facebook page very early on so that I could invite my closest friends and family. I also used it as a central location to post regular updates on the recital. Creating the posters became a central part of the marketing effort as a straightforward way to advertise the necessary information for the event. I printed off enough posters to hang liberally around the HUB, Gould Hall, the music building, and the Husky Band facilities. I also posted it online via Instagram and Facebook outlets. Ultimately, I primarily targeted my own personal network, because I've considered that one of my most powerful assets and I knew that they would be the most likely to be in attendance anyway.

For the day of the recital, I created an agenda that started at 1:00 PM and ended at 6:00 PM, with 4:00 PM set as the start of the recital (listed as 0:00 below). I made it into a simple checklist to ensure that there would be nothing forgotten over the course of the day. I printed it out and kept it with me, because I knew that I'd be prone to forgetfulness in a high-stress situation. Some of these tasks were very trivial, such as grabbing my laptop in the

morning; others required a substantial time investment, like rehearsing the music for the last time. I wrote the following agenda:

(-3:00) – (-2:00)
- Grab my laptop
- Order the pizza

(-2:00) – (-1:30)
- Pick up the sousaphone
- Set-up rehearsal space

(-1:30) – (-1:00)
- Eat pizza
- Debrief and prepare speakers
- Gather my composure

(-1:00) – (-0:30)
- Run rehearsal, finishing touches
- Pep talk

(-0:30) – (-0:15)
- Transition upstairs to auditorium
- Delegate tasks
- Move furniture for band
- Set up presentation
- Hook up sound system
- Start filming
- Set out programs

(-0:15) – 0:00
Doors open

0:00 – 0:05
Introductions

0:05 – 0:15
Background on research and project

0:15 – 0:45
PERFORMANCE

0:45 – 0:55
Review, conclusions, transition

0:55 – 0:75
Open Q&A seminar

0:75 – 1:20
Clean up

For the recital, I designated a few teams of individuals to help take care of logistics on the day of because I knew I could not do it all alone. I put together a house management team first, to help take care of lights, sounds, and stage equipment. All the people on this team regularly worked as concert staff for the auditorium and therefore knew their way around the necessary systems. I created a photography team to take pictures throughout the recital, from set-up to clean-up and everything in between. I put together a team of helping hands for the sole purpose of carrying equipment up from the rehearsal space to the auditorium. I also utilized this team to hand out programs. Again, I made it my goal to do as little as possible during the day of the recital, which still ended up being a substantial number of tasks for me to manage.

Results

Though I created a lot of systems to take stress off myself on the day of the recital, I also remembered to recognize that not everything goes as planned. At the very beginning of the day of my recital, I remembered that I had not yet created the program for the concert. I spent the next few hours putting together a simple program with the same design elements as my presentation. They turned out great, so I started looking for a way to print them off. My printer went too slowly, Fedex costed too much, and the printer in Graves Building broke down. Someone in my house management team did eventually find a way to print in the music building using black and white printers; in the moment, aesthetics seemed a small price to pay for my audience to have programs.

For the recital, I promised that I would feed the musicians before going onstage, as a sort of thank you for their time and efforts. I had planned to call in my order for 12 pizzas at least 60 minutes in advance, but the setback with the programs left me placing my order with only 30 minutes' notice. The staff told me that they could not bring the food in time. I responded to the situation with understanding, asked them to bring it whenever they had time, and planned to wrap up rehearsal early so people could grab food before performing. Whether it was my understanding and patience, or just a monumental effort by the staff, the pizzas did arrive on time despite the short notice, and everyone got the chance to eat on schedule.

For our next challenge, we found the instruments we needed locked in an instrument closet with no key readily available. I had keys checked out for the rehearsal space and the auditorium, but I had not realized the key for the closet would be separate. I let the house team solve that while I continued to run set-up. Because of the delay, and since we found the auditorium had been vacated early by the previous reservation, I decided to push back the rehearsal by 20 minutes and move everything upstairs early.

The set-up time proved to be the most critical time to make or break the concert. I kept running around in circles trying to get everyone in the right spot, explain to the speakers what kinds of stories I'd be looking for, setting up my presentation slides and clicker, make sure the different teams knew what to be doing, setting up the video camera, getting the in-house sound working, check-in on the keys and the programs, consult on the lights and how to change them for each performance, keep track of what furniture we removed from the basement, and help my mom find the auditorium.

Despite the chaos, I somehow managed to get it all done, and help run the rehearsal. I still hadn't taught the musicians how the transitions would work with the speakers at that

point. We had never rehearsed with all the musicians together in the same room, let alone with the two speakers ready to present. I felt thankful to have such talented musicians participating; they managed to get a lot of preparation done without me micromanaging them.

I started the presentation five minutes late intentionally, to give extra people time to show up and settle in. A few deep breaths and a last-minute group hug from the musicians, and then I started the show. The presentation felt a little nervous but mostly confident since I had done an extended version before. About halfway through speaking, I realized that I had accidentally loaded an outdated version of my slides, but the changes were insignificant so I didn't miss a beat.

Once the presentation ended, I brought up the musicians, started the video, and sat down to enjoy the show. I set up each element of the performance to start on a cue so that I could take a break and fully appreciate my handiwork. I did give each speaker a nod when their time came to walk on stage, but the music started on its own after each of them finished their stories. The first two movements went by without any major faults. The third movement lost cohesion in one or two spots, but the group quickly pulled the music back together each time before the mistakes became noticeable.

At the end, I wrote an optional cadenza into the music, which gave me an opportunity to show off for the crowd before the last chord. I found it challenging to play such a solo without much time to warm up my horn, but I still played well enough to impress. The band came back in for the last note which released with a beautiful ring that filled the space. Most importantly, everybody clapped, which is about the best result I could have hoped for.

For the last part of the recital, I invited four street musicians to the stage for the question and answer panel, ready to improvise depending on the audience and the panelists. I opened with an easy question asking for names, bands, and favorite places to play. The audience stayed engaged and asked a few questions right after me. Throughout the course of the panel, the audience asked 4-6 questions and I asked 3 questions, which felt like a good balance. I let that go for about 20 minutes before I wrapped up the questioning, thanked everyone for coming, got one last round of applause, and released the audience. In total, the recital lasted about an hour and ten minutes, which I felt was a perfect length for what I wanted to accomplish.

After the show, I scheduled time to clean up, but I became to overwhelmed with pure relief and glowing friends and family to offer much help with the labor. My teams managed to take care of everything almost autonomously while I visited with people and answered questions. In the end, everything got put back in time, people helped me get my things together, and everyone that I spoke to had only praise for the performance I created on that stage. Though I had my challenges, the recital truly went well beyond my expectations as a wonderfully entertaining and extremely valuable experience. Best of all, I got full video and audio of the performance, so that I can produce a record of it for future enjoyment.

Conclusions

Being able to share a story of street music with the community brought immense value to musicians as well as myself. I discovered that buskers seek an outlet to play their music on the street both to express their art form and to engage their community. More than anything,

they want to bring a smile to people's faces. I relate to these motivations as a musician myself, as I also strive to move audiences through my music. Music communities, especially buskers, really know how to have fun out on the street, no matter how much work it can be.

To facilitate this project, I had to further my own musicianship out of necessity. Joining some of the music circles that I joined required that I impress on my instrument. I may be a skillful player but some bands just didn't have the space for me. Whether that had to do with my musicianship or my time commitments wasn't articulated to me, but either way it inspired me to work harder on my playing. Going forward in music, I plan to get more involved in the HONK! scene in Seattle, whether through the groups I jammed with or with new musicians.

Regarding my future career, I found great passion in engaging my local communities in a new and forward way. Street musicians usually took considerable pride in their playing and often happily opened up to me after I introduced myself and my interest in their work. Part of that came from their eagerness to engage with a fan and musician, but my charismatic and genuine demeanor also helps facilitate those sorts of cold introductions. I did feel nervous sometimes, especially in front of more talented musicians, but I've learned to take a deep breath and go for it regardless.

Though I faced a great challenge bringing a street atmosphere into a concert hall, I felt that the program I created appeared transparent to the audience and engaged them in a positive way. Talking to friends and family after the show suggested to me that they truly did garner greater appreciation for street music. Being able to show my presentation helped with that, so that people knew what to look and listen for as they enjoyed the show.

I felt more stress than I ever had on the day of the recital, but I delegated and managed everything quite well, all things considered. The performance sounded great, the transitions were smooth, and the program never grew stale. I feel a deep sense of pride in being able to put on an event with so many moving parts, something that I've always enjoyed doing but never practiced on such a large scale. In addition, I created musical and artistic content that could rival that of graduate students, with not much more than a piano and a camera.

I aim to transfer these event planning and creative content skills into my future career. I recognize my need for a work environment that moves and changes with me. As I homed in the focus of my project, it became increasingly obvious that research and data just doesn't excite me. In my ideal future career, I'll be doing work like that of my project, organizing and managing music events. In the meantime, I'll be looking for any work where I can engage my community in an impactful and meaningful way.

Having fostered a greater appreciation and understanding of street music may be the greatest, most lasting impact on me from this project. If one truly wishes to appreciate the community of street music, they need simply follow my footsteps and hear the stories themselves. Having talked to and played with buskers gave me the most appreciation for this city asset, and teaching others about it truly taught me the most. I'll forever be an advocate for the humans of street music.

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Appendix B: Reflection

From kindergarten to graduation, my story has been full of challenges, achievements, and discoveries. Going to school for sixteen years straight only gives you a perspective of the world through education, which has culminated into figuring out how I fit into this crazy world outside of the classroom. In many ways, I feel prepared for this transition; yet other parts of me couldn't be more intimidated by the job market and career paths, a feeling shared by many in my generation. To find success moving forward, I must take a moment to look back. This reflective essay will be a way for me to recount the story of me, from my first kindergarten gingerbread man hunt to my last senior year job hunt.

To understand a foundation of me, I've needed to take a hard look at my family, something that has been valuable but difficult. My parents met in a bar and conceived me in their early 20's. They stopped dating before I can remember, so having separated parents has always seemed normal to me. My mom lived in a Tacoma trailer park when she gave birth to me; my birth motivated her to go back to school and study to become a nurse. She lived in that park with me for five years, surviving on welfare, letting my grandma babysit me, and taking classes while working a part time job. That hard work paid off when she got a job as an LPN. Shortly after she started dating a man who is now my stepdad, and moved into the suburbs. From there, she found stability and comfort. Together they raise two little girls in a comfortable home with new cars and PTA meetings, truly living the American dream. Most of these successes happened without me, while they both worked jobs and took care of my baby siblings, but as a result I learned to take care of myself throughout high school and college.

My dad took a much different route; he currently has six kids with five different women, working two jobs so he can continue to pursue an acting career. While he doesn't hold regrets, he's faced plenty of challenges along the way. He made sure we all had great childhood experiences when we visited every other weekend. Around my middle school years, he had his hardest time when he faced the infidelity of his wife and the death of his mother. We didn't see him as much during this time. I spent many weekends babysitting and entertaining my siblings while our dad either slept in or went out, often gambling. Fortunately, I had the maturity at this point to help take care of the family until he finally got out of his rut, while I planned to move in for my freshman year of college. We grew a lot together that year, and today he's doing much better for himself: he's single, mending relationships with his kids, finally getting small acting gigs that pay, and at the very least comfortable in his poverty.

Living in low income households left an impact on my economic identity. Even today I feel the effects of such an upbringing, especially at a major research university where most of my peers have never dealt with this sort of disadvantage. This can amount in smaller impacts, like missing buy-in band trips while my friends recount incredible stories and adventures; or it can show up more tangibly, like with the stress I experience every spring looking for a way to pay my summer living expenses. Many of my peers get support from their family. I get my support from the Husky Promise. I have my dad to thank for the financial aid I get, because of his economic status; my mother's income would have been too high. Unfortunately, my

stepdad won't allow her to support me in college, so that economic status does me no help. I've come to terms with being on my own out here in Seattle, no matter the consequences.

More positively, these childhood experiences also taught me the independence I've carried with me through college. Seeing my parents work so hard showed me work ethic and problem solving. Being bullied through middle school and high school both by my friends and by my stepdad motivated me to apply myself to my own personal endeavors. These skills certainly proved useful in high school: I joined running start, theater club, and multiple bands inside and outside of school. I always kept myself busy, partly because I didn't like to be bored, and partly because I use a busy schedule as a defense mechanism against personal reflection. I did not enjoy much of my high school experience, but my extra-curricular activities kept me sane.

My senior year in high school, I learned to appreciate life for its simpler pleasures. A power outage put our morning band class in the dark, so our music teacher improvised a new lesson plan for the day. He would perform John Cage's piano concerto – 4'33" – and have us reflect on the experience. (If you don't already know, the song fundamentally questions what qualifies as music: the entire four minutes and 33 seconds of the piece consists of the pianist sitting at the piano in complete and utter silence.) As our teacher sat at the piano, essentially pretending to play complex and intricate music, I suddenly felt the sound of the world. The silence was deafening. Empty space amplified every little sound in the room. The experience moved me to open my perspective, to let go of insignificant worries, and to enjoy the little things. I later wrote about it in the UW application essay that eventually earned me my acceptance letter.

In attending the University of Washington, I most looked forward to getting a fresh start. Being away from my family, with new friends and opportunities, excited me more than anything else. I experienced that change very quickly when I moved in with my dad in July and joined the Husky Marching Band in September. Commuting from Tacoma to Seattle proved very taxing, but luckily, I made so many friends during "band camp" that I'd done my share of couch surfing before classes had even begun.

Once classes did begin, I got right back into old habits filling my schedule. I started studying in architecture before missing science and switching to civil engineering. I kept up with music in Husky Band and symphonic band on campus, while joining a blues band with some friends off campus. I got hired with College Works Painting, the hardest job I've ever worked. In December, I tore my ACL in a motorcycle accident, just in time for me to start working in February. Immediately I found myself balancing work, school, music, commuting, and life, but I certainly learned valuable time management and organizational skills because of it.

Working with College Works became one of the defining experiences of my college career. Through the experience, I learned to start and run a small painting company. I made estimates, sold work, hired employees, managed finances, and (most fun) managed projects. I achieved these things without a car, all while nurturing a knee injury, which earned me the "Whatever It Takes" award for my efforts. Ultimately, I took this internship on to gain

professional experience and to become more confident in myself. I felt that I reached that goal by the end: I did some incredible things my freshman year, especially considering my circumstances, and I made some lifelong friends along the way.

As I continued in Husky Band, it quickly became the single largest defining experience of my college career. By the end of sophomore year, I became a section leader for the trombones. I taught and managed 28 trombones my first year and 30 trombones my second year. Each year, I had to teach the incoming class the Husky Band style: how to march, dance, and play the music, all at the same time. I built the culture of the section from the ground up and established clear expectations for everyone. Most of all, I made sure they all had just as much fun as I had, which is perhaps what I'm most proud of throughout that leadership experience. By the end of my tenure, our section had earned the "Most Musical Section" award, and I personally earned the "Most Spirited Bandsmen" trophy, both major achievements for me and my section.

I invested so much time into activities outside the classroom that I'm surprised it took me until summer after sophomore year to have my first academic identity crisis. I had to retake two different key science and math classes necessary to be accepted in my engineering degree, and my GPA was far below the recommended average. So, when I applied to civil engineering in July and got rejected in August, I suddenly had to rethink my academic track. I couldn't reapply for engineering the following year because of financial aid restrictions. Math, physics, and geography all didn't feel like the right major to me. I hadn't registered for any classes and I didn't know what to do.

I finally met with a civil and environmental engineering advisor to explore options. I explained my situation, and then I explained why I wanted to be in CEE in the first place. She rifled through some papers and pulled out an information sheet for Community, Environment, and Planning. She told me that CEP seemed more like what I had been trying to mold CEE into; and sure enough, my interest was piqued. CEP gave me more opportunity to explore how people use space and different ideas of placemaking. I applied and got accepted within the span of just a couple weeks, and found myself sitting at orientation that September. The open and intentional curriculum built within a student run major filled with ambitious adults trying to make an impact on the world turned out to be a perfect place for me and my next identity crisis.

I continued in CEP taking classes focused in urban planning and transportation. My grades were decent, but I couldn't help noticing myself falling behind in technical skills compared to my peers. I couldn't navigate Adobe suite and my GIS skills felt below average. I worked a job through winter and spring quarter with UW transportation services, which did help with various hard skills, but I wanted something more substantial for the summer. I believed that finding a dream internship would give me the skills I wanted to catch up with my cohort.

I applied for several positions in Seattle and even got a few interviews out of them. My prospects felt good initially, but slowly I started getting rejection emails for each of them. Some of them brought up my qualifications as reason while others pointed to a lack of passion

or interest. The second point troubled me the most. I wanted those jobs very badly, albeit for financial and educational reasons. I would come to revisit and reflect on those ideas that winter; in the meantime, I had to pay the bills until school started again. I continued working for transportation services, I found a job working front desk at a hotel, I worked on the side painting houses for an old College Works friend for a couple weeks, and I kept gigging around Seattle. Working 60-70 hours a week in uninspiring jobs turned out to be extremely draining, but I made the money I needed.

Senior year brought a lot of change and reflection. Fall quarter I spent my time starting my senior project and enjoying my last year in Husky Band. The first signs of change came when registering for winter quarter classes. The GIS-intensive classes I planned for weren't available, and frankly, they discouraged me anyway. The classes I ended up taking instead were emailed out to the major by our advisor, Kelly, and I took them only because they seemed interesting to me. The first one was a professional leadership class where I learned team building, sociology ideas, and management techniques. The second one, with Jim Diers, covered community organization and social movements at the graduate level – which ended up being the only time I ever found success in a graduate level course at the university.

I thrived in classes where the topics revolved around people. Learning about how people organize and work together in different settings through different classes proved to be a valuable learning experience for me. As I reflected on these classes and my interests, I realized that people are my passion. All of my extra-curricular experiences in college have been about the people all along: College Works, section leader, transportation services, even hotel work. I don't care about technical skills because I'll never be happy at a job sitting behind a computer all day. If I had gotten one of those "dream" internships over the summer, I might have started myself down a career path that led to disappointment and frustration. Those who interviewed me recognized that I didn't have the passion, not because I didn't want the job, but because those jobs weren't my calling.

When I made this realization, my senior project on street music suddenly acquired direction. I originally planned to study data, public perceptions, and spaces. In the end, I studied the people, sharing human experiences with musicians to share their stories with my community. I enjoyed my project more and achieved greater results by focusing my work on ideas I cared about. I'm especially proud of my result because I did not believe that I could put on such an intense and intricate event. Even my project mentor advised straying away from such a challenging feat, because he knew how much of a struggle it can be to unite 16 musicians on a music project in the span of a couple months. Nevertheless, I went above and beyond to create an incredible recital that I can forever show off as one of my greatest accomplishments.

I am extremely grateful for the path that led me to these realizations, but I'm nervous that it took me so long. I am about to enter an unforgiving and competitive world without a clear idea of the job market I'm looking for. I know I love people, organizing, and especially music, but where that road leads to isn't completely clear yet. One thing I have come to terms with through this reflection is that, wherever I end up, it's not necessarily forever. Just

as I have changed here in college, I can still change in my career. I hope I get the opportunity to try different sectors and fields before I retire a seasoned trombone performer. Until then, wherever the road takes me, I'll remain open minded, ambitious, and continue to bite off just a little bit more than I can chew.