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Exploring music careers: music graduates and early career trajectories in UK

Dr Roberta Comunian, King's College London

Roberta Comunian is Lecturer in Creative and Cultural Industries at the Department of Culture, Media and Creative Industries at King's College London. Dr Comunian's work focuses on the relationship between arts, cultural regeneration projects and the cultural and creative industries. She has currently leading an AHRC research network exploring the connections between Higher Education and the Creative Economy and has publishes extensively on the career opportunities and patterns of creative graduates in UK.

Dr Alessandra Faggian, Ohio State University

Alessandra Faggian is Associate Professor at The Ohio State University, AED Economics Department and co-editor of Papers in Regional Science. Dr Faggian's research interests lie in the field of Regional and Urban Economics, Demography, Labour Economics and Economics of Education. Her publications cover a wide range of topics including migration, human capital, labour markets, creativity and local innovation and growth.

Dr Sarah Jewell, University of Reading.

Sarah Jewell is a Lecturer in Economics at the University of Reading. Her research interests lie in the fields of Labour Economics, the Economics of Higher Education and Life Satisfaction. She has published in journals such as: Oxford Economic Papers, Regional Studies, Feminist economics and International Review of Finance.

Abstract

The chapter examines the connections and dynamics linking higher education and music careers. The emerging literature on the role of higher education in the creative economy, in general, reveals a growing interest in the sector, which is expanding courses in this area. However, creative graduates face great difficulties in entering the professional networks and employment opportunities of the creative sector. Drawing on statistical data from HESA (Higher Education Statistical Agency) and some explorative interviews with recent graduates, we explore the career patterns and trajectories of music graduates and their employment after graduation. The findings suggest that music graduates are overall aware of the difficulty of a career in music and performing arts. Compared to other creative graduates, music graduates enjoy a stronger position on the labour market but are also more likely to go into further education. Only a minority of music graduates enter the music and performing arts sector, and an even smaller group enters the broader creative economy. Education is a preferred career path but other sectors are also relevant employers. Music graduates seem to suffer (in the short term) in the transition from education to work but the longitudinal views highlight a stronger position in the job market and improved graduate level occupations. The accounts from graduates' interviews point to the need to offer a broader range of career opportunities and options to graduates but they leave university.

1. Introduction

Music is a key sector of the cultural and creative industries as defined by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS, 1998). Overall, the music industry is very well researched both in relation to its economic-business dynamics in the private commercial sector (Lorenzen and Frederiksen, 2005) and its cost characteristics as public good within the arts economy literature (Frey, 1994). Whether looking at the private commercial sector, or the public a key essential component of all socio-and economic analysis of the sector is related to the role of musicians and their creative work and careers (Bennett, 2008, Hracs, 2009). While this paper does not adopt a network based methodology, it is strongly related to other works in this book, as it explores the initial steps in music careers and music productions which are often at the base of future creative networks. Within this broader field of research, this chapter is specifically interested in exploring the dynamics and characteristics of early career musicians, specifically the ones that recently graduated from

music degrees in UK universities. There has been a growing number of works on musician careers; most of them concentrate on specific patterns and aspects of music careers structures of people who are already musicians. However less is known about the early steps of musicians, specifically in relation to how music careers start (Bennett, 2007). While we acknowledge that many successful musicians are not university graduates, the paper focus on music graduates and their career perspectives, using data collected from the Higher Education Statistical Agency (HESA). Therefore, the paper considers specifically the role played by a higher education degree in initiating and supporting the careers of aspiring musicians. Following earlier work (Comunian et al., 2011, Comunian et al., 2010, Faggian et al., 2013) linking higher education degrees in creative subjects to career perspectives, this contribution aims to specifically explore the relationship between music graduates and their careers also in the broader framework of the creative economy. Many authors highlight the importance of networks in artists (Comunian, 2012) and musician careers, it is therefore important to take a step back and reflect on when and where these network start and develop. The role played by education in starting and nurturing these networks need to receive further exploration. The chapter is articulated as follows: the next section introduces the literature and previous research in the field. We then briefly describe the data and methodology used in this research. The following sections present the result from the short-term perspective of six months after graduation and explore the longitudinal data. Finally, we discuss the findings, conclude and present further possible future research avenues.

2. Music careers and music graduates

The literature on music careers is very extensive and acknowledges how music work fits within the broader characteristics of creative and cultural work (Banks, 2007). In general, all these studies acknowledge that creative labour is characterised by precarity, instability and low economic rewards (Gill and Pratt, 2008, Gill, 2002, Menger, 1999). Further literature on

music careers specifically considers also how this instability impact musicians work and life (Hracs, 2009). The characteristic of work are also intertwined with issue of self-identity and personal motivation as for many being a musician is not just a career choice but key to the perception of self and self-worth (Oakland et al., 2012). Others sources also highlight the collaborative nature of music work (Martin, 2006) which is sometimes very informal and but can also have strong organisational structures and patterns, for example in classical music (Faulkner, 1973). Adding to an already complex balance of work, career and networks, technological changes are also having an impact on the music sector, as recent works emphasise (Hracs, 2012).

Within this broader landscape of creative and music work, it is important to consider the role played by higher education and the delicate transition between training and work. This is very important and many authors considered training as part of the creative identity building. Oakley (2009) considers the role of higher education in shaping the attitude of artists towards work, wondering whether the attitude towards 'sacrificial labour' (attitude towards accepting lower economic rewards and the emphasis on gratification coming from their practice) is in fact an acquired framework that is embedded in their training. Similarly, Juuti and Littleton (2010, Juuti and Littleton, 2012) reflect on how students form their identity entering academia and how after - in the transition from study to work - they redefine their possible identities and trajectories in relation to employment or career paths. The literature also highlights how the networks developed within the higher education context determine and shape the career opportunities of recent graduates (Hearn and Bridgstock, 2010).

In some of these studies there is also an emphasis on what role higher and further education institutions play in shaping the identity and employment opportunities of music graduates. Bennett (2007) in respect to music graduates and their training engages with the limited perspective of higher education of the broader range of jobs and professions that can be undertaken by a music graduate: "musicians require understanding of their diverse cultures and communities in order to provide services relevant to the community need [...]" (Bennett 2007 p.185). In this respect she specifically considers the new role that cultural and creative industries can play "the wide range of activities within the cultural industries highlights the potential for suitably skilled musicians to diversity their roles" (Bennett 2007 p.185). In the research Bennett (2007) also considers and questions what should be the role of higher education in reference to shaping careers in this field, reporting Aguilar (1998) she considers whether "educational institutions [...] should at all times take the responsibility for establishing a process of adjusting educational policies, goals and structures to the world in which future musician will work" (Aguilar, 1998 quotes in Bennett 2007). Alongside the value and impact of higher education, it is important to also consider how the nature of music work and practice also shapes its employment patterns and the kind of opportunities that recent graduates can enjoy. In particular, Freakley & Neelands (2003) highlight the importance of networks to access different range of employment and

opportunities “the notion of the artist as a micro-business in a network of trading relationships was completely unfamiliar to all but one of the participants” (p. 59) . These dynamics are hard to capture through statistical data but qualitative interviews can help uncover some of these network dynamics. Since the seminal work of Granovetter (1973) the literature on social capital has highlighted the importance of social ties are for finding work opportunities in a range of fields and contexts (Erickson, 2001). This literature is even more relevant for creative occupations, where career and opportunities are usually based around temporary projects (Cattani and Ferriani, 2008, Tams and Arthur, 2010) and where symbolic capital - as well as socio and cultural capital - plays a pivotal role (Jones, 2010, Jones, 2002).

However, these issues are not limited only to music graduates. The broader creative graduates group has recently been focus of further research (Ball et al., 2010, Comunian et al., 2011) and similar patterns emerge. Creative graduates are more likely to experience lower salaries, be in part-time and freelance occupations, and a lower percentage enter graduate occupations compared to other graduates (Comunian et al. 2011).

Therefore this chapter aims to focus on music graduates career perspectives and consider their career opportunities after graduation, specifically linking it with work in creative occupations with reference to the importance of networks.

3. Data and Methodology

Our empirical analysis is mainly based on data collected by the Higher Education Statistical Agency (from now on referred to as HESA). However, in order to help understanding the data and findings, a handful of qualitative interviews with recent music graduates in the UK were conducted between May and June 2013¹.

In the UK, HESA collects annual student record data, for all students, containing information on personal characteristics (such as age, gender, ethnicity), course characteristics (including subject studied at the 4-digit JACS code², mode of studying, i.e. full-time or part-time, institution attended, final grade achieved for finalists) and location of parental domicile (at unit postcode level). Within UK higher education the institution attended can be placed into several different groups: Russell group universities (comprising of 20 research intensive universities who receive the majority of research grant and contract income), other old universities, new universities (established as part of the abolition of the binary divide in

¹ Interviewees were recruited through mail outs to recent alumni amongst graduates from two UK Russell Group universities, one conservatoire and one new university. The communications enabled us to recruit 5 recent (between one and two years from graduation) graduates. Interviews were transcribed and coded and are used in the text to discuss findings emerging from the HESA data. The names of the interviewees have been changed to respect anonymity.

² For more information on the Joint Academic Coding System (or JACS) see http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=158&Itemid=233

1992) and Higher Education/Further education colleges. The Russell group universities, followed by the other old universities are generally considered to be more prestigious.

We link student record data to two further datasets:

1. Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Institutions (also known as DHLE). On behalf of HESA all higher education institutions are required annually to collect data on the destinations of their graduates six months after graduation, via the 'Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Institutions' (also known as DHLE) survey with a target response rate of 80% for British domiciled full time students. The DHLE provides information on graduate employment six months after graduation,³ this includes not only the salary and location of their job, but also a brief description of their tasks and the SOC4 (standard occupational code) and SIC4 (Standard Industrial Classification) codes of their occupation, in particular we focus on their ability to enter creative occupations. In this analysis, we utilise data for British domiciled students belonging to the 2004/2005 graduate cohort. The student record sample consists of a total of 442,518 finalists, of which we have 313,800 valid DHLE returns (see table 1). The sample includes both undergraduate and postgraduate students.
2. Longitudinal Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Institutions Survey (LDLHE). In November 2010 (up to 3.5 years after graduation) 224, 590 of the 332, 100 2006/2007 cohort DLHE respondents were invited to undertake the LDLHE survey. In total 49, 065 responses were received representing about 15% of those responding to the original DLHE survey. This sample excludes post-graduates and focuses on British domiciled first degree graduates and other undergraduate students⁴, so we have a sample size of 34,229 students. Weights are provided to allow for the over-sampling of some groups and hence any descriptive statistics and regressions will be weighted using these weights. The LDLHE survey contains information on employment activity 3.5 years after graduation, similar to that of the DLHE survey, although the LDLHE is more detailed than the DLHE survey. In particular the LDLHE survey includes information on employment activity, employment since graduation, job characteristics, occupation, industry, location of employment, salary 3.5 years after graduation and questions relating to whether the degree/subject was important to the job. The LDLHE data is linked to their student record and DLHE return.

³ Although six months may seem relatively early on in graduate careers, it is still a useful indicator of both longer term labour market success (Elias et al., 1999) and assimilation into the graduate labour market. Elias et al. (1999) found that students employed six months after graduation were more likely to be in graduate jobs three and half years later, while graduates unemployed six months after leaving university tended to have lower earnings and lower job satisfaction later on in their careers (McKnight, 1999).

⁴ Other undergraduates are those that are taking a qualification below first degree level so include students taking foundation degrees, higher education certificates and diplomas and any other qualification classed as higher education level but below first degree status.

These two datasets are used to capture the career trajectory of music graduates. In the analysis, students are classified, according to the subject studied, at two different levels. Firstly, we distinguish between creative and non-creative graduates⁵. Broadly speaking creative graduates include students in creative arts & design subjects (all JACS codes starting with W), creative media graduates (all JACS codes starting with P) and other creative graduates: subjects mainly linked to technologies-based creative subjects and architecture. We then separate out music graduate (JACS codes starting W3), so we have three categories of Non-creative, other creative and music students.

Using a creative job approach as suggest by NESTA (2008) we consider both creative careers within the creative industries but also creative occupations in other non-creative industries. Our definition of a creative job is based on the initial DCMS definition based on 4-digit SIC codes. However, we supplement this definition with the inclusion of other creative workers (based on occupations using 4-digit SOC codes that are defined as creative) based in industries outside the creative industries as identified by DCMS (2010) (see also Comunian et al. 2010 for detailed SOC and SIC codes). Moreover, we also took on board some of the criticisms to the DCMS definition provided by a recent report by NESTA (2008). We also divided creative jobs into specialised (creative occupations in creative industries), embedded (creative occupations in non-creative industries) and supportive (non-creative occupations in creative industries) jobs.

The paper is also concerned with the alternative careers undertaken by music graduates that do not stay in the music or creative occupations sector, therefore, an overall set of sector groups were created based on the occupation and industry with the creative sector superseding any other sector group (since there was some overlap). Careers include: 1. Creative sector; 2. Science, Technology & Engineering; 3. Health & Social Welfare; 4. Education; 5. Financial, Property & Business; 6. Public Administration; 7. Other

4. A short-term perspective on music graduates

4.1 Data and sample

As table 1 summarises, 51,697 students graduated in 2004/2005 in other creative disciplines in the UK (corresponding to 11.7% of the students graduating that year), with 5,299 music students (1.2%). On average 71% of students responded to the DLHE survey with slightly higher response rates for other creative (73%) and music students (77%). The LDLHE refers to a different cohort but the breakdown of the subject groups is very similar.

Table 1: Sample Sizes

Finalists	DLHE	LDLHE
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⁵ Graduates were categorised as ‘bohemian graduates’ if they were a single honours students and their subject fell under any of the creative categories; if they were a joint honours student and their first or both subjects were creative – those whose second but not first subject were classed as bohemian were classified as “non-bohemian”; if they were a joint honours student with three subjects and two or three of the subjects were creative (even if the first subject was not creative).

Non-Creative	385,522	87.1	271,917	86.7	29,954	87.51
Other Creative	51,697	11.7	37,831	12.1	3,822	11.17
Music	5,299	1.2	4,052	1.3	453	1.32
Total	442,518	100	313,800	100	34,229	100

Our analysis includes postgraduate (27.0%), undergraduate (60.59%) and other undergraduate (12.70%), however, in the DLHE data we only map undergraduates and other undergraduates data. If we look at the institutional typology breakdown (table 2) to consider how music students are distributed across UK universities we can see that compared to other creative students they are strongly present in the Russell Group and Other 'Old' institutions and less present in New Universities than other creative students. Faggian et al. (2013) argue that graduates from subjects with stronger presence in Russell Group universities can influence the salary and 'signalling potential' (Spence, 1973) of these students in the labour market.

Table 2: Institution Breakdown by Subject

	Non- Creative	Creative	Music
Russell group	24.3	7.75	20.32
Other 'Old'	27.68	13.41	19.82
New	39.5	57.62	32.61
Colleges	8.51	21.23	27.25
Total	100	100	100

Two of the music graduates interviewed studied in a Russell group university and highlighted the importance of the type of education and qualification an older university provides - more research and less performance based – compared to conservatoires

[...] the perception is you go to a reputable university and you get a research degree, it is very academic and on paper you have a good degree and a good university and that will open doors (Sandra)

4.2 Destinations, Employment & Geography

Looking at the destination of students, 6 months after graduation for the 2004/5 cohort (table 3), using their DLHE survey responses, it is possible to see that music students are less likely to be in full time work and more likely to be in part time work and particularly more likely to be self-employed/freelance than other students – although 22% go onto further

study which is more than double other creative students. Altogether it is also important to note that music students have a lower unemployment rate than other creative students.

Table 3: Destinations of 2004/5 DLHE Respondents

	Non-creative	Other Creative	Music
Full-time employment	55.93	48.29	34.4
Self-employed/Freelance	1.46	6.3	11.65
Part-time/unpaid employment	7.86	11.41	12.27
Work and Study	10.37	7.55	9.06
Further study only	12.51	10.02	22.01
Unemployed	4.72	7.92	4.91
Other	7.15	8.51	5.7

As in previous research (Bennett and Stanberg, 2006) the graduates interviewed were very aware of the challenges of work in the music sector and also of the importance of a portfolio career or a job to support living while pursuing a career in performance

it is really hard to know what to do, the hardest thing, I haven't gone straight into freelancing I would have not survived this time last year, I did not know enough people, I had not done enough, moving to a new city [...] I do not think many people can do it where you finish a degree and be a professional musician like that [...] you have to build it up and do other things [...] (Maria)

In my head I would love to do more performing, number two is developing the company and then teaching, at the moment is the other way around doing mostly teaching, secondly the company and thirdly gigging, so in the long term, I am trying to build the company so that the teaching can diminish [...] (Sandra)

In reference to the role played by further study, this seems very important for students (especially if they aim to become performers) as they whole understand their education as having to include a postgraduate qualification and potential life-long training. As the graduates interviewed reported there is a general understanding that musician training will involve further qualifications

so I hope to do a further postgraduate performance degree at a conservatoire [...] I never saw that as being the end, I always had it in my mind that I would do either a postgraduate studies in performance or a Postgraduate Certificate in Education I never saw that as being the end point (Anna)

I enrolled in a postgraduate diploma at the [conservatoire name] and half-way through the academic year I decided to transfer to the MA course as one year did not seem enough to do all I wanted to do (Maria)

In the HESA survey, individuals (not all respond) are asked the name of the course and the subject they are studying. Based on this information a professional subject of study is created (using the SOC code). For music students (table 4) the most common occupational groups of further study 33% are on courses which are education related and 46% music related.

Table 4: Occupational Subject of Music Graduates' Further study

	Freq.	%
Teaching professionals	292	32.88
Musicians	406	45.72
Musicians	136	15.32
Composers, Arrangers, Conductors and Musical Directors	64	7.21
Musical instrument players	206	23.2
Actors/entertainers	54	6.08
Vocalists	48	5.41
Other	88	9.91
No of obs.	888	100

Looking more closely to the sectors of employment, we first consider whether music graduates enter creative jobs. Overall 42% of other creative are in a creative job compared to 30% of music students and only 9% of non-creative graduates (table 5). If we look specifically at creative sectors we find that only 21% of music graduates find jobs in the music and performing arts sector. It is interesting to notice that the high concentration of music graduates in the music and performing arts corresponds also to a high concentration of them in non-creative sectors, with in fact only 9% entering other creative sector.

Parkes and Jones (2011) consider a different motivation behind the choice of students towards a career in performance or a career in music education. The graduate interviewed highlighted the difficulty of entering a career in music and tended to consider a broader career in the arts and other creative fields as good alternative

having put all the efforts in, I was gigging regularly in several bands, there was enough work to sustain me throughout the summer, thankfully, which afford me the opportunity to look for jobs, I had 75 jobs applications during the period, 65 of them where related to arts and music in one way or another, the other 10 I would have been a chief salesman, bar tender [...] (Mark)

Table 5 also includes a breakdown of the non-creative sectors with 37% of music graduates in the education sector (which is a much larger proportion than other creative and non-creative graduates) and is the most popular sector for music graduates.

Table 5: Sector of Employment by Subject group

	Non Creative	Other Creative	Music	Total
Creative	9.06	41.97	29.97	13.18
Advertising	1.81	3.59	1.62	2.01
Architecture and design	1.29	6.3	0.29	1.87
Design, designer fashion & Crafts	0.53	12.42	0.85	1.94
Film, TV, Radio and Photography	0.53	5.7	3.16	1.17
Music and Performing Arts	0.74	5.22	21.29	1.5
Publishing	0.74	3.56	1.03	1.08
Software, computer games & Electronic Publishing	2.82	2.89	0.85	2.8
Libraries, museums & art galleries	0.6	2.28	0.92	0.8
Non-Creative	90.95	58.03	70.00	86.83
Science, Technology & Engineering	10.34	4.68	2.71	9.58
Health & Social Welfare	24.81	3.82	4.07	22.1
Education	20.53	12.97	36.87	19.82
Financial, Property & Business	14.94	9.27	8.51	14.2
Public Administration	5.79	2.85	2.24	5.4
Other	14.54	24.44	15.63	15.71

However, all of the interviewees highlighted the difficulty of translating their study into a profession (this of course links back to the issue of further training or re-training into a different field like education)

there was very little in my degree, whereby I could say ‘well, I have learned that, how can I apply that to the real world’ I think it was very much I am learning about music and I am in my own little music bubble, and then suddenly you leave university and you find there isn’t a job for a music graduate, you need to find what your strength is and what the job available are, because I did not have a clue really of what I could do with my degree [...] (Mark)

If we look more closely at the type of creative jobs graduates get (table 6). Music students are more likely to be in supportive jobs than other graduates and less likely to be in specialised or embedded jobs than other creative graduates.

Table 6: Creative Job Type

	Non Creative	Other Creative	Music	Total
Specialised	2.28	21.74	16.65	4.74
Supportive	2.6	6.93	8.13	3.18
Embedded	4.17	13.29	5.22	5.26
Non-creative	90.95	58.03	70.00	86.83

Three of the five graduates interviewed were currently working in a supportive role within the creative / music industry. This was considered a fulfilling career option (rather than being articulated as a failure to be a specialised creative).

I now work for a different agency in the city centre, I am doing the same role I am an account executive, which is the person who liaise with the client and leads the creative team, I do not do the creative work myself but I organise it which is what I am good at [...] (Laura)

Related to the role played in supportive roles (but also more broadly to music graduates who are working in other sectors), the students interviewed were able to articulate very well how the skills that they learned specifically in their music degree were valuable also in other areas of work:

the focus, to practice 6 to 8 hours a day it takes some dedication, it is a mind-set, that practice takes a lot, there are a lot of tests along the way that push your buttons, it is managing the frustration of not being able to get it done straight away, the expectation of what is to come at the end, those skills were things I could take out into this role [...] the performance aspect of it, helps you in meeting, showing venue, there is an air of confidence that is apparent [...] (Maria)

Musicians are very good at working in team, very motivated and disciplined [...] our skills are more broadly applicable in life in most jobs, musicians have to be very organised with time and very efficient with your time [...] the drive might initiate maybe earlier than university, but the punctually for training and rehearsal is definitely trained in and expected [...] the idea of efficiency come at that high level of study [...] (Sandra)

It is important to also consider the geography of study (linked to course provision (Comunian and Faggian, 2011) in music and creative disciplines but also the region where graduates get their first employment. As table 8 shows other creative followed by music graduates are more likely to be in the London with music graduates more likely to be in the South East than the other graduates. London is the most frequent region for creative jobs

with 33% of all creative jobs in London and 41% of creative jobs taken by music graduates in London.

Table 7: Region of study & employment for creative jobs

	Region of Study				Region of creative Employment			
	Non Creative	Other Creative	Music	Total	Non Creative	Other Creative	Music	Total
North East	4.7	3.44	2.94	4.53	3.45	2.57	2.33	3.1
North West	10.79	9.79	10.62	10.67	8.66	8.86	10.71	8.78
Yorkshire & The Hum	9.13	8.96	9.66	9.12	6.44	6.42	3.11	6.36
East Midlands	7.82	9.79	2.98	7.99	4.79	4.66	2.64	4.69
West Midlands	8.13	6.44	6.53	7.91	5.92	5.51	5.75	5.76
East of England	5.1	3.17	5.06	4.87	6.56	5.16	5.9	6.02
London	14.93	21.61	27.25	15.86	30.71	35.6	40.99	32.77
South East	14	13.3	14.53	13.93	13.89	11.11	10.87	12.79
South West	6.68	9.49	6.3	7	7.08	7.66	5.43	7.26
Wales	5.97	5.93	5.11	5.95	3.19	3.68	3.73	3.39
Scotland	10.02	6.73	7.7	9.61	6.96	6.92	7.92	6.96
Northern Ireland	2.73	1.34	1.3	2.55	2.34	1.85	0.62	2.12
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

As shown in table 7 it is worth mentioning here that the largest proportion of music students are based in London and this is a greater proportion than other students especially non-creative. Other popular regions include the South East and the North West and Yorkshire and the Humberside – which are common across all graduates. The importance of London emerged also in the interviews as one of the graduate highlighted and this will be discussed further in the chapter:

I am a Londoner, I commuted during my degree, it was silly to leave London to study music because London is the European capital of Music [...] (Sandra)

A graduate from the a university in the north of England considered also the advantage of students based in London

in London where the industry is based, it is a lot London centring, there is a lot more opportunities if a record label sees you, an agency, they can pick you up from an early age and develop you, while here it is kind of isolated, you have to make things happen [...] (Mark)

5. A Longitudinal view on music careers and working patterns

We now move onto exploring the LDLHE data. Comparing the destinations 6 months and 3.5 years after graduation of the LDLHE respondents (table 8); firstly, it is noticeable that music graduates are more likely to be self-employed/freelance and be in further study. Also across all students the number in full time work increases between the 2 time periods and hence the number in study and unemployment has fallen but the number in part time work and self-employment, has increased and this is especially true for music graduates.

Table 8: Destinations: comparing 6 months and 3.5 years of LDHLE respondents

	6 months			3.5 years		
	Non Creative	Other Creative	Music	Non Creative	Other Creative	Music
Full-time employment	51.38	46.53	33.63	69.52	58.54	47.35
Self-employed/Freelance	1.24	6.28	9.44	3.05	9.56	18.67
Part-time/unpaid employment	7.68	12.02	10.21	7.94	11.78	11.52
Work and Study	13.41	8.19	11.12	5.71	3.65	7.04
Further study only	15.98	12.06	25.57	7.37	5.51	8.38
Unemployed	5.26	8.86	5.71	3.59	6.51	4.9
Other	5.06	6.07	4.32	2.82	4.45	2.14

While this general view shows a strengthening of the full-time employment, it is important to consider where job stability has increased (in which sectors). Table 9 shows that the proportion with a graduate job has increased between 6 months and 3.5 years for all subjects – with the proportion in a creative job only increasing for non-creative graduates and decreasing slightly for other creative and music students. The proportion of music students in Music and Performing arts sector jobs has increased slightly between 6 months and 3.5 years from 17% to 20%. Examining the non-creative sectors shows the proportion of music students in education has increased from 20% to 31.5% (36% of music students in the education sector at 3.5 years were in further study at 6 months).

Table 9: Jobs in creative and others sectors (6 months vs. 3.5 years) of the LDLHE Respondents

6 months	3.5 years
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	Non Creative	Other Creative	Music	Non Creative	Other Creative	Music
% Graduate job	70.93	61.88	60.03	78.57	70.79	76.28
% Creative job	11.84	49.26	35.87	12.78	48.02	35.03
Creative Sector	11.85	49.32	36.00	12.84	48.45	35.18
Advertising	2.66	4.55	5.52	2.86	5.47	4.57
Architecture and design	1.66	6.99	0.34	1.33	4.76	0.37
Design, designer fashion & Crafts	0.63	17.92	0.43	0.62	15.55	1.45
Film, TV, Radio and Photography	0.7	6.27	6.81	0.76	6.11	4.02
Music and Performing Arts	0.81	5.38	17	0.94	7.5	20.05
Publishing	0.84	3.49	1.94	1.01	3.1	1.43
Software, computer games & Electronic Publishing	3.96	3.31	2.74	4.63	4.32	2.21
Libraries, museums & art galleries	0.6	1.41	1.23	0.69	1.64	1.09
Non-Creative`	88.15	50.68	64.00	87.16	51.55	64.82
Science, Technology & Engineering	11.78	4.16	2.9	11.57	6.41	4.18
Health & Social Welfare	28.09	3.9	6.41	25.67	5.13	6.83
Education	11.3	6.37	20.26	16.07	12.72	31.53
Financial, Property & Business	16.31	9.86	8.71	17.04	8.2	6.65
Public Administration	5.04	2.05	1.73	5.94	2.4	2.61
Other	15.62	24.33	23.99	10.87	16.69	13.03

The graduates interviewed were still between one and two years from graduation, so would not correspond to the 3.5 year samples used by HESA

it is a performance degree [...] focused on the music itself, but I always thought there should be also something else, a fallback position, which I do not think lots of musician think about; lots of them are solely focused on the music [...] it is risk management for my point of view, if the playing does not work out I need to think of something else [...] (Mark)

For some a long-term career strategy was a response to a lack of vision or direction in the career opportunities offered by universities. This was especially true for students who did not pursue the performing career path

it was not made very clear to us what other career options there were in music, part of me going to advertising was me trying to find a realistic option, because at no

point did they say you can be a composer, here are the contacts you need to make, the network you need to be part, or if you want to work in the record industry [...] there was none of that direction from a music point of view, so that probably forms part of why I was determined to find a career path myself [...] (Laura)

This issue was less relevant for students wanting a career in performance as opportunities seem more available / obvious for them within their degree

Part of the attraction of the course at the conservatoire and part of the reason I stayed a second year was that built into the course they had several professional development opportunities, which included professional experience schemes with several professional orchestras based in the city [...] (Maria)

Teaching / Education was one side perceived as a blessing (as it offered economic support and interaction within people's practice) but on the other it was also look down on

the teaching, I am blessed as I got a great relationship with students, and if I wanted full time work teaching, I could get it, but I restrict myself to two days teaching because I find not very stimulating and creatively stifling, so it would be quite hard [...] (Sandra)

I wish I was performing more [...] and teaching was almost look down upon I felt and now I bump into people now and they go 'oh you are teaching too' so people are doing it but I do not think they saw themselves doing it [...] (Maria)

I thought about teaching [...] I definitely have not discarded that idea but I want to give this a go before and see if I can get into doing postgraduates studies, so teaching is a bit of back-up plan but something that I am sure I would enjoy doing [...] (Anna)

Respondent to the LDLHE survey are asked how many jobs they had, if they had been unemployed for a month or more, how many spells and total months unemployed for those with at least one spell above 1 month. Table 10 suggests music students on average have had more jobs than non-creative and other creative (note that music students are more likely to hold more than one job at a time with 32% of music students at 3.5 years holding more than 1 job, compared to 10% of non-creative and 18% of other creative graduates), have a high proportion (42%) who experienced at least a month's worth of unemployment (slightly lower than other creative graduates) and on average (for those unemployed) had 6 months of unemployment between graduation and the LDLHE of unemployment.

Table 10: Multiple jobs and unemployment

No of jobs since	Unemployed 1	Months
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	graduation		month or more		Unemployed	
	N	mean	N	mean	N	mean
Non Creative	28260.00	2.36	29,721	29.87	8915	6.17
Other Creative	3718.00	3.30	3,930	45.36	1788	7.13
Music	433.00	3.38	451	42	190	6.25

The issue of unemployment and transition between academia and world of work was also expressed in our interviews

Currently I teach music that takes time more of my time and I perform and I have a little music company that I founded straight after university [...] (Sandra)

I got to the end of my degree and I felt exhausted so I think I spent 3-4 months just staying at home not doing much [...] It was a bit step for me to decide to be self-employed I did applied and was getting interview at corporate stuff but it did not suit my nature, I was looking at jobs in arts management and some teaching roles, anything to do with the arts [...] (Maria)

You have to do a lot for free before you start getting stuff that will pay [...] because you need that experience on your CV and then the initial salary is very low [...] so you might have to work several jobs simultaneously [...] most musicians fill as much time as possible with teaching because it is the most available employment and in a way it is the most flexible [...] you cannot really have a music career without teaching [...] (Anna)

5.1 Salaries & Economic rewards

The average salary⁶ has increased between 6 months and 3.5 years (table 11)– music students who earn slightly more than other creatives at 3.5 years (but marginally less at 6 months) have a bigger increase in salary than other creative and non-creatives. Although the cell sizes for music students are very small so results need to be interpreted with caution⁷.

Table 11: Average Salaries (in GBP) by Subject Group (6 months vs. 3.5 years)

	6 months		3.5 years		% Change
	N	Mean	N	mean	
Non	11182	£20,344	19094	£22,764	11.9

⁶The 3.5 year salary level has been deflated (using the CPI) to the price levels at 6 months (January 2008).

⁷ These changes have to be viewed with caution as the 6 month and 3.5 year values don't necessarily include the same students. The response rate is much higher at 3.5 years (79%) than 6 months (51%).

Creative					
Other	1097	£16,824	2129	£18,867	12.1
Creative					
Music	104	£16,547	239	£19,550	18.1
Total	12383	£19,958	22000	£22,297	11.7

Graduates interviewed were particularly aware of their weak starting position in the job market and of the need for further support and time to develop their practice and networks

The major barriers are, finding an income that supports living rent free rather than going home and live with your parents, although I know friends who have done that and are building up work from home, secondly particularly to be an orchestral musician, while there are a lots of jobs around compared to the number of graduates there are still very few [...] (Anna)

I did not want to have to rely on the insecurity of not knowing where the next month rent is coming from [...] so it was a conscious decision for me music is a passion, a hobby [...] For me I can still go out now and gig two three times a week, if I do not want to, or I cannot, I do not have to take the gig to eat and pay the bills [...] (Mark)

I actively chose a career path that pays rubbishly, but continuing with why I chose music in first place, I chose a career that I thought I am going to enjoy and be good at, that why I have done it not from a money point of view [...] (Laura)

If we look specifically at creative versus non-creative jobs we can see that music individuals have the biggest increase in both creative and non-creative jobs with all subjects having a greater average salary for creative than non-creative jobs.

On average whilst earning less than non-creative graduates music graduates earn more than other creative graduates – although the gap is less within creative jobs. Non-creative graduates seem to earn more across both non-creative and creative graduates.

Table 12: Salaries and creative occupations (in GBP) (6 months vs. 3.5 years)

	6 months		3.5 years		% Change	
	Creative	Non-creative	Creative	Non-creative	Creative	Non-creative
Non Creative	£20,882	£20,259	£22,981	£22,732	10.1	12.2
Other Creative	£17,637	£15,945	£20,040	£17,830	13.6	11.8
Music	£17,908	£15,803	£21,062	£18,743	17.6	18.6

Total	£19,873	£19,976	£22,032	£22,349	10.9	11.9
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There is a clear acknowledgement from the music graduates interviewed that a career in music might not provide the level of salary of other sectors or might not even be enough to support their living

even if it was not just music but dance or theatre, I want to be in an industry that is creative [...] there is pressure when you come out of university, it is a lot money to study for 3 years, and you put pressure on yourself to find a job when you can earn, I am not going to earn a lot of money not for a while I am not driven my money but I am probably driven more by creativity and having fun [...] (Anna)

I do not know if I will ever end up with a permanent orchestra job or with enough freelance work to live off it is a bit of a gamble but for the moment I got to try until I fail [...] (Maria)

I was at the assessment for a job outside the sector, the pay was incredible for the time, I was almost feeling like I was selling myself, but in my mind I knew, if I do that job I can do gigging and what I wanted to do, but I got a phone call from here [performing arts venue], it paid probably half as much as what I was going for, but it was in the career, in direct relation with what I wanted to do [...] I could use the value of it to carry on [...] (Mark)

5.2 Migration & geographies of work

Comparing region of employment between 6 months and 3.5 years there is an obvious increase in the proportion working in London and for music a specific increase in the number in the South East.

Interviewees also mentioned the difficulty in remaining in the location of study without parental support, a trend identified in Faggian et al. (forthcoming). The importance of support at the off-set of their career is key especially for self-employed musicians

It was very hard time for me, it was straight out university, I am a lonely child living away from home, a bit of a decision making: do I stick down here and make a go at it or go back home and try and carve something out [...] (Mark)

I am very blessed because my parents are Londoners and I live with them and I acknowledge that it is a financial safe blanket [...] so that enabled me to start being self-employed without immediately needing an income which is fairly unique, I know a lot of my colleagues went home for a period afterwards, but I had a bonus of being in London that was a real benefit[...] (Sandra)

Table 13: Location of music graduates (6 months vs. 3.5 years)

	6 months			3.5 years		
	Non Creative	Other Creative	Music	Non Creative	Other Creative	Music
North East	3.02	2.31	1.33	2.8	2.19	1.4
North West	9.68	8	9.9	9.22	7.39	9.1
Yorkshire and The Humber	8.1	7.45	10.53	7.24	7.01	8.24
East Midlands	5.9	6.9	4.51	5.7	6.36	2.62
West Midlands	7.47	6.15	7.18	7.11	5.23	5.8
East of England	6.45	5.94	6.16	6.47	6.28	7.9
London	18.71	27.8	25.54	22.7	31	31.62
South East	12.93	13.35	9.94	12.14	13.26	12.96
South West	6.94	7.62	7.27	6.76	8.07	5.58
Wales	6.75	6.37	4.64	6.3	5.7	4.47
Scotland	9.83	6.02	10.47	9.45	5.38	8.27
Northern Ireland	4.22	2.08	2.53	4.11	2.11	2.04
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

The proportion of music students in a creative job in London has increased from 45% to 46% and in the South East increased from 5% to 10%, whilst for non-creative jobs the proportion in London has increased from 15% to 24% and in the South East 13% to 14%.

Interviewee mentioned the importance of London in their music career

I wanted to be in London, a lot of the work that I am getting in singing at the moment is working in young professional scheme with them, who are helping me to guide me for a year, to be in London I thought it was a good idea for that kind of things [...] I always wanted to move to London, I felt I exhausted some things in Manchester [...] the job has been a good way to ease into London [...] (Maria)

However, they also mentioned the importance of being mobile and following the job opportunities available

I think your career is much more important than your location when you are a graduate point of view, further down the line it might be more important [...] but as a graduate you cannot be tied down and I am not the kind of person who would be [...] (Anna)

I am applying for auditions UK-wide, because you have to go where there is work, this is my philosophy, I do not think I can afford to be picky and choosy [...] I am going to try and make it anywhere [...] I was also interested in exploring opportunities in Europe [...] (Maria)

6. Conclusions

Using HESA data and qualitative interviews the chapter has attempted to provide a better understanding of transition of music graduates from higher education into the world of work. It provides an important reflection on the initial steps of music graduates in building a career and a network to enter the professional world.

The data presented highlight a complex picture of different academic practice (especially distinguishing between graduates from conservatoires and graduates from other higher education institutions) as well as different ways of entering the work and creative careers in particular. From the quantitative data it seems that the position of music as a discipline in older and more prestigious institutions allow for more opportunity (less unemployment) for music graduates. It also allows for investment in further training and re-training. However, while music graduate leave university in a stronger position than other creative graduates, they still face the difficulties brought by portfolio careers and multiple-job handling. Here networks become key sustain their livelihood and project them into a professional career. Networks are used to mobilise resources that enables them to start freelancing and get established.

From the qualitative interviews, it is possible to highlight two further areas for future research and consideration: the role played by networks in facilitating the transition from higher education to work and the role played by the higher education departments and their employability agenda.

In reference to the role of networks, graduate interviewed highlighted how the contacts established during higher education (often within extra curricula activities) are still key to their current work. Individuals use these contact to mobilise opportunities:

I met other musician via the jazz society from other universities [...] having made those contacts, I can now contact them for gigs, and through those networks you meet endless more [...] all of the musicians that I use now in gigs there is some contact from having met someone at university, so you can almost trace it back and a lot of venue owners and people who run events [...] I still use those contacts now
(Mark)

Music graduate were aware of the importance of investing in those network while at university and also of their place-based nature and the importance of nurturing them. Graduates seem to invest in developing their social capital while studying in order to be able to tap into future work and are also aware of the weak nature of some of these ties and how they need to be sustained over time.

I worked so hard for three years while at university to build such a network and reputation on the strength of my ability to come in and read and substitute people

and my reliability, if I went away for 6 months or a year this network would not be there when I would be back (Maria)

Another area of further research and investigation relates to the attitude and understanding of employability and career transitions in academia. Recent literature has highlighted the importance of creating awareness amongst students about challenges of music careers (Gembris, 2004). Furthermore, there has been a push in introducing professional development opportunities and activities in students' curricula (Barnes and Holt, 2000) that aim to enhance their employability, as well as new teaching methods to enhance independent learning (Lebler, 2007) and complementarily with other skills and careers (Bennett and Stanberg, 2006).

As one of the interviewees in our project suggested "everybody can get a music degree but not everyone can have a music degree with experience [...] I needed to make myself more attractive to a potential employer, it was a big eye opener" (Mark).

Some of the interviewees praised the opportunity offered by the university and their career services, however, there was also a lack of understanding of what is important to know to enter a music career on behalf of these services "I am not sure how much they really know about the professional music industry and I think no one really knows until they tried to enter it, I think that kind of information gets passed on from your singing teacher or from instrumental teacher, it is difficult for the career service which is working in such a massive university to know exactly what it entails" (Laura).

Overall, interviewees experienced more opportunities for career development outside the classroom so the same student, while admitting that "I can never remember having a conversation with a lecturer about what will I do after university, like never" [...] her involvement in the university Jazz society meant that "I learnt all the stuff I do for my company there, I took them on tour, I ran a gig, I met musicians and I made contacts, that really helped me" (Sandra). So from the conversation with graduates it was clear that as Pitts (2003) "learning, personality and opportunity thus become intertwined in students' experience of a music degree and these aspects of the 'hidden curriculum' assume a powerful role" (p. 282) towards their future career.

Lastly, graduates seem to call for "more real world exposure to the risks of being a musician" particularly to mediate the changes taking place from being in the world of higher education and entering the world of work. The quantitative data show that music graduates perform better in the longitudinal survey, therefore suggesting there is a long-term adjustment. However, the short-term data and interviews reveal the trauma and adjustment required, as one of the interviewees suggests "there is a big safety net in the higher education setting that quickly gets taken away without you realising instantaneously as soon as you finish".

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