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"I WAS MAKING MUSIC FOR MONEY, INSTEAD OF MAKING MUSIC FOR ME."'1
AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF SOLITARY MUSICIANS

by

Karl William Neuenfeldt
B.Sc. Wisconsin State University, 1969

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTERS OF ARTS
in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology

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SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
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"I was making music for money, instead of making music for me."

An Ethnography of Solitary Musicians.

Author: Karl Neuenfeldt

December 5, 1988
ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the occupational activities of solitary musicians/entertainers, "singles", (identified professionally as "singles"), who are hired as musical subcontractors to perform in bars, lounges, and restaurants. The primary focus for the thesis is upon the career contingencies that shape singles' entry, continuity, and/or decision to leave the occupation. The objective for the thesis is to document and analyze the work singles do from an anthropological perspective, in particular that proposed by Wallman (1979). In accordance with this approach, they are seen to convert both intangible resources (musical and social skills) and tangible resources (time, transport, and social support) into a livelihood. Singles, however, exercise limited control over the conditions of their work since considerable power over singles' professional activities lies primarily with the other social actors -- booking agents, venue managers and staff -- with whom they cooperate to construct public performances.

The topical areas investigated in the thesis center on factors and tasks that culminate in an individual becoming a professional entertainer and functioning in that capacity. These factors include: the influence of family, peers, and educational training on choice of career; how paid work is actually obtained; the management of travel and interpersonal relationships; the economic dimensions of the
occupations, the extent of identification or alienation with
the occupation; and, finally, the ways in which singles
formulate career and musical aspirations for themselves and
for their progeny.

Methodologically, this thesis employs extended career
histories and participant observation to gather data on a
sample of ten male guitarists in British Columbia. Interviews
were also conducted with agents, managers, staff, and
patrons. Analysis was informed by the researcher's extensive
background as a musician and single. This thesis combines
aspects of both "insider" and "outsider" ethnography and
gives some attention to the challenges encountered in
attempting to combine the two perspectives.

This examination of the occupational activities of
solitary musicians/entertainers shows that the work they do
is extensive, although not always apparent, and can be
usefully compared and contrasted to other occupations studied
by anthropologists. Due to the exploratory nature of this
study, suggestions for further research are included.
(Non-musician villagers say), "Musicians drink, and smoke hemp, to excess, are lazy, do not like to indulge in physical labor and are poor at it, are excellent lovers but poor husbands, and are improvident and foolish in the management of money; furthermore, they quarrel, like to travel, are inordinately fond of eating, and are apt to fleece the unwary, particularly strangers... But life in a village without musicians is not to be considered."

(Alan Merriam, 'Basongye Musicians and Social Deviance' (1979).)

Work is way beyond the problem of whether it's boring or not, because your life is on the line. Your work is where you locate your self respect, that's where you test your character, where you refine what's left of yourself.

(Leonard Cohen, The Vancouver Sun, Section H3-October 22, 1988.)
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"Look at them yo-yos, that's the way you do it, you play
the guitar on the MTV - that ain't working, that's the
way you do it, money for nothing and chicks for free." 1

As the above quotation from a contemporary popular song
demonstrates, there is a prevalent "folk" conception that the
activities of musicians do not constitute work. While the
song's lyrics can be viewed as a musician/songwriter's ironic
commentary on the presumed commentary of the public, the
currency of similar negative attitudes towards musicians were
remarked on by informants for this study. I have also
personally been the recipient of the same type of comments
while working as a musician. Against this view, this thesis
will show that the activities of musicians in general and
solo musicians/entertainers in particular are work activities
and not simply avocational pastimes. I will also strive to
show that a great deal more work is involved than mere
performance. The intent of this thesis is to explore the
texture of these musician's working world from the point of
view of the "man on the stage".

To accomplish these ends this thesis adopts the
perspective of the anthropology of work and in particular,
Wallman's (1979) view that work comprises the conversion of
resources into livelihood. Specifically, the thesis
investigates in detail the occupationallv related activities
of 10 individual musicians in British Columbia, Canada. This
study is, therefore, only tangentially concerned with the "folk" perspective of musician's work as exhibited by the introductory quote. Methodologically, this investigation draws on ethnographic techniques suggested by other industrial ethnographies (Agar 1986, Pilcher 1972, Applebaum 1981), to investigate the nature of the musician informants' "career contingencies" (Becker, 1963) and the situational elements that affect occupational entry, continuity, and/or the decision to leave the occupation.

Agents, musicians, and employers refer to individual musical acts as "singles." Other terms encountered are "one man band", "solo" and the pejorative "lounge lizard". Two member groups are commonly called "duos", while larger aggregates are lumped together under the rubric of "band" or "group".

Although a certain amount of research by social scientists has been conducted on musicians (Becker, 1952, Faulkner, 1983, 1971, Bennett, 1980; Peterson, 1967, 1965), virtually nothing has been produced on singles, perhaps because they occupy the lower echelons of the North American musical pantheon. They are not the recipients of mass adulation, like "pop stars", nor are they the object of mass vilification, like historical counter-culture anti-heroes such as beatniks, early jazz and rock and roll artists, or punk bands. They are primarily anonymous performers who present "popular" or "conventive" music. The
main contribution of this thesis then will be to examine this previouely unexplored occupational world from an anthropological perspective, making use of previous work in the field of occupational ethnography (Agar, 1986, Pilcher, 1972, Applebaum, 1981) and well-established anthropological methods such as participant observation (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, Marcus and Fischer, 1986) and the recording of life histories (Langness, 1965, Mandelbaum, 1973, Crapanzano, 1984).

In British Columbia, and elsewhere, singles are solitary freelance musical subcontractors who offer their labor and product (entertainment) to prospective employers either through their own promotional activities or those of entertainment agencies. A conceptual distinction can be made between musicians who are "musical" and those who are "entertaining." This distinction is primarily one of emphasis: being "musical" refers to the skill with which people play their instruments and perform the music; being "entertaining", by contrast, reflects the nature of performer/audience interaction. A common view held by agents and management is that singles can be excellent musicians yet "lousy" entertainers and vice versa. From the point of view of employers, however, the ability to be "entertaining" generally takes precedence over technical ability.

There are various categories of singles which are based
on considerations such as the instruments played, the types of venues performed at, the genres of music in which they specialize, and the sophistication of technological accompaniment. Singles play a variety of instruments but usually one of the following is primary: guitar, keyboard, stringed instrument, or accordion. They perform at venues as disparate as concert halls, pubs, restaurants, pizza parlors, lounges, private parties, weddings, old age homes, and street corners. Genres of music include pop, folk, middle-of-the-road, country, ethnic, and sing-a-long.

Since the level of technology employed by an act can determine the types of venues where they can work, a brief description of the range of technology is required. Some singles (referred to, hereafter, as "mid-tech" and "low-tech") make use of minimal electronic accompaniment, a guitar, a drum machine, a microphone, and an amplification and speaker system. However, some singles (referred to, hereafter, as "high-tech") increasingly are making use of technologically sophisticated equipment in the presentation of their acts in order to reproduce more accurately the recorded performances they copy. At the upper level of sophistication is MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) technology which allows machines such as computers, sequencers, synthesizers, drum machines, and sound samplers to "communicate" with each other in a computer language. MIDI helps facilitate the reproduction of
complex musical arrangements by linking together these machines. It also allows for high quality sound reproduction. Although "mid-tech" and "low-tech" acts do not make use of MIDI technology, there also has been constant evolution in guitar technology, sound shaping devices (i.e. reverberation units, digital delays, noise gates), and amplification and speaker systems.

Singles, therefore, may have to upgrade continually the quality of their equipment, regardless of the level of technology they use, just as they must continually upgrade the quality of their repertoire. In both cases there is no guarantee that new songs or new electronic gadgets will lead to more employment. Singles must expend time and money just to keep from being eliminated from being considered for work since some venues prefer acts featuring a certain level of technological sophistication and/or repertoire.

The work of singles is certainly not inconsequential. As the following figures suggest, providing music and entertainment for patrons is a common addendum to the extensive food and beverage, and hospitality industries in British Columbia. Live entertainment is seen by management as part of the "ambience" of conviviality they wish to create for their patrons. In Canada, as well as elsewhere in North America, music is a culturally recognized component in "having a good time," although bars need not necessarily be viewed as the optimumum venue in which to appreciate music.
According to a recent survey there were 5,700 venues licensed to provide entertainment in British Columbia. These included 2,487 dining lounges, 874 dining rooms, 1073 lounges and recreational centres, 405 pubs, 227 neighborhood pubs, 18 marine pubs, 231 cabarets, 32 military messes, 24 combined pubs, and 18 public houses which can accommodate live entertainment. The taxes on food, beverages, and lodging are a source of considerable government revenue. A sizeable work force is also directly involved in the operation and provisioning of these venues.

Single musical acts are ubiquitous in British Columbia in that they are an integral part of the province's entertainment industry. At times, a single's musical activities may appear peripheral and not at all integral to other activities (such as socializing, drinking, darts and pool games, and watching sports events on television) simultaneously taking place in venues where they perform. Regardless of whether anyone pays express attention to the work they do, singles are still part of the establishment’s 'ambience', and their performance whether watched or ignored entails the same amount of work for the performer. It takes as much energy to perform to a responsive audience as it does to an indifferent one.

Working as a single is a solitary occupation. In the workplace and outside the workplace (if performing "on the road"), a single is solely responsible for his own personal...
and occupational activities. Also, because his work is solitary and nomadic, he often spends extended periods of time without close personal connections or a sense of community, either occupational or personal. An inherent paradox of the occupation is that although the work takes place within a highly "social" context, the working life of many singles is quite solitary. In this respect, it is similar to other solitary nomadic occupations where individuals perform essentially the same service in changing locales: professional sports referees, strippers, symphony conductors, comedians, traveling salespersons, and hookers. Other solitary workers such as long distance truckers, bank examiners/auditors, and prospectors also perform tasks that do not vary greatly from place to place. All of these are portable occupations.

A single differs from some of the aforementioned occupations in that they must provide all their own work tools and carry with them all the equipment necessary to their performance, including, amplification and lighting systems, and instruments. Whereas a stripper or referee can travel with a minimum of personal baggage, the production of a musical single's act often requires a van or station wagon to transport their work tools to the work place. Unlike bank examiners/auditors, salespersons, or long distance truckers who may return regularly to their "home office" before venturing forth again, singles often remain "on the road" for
extended periods of time. Some do not establish permanent domiciles but rather live continuously in the temporary accommodation provided for them by venues. Moreover, some singles obtain all their bookings themselves and therefore are totally unattached to any larger institutional or corporate entity such as an entertainment booking agency. The solitary work of a single is also inherently different from that of many other musicians in that it takes place outside of a collectivity such as a band or symphony. If a performance goes badly, there is no one else to blame, and if a performance goes well, there is no one else with whom to share the glory. A single often travels, works, and lives essentially disconnected from any sense of community either in a spatial or social sense.

Although "popular" cultural myths about musicians, solo and ensemble, characterize the musician as a transparent and easily stereotyped figure, the reality of a single's work in fact can be quite different than the myth. Just as many of the other myths about related occupations do not stand close scrutiny (i.e. the "freewheeling" trucker, the "good time" strippers, the "journeymen" minor league athletes), so too is the image of the work of singles as "money for nothing and chicks for free" erroneous. An exploration of the "humanscape" (Agar, 1986) of singles -- the contours and distinguishing features of their occupation -- will illuminate how singles are similar and dissimilar to other
REASONS FOR UNDERTAKING THE RESEARCH

The undertaking of this thesis was inspired by two factors: my own experiences as a musician, and the realization that anthropology could provide a means to examine systematically the occupation. I have had over twenty years of experience in various areas of the entertainment industry. At various times I have been a recording artist, song writer, producer, commercial writer and singer, and, most germane to this thesis, I have worked extensively as a single musician/entertainer in Canada, the United States, Australia, and Central America. While performing as a single, I realized that outsiders had little comprehension of the work I did. Both audience and family members consistently suggested I was not, in fact, working, but rather I was "playing." I also realized that perhaps other insiders, other singles, were struck by how little the occupation is understood. Because I often worked in isolation, and in direct competition with other singles, I had rarely talked with them about the nature of the work we do. I was curious to learn if my view of the occupation was unique or if it was shared by other insiders.

I entered graduate school for various personal reasons, but mostly because I wanted to leave the world of single musicians. I came to realize, however, that anthropology as a discipline could provide an appropriate approach for
identifying and examining features of the occupation that I, and others, had often found to be elusive and contradictory. I wanted to arrive at a better understanding of what had been my primary economic activity and a major influence on how I defined myself and was defined by others. Although I had a strong desire to leave the occupation I felt an equally strong urge to understand it and place it into perspective relative to other types of work. After all, I had invested over twenty years of my life in music but had found that, even though I became much more proficient at what I did, what I was doing still was not recognized as work, even though I, and other musicians, knew otherwise. In a sense, the thesis topic presented an opportunity to clarify, and thereby, redress some of the misconceptions that existed both in my mind and in the minds of those who suggested that making music for money was not work.

OCCUPATIONAL ETHNOGRAPHIES

This thesis can be considered an occupational industrial ethnography in that it investigates a subculture of industrial work (Gamst 1977:2). The work activities of singles take place within the context of a "service industry", in this case, the food, beverage, and hospitality industry (Whyte, 1948). Gamst notes that the ethnographic study of industry distinguishes itself from the way other disciplines approach industry in its presuppositions about
the nature of culture. Culture acts as the master concept with which to explain human behavior. Anthropology also stresses the holistic viewpoint, that "industrial... [ethnography] is more than just the study of occupational organizations and their institutions; it is also the investigation of relations between such organizations and of their relations with the wider societal order" (Gamst 1977:2). Furthermore, Gamst states that the purpose of the ethnology of modern industries is an attempt to "narrow the ever-widening gap between conceptualizations concerning work and the sociocultural elements and settings of work". In the case of musical singles, this thesis is attempting to show that many people hold mis-conceptions about the nature of the work of singles as the result of the failure to sufficiently take into account these very same sociocultural elements and settings of work.

The anthropological and sociological literature contains several case studies which offer useful approaches to the ethnography of work and illuminate work situations that are analogous tangentially.

Spradley and Mann's (1975) study of cocktail waitresses establishes that the social interactions which take place in a bar or lounge are anthropologically interesting. They argue that there is a wide range of behavior present since "bars are places where work and play overlap and many people find a home away from home" (Spradley and Mann, 1975:2).
Although bars might initially appear chaotic, the behavior observed is nonetheless determined by underlying values. Since a single’s milieu is bars and restaurants, this study provides suggestions for dissecting what the single sees from the stage.

Applebaum’s (1981) ethnography of construction workers illuminates how occupational sub-cultures evolve their own jargon and costumes, based on shared experiences, to establish themselves as a distinct entity. An occupational similarity that construction workers share with singles is the importance of owning one’s own tools, thereby retaining a degree of personal control over one’s work activities. This is crucial to singles because, like construction workers, they must be entirely self contained as they go from venue to venue. The only way to ensure adequate sound systems and consistent performance quality is to take the tools of their trade with them.

Pilcher’s (1972) ethnographic account of longshoremen presents an interesting parallel to this study by stressing the sense of "otherness" that pervaded the lives of longshoremen. Although different than singles in that they are part of a collectivity, longshoremen, similar to singles, do not work on a fixed 'nine to five' schedule and were enamoured of the real or imagined freedom to come and go, take or leave employment, as the mood or economic need demanded. This "boom and bust"/ "feast and famine" attitude
is also found among singles.

Finally, Agar's (1986) investigation of independent truckers provides an example of an occupation, analogous to singles, where the "folk" conception of the job does not match its realities. Mythologized in the media as the modern embodiment of the spirit and independence of the American cowboy, the occupation is in fact tightly regulated and individual freedoms highly circumscribed. Like singles, independent truckers are often forced by their work to lead a semi-nomadic lifestyle. This often brings along with it a host of difficulties in personal relationships and a sense of being outside the normal community of kith and kin. Agar attempts to demystify the occupation by presenting its realities. This ethnography attempts to do the same for solitary musicians.

MUSICAL ETHNOGRAPHIES AND ETHNOMUSICOCOLOGICAL ACCOUNTS

The preceding ethnographies suggested potential methodological approaches and pointed out occupational similarities to the world of singles. It is necessary to look into accounts of occupations unrelated to music because there is a paucity of occupational ethnographies of musicians. Popular literature and journalism are awash with accounts of popular musicians and musical celebrities. There has, however, been relatively little social science research in the area. While the social science literature is almost bereft of accounts of lower echelon musicians (such as
singles), there are numerous accounts of jazz and commercial band musicians,^{10} rock musicians,^{11} symphony musicians,^{12} and Hollywood studio musicians and composers.^{13} These works, however, do not specifically employ anthropological approaches to examine work.

Bennett's sociological study of rock bands deals with many concerns common to singles^{14}. Although it deals specifically with contemporary popular musicians, it, like the studies of construction workers, longshoremen, and, to some extent, independent truckers, is concerned with work that takes place in a collectivity. As stated earlier, being a single is an intrinsically solitary, yet dependent, occupation. The fact that singles perform alone, and are continually in direct competition with each other for jobs, means that they have to solve problems largely in isolation from each other without the greater bargaining power and supportiveness that group solidarity can often enlist. Bennett's study is also valuable because many singles, at some point in their careers, have worked in a band. The values and attitudes internalized during their early socialization as musicians, therefore may be carried over into their work as singles.

Since part of the reason for adopting an anthropological perspective on work is to facilitate the use of comparative data, it is worth taking account of several ethnomusicology studies on musicians. These provide useful examples of how
non-Western musicians function within, and are reflections of, their own societies. They emphasize that the occupation of musicians and the social purposes of music, like work itself, are perceived variously in different cultures and contexts. Several ethnomusicological accounts deserve mention here.

Merriam (1979) deals with the 'deviant' activities of village musicians in Zaire who are held in high esteem but at the same time are accorded low status. Merriam argues that this is an example of a society providing a safety valve for discontented people, allowing them to function as musicians. In a sense, this low status assigns and restricts music (and the musicians' roles) to a form of institutionalized social deviance. In North American society, the sanctions may not be as severe but the net effect is not entirely dissimilar.

Waterman's (1982) investigation of leader/group interactions among urban Yoruba ju-ju musicians points to the manner in which musical organizations reflect the social structure of their parent societies. The Nigerian preference for a 'big man', leader (often expressed through honorific titles such as Commander or King) and large ensembles, is in stark contrast to the often egalitarian nature of North American popular musical aggregates. This lack of a strong leader figure and group ethic may partly be responsible for the chaotic ebb and flow of band personnel as noted by Bennett (1980) with respect to rock bands. Waterman's study
may also suggest, by way of contrast, reasons why single performers are ubiquitous in our purportedly egalitarian society where there is also an ideal of individuality. This tendency, combined with ready access to advanced technology, allows North American musicians to operate in isolation and still find employment. In North America, there is often also a financial rational behind hiring one performer, who with electronic assistance, can approximate the sound and energy of a larger ensemble. A similar scenario might be socially, economically, and esthetically unlikely in a Nigerian context.

These and other ethnomusicological studies suggest that the occupation of musician is often viewed as going beyond being merely a "job" because it expresses and entails much more than purely economic activity. As such, the "job" can be considered as dwelling within the realm of "moral" activity and, therefore, operates on a different social level than music made primarily for economic reasons.¹

Finally, Frith's sociological examination of popular music and the mechanics of the music industry is important because it deals exhaustively with contemporary western popular or "pop" music, the music that most singles emulate. Frith's study clearly demonstrates that contemporary music making and music makers are accessible, and potentially amenable, to sociological and anthropological examination.
A DEFINITION OF WORK (AND PLAY)

The preceding ethnographies address specific concepts and concerns informed by the anthropology and sociology of work. The issue of what work actually constitutes in the specific case of singles requires an investigation into how anthropologists and sociologists have approached the overriding question: what is work?

PLAY

To define "work" requires an investigation of what constitutes its opposite, "play", if indeed they are true opposites in the case of singles. The folk conception that what a single does is "money for nothing" is problematic to some extent because what others may view as "play" is "work" to a single. Singing, or performing on a musical instrument are common leisure activities, but only a relatively few individuals engage in music as an economic activity. The nature of work and play as opposed cultural categories can be addressed by juxtaposing, for heuristic purposes, work and play at opposite ends of a continuum. Godbey notes that one view is that "work is what you have to do, and [play] ... is what is left over" (Godbey, 1985:83). However, this either/or opposition is not always feasible because of the culturally specific relationships of work and play. Godbey feels that for hunters/gatherers and agrarian/societies the demarcation line between the two poles is blurred because "work and... [play] [are] inextricably related" (ibid ). Citing C. Wright
Mills, Godbey suggests that the same condition exists for artists and craftsman: "the simple expression of play and the creation of the ulterior value of work are combined in work-as-craftsmanship" (ibid :83). Godbey suggests that for the artist (and here we will suggest the single can be classified as an artist), work and play are part of the same act. Therefore social strictures, such as those expressed in the lyrics of the song "Money for Nothing" (Sting/Knopfler), are perhaps understandable because work and play are not commonly experienced as elements of the economic activities of the general public. Like other creative workers such as writers, dancers, athletes, and teachers, the single must learn to accommodate inaccurate social stereotypes as to the nature of what they do.

WORK

Work encompasses activities germane to two critical human concerns: subsistence and social identity. For singles, musical entertaining is the means by which they provide for themselves, as well as a means by which many of them define themselves and are in turn defined by others. There exist various approaches to defining work: biological anthropologists emphasize the output of energy (Harrison, 1979), economists incorporate the relationships between work/output, employment/unemployment, and work/leisure (Elkan, 1979); psychologists approach work from the perspective of how personal identity is linked to work
activities (Fagin, 1979); producers of both manufactured goods and cultural events view work as those activities necessary for the production of an item, be it tangible or intangible; the "folk" concept of work (Wadel, 1979) largely limits itself to any type of "paid work." But these views of work fail to acknowledge that "work" is, above all, a culturally constructed category. Thus, in different cultures, the areas of human activity that are socially defined as work vary along with the circumstances under which these culturally specific definitions are renegotiated (Wadel, 1979:365).

By contrast, Wallman defines work anthropologically as "the production, management and conversion of the resources necessary to livelihood" (1979:20). She acknowledges that to arrive at a cross-cultural definition of work is difficult. One could, for example, claim that work means so many different things to different people that a comprehensive single definition is impossible. Alternately, one could attempt to arrive at a more satisfactory definition by examining the component parts of the issue. The first approach suggests that work is too all encompassing and therefore it is folly even to try, while the second runs the risk of underestimating work's complexity and ubiquity. Wallman suggests a compromise: first to identify the distinct features of the specific occupation and then to try to examine the relationships between them. She states that, "it
is in terms of the relations between constituent dimensions of systems of work that social anthropology is most likely to inform both the practical and the theoretical issues" (1979:2).

So far, this definition of work allows us to see the activities of singles as work: they perform a service and are compensated for it, therefore they are converting resources (musical and social skills, time, transport) into a livelihood. Moreover, there are two other factors which are critical for understanding their activities: first, they earn a livelihood in an occupation where both access to work and aspects of the final product (the performance) are ultimately controlled by others - agents, employers, staff, and audiences (Wallman, 1979:1); and secondly, the production of their act requires extensive "hidden work" (Wadel, 1979:365).

The notion of control — physical, psychological, social, and symbolic — is central to an understanding of any type of work. Wallman feels that fundamentally work serves human beings' need to control nature, to make a living from it, and to enforce their cultural order on it (1979:1). This is common to all social groups. Furthermore, this urge to control nature is, according to her, transformed into society's desire to control work which serves to help protect the process (and the end product) of work from the vicissitudes of chance. According to Wallman, "the working
relationship between man and nature is never unembroidered; and ...much of the social/cultural embroidery of work tends to be concerned with control of one person or category of people over another — whether direct control by means of command over the actions of others or indirect control achieved by limiting their access to resources and benefits, or by devaluing the resources and benefits which they have" (1979:1). Control is the primary determinant of what gets done by whom, and who benefits. This is an important dimension of singles' work in that their own personal view of their performance is in many ways incidental; they are not the final adjudicators.  

There is a further dimension to the anthropology of work which is pertinent to the activities of singles. Wadel suggests that economic, business, and folk definitions of work fall short of providing an adequate definition because they fail to account for "hidden work". (Wadel, 1979:365) Hidden work is the effort that goes into creating, maintaining, and changing work. As an example, these could consist of activities which contribute to the establishment and renewal of personal and work-related relationships and networks, the upkeep of equipment, the upgrading and expansion of skills, and the altering of work situations. These efforts may not necessarily be recognized as work, and consequently not socially valued because a society's attitudes and definitions in regard to work are fluid.
Wadell feels that the emphasis has erroneously been placed on the end product, social definitions and institutions of work, and not on the on-going processes that shape it.

Many of the activities of singles are "hidden". The audience that consumes the aural and visual fruits of this labor only have access to the "front stage", where presentation takes place, and not to the "back stage", where preparation is undertaken.²³ A performance would not be possible without both of these. Audiences, however, are not obliged to appreciate or even acknowledge backstage activities. They participate only at the instant of presentation, not during the tedium of preparation. For the single, what precedes the performance is of great importance to the presentation since it enhances and allows the performance to take place. Indeed, the work that is hidden often requires more time and effort than that which is visible. Therefore, the "folk" conception that a single's work is "money for nothing" is based on a misconception because a significant portion of a single's labor remains "back stage", unknown and unrecognized. It may be hidden, but it is still work. Also, since the ultimate control of many facets of the occupation is held by others, the single must expend considerable effort negotiating and accommodating the demands of the other social actors. The argument presented in this thesis is that all the means by which singles produce, manage, and convert their talents into a
livelhood can be accurately identified as work activities.

In summary, the relationship of work and play in the lives of musicians is potentially problematic and ambiguous. Musicians may initially be attracted to the "play", or "fun", aspects of performance, but eventually, as they are further drawn into the reality, and often the drudgery, of routine performances, they must accept the "work" aspects as well. The often episodic nature of musical employment would suggest that while musicians may at times feel they are better off than their counterparts in the "9-5" world, there exists an ambiguity as to whether "play" or "work" takes precedence in their own view of their chosen occupation.

THE INFORMANTS

Having identified and defined singles, the economic importance of their activities, and, having highlighted the critical influence of control and "hidden work", it is now necessary to examine precisely how this thesis will explore the occupation.

The ten male\textsuperscript{16} informants\textsuperscript{17} are guitarists\textsuperscript{20} /singers residing in the Lower Mainland region of British Columbia, Canada.\textsuperscript{21} All informants have performed as singles during the course of their musical careers, although some are not currently active performers.\textsuperscript{22}

This study is not a comprehensive survey of singles throughout British Columbia, but rather a partial one
informed by theories derived from the anthropology of work.

As the study is exploratory in nature, it makes three caveats. First, it is limited to males since they are numerically predominant in the occupation. Agents estimate that 85% of all single musical acts are male. Limiting the study to one gender helps to eliminate potential for gender differences in the manner in which singles function within the occupation. Any such differentiations are beyond the scope of this enquiry. Second, the ten informants use guitar as their primary performance instrument, although most are multi-instrumentalists. Agents suggested that the occupational realities of guitarists and keyboardists (the other major instrument commonly used) are quite similar. And, third, this thesis does not claim to provide the basis for statistical inference to a larger population; rather, it is "logically" representative. Given that the structure of the occupation and available responses are dictated in large part by the parameters of the industry within which it operates, the informants chosen are occupationally "representative" insofar as their experiences reflect a range of individual responses to common concerns.

METHODOLOGY

Even before the informants were selected, an appropriate methodological approach had to be chosen to record and examine their experiences as singles. Ethnographic interviewing and observation was chosen because it features
the combination of informant's words (artifacts) with the perspectives of the researcher (experiences). It attempts to construct a "humanscape," a means for those outside of the informant's world to better understand it (Agar, 1986:13). Ideally, this "humanscape" is created by employing two common threads woven into ethnographies: description rooted in the subjectivity of the informants, and analysis which is informed by the impartiality of the researcher.

The focus of this study is not on quantitative representations of, for example, what singles earn or how many days a year they work. That would provide figures, but not necessarily context. Instead, the major concern is qualitative: how singles view themselves, experience their work situations, and negotiate the intricacies of their social and working lives. No doubt the viewpoints of the other social actors, with whom they consistently interact, are important, but the primary perspective of this study is the view from the stage. Its focus on individuals and relationships is analogous to other ethnographic studies.

Ethnography has several strengths as a qualitative method. To begin with, it is useful in developing theory because its "primarily qualitative forms and methods can produce more ideas and empirical data than...[other] more rigidly conceived and organized methods" (Gamst 1977:15). Another strength is its capacity to depict the actions and viewpoints of both informants and researchers in order to
take account of the preconceived notions that social science researchers might bring to their investigations. In contrast to potentially method-dependent approaches, it demonstrates greater flexibility and leaves itself open to "intuitive and serendipitous revelations" (Agar, 1986:13); that is, to unexpected insights or changes that can redirect the course of the research project. Finally, it facilitates "triangulation" (Denzin, 1978:232) whereby multiple sources can be cross referenced. As Hammersley and Atkinson note, this can be viewed as an "effective manner in which reactivity and other threats to validity can be handled" (1983:24).

Ethnography also has potential shortcomings that must be considered. Although researchers are research instruments par excellence, they are a part of the world they study (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983:14, 18). It is essential that they reflect on the biases they may bring into the research situation and remain cognizant of the intrinsic reflexivity of social science research; hence, when we study others, we in part, study ourselves (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). It is also important to reflect on the dynamics of gathering and analyzing data because the research process has the potential to alter both the researcher and informant in unexpected ways. These changes themselves are a potentially valuable source of information on the nature of research.
THE RESEARCH PROCEDURES

The specific methods utilized in this study were "career history" (Hockey, 1986), interviews and participant observation. "Career histories" are related to life histories, albeit with a narrowed temporal and occupational focus. Career histories are concerned with the work activities of informants and operate from the perspective that work, or the lack of it, is central to personal and social identity. The career histories used in this thesis can also be classified as "case studies" since they are "the basic descriptive material an observer has gathered...about some particular phenomenon or set of events" (Mitchell, 1983:191). Gluckman (1961) suggests a continuum of case studies: apt illustrations, analysis of social situations, and extended case studies. This study conforms to the latter because it deals with "a sequence of events over...a long period, where actors are involved in a series of situations in which their structural position must continually be re-specified and the flow of actors through different social positions specified" (Gluckman in Mitchell, 1983:194). Eckstein (1970:94) further refines the classification of case studies; the type of approach used for this thesis could be classified as a "configurative-idiographic" case study in that the material is mainly descriptive and reflects circumstances that surround the events being described.
The interviews were taped in the autumn of 1987 at the informants' residences and verbatim transcripts were prepared. The interviews were open-ended in the sense that informant responses were undirected beyond general questions which were asked to elicit responses relevant to the occupation. No informants requested alterations when provided with verbatim transcripts.

In addition to the "career histories" of singles, interviews were also conducted with agents, bar owners and managers, bar tenders and waitresses/waiters, and audiences in the Lower Mainland. Research into the activities of agents was conducted through taped private interviews as well as through observations of their activities at their entertainment agencies. The visits attempted to ascertain modes of interaction between agents, acts, and venues. The agents observed are employed by large musical booking agencies in the Lower Mainland. The agencies deal with singles, duos, and bands at venues throughout British Columbia, Alberta, and the Yukon Territory. Gathering data from both bar owners/managers and bar staff members was more problematic. They expressed considerable discomfort with any formal interview structure, so information was gathered on an ad hoc basis during research visits to venues and also during the course of my activities as a musician.

Concomitantly, audiences were reluctant to express their opinions on singles in any structured format such as
questionnaires or formalized interviews. Given that this aspect of the research was undertaken during working hours in busy bars, lounges and dining rooms, it is perhaps understandable that specific replies to questions were difficult to obtain. These unstructured interviews did, however, provide substantial background on the quality and utility of services that the non-musician informants felt singles did, or did not, provide.

While interviews provided an important portion of the data for this study, participant observation was also employed. As a method, participant observation requires participation in an informant's activities and observation of what takes place. In some respects this thesis is a hybrid. It is both an "insider's" and an "outsider's" ethnography: an "insider's" account since the researcher already possesses some familiarity with the subject matter; and, an "outsider's" account since the researcher first had to become acquainted with the lives and experiences of all the informants (musicians and non-musicians) in order to be more familiar with the subject matter.

Aguilar suggests there are inherent problems with both approaches, "the extreme arguments both for and against insider research rest on an implicit model that characterizes all researchers as either absolutely inside or outside a homogenous sociocultural system" (Aguilar, 1981:25). He cites Merton (1972) to suggest that the pursuit of ideal types is
counter productive since such a quest fails to consider an element Aguilar feels is critical to ethnography, the researcher's talent to draw out responses from informants. The wild card of talent might skew the validity of the "absolute monopolies and exclusion" proponents might envision for their respective methodologies (Aguilar, 1981:25). Aguilar stresses that insider research is of value especially "to matters of what is considered important in the lives of the people studied" (ibid 26). He also believes that while insider research can provide useful information on the group under study, it can also provide information on "insider" researchers themselves.

Since the intent of this thesis is to present the working lives of informants as they see it, the choice of methodology should help to reflect this concern. For this reason, insider research was used since it facilitated addressing important concerns I was aware affected informant's working lives. As a balance to an "insider" approach, I at times adopted an "outsider's" stance. Although I have extensive experience working as a single and in other aspects of the entertainment industry, I have never worked as an agent, employer of musicians, bar tender or waiter, and rarely have been part of audiences viewing a single at work. Therefore it was necessary to participate in and/or observe these unfamiliar aspects of the occupation in order to gain perspective on a single's co-workers.
(agents, owners, staff, and audiences) who, in congress with the single, construct public performances. The fact that I was using anthropological methodology to investigate the occupation effectively made me an "outsider". I was using a perspective not common to the ways in which singles might reflect on their work.

By combining my "insider" knowledge with perspectives gained from participant observations as an "outsider", I was able to investigate not only what singles do, but also the nature of their relationships with other social actors. The bulk of data included in this thesis arose directly from what informants said, not my own experiences. This approach makes the study ethnography and not autobiography.

SUMMARY

Bearing in mind Wallman's definition of work, the importance and ubiquity of control and Wadel's definitions of hidden work, this thesis will focus on the ways in which singles attempt to gain personal and occupational satisfaction by the production, management, and conversion of resources (including musical and social skills, time, transport, occupational networks, social relations) into a livelihood. Beyond this descriptive purpose, however, it is concerned with detailing and analyzing how singles balance the divergent demands made upon them by the various networks of relationships within their occupation. After all, it is these "distinctions between [areas] of activity, exchange or
meaning, and 'conversions' between resource systems...that work is 'about' from the perspective of social anthropology" (Wallman, 1979:2).

The central intent of this thesis, is to demonstrate that, even though their product (art) is intangible, and much of their time is spent in unacknowledged preparation, the occupation of single should be depicted as "work". This, I believe, requires that their activities be understood anthropologically rather than from the everyday "folk" perspective held by many audiences and reflected in popular songs and the media.31.

Indeed, the single's final product, the actual performance, is but a culmination of many different factors and tasks.32 I shall refer to these factors and tasks as the "gettings": first, "getting into the business" which includes the nature of familial, educational, and peer influence on music becoming an occupation; second, "getting gigs"33—how work is obtained either through self promotion or agencies; third, "getting to and through gigs" which refers to preparations for work and interactions while on the job; fourth, "getting livelihood", which examines the viability of music as a source of income; fifth, "getting satisfaction", which asks how singles strive to derive personal fulfilment from their work; and finally, "getting back to the future", which entails a review of informant's ambitions, realizations and hopes for musical involvement in their own, and their
children's lives. The structure of the rest of this thesis, therefore, is based on the "gettings". These various aspects of the production of an act will serve as an organizing framework for ensuing chapters.

Because of the exploratory nature of this study this thesis will raise more questions than it can satisfactorily address. These questions and suggestions for further study will be noted in the concluding chapter. Furthermore this thesis, although limited in scope, will provide a base from which further explorations can embark.
CHAPTER 2

GETTING INTO THE BUSINESS

LEARNING THE MUSICIANLY ROLE

[Being a musician and single] is a very weird career. If you want to be a doctor, you do what a doctor does, and then you become a doctor. You want to be a musician? There's no clear road. It's not as if you even have to know how to play anything to join the Musician's Union! (Moe)

Before preceding further with this thesis' exploration of singles, I would like to briefly mention the informants in the order of their appearance in this chapter: Moe works both as an agent and single and is the writer of clever "play on words" country western songs; Ian is the eldest of the informants and is highly regarded for his interpretations of traditional folk songs; Jon began his career belatedly but now performs full-time; Eric has left the occupation but still remains active as a songwriter; Tiny is the busiest and highest paid of the acts and keeps up a steady stream of performances year-round; Leo has also left the occupation and works as a computer programmer while honing his musical skills; Duke moves between being a single and performing with country bands; Dewey works consistently and is an accomplished guitarist; Benny is the youngest of the informants and is constantly touring and recording his own material; and, Mac attends music school full-time and performs intermittently. In total, the informants represent a wide variety of skills and interests. Their careers will be
examined in greater depth in the ensuing chapters.

A considerable amount of 'hidden work' goes into learning the skills necessary for occupational activity, especially in the case of musical singles where skills are not transferred via clearly delineated pathways. The impetus for learning to entertain and be musical is idiosyncratic, but the processes, formal and informal, are controlled to a large degree by others, including family, peers, and educational institutions, either through well defined pathways to occupational accreditation or via less tacit social strictures. The issues of control and 'hidden work', therefore, have a tangential though not always apparent bearing on how singles are introduced and socialized into the business of making music for money. This chapter will examine the nature of recruitment into an occupation, specifically the ways in which singles became musicians and the influence of family, peers, and educational systems on that choice. We will also briefly examine their introduction to one the tools of their trade, their instruments.

It is paramount to remember that a single, as a musician, is a member of a larger societal unit and above all, a social specialist (Merriam, 1974). He has a role to perform as well as social expectations to meet. To his role he brings specific knowledge of musical forms and technical dexterity. In different cultural contexts he may assume a distinct role and social class (achieved or ascribed) or he
may be assigned status and importance (high, low, or both simultaneously). He may also be regarded as being a professional. Within their own cultural contexts "musicians behave socially in certain well-defined ways, because they are musicians, and their behavior is shaped both by their own self-image and by the expectations and stereotypes of the musicianly role as seen by the society at large" (Merriam, 1974:123.)

To become a social specialist and fulfill a societal need, a musician must be "recruited", (Lewis, 1979) trained, and ultimately, rewarded. This chapter focuses on the recruitment and training of singles. It investigates the over-riding question, how do singles "get into the business", how are they drawn out of the general population? Specifically, this chapter asks: what was the significance of familial, peer group, and educational influences on a single's choice of music as a career? These questions will permit us to trace how the individuals in this study set out to acquire occupational proficiency.
RECRUITMENT OF SINGLES

To be quite honest I don't know where a lot of entertainers have come from. Some have come from bands, but where that first single ever came from I really don't know. (Sol-Agent)

I learned to play the guitar just to try to get lucky with girls, I guess. (Moe)

Recruitment can be characterized as the underlying process by which new members are brought into the entry level of a group. To appreciate the scope of an occupation it is necessary to explore how individuals embark upon a career and what incentives, and disincentives, influence their choice of occupation (Lewis, 1979). The striking feature of informants' accounts of their start as musicians is the haphazard nature of their recruitment and the inconsistencies of primary (family) and secondary (peers, educational institutions) group attitudes towards music and musicians.

Informants had vague recollections of why they became musicians. They can recall isolated incidents to which they assign relevance with respect to their initial interest in music and things musical. For most informants, choosing a musical career was not a calculated long term decision. The choice of occupation seems rather to have been the result of circumstance.
FAMILIAL INFLUENCE

My folks wanted and would prefer that I had become a lawyer, or something. That's a typical family thing, right? (Dewey)

As the primary socializing unit the family is crucial in the shaping of attitudes. It was the initial locus of each single's fledgling attempts to produce, manage, and convert a resource (talent) into a livelihood. It was where they were first introduced to opinions, both positive and negative, as to the occupational value of musicianship in their society.

Each informant had to negotiate his interest in music within the dynamics of his family unit. While many of the informants' parents or close relatives had an interest in music it was usually confined primarily to music as a recreational activity, for instance playing at parties or small functions. Indeed, performing music, either as a career or to supplement one's primary income, was not always viewed favorably. Singles who received negative reinforcement had to learn to balance occupational ambitions with family disapproval, a process that was not always pleasant. Those who experienced positive reinforcement had an easier time of it, and their recollections are not tinged with bitterness over a perceived lack of encouragement. The support of "significant others" is no guarantee of occupational success, but it certainly can contribute to positive attitudes and self image. If the families felt that the most important
thing for the informants to do was to perform to the best of their ability, then it was often easier for the informants to deal with some of the negative features of the occupation and societal attitudes towards it.

Informants were asked what was their family’s attitude to music as an activity and/or career. Their responses encompassed a broad spectrum of experiences, ranging from enthusiastic support to grudging acceptance or ambivalence and, finally, outright disapproval.

Moe is gregarious and a gifted raconteur who presently mixes his own gigging with activities as a booking agent. For Moe, getting into music was an act of defiance. His interest was, and still is, unsupported by his parents. For him, music was a way of getting attention in a large Irish Canadian family. Although it was a musical family, Moe was told just to move his lips since he was considered tone deaf. He feels he pursued music “to prove something” to his family; he practised playing the guitar till his fingers bled. It was only among his peers that he eventually got affirmation of his talents. Moe went so far as to receive qualifications in two other occupations, banking and medical technology, in order to please his parents. "It was like a guilt trip with me, I had some reason to get education to make everybody proud of me. I got it and I just didn’t like doing the job!" He felt they would prefer any occupation that provided the stability and status that music lacks.
However, he always came back to music and has finally accepted that he is, at heart, a musician, and not a laboratory technician or a banker. When asked if his parents still were unsupportive of his musical ambitions he replied, "When I explain to my parents that I am singing for a living, [they say], "that's nice" but they don't really approve. My mother still doesn't believe it's a way to make a living."

Ian is also in his early forties. His specialty is an extensive English pub 'sing-a-long' and folk repertoire. He was sponsored for immigration to Canada by an entertainment agency in Vancouver and is fervently committed to his music. Ian was educated in private schools in Britain, and succinctly appraised his family's attitude towards music as an occupation: "It wasn't even vaguely considered." He feels that since he has been active in music for so long the potential to make music must have been there in the first place. He expressed a great deal of resentment over the issue of family and social support: "I think parents and teachers have an absolute duty and responsibility to find the potential of the children that pass through their hands." He feels that music, something that was intrinsically a part of his personality, definitely was not recognized or encouraged by his family.

While Moe's and Ian's families were decidedly negative about their musical interests, Jon's and Eric's families' attitudes could be described as ambivalent or grudgingly
accepting.

According to Jon, his parents sent him contradictory messages about his musical interests. He recalls that "they were negative, but they were positive, as long as I kept it sort of on a hobby level." He wishes they had been more supportive as he might have gotten into music as an occupation earlier. However, at the time "nobody looked at music as a way of making a proper living. You had to be a doctor, or something the equivalent of it." Now in his mid-thirties he has only been gigging for ten years. He had not had the opportunity, or confidence, to live out his musical dreams earlier. He keeps his aspirations alive by recording and promoting his own records, hoping that they will act as a catalyst to further his career.

Eric also experienced ambivalent familial attitudes. Tall and easy going, he has traveled and lived outside North America and is quite cosmopolitan and well read. His family was musical. His mother taught piano and his father played saxophone casually. Even so, they did not see music as a very practical choice of occupation. When queried about what his parent's opinion of music was he answered, "It was not much of a life... it was a bit unstable... and you had to travel." At the time they were also negative about any type of music except classical which was one reason they encouraged Eric's classical studies on piano and violin. In the back of his mind he still feels that although his father eventually
expressed some approval for his non-classical musical endeavors, he did not feel encouraged as a child or adolescent. He has a finely developed concern and appreciation for the spiritual aspects of music. Perhaps that is why he presently does not perform as a single in bars. He found the "low life energy" too difficult to contend with and now prefers to limit his playing to either composing or performing in situations that are not mediated by alcohol. Eric himself is ambivalent about whether or not his parents were actually strongly against music as an occupation or if he projected those opinions on them. It was more a sense that performing popular music was not a valued occupation, although it was potentially an acceptable avocational activity.

Positive attitudes were found in some families and there is almost a nostalgic quality to informant's reminiscences of a supportive environment. Tiny's parents were extremely supportive of his musical interests. Could he recall a specific incident when he recognized their support? He recalled the turning point for him was when he and his parents were watching a television show featuring Mac Davis [an American pop-country singer/songwriter] and they said, "You could be doing that, you know." This remark came as a surprise to Tiny since he was intent on becoming an architect because he thought it would please his parents more than becoming a musician. It was the first really positive
reinforcement he had received from them, other than just that music "kept him off the streets". He felt they were giving him approval for his choice of career by saying, "I guess this is probably gonna be your career, so go for it; if you're gonna do it, do it good."

This early positive reinforcement may have contributed to Tiny's success as a single. Presently in his mid-thirties he is the most financially successful of the singles and is rated by both agents and other musicians as the most accomplished in his genre, and, the most in-demand in the market. He is booked well into the future and exerts a level of control over his career that is the envy of other performers. Tiny combines his innate musicality and mastery of high technology accompaniment (he has over $25,000 of MIDI* and sound reinforcement equipment on stage) with a well developed sense of the ridiculous (such as 'rap' songs about sheep) to present an act that has potential to take him beyond the local market.

Leo was born in a village on an isolated island off the north coast of Vancouver Island. Since electrification arrived quite late to the area, entertainment was provided by residents, and Leo's family was viewed as a community asset because they played instruments and sang. His father was always very supportive of his son's interest in music. In fact, he was "tickled pink." He provided a major service for Leo's budding musical interests by keeping the guitar in
tune. Leo recalled, "I mean, when you first learn to play, you can’t hear the notes, right? It’s really hard. So I’d take it to my dad, he’d put it back in tune, and then I’d play it some more, and it’d go out of tune. After about a year of him doing that, I could do it myself but it really does take a long time to develop an ear for that."

Leo’s extended family also was extensively involved with music. His pride in his family’s musicality and, by extension, his own musical talents, were both nurtured by a sense of community. "I think that the live entertainment provided by members of my family was an important part of that community, before record players became really common."

To this day, although he now works only episodically as a single and concentrates instead on designing computer programs for the visually impaired, Leo still retains a perspective of music as an element of community. One reason he ceased working as a single full time is that he felt that often bar situations were bereft of a sense of community. He now prefers playing to smaller audiences that are appreciative and polite enough to let his musical gifts make a contribution to the social occasion, rather than simply being another aural distraction. For Leo, the quality of his performance and the maintainance of a broader appreciation of music, as a social activity, is paramount. The affirmation present in his early familial environment perhaps has helped him keep his musical talents in a positive perspective.
The range of the preceding responses points out that there was no consistency in familial attitudes. Most informants had to accept either negative or ambivalent sanctions and rise above them; only a few enjoyed the stabilizing influence of positive reinforcement as a springboard for launching their careers. Knowledge that the primary socialization group, the family, is supportive and proud of a child's choice of career can contribute to translating childhood ambitions into adult realizations.

**PEER GROUP INFLUENCE**

[Other kids] think it's really neat that you've got a guitar and you can sing and play. So naturally your ego goes up through the roof... I think it's every kid's dream to be a rock star or some sort of pop star. (Luke)

Musicians were always treated a little bit differently. It's sort of a specialty sect... being a musician is a specialty act... so to speak. (Jon)

The influence of peer groups was also important in shaping informant's early involvement in music. Peer approval or censure can be more critical than that of the family's, especially when there is familial disapproval of a generationally valued activity. Peer group membership is a means of asserting personal independence and music is often a unifying element in subcultural identity. Clothing styles, jargon, and attitudes are often directly related to current musical fads. Music and, by extension musicians are convenient and readily accessible symbols (Hebdige, 1979). Musical talent is a means for drawing attention, and, unlike
student activities such as athletics, can generate income as well as prestige. Informants’ first musical encounters in front of and among peers may have been awkward and musically amateurish but they were important steps towards establishing a distinct individual identity separate from that of the family unit.

For Duke, his first performances were a way of overcoming his shyness. He grew up in a logging community on Vancouver Island, where he picked strawberries and worked in construction to finance his first instruments. However, his peers were unaware of his musical talents or the fact that he would go home every day after school and practise. He was elated by the attention he received when he finally appeared in front of his peers with a band and older 'guys' came up to say "hey, that was real good man, wow." When asked if there were other aspects of his new found status that he found exciting he replied, "The younger girls [would be] hanging on to parts of your body and rubbing elbows and other parts." Performing became a vehicle for self realization, and self promotion.

Similarly, Dewey began quite early to associate with other neophyte musicians and establish music related networks, even though initial forays into the intricacies of instruments and performance were decidedly amateurish. Now in his late thirties, he recalled that during his teens there were usually five or six other students who played music in
each high school class. This provided a nucleus from which small bands continually formed, went into disintegration, and reformed. Dewey was more advanced instrumentally than the others, so he recalls having to compensate for his contemporaries' lack of skills: "It was just trial and error... so I ended up having to almost teach everybody... everything... in order to make anything work. To me it was futile to sit there and have everybody just play different things". Consequently, Dewey became a multi-instrumentalist by default. Even at that he recalls the early performances were quite rag-tag, "[I was] just playing and singing through the same amplifier. My singing was a battle all the time, [but] somebody had to sing... I was terrible, but at least I could sing and play at the same time." Dewey's early networks and peer interaction had an unforeseen consequence. Because he had to learn to play various instruments and had been forced to develop as a vocalist, he was able to prepare his own backing tapes when he began doing a single. His act was unique at the time. He preceded the advent of on-stage sequencers and other technological aids. Consequently, he was able to establish his reputation in the marketplace as an innovator and has been performing steadily ever since.

The youngest informant is Benny, who is aged 22. He began playing guitar because a friend got a drum set and they thought it would be fun to start a band. Their early collaborations were amateurish but he progressed to the
school orchestra and eventually rock bands. Although he grew up in an urban area (Victoria) he has always identified with country music. His single act and his appearance are very country orientated, as are his self-written and independently financed records. "When I walk in without my cowboy hat, people do a double-take 'cause they don't recognize me." Without the regalia of his genre - the hat, the vest, the boots, and the jeans - he is not as distinctive and not as obviously a 'serious' country artist. He still, however, makes use of the early rock and roll songs he learned with his peers and likes performing them. They are a resource he calls on because "it's good party music... it gets people dancing, it gets people singing, and when you can get people dancing and singing, everybody can have a good time."

Mac experienced a degree of peer censure because he was learning a classical instrument (violin) which entailed a different level of instruction and commitment than guitar, which was the primary instrument of most of the informants. It also presented an image far removed from popular music's cultural icons, such as rock stars. Mac recalls music in his early years as being a solitary thing, partly because his family moved often and his peer group was constantly changing: "I'd make some friends and acquaintances, and then boom, I'd be off somewhere else, having to make other new friends." Also, the family resided in working class neighborhoods where few people were aware of classical music.
and classical art. He does not recall feeling completely ostracised, but he had to practise everyday. He ended up compartmentalizing his music apart from his social play activities. Was peer disapproval ever pointed? "I did get a lot of 'aah, you're a bit of a sissy 'cause you're playing the violin, back then especially." But Mac tried to look beyond it: "I never let it bother me. I didn't. I knew what I liked, I knew what I enjoyed, and I really enjoyed the pleasure that other people got from it as well."

Peer approval was an important consideration for informants. For some, being a musician was a role they drifted into, for others it was a goal to which they aspired. The skills necessary to present oneself and interact with an audience successfully are critical to performance. These are only gained through experience and it is initially at the family and peer level that the first fledgling steps are taken towards becoming a performer. In the case of some of the informants, if familial support was lacking then peer support helped sustain their aspirations. If familial support was present, then peer support only added to informants establishing positive self-identities as musicians. The informal social and musical attitudes provided by family and peers was augmented, and in some cases superceded, by the influence of the educational system, which will be addressed next.
EDUCATIONAL INFLUENCE

I thought, Jeez, I've educated myself out of knowing what the hell people want to listen to.
(Dewey - on his return from the Berklee School of music)

The influence of education, either formal or informal, is problematic for singles. There is no degree program that permits them to classify themselves as 'fully accredited' singles. Nor are there 'cliques' of musicians to draw upon for expertise. This situation is analogous to Bennett's investigation of rock musicians: "Becoming a rock musician is not a process that is steeped in the history, theory, and pedagogy of prestigious academies; nor is it a learning experience which is guided by an informal tradition of teachers and teachings. Becoming a rock musician is not even a process of apprenticeship. In fact rock music is learned to a much greater extent than it is ever taught by teachers...

In a few words: the career of becoming a rock musician is simply being in a local rock group" (Bennett, 1980:3).

For a single to classify himself as such he needs to have performed solo in front of an audience. Whereas a classical musician learns and then is classified as a serious musician by teachers or institutions (Bennett, 1980), a single must, like other popular musicians, classify himself as a musician first before being recognized as having learned the trade. Bennett suggests that this self definition is a means of establishing a reality that once defined as real is real in its consequences (Burger in Bennett, 1980:3). As with
rock musicians the episodic nature of single's employment and the subsequent ambivalence as to whether or not one is a musician if one is not playing, can "place a measure of insecurity at the foundation of one's musical self image" (Bennett, 1980:17). For rock players a 'band' serves as "the spontaneous institution that provides ... anchors... between individual aspirations and collective recognition" (Bennett, 1980:17). Since this corporate entity is non-existent for singles, the notion of self definition is critical.

Bennett's summary of the nature of recruitment and education for rock musicians can also apply to singles, albeit with the proviso that the single operates outside of a collectivity: What exists for the person who is trying to move out of the general population and into the population of rock musician is an amorphous amalgam of knowledge about instruments and equipment, recordings of rock performances, experiences of live rock performances, and a group of like minded contemporaries. What does not exist for such a person is a pedagogically routinized musical discipline. This state of affairs tends to bring about either floundering confusion or uninhibited innovation - or the inability to differentiate the two" (Bennett, 1980:19).

I was curious about the extent and nature of musical instruction the informants had received, since all remarked to me that music was a low priority in their schools' curricula. It was peripheral to their academic subjects.
Therefore, informants received only minimal musical instruction, if any at all, and when they did it was often on brass or woodwind instruments, that had limited utility in a pop band or soloist context. The mainstay instruments of pop music bands - guitars, drums, and keyboards were often unavailable from institutional educational music programs. Also, the music being taught was often traditional and therefore outside the realm of the contemporary repertoire required for school dances or folk clubs. Several of the informants were exposed to some musical skills, such as sight reading and ensemble playing, but peer group identification based on music as part of a statement of individuality, was not part of the curriculum. If anything, the non-traditional nature of pop music seems to have been viewed as a threat to 'serious' music making. Consequently, most informants learned from other musicians and from records (and television and movies) which became de facto notational systems by which sights, sounds, and songs could be emulated (Bennett, 1980).

The interviews revealed that the extent of their musical knowledge ranged from total musical illiteracy, through a modicum of skills, up to immersion in musical theory and instrumental techniques at professional educational institutions.

Only one informant, Dewey, pursued extensive musical instruction in an institutionalized setting. The effect of his education is interesting because it ended up placing him
in a paradoxical situation; as he became more musically literate he found it harder to relate to what he perceived audiences wanted to hear. He started out with formal guitar lessons from a teacher who had played in Paul Whiteman's 'big band', so from early on he was exposed to 'traditional' musical practices and competent instruction. Even then it took him almost two years before he made anything that, he felt, "Sounded even remotely like music." After developing his craft he worked with numerous bands and eventually taught music. He felt, however, he was atrophying as a musician so he decided to enroll in the Berklee School of Music in Boston. There he was trained more extensively in the minutiae of traditional and popular music. However, when he returned home he found that he could no longer listen to music without analyzing it and also found it very difficult to play music he considered simplistic and uninteresting. It took him awhile to re-adjust to playing the music his audiences wanted to hear, rather than music he wanted to play because it was musically sophisticated. Having to appeal musically to the 'lowest common denominator' in a lounge or pub setting became problematic for him. Dewey had to 'un-learn' in order to re-integrate himself as a single.

Several informants commented on the lack of a ready availability of instruction within their school systems. Duke recalled that the two subjects he most enjoyed, music and art, were discontinued after grade eight. He then entered
his school's "university program" where he had to take
subjects that he found unappealing. "We had French, and
science, the dreary horrible subjects that nobody in their
right mind wanted to study. You know, things with "ology" on
the end of them." Leo recalled having to learn on his own the
bulk of the theory he now knows. The choirs he sang in as a
child did not stress harmony signing. "The kids just
basically all sang in unison." Ian ruefully recalled that on
an academic level everybody in his school got the same
indifferent exposure to music unless they were enrolled in
private lessons.

Most of the informants learned their instruments on
their own, or by informal instruction from peers. Several had
some formal instruction but not necessarily on their working
instruments. Self teaching books, especially guitar manuals,
often include diagrams of the chords or guitar tabulature so
an individual studying on their own can learn the rudiments
of the instrument. The most common method of learning for
many informants was to listen to and imitate recordings.

Although levels of education varied for the informants,
to perform as a single required no minimal level of formal
instruction. Dewey's case illustrates that those without
formal training could be as successful as those who have it.
The music that singles present to an audience lies at a grass
roots or 'folk' level where formal pedagogy is not essential
and in fact may be deleterious to performing. What becomes
essential, however, is the ability to be 'entertaining' which is not at all the same thing as being 'musical.' Those who can successfully combine the two distinct aspects of performance will most probably find employment less problematic. 'Paying ones dues', even though intrinsically ad hoc, is a far more relevant means of gaining competency than any institutionally recognized curriculum.
FIRST INSTRUMENTS

Grandpa had a guitar that nobody in this world could play. But I tried to learn on it. It was a finger bleeder. (Duke)

An aspect of education that bears further investigation is how informants gained access to and proficiency on their instruments. It illuminates their dedication in the face of often sub-standard instruments and benign indifference on the part of family, peers, and the educational system. They had to be self-defining as to not only their identification as musicians, but also to the means to that end.

Recruitment also entails introduction to the tools of the trade. Along with the idiosyncratic nature of the informants' initial interest in music and the nature of family and peer support the poor quality of many of their first instruments is striking. The guitars, especially, were often "finger bleeders," instruments that would be barely playable by an adult, let alone a child. The poor quality of instruments was not necessarily the result of families not wanting to encourage music or being fearful of over-investing in what might prove to be only a temporary interest; more often they were the only instruments available or affordable. However, it did take perseverance for informants to overcome the inadequacy of their instruments. They were not even cognizant of how inadequate their instruments were until they acquired better quality ones; they were surprised to learn that untunable strings, sore fingers, and cramped hands
were not necessarily a requisite component of the learning process.

Moe and Duke got theirs by default. Moe's older brother joined a monastery and a friend of his left a genuine birch, star burst painted, S2 Stella guitar that had strings 1/2 inch off the fretboard. Duke attempted to learn on his grandfather's acoustic guitar which was almost unplayable because it was "all ripped... nobody could play that thing, King Kong could not play that sucker." Luke was given his first guitar as a gift, with the added proviso that he had to stick with the instrument for at least a year. Jon vividly remembers his first guitar as a "really flashy Hawaiian-type guitar, with the strings about 6 inches away from the frets." Tiny's first instrument was imaginary, part of the fantasy world of childhood; he and his friends would make up cardboard guitars and put on skits.

Mac received his guitar as a reward for gaining honors in a violin examination. He had been schooled quite intensively in classical music, yet his description of his first encounter with an electric guitar illustrates the intensity of appeal that popular music and its accoutrements had for informants; the magic of it, if you will. It bears quoting at length because it provides a clear cut articulation of the lengths to which informants were prepared to go in order to attain access to what they perceived to be pieces of the puzzle from which they could
construct their dreams. When asked if he could recollect when popular music intruded on his classical interests, Mac recounted:

I was out in the backyard and some guy had an electric guitar, and he was wailing away with a little amplifier. This was the first time that I really heard an [electric guitar]—it was the 'Venture's style'. I just thought that was the greatest sound, and I went, 'oh, man, that's incredible. God, I'd love to play electric guitar.' It was so new, and so different, and so exciting. So my old man heard me, and he goes, 'oh, you like that, eh?... Well listen, you get honours in the Toronto Conservatory exam, and I'll buy you an electric guitar'. He figured he had it made, because [I had missed a lot of lessons when we moved around]... and my teacher figured there was no way I was going to be able to pull it off. It was only three months before the exam, and no student has ever been able to do that. So dad figured he had it aced, right, and I thought... 'Oh, boy, an electric guitar, are you kidding? I gotta get honours.' So I worked, and I studied, and I worked, and I practiced my little ass off. When the Toronto Conservatory Exam results came back I had gotten honors. I missed first class by about one point. So, my dad was true to his word, though he couldn't believe it, his nose was out of joint. He took me down [to the music store] and bought me a piece of junk, basically. It was [not a good guitar]—he didn't know, really. [It was]a real bad finger bleeder. It was a Kent. What did we have back then, the Kenoras and the Kents, and the Sears specials. The strings were an inch and a half away from the neck!

But it was a guitar and part of an image to which Mac was drawn. Its quality was not important; what was important was what it represented.

Leo, however, reflected that even given all its faults his first instrument, his dad's $13.95 Stella guitar "with frets like a barbed wire fence", still sounded good
sometimes. He still plays it when he goes home and contends that "the blues sounds best on a cheap guitar." Even if it’s "Clunky, funky, and out of tune."

In summary, the reasons given for embarking on a career as a musician, the inconsistent nature of familial, peer and educational support, and the often sub-standard quality of learning instruments points out the haphazard nature of singles’ recruitment out of the general population. They learn about the "musicianly role" and become social specialists (Merriam, 1974) through a myriad of influences. They come from a broad range of social categories and there is no clearly evident socio-economic pattern to the source of recruitment to the occupation. These influences, when taken together, perhaps prepare the budding musician for an occupation that is often capricious in the extreme.

Once the single has gathered skills and identified himself as a musician, the next step is to obtain, and maintain employment. We now proceed to how a single goes about "getting gigs". It is in examining how singles obtain employment that we can apply anthropological insights to understanding the nature of control and the extent of hidden work in the occupation.
CHAPTER 3

GETTING GIGS

"THE PERPETUAL WHEEL OF MISFORTUNE"

It's the same old story, the perpetual wheel of misfortune between agent, management, musician, right? It will always be that way, it's never gonna change. (Mac)

I didn't like to go to what we affectionately call "pimps", agents, at all. I use them if I have to, but so does any hooker. (Duke)

I find them all a little seedy, you know, a little on the sleazy side. (Eric)

Well, overall, [dealing with agents] sucks, you know, with a capital 'S', it really does. (Jon)

While the 'front stage' performance viewed by an audience may suggest, superficially at least, that a modicum of cooperation has had to exist for the event to take place, the 'back stage' relationships may in actuality be more problematic. The relationship of singles and agents can be riddled with mutual prejudices and unrealistic expectations as agents and singles strive to provide a service in a situation where the market (venues), the consumer (audiences) and the product (entertainment) are infinitely variable as to quality, composition, and dependability. Given the capricious nature of the relationships and variables that exist within the occupation at all levels, the fact that disputes arise is understandable.

Informant's vitriolic comments about entertainment
agents illuminate one of the major points of occupational friction for singles: their relationship with booking agents who exercise control over access to information about gigs as well as extended industry contacts. This chapter will examine informant's relationship with entertainment agencies and agents. This primary focus is augmented by comments from a composite agent/informant about how agents view the relationship. Although all singles do not consistently rely on agents for "getting gigs", most deal with agents at least part of the time. Some specifically self-book because of difficulties encountered with agents during the course of their musical careers. Each informant has at one time or another had to reach individual accommodations with agents. They may not like them, but as Leo remarked, "They're sort of a necessary evil".

The position of an agent can be viewed in the anthropological sense of a "broker", a go-between managing transactions between different groups and systems and the "ostensible source of decisions and favours" (Paine, 1971:5). Paine suggests that the power relationship between brokers and clients is often asymmetrical and weighted in favor of the broker. The broker must maintain the illusion that they have access to a resource unavailable to the client. This situation exists in the context of singles. The agent controls information about work and can decide who to book into what venue and the decision, assuming that the talents
of the available acts are relatively equal, may be based on favours owed by the act to the agent. In a parallel sense, the relationship between the agent and the venue may be based on the venue assuming the position of power since they can choose which agent to deal with.

In the case of Tiny, an admitted exception to the general nature of agent/single relationships as expressed by the informants, the power relationship is in a sense inverted. Tiny's act is in demand and he can therefore exercise greater control over some of the conditions of his work (wages, frequency, locality). His situation is further differentiated in that the agency has guaranteed him a certain amount of work in order to gain the right to represent him exclusively. This situation is atypical.

Paine (1971:10) stresses that at the core of the relationship between brokers and clients is a mutual understanding that both parties wish to gain access to a resource not otherwise available. Singles, especially neophytes, wish to draw on the agent's more extensive contacts while the agents wish to draw on the single's talents. The extent of self booking that takes place within the occupation would suggest singles perceive that there is no advantage to be gained from interacting with agents. In turn, agents know they have a readily available labor pool to draw on since there are more performers than gigs and there is continual recruitment into the occupation. The bond
between agents and singles is easily broken and the mutual understanding characteristic of broker/client relationships can evolve into one of mutual mistrust and misunderstanding.

Singles progress from casual performances in front of friends and family and at peer group parties, to paid gigs, which often involve agents, in an inconsistent manner. Some singles first perform in amateur bands and find they cannot function in a group situation, either because bands do not suit their musical or personal tastes or because they cannot afford the investment in equipment or time. Others never work in collective situations and evolve their acts as soloists through folk clubs, or school or community functions. All singles realize eventually that if they wish to gain access to a larger market and hopefully make performance their sole income source, one means to attempt to accomplish these goals is to begin dealing with agents. At the onset of a career the single may be overwhelmed with the complexities of polishing an act, buying and learning to operate equipment, and getting gigs. It is therefore predictable that those serious about their occupation would gravitate towards agents who are initially seen as possible allies in the single's quest for livelihood and satisfaction. The impression left by informants was that when they exited the world of making music for fun, many were rudely introduced into the realities of making music for money. The idealism of the former is often replaced by the cynicism of the latter.
Becker uses the term "art worlds" to denote the "networks of people whose cooperative activity... produces...art works" (Becker, 1982:x). Since this thesis contends the activities of singles are work and yet also a part of an art world (music and entertainment), then the networks of interpersonal relationships which contribute to the construction of the public performances by which singles gain their livelihood need to be examined.

This chapter poses the following questions regarding the dilemma of control: how do singles become involved with agents and agencies? What are the major points of disagreement that arise between singles and agents? Where do singles feel the loyalties of the agent lie, with the act or elsewhere? To gain a more balanced perspective on this often divisive relationship the views of agents are also essential. Therefore, this chapter will interject their viewpoints, represented by a composite informant from several agent interviews, and pose the question; what do agents see as the nature of their relationship to singles? Finally, this chapter asks why some singles self-book and what are the advantages, if any, of doing so?

As the comments cited at the beginning of this chapter suggest, at times performances are constructed via 'networks of un-cooperation'. Data gathered from agents also suggests that although the agent and the single are mutually dependent on each other that does not presuppose a
commonality of purpose, intent, or execution. Somehow performances do take place but, taken together, the comments of singles and agents point to a major disjunction as to what agents themselves see as their function and what singles perceive an agent's function to be.

This disjunction centers on the issue of control: the agent controls access to a more extensive network of potential employers of singles. The agents' work consists of making these available, selectively and for a price (commission—currently 15%). At the same time singles control a resource (talent), but they often feel that the only real authority they have over their work, if they are dissatisfied, is to either leave the gig (or the occupation) or fail to pay commissions. Further complicating the relationship is that when singles self-book they are in direct competition for a limited number of gigs, not only with other acts but also with agents. Therefore, agents and singles are often simultaneously competitors and colleagues.

The single/agent relationship requires continual renegotiation and can be a difficult relationship precisely because, although they need each other, they do not necessarily respect each other or feel the other is fully
appreciative, or even cognizant, of each other's obligations and/or requirements. Familiarity, if partial and ill perceived, can breed discontent; and discontent typifies many singles' relationships with agents, and vice versa.

STARTING OUT DEALING WITH AGENTS

I [realized soon after starting] that the longer the agency is in the business, there is more [chance] they are [going] to be kind of cut-throat and more severe about their job. And merciless, and apt to telling more lies, and saying that you're booked somewhere, and you're not, and double-booking you. (Jon)

All the informants had to learn to deal with agents. It is part of "paying one's dues". Like other artistic occupations new recruits start at the bottom of the ladder until they either prove themselves dependable and competent, or, come up with a gimmick that makes them a saleable commodity, thereby creating opportunities for more types of gigs. The process of occupational advancement is inabsolite and tends to reward either the conspicuously conventive or the entrepreneurially innovative. Most singles have difficulties with agents; some do not, but those are the exception, not the rule. As the title to this chapter suggests, the relationship often is viewed by singles as a perpetual wheel of misfortune where centrifugal force tends to favour those on the inside (agents) and eliminates those on the edges (acts).

Moe's story is typical. He first began dealing with
whoever could get him work. He would contact various agents
and let them know what dates he had open and then hope they
could fill them. As a neophyte, finding work was not as
problematic as he later found it to be because when he first
started he "didn't mind travelling all over the place." When
asked about the general quality of the rooms agents booked
him into, he said, "I had to take all the horrible [gigs]."
Eventually he found certain agents who could get him gigs he
liked, especially in-town ones because "that means your day's
your own." He tried to remain loyal to agents but admits he
was tempted by the offers of some bar managers to book him
back into rooms without going through the agent (thereby
reducing the money paid for entertainment by 15%); a not
uncommon practice, one which in the long run has the effect
of driving down the price for every other act that books
into the venue. Eventually Moe built up a big enough network
of contacts to keep himself booked consistently without
having to resort to too much 'road-work' or playing too many
in-town 'skid row' hotels, gigs worked only by the very new,
the very inept, or the very desperate single.

For Dewey, initial disinterest on the part of agents led
him into a fortuitous innovation which ended up being his
main strength as a single. At the time he was getting into
becoming a single performer he had put together an act based
partly on a standard combination of vocal, acoustic guitar,
and drum machine; and partly on the use of backing tapes over
which he would sing and play live. The initial tapes were fairly straightforward and the agents didn’t feel the act was viable. Had he felt discouraged? He said he had, but he continued working on his tapes, taking a whole year to put together more elaborate tapes, complete with live drums (he despised the anemic, unrealistic sound of early electronic drum machines), a bass part, rhythm chords, and backing vocals. Dewey went back in and talked with the agents again. This time they were more receptive. He told them about his training at the Berklee School of Music (which made him a bit unusual), and played them the new ‘demos’ (demonstration tapes) of what his act would sound like. What impression did the new tapes have on the agents? “Suddenly it sounded like the Beach Boys and they said, ‘we can sell this guy,’ and that’s how I got started as a single. What sold me was the tapes.” Dewey was able to carve out a musical niche for himself in part because he overcame his initial rejection by agents. Their disinterest forced him to re-evaluate and innovate. His unique combination of multi-instrumentality, and for the time, high technology, ended up his meal ticket, even though he did not always retain harmonious relationships with agents.

Once singles start dealing with agents they often encounter difficulties in sustaining amicable booking relationships because disagreements arise. Some of these are of a fundamental nature, and are addressed at some point by
all acts. Conflicts arise most often when there is a mismatch of appropriateness and expectations between the act and the venue, with the agent as a not totally objective arbitrator (as will be witnessed by later remarks). Most singles can relate, vociferously and only at the slightest prompting, tales of being sent by agents to rooms which were, in Ian's summation, "totally and utterly inappropriate" to the music they played and the personalities they possessed.

Benny's first ever gig on-the-road was booked through an agency at a hotel in a logging community in the interior of British Columbia. The venue had a reputation among singles as a "real toilet" featuring aggressively abusive patrons, obnoxious management, nauseating accommodations, and poor pay considering the travelling distance for a single to work there and the conditions. This is probably why the gig was available to a complete novice such as Benny. Unfortunately, Benny was not aware of the drawbacks so he went and was glad to finally be working for a 'major' agency.

When he arrived he was shocked to discover the hotel was a "real dump," and found the overall ambience of the venue decidedly depressing. When they showed him his room he got even more depressed. What was so bad about his room? "It was a bed on the floor, nobody had made up the bed, but the bed looked like someone had been sleeping in it and hadn't changed the sheets in three weeks." Having played the very same room myself I was intrigued to find out how he had
handled the situation. My own solution was to park my camper van at a nearby lake so I could be at the hotel an absolute minimum of time. Benny solved the problem by going down the street to a motel and taking a room there. Of course, he had to pay for the new room himself so out of his $500 wages for the six nights he had to pay $200 for the motel, $75 for the agents' commission, $75 for travel costs to and from the gig, and another $50 or so to amuse himself and pretend he wasn't where he was. So for six nights of performing he cleared approximately $100 or a little over $16 a night or $4 per hour, which did not include his travel time. One side effect was that by the end of the week he felt like a smoked salmon due to the cigarette and cigar smoke in the poorly ventilated bar.

As his first road gig was a bitter introduction to dealing with agents, Benny, who now self-books almost exclusively, found the gig a traumatic experience and ruefully recalled, "It almost destroyed me. I almost stopped playing. I thought 'it can't [get worse], it's got to get better than this, it was so bad." Experiences like Benny's harden musicians and make them leery of unsubstantiated claims by agents that the gig is "just right for you". Benny was indignant to be viewed as 'just right' for something he felt exuded "low life energy" in the extreme.
MISPLACED LOYALTIES

Agents' loyalties lie with themselves, entirely. (Mac)

[Agents'] loyalties are to the room, definitely. (John)

Some [agents] are good and some of them are downright assholes. Put briefly, they'll put you into any room as long as they get their percentage. (Benny)

Benny's tale of woe illustrates a major point of contention for most singles in their interactions with agents: loyalty. Most informants expressed the view that agents' loyalties lie decidedly with the venue, or themselves, and only rarely to the act. An agent theoretically controls access to more gigs than an individual single does, consequently, many singles feel powerless to insure that agents do in fact have their best interests at heart and are not perpetually ready, willing, and able to jettison the act at the slightest whim of the employer. There are exceptions but perceived lack of loyalty is a contentious and recurring issue for singles.

Duke feels the question of loyalty is cut and dried, but he resents the presumed agent's outlook. "The money comes from the room, no question about it. So if [agents] please the room, they work, and if they don't please the room they don't work. It's as simple as that." He feels that consequently the agent is not really out to get more money for him, they are going to satisfy the room first. Getting more money out of the room is something Duke thinks is a personal manager's duty, but singles don't generally have
personal managers, so he feels he has little control over increasing his wages even though costs, especially for extensive 'road work', continually escalate. The agent can always get ten other guys like Duke who will work for the money offered.

Jon also resents agents siding with the venue. He feels his act has improved over the last years and that he should not have to worry about an agents loyalties anymore. Where did he feel their loyalties were directed? "Their loyalties are to the room because they gotta keep a clean nose. If they send a bad act there, the room might drop them and go to another agency." Other responses of informants are not as forgiving when it comes to the perception that agent's loyalties, if not directed to the venue, still do not belong to the act. Agents are seen as being concerned with themselves, first and foremost, now and forever.

Mac finds dealing with agents difficult precisely because he feels their interests are exclusively selfish. He tries to be "up front" and honest with people and resents it when he is not accorded the same treatment in return. He has experienced his share of double bookings, non-existent gigs, and mismatches. When asked if he dealt with agents any more, he bitterly replied, "rarely, because of the fact that they are all crooks and shysters. They cut the musician's throat, basically." Impassioned opinions like Mac's point out that there is often little space to maneuver in a relationship
that is frozen in such an adversarial embrace.

Leo offers a more reasoned, but still cautious appraisal about dealing with agents and the issue of loyalties. He personally feels comfortable dealing with agents but is always very strict with them. When asked what strategies he had adopted he replied, "It is just a matter of not biting the hand that feeds you." He realizes that he is not their only act, nor are they personal managers, and that "they could care less about [his] career." Paramount to the process of working as a single for Leo is that he must get results for the people he feels the agent is most beholden on to, the owners or operators of the venue. He intimated to me during the course of the interview that he himself had not really thought of his relationship with agents and venues in that light until queried about the relationship, but he feels that if he pleases the hotel by pleasing the patrons, then the agent will be satisfied. The agent will get his commission and keep the room, the hotel will make its percentage on food and beverage sales, the audience will drive away feeling entertained. And, Leo could keep working doing something he enjoys. For Leo, it is usually a reasonable arrangement. However he is no pollyanna. He "always resents having to give agents money for sitting and answering the telephone." But he's never been able to survive full-time without going through agents. To him they are "a necessary evil."
THE AGENT'S VIEW - STUCK IN THE MIDDLE

Thus far we have seen how some individual singles view their relationship with agents. But every role needs an opposite in order to be defined so we now address the role of agent. An agent is a classic example of an "entrepreneurial middleman" (Bennett, 1980), or more precisely, "entrepreneurial middleperson", since many agencies have equal numbers of women and men. The work of an agent consists of putting together, for a price, a perceived need (a venue with a desire to feature live entertainment in order to encourage food and beverage sales or provide 'atmosphere'), and an offered service (an entertainer who wishes to perform and in the process be paid.) During over twenty years of personal experience dealing with agents I have observed that, like singles, agents also have to perform their own balancing acts and reach individual compromises with the system within which they operate. Like singles, some are competent, others incompetent. Some are captives of the system within which they labor, others are able to master and manipulate it to their own benefit. But above all, agents hold a view of their work that is in some respects fundamentally at odds with that of the acts they book. Mutual misconceptions inform the occupational relationship of agents and acts. This disjuncture of intent is the spoke in the wheel of misfortune.

Sol, in his early forties, has been an agent on and off
for thirteen years. He has never been a serious musician. Similar to many singles he has worked at his occupation episodically; he has also built houses, been a sporting events promoter, and set up his own branch of the large entertainment agency where he is now employed on a 'straight commission' basis. I had had some musical dealings with him. He had booked me for several gigs, but he was just a disembodied voice over the telephone to me. He had never seen me perform nor had I ever been into the agency to pay him my commission or socialize. Our business had all been transacted anonymously over the phone or through the post. I was intrigued to find out what he would look like. He at least had a photo of me (Albeit a rather dated one, an '8x10 inch glossy' - complete with tuxedo and acoustic guitar. It was designed to appeal to the middle-level management of the chain hotels at which I had been performing). So he knew what to expect, while I held a preconceived notion of a slightly rumpled, diminutive person who would be inarticulate about anything outside the limited realm of 'shop talk'. I found him to be nattily dressed, well groomed, and articulate about the agent's working world, of which I was frankly quite ignorant.

The anonymity of our relationship was not unusual. Sol told me that out of the 67 singles he had booked over the last five months he had seen no more than 15 or 20 of them. Nor had he seen many of the venues into which he booked
acts. In a market as geographically dispersed as British Columbia's he feels it would be financially senseless to visit each venue and check out its clientele. Sol relied on the information supplied by whoever looked after entertainment for the venue; managers, owners, or bartenders. Given that he had only seen 25% or so of the acts he booked and a smaller percentage of the rooms, mismatches are perhaps inevitable. He estimated his success rate to be in the neighborhood of 90-95%. From the remarks of informants, this figure would seem to be optimistic, but then again Sol was an experienced agent who had paid his "dues" and may have been able to sidestep some of the pitfalls encountered by less experienced agents. Also, to remain an agent for thirteen years would require the ability to project a fair degree of optimism.

When asked how he viewed his occupation he said he considered himself to be a middleman. He stressed that "you're wearing two hats. You're working on behalf of the act, that hopefully keeps them working, but, you're also working on behalf of the room, to find the right entertainment for them." He feels that his primary loyalty has to lie with the people who run the venue because he may only be able to place an act occasionally but he can book a venue 52 weeks in a year. When asked what he emphasized in his business approach he immediately responded, "You always want to try and keep the room, because this is a business
where if you don't keep on top of your rooms, they won't remember you in two or three weeks time." So he must constantly phone and keep contact even if he does not currently have an act in the room.

He appreciates that his middleman status is problematic. "We take an act and we say to the venue, 'Here; please, I'd like to introduce you to this act.' If the room says 'Ok,' we then set it up with the act. But what the act does when they get there, we cannot be responsible for." If the act does not go over well, then they can turn around and say to the agent, "We weren't booked into the right room." But conversely, the venue might be equally dissatisfied and say, "Their attitude was bad, they fooled around with their equipment all night, and they got drunk, didn't pay their bar bill, and didn't play what people wanted to hear." In a scenario like this, Sol's said his normal reaction would be to "kind of wash my hands of the act and try to keep the room."

Sol summarized his view of his work as follows: "An agent's job is to go and get the work, then make sure that the act will do the job, then make sure that the place still wants the act, then make sure that the act got to the job, and then make sure that the act doesn't get fired — and does well. Then make sure that the act gets paid, and then, the agent's got to make sure that he gets paid from the act." There are a lot of steps that Sol must go through. He can
"book like crazy all day" but he does not reap any benefit "until the act has played and paid the agency."

Sol's reply was quite vehement when asked if there were things singles expected of him that he felt were unreasonable. Did he feel he was obligated to function as a personal manager? "I can't wake them up in the morning and tie their shoe laces, give them directions to the job, and make sure the tires have air and the tank is full of gas."

He sees his sole purpose as offering an act work. "If they accept it, fine, but if they don't, I go on to the next name on my list and see if he'll do the job." Sol knows what singles expectations are but he feels "it simply is not my job. If I got involved with every entertainer that came through the door, I'd go crazy."

The issue of loyalty is a sorepoint with agents as well as singles. When the general tenor of some of the remarks singles had made about agent's perceived lack of loyalty to acts was mentioned Sol said, "Look, there is no loyalty from the act either." The act might tell him to go ahead and book them all the time and that they are prepared to travel. But he has found that "six times out of ten you phone the act back and they've either found work on their own, or else they won't do the job for one reason or another." So, he does not feel he can bank on the act, nor can he necessarily count on the venue. But at least the venue is a "fixed asset" and without the room he has nothing to offer the acts. "The point
is that you can book ten different acts into a room over a
two month period, but if you lose the room you send ten more
musicians out of work." That is, ten musicians he represents. Other agents and self-booking singles would also be
approaching the management of such a venue for openings.

Sol counters singles' assertions that they often feel ignored or interchangeable by stressing that he also has to deal with a lot of unrealistic, unprofessional acts who think erroneously that "this business is just one phone call away from stardom."

As Sol's remarks have indicated, the agent/single relationship is problematic for both role players. From Sol's perspective, his work does have some positive aspects. First, singles tend to be much easier to deal with than bands because they are individuals and therefore can answer yes or no about prospective work and are usually more conscientious about paying commission. Secondly, working as a booking agent can be lucrative, once an agent has established a clientele and a stable of dependable acts.

Toward the end of our interview Sol was asked what was a 'good day' for him as an agent. His response highlighted a major difference between his, and most musicians priorities. His primary concern was: "Seeing how much commission comes in. It is dollars and cents." For him success can be measured in finite terms, "You know, I am not a musician, I am not an artist, in that respect of wanting to hear my music
played and not caring about getting paid. I must admit that entertainers do care about that, but I'll know that I am very successful if I am making $150,000 - $200,000 a year." Sol would not reveal his actual wages but his idealized objective is in stark contrast to Benny's actual wages last year, $17,000, Sol felt there are also other satisfactions in booking acts and having rooms that have no complaints. But Sol expects "no roses at the end of the week." He feels people expect him and the agency to do a good job. But overall the money is important to Sol because "it is a very frustrating business dealing with acts and rooms and trying to keep everybody happy." When asked what was the major difference between the outlook of agents and singles he said he felt most musicians were sustained by a 'dream,' while most agents were not. "[Being an agent] is not a stepping stone to anywhere, the dream at the end of the agent's tunnel is only to be more successful, to book more than the week before and see that commissions are paid on time." And that the wheel spins on in perpetuity.
SELF BOOKING

The jobs come to you if you look hard enough. The harder you work, the luckier you get. (Duke)

When a supposedly 'cooperative' undertaking turns as rancid as some of the preceding accounts suggest, there may be a negative effect on how workers view their occupation. Cynicism and unfulfilled expectations is continually lurking beneath many of the responses of both agents and singles. Such levels of animosity can operate for only so long before a reaction sets in. Was there a high turnover of agent personnel? Sol said, "It's a revolving door. I think that if you last six months you're gonna last until you burn yourself out." For singles the reaction often takes the form of self-booking, an attempt to bypass agents and exert more control over converting a resource, their talents, into a livelihood.

Self-booking is a response, the direct result of the hassles a single encounters with agents over mis-matches and misplaced loyalties. But self-booking also arises out of singles feeling that they are too often lied to, ignored, or, far more devastating for an artistic ego, treated as interchangeable entities.

Jon had a strong personal reason for starting to self-book; he felt utterly ignored. "They treat[ed] me like I am just another entertainer, waiting beside the phone, holding on to it, clutching it, waiting for that extra paying gig." Was self booking an attempt on his part to gain more control
and independence? "I don't want them to have me in their grasp like that, so I keep them on their toes by booking myself, and, they treat me with more respect." He recognizes that the agencies have many acts to book and that unless a single is at the top of the list they are easily shunted aside. I asked him what he felt the agent's ultimate goal was in ignoring him. He said he thought "most agents want you sitting there beside the phone, so they have full control over your life." Jon does not let himself get too concerned with how agents view his self booking. He realizes they do get annoyed, but justifies the situation by observing, "You're banging your head against the wall, because they can't keep you booked steady, and you've got to keep the wolf from the door yourself. So if they don't like it, it's too bad. You’ve got to look out for number one, which is yourself, right?"

Moe got frustrated having to pay an agent her commission, even the third or fourth time he went back into a room. What most galled him was that he never could get the agent to get more money for him, even though he was doing a good job and the venue's business was on the rise. What had been his experience in approaching the agent to get more money from the venue? He recalled that "by the third time [returning to the same room] I'd try to whine for more money and that's when the agents tell me I was the worst entertainer they'd ever had. And of course there never was
any more money."

Dewey recollected a similar situation, equally frustrating, where he really felt he should get increased wages but the agents were unable, or unwilling, to help. He had gone to an agent and was kept fairly busy, but he still wasn't getting any more money although he had returned to the same rooms many times over the course of several years. He would go out to evaluate other acts to see what he was competing against and was appalled to discover that there was little salary differential. He remembers thinking, "Either I am nuts, or something is wrong here. Because here I am, I've got all this experience, and my act sounds like the Beach Boys or Elvis, and here is somebody else who only knows four chords, has a terrible sound system, can't play, and they're getting the same amount of money, too. Jesus, what's going on here?" What was going on was that Dewey was not in control of marketing his own services.

Getting more money is one means by which a musician gauges if they are, in fact, making progress within the occupation. To have their wages remain the same is actually to have them decline in real terms due to inflation and increased expenses. Knowing that other less competent acts receive the same salary is difficult to accept for experienced performers, especially when the act they are presenting is more polished and their own musical skills have evolved.
For Duke, self-booking was the result of several mismatched gigs, financial ripoffs, and gigs which had been doubled booked by an agency. The latter entailed the humiliating experience of arriving for work to find someone else's equipment already on stage. His negative experiences with agents culminated in the office of a Calgary agency where he overheard an agent totally misrepresent a group he was familiar with to a venue where he knew they would not last a night. They didn't, and the agent's obvious lack of veracity was the final discord in a sad song that Duke did not want to play, or hear, again. He started self-booking but recognizes that it can be extremely time consuming and involved. However, it gives him "more of a sense of control."

The effort is not always worth the return, unless the illusion of exercising a greater measure of control is important to a single. To most of them exercising more control is an important consideration and reason enough to continue self-booking. However, they still get into occasional confrontations with owners and managers; they still have to get on well with the rest of the staff where they perform; they still must get up and play appropriate music and entertain an audience. They have eliminated one actor from the business transaction so consequently their part is larger. But they may not necessarily get better reviews or be compensated for their extra effort.

Taking into account the questionable efficiency of self-
booking, many singles still prefer to self-book. Dewey, who has worked as an agent (as has Moe) offered a balanced, though slightly jaundiced, overview. He noted that a lot of musicians feel agents are leeches and don't do anything. To some extent he feels that is a correct appraisal. However from his own experiences as an agent he also knows the difficulties agents encounter in dealing with management, which can be just as unpredictable as musicians. Management often tells the agent one thing, and then does another. I was curious if working as an agent had altered his perception of musicians as well. He said he had come to the conclusion that "a lot of musicians are totally flakey. Either they're irresponsible, drunk, or on dope all the time. That's an occupational fact." What Dewey found most difficult to deal with was that he was none of the above. He wasn't drunk or on dope. He was "straight ahead" and had his act together. If he said he would be somewhere, he was, and the equipment sounded good, and, he was in demand. Regardless, he recalled, "I'd still get screwups, and I'd think this is insane. I am paying [the agent] to do this and that and he's not doing it, and I'm still paying him." So he started, and continues, to self-book because, "at least if I am talking to the owner then I know [better] what's going on." For Dewey, a little control is better than none.
FALSE CONTROL - IMAGINARY CONTRACTS

An element of the "perpetual wheel of misfortune" that most singles find themselves spinning on is the lack of enforceable contracts. This deficiency bears mention because in some respects, like self-booking, what has evolved can be viewed as a form of "false control"; an illusionary edifice that evaporates when examined too closely or when ignoring contracts is to anyone's advantage.

Ian recently lost over $2,000 on a gig in northern British Columbia that had been contracted through an agency. The venue was supposed to be a perfect room for Ian's "sing-a-long" act. Unfortunately when he arrived there, a 3186 kilometer (1918 mile) return drive from his home on Vancouver Island, he discovered that the hotel had gone into receivership and the bank appointed manager was not at all interested in Ian's type of music. He did have a contract but as Ian was too painfully aware, "A contract isn't worth the paper it's written on. They never are. You have no recourse whatsoever if someone fires you." The lack of an effective union further hampers attempts to find a solution to the problem. Ian wasn't fired for incompetence; he was competent, but the situation was simply untenable. Yet he still lost out on the $2,000 which represented a significant proportion of his potential earnings for the year.

Sol, the agent, has had similar problems with contracts. Much of the business that he transacted by him is based on
verbal contracts. What did he tell acts? "Well, you can always ask for them, and you can always come in and sign them, but to get signed contracts [from the venue] is like pulling teeth." Sometimes a hassle arises as to who is going to sign first, (and therefore commit themselves in writing), the act or the venue. Sol has found that by the time contracts are signed by the act and sent to the venue and then signed by the venue and sent back to the agent, the gig may have come and gone. Still he tells acts, "If you want a contract you can always get a contract. But it's not worth the paper it's written on."

So, anyone — act, agent, or venue — can get a contract but they are all equally spurious. Therefore, not only is the control "false" but it serves to reinforce many singles' perspective that most often control over getting, and keeping, gigs resides elsewhere. Even when control hypothetically rests partially with them, in the example of contracts and self-booking, it is illusionary. Reality for a single is that to keep getting gigs and to continue to perform they must reach some level of accommodation with the system, flawed as it may be. They must learn to live with what many of them view as a no-win relationship with agents. But even if they do eliminate the agent the rest of the system is still there and the system in its entirety is not even vaguely predicated on the belief that the musician is paramount. Instead profits are, and will always remain,
primary. Profit is the grease that lubricates the system, and the single must accept the fact that the wheel is going to keep spinning with or without them on it, and if they are either tossed off or jump voluntarily there is no guarantee they can get back on.

Perhaps since this chapter has been, in effect, a lengthy litany of agent's sins, which singles refuse to forgive or forget, an agent should be allowed to have the last word on the relationship, and what he sees as the true nature of control. Near the end of my interview with Sol, a thirteen year veteran of agency work, he remarked, "It's interesting that you did this interview with me because I really didn't think that the agent was that important in the [entertainer's] life. What can go wrong is not really the agent's fault. I guess it could be that way if an agent was indestructible, or controlled everything. Too often we're just the bearers of bad news, and all too often, as the expression goes, you 'kill the messenger.'
CHAPTER 4

GETTING TO GIGS

ON THE ROAD AGAIN, AND AGAIN, AND AGAIN,

Well, the first thing I do when I get a road gig is to feel sorry for myself. (Moe)

Once a single has obtained employment, the next phase of his work is getting to the gig. This chapter asks what preparations are necessary for a single's performance to take place and how do singles travel to gigs?

Getting to gigs encompasses a large amount of "back stage" activity (Goffman 1974). These essential preparations, or "bundle of tasks" (Bennett 1980) to perform are working examples of Wadel's (1979) concept of "hidden work" which offers a means to examine the nature of the popular folk conception that musicians "play", and do not "really" work. This misconception exists in part because the bulk of singles' work remains unobserved and unappreciated by the ultimate consumer of their product, the audience. Audiences only see or pass judgment on "front stage" activities (Goffman 1974). They see the musician perform for what seems a short time before he takes a 'break'; the actual time on stage is insignificant to the actual performance in terms of defining work involved, but audiences pass judgement only on the single's immediate presentation. Audiences generally do
not appreciate nor are they usually cognizant that the single has had to invest considerable time, effort, and money, in order to present himself, and his music, publicly for acceptance or rejection.

PREPARATION

We do a lot of work that nobody sees. Like there's a lot of hours spent initially just getting to know the instrument a little bit and then getting proficient at it and then constantly, working [on it]. You're constantly working. (Duke)

Because a single is 'self producing' (Bennett 1980), he has to be a promoter and possibly, if he self-books, a booking agent, an electrical and sound technician (conversant with a variety of technologies), a competent driver, a computer programmer or recording engineer (if he does a high-tech act), a business person (if he intends to have any money left to show for his efforts) and finally (the only aspect of the single that an audience encounters), a musician and entertainer. These necessary elements of his work are specialized tasks in their own right, but singles must be at least sufficiently competent at each in order to be available, and able, to perform.

All singles are self producing and no matter what their actual competence as musicians, must perform the same 'bundle of tasks' to present their act. Some, such as "high tech" singles have to possess an extensive knowledge of computers and sequencers to program their music. (A sequencer acts as a digital recorder that can record and play back information
entered into it via synthesizers and drum machines. The reproduced sound quality is high but so is the cost of the technology.) Those who use backing tapes, must be familiar with recording technology. Even a low-tech single, using a microphone, guitar, drum machine, and amplification system must still be able to set up a sound system adequately in order to present his music most advantageously. What follows is a partial chronicle of some of the "hidden work" singles must engage in.

Tiny does a high-tech act that requires the on-stage use of a computerized sequencer and drum machine, keyboard synthesizers, elaborate sound shaping devices (reverberation, digital delay, and equalization units), a full range amplification system, and the guitar synthesizer and microphone he uses to play and sing live. Tiny estimates he has $25,000 of equipment on-stage. I asked him the amount of time it took him to prepare the computer disks for his sequencer. He responded that the amount of time varied with the complexity of the arrangement. Generally it took between 4-8 hours per tune to accomplish the following: listen to the record, replicate the bass, drums, and chordal structure and rhythm of the song, and, learn the words and guitar, flute, or mandolin parts that he would perform live over the sequenced backing tracks. To prepare the 15 songs that comprise a "set" would therefore require 90 hours of preparation. (A "set" is approximately 45 minutes of music
which is followed by a "break" of approximately 15 minutes duration. The break allows the musician to rest and the bar to sell liquor. Patrons who are dancing or listening intently are not consuming drinks.) Since a performance usually consists of 4 sets, his evening's performance would have required approximately 360 hours of preparation for the sequencer parts alone. The development of in-between-song "patter" can also be time consuming; he has had to learn jokes and stories to keep the audience's attention while he enters the next song into the sequencer. Although songs can be used again, most songs have a limited "shelf life". Tiny remarked that this is true especially of contemporary popular music: "That's the way Top 40 tunes go, they are gone within six months and then there's no sense playing them anymore." To even be able to operate the equipment on stage took Tiny several years of working in music stores to acquaint himself with new technologies as they became available in the rapidly expanding commercial and professional musical instrument industry. All his technical knowledge and considerations are, of course, addendums to his musical expertise, which also took years to develop, and yet, to an audience, he is simply a funny guy who sings and tells jokes; his act sounds just like the records they have at home. But the process of making the act look effortless and simple, was neither.

Dewey uses backing tapes prepared on a 4-track tape
recorder. He records the drums, bass, and guitar parts and also does complex vocal arrangements. Because of his academic musical background he scores out many of the parts, a task which requires finely honed ear training and transcription skills in order to translate faithfully the arrangement that appears on the records onto his own tapes. He said preparing the arrangements was time consuming: "I could easily spend two days writing to make sure it was right." He would work at several tunes at one time but it took him 9 months of intermittent work to prepare two sets of music (30-40 tunes). As his competence increased he could work up a set in a month, but again like Tiny, he had continually to add new songs to his repertoire to keep from stagnating personally and also to keep his audience entertained. The use of backing tapes suited Dewey's multi-instrumental abilities but they necessitated a large investment of his time and the recording equipment to properly prepare them.

Duke's low-tech act also needs a constant input of time and energy to keep the act from atrophying. He must make an evaluation as to the 'staying power' of new recording acts before he invests the time and effort to add their songs to his repertoire. As a multi-instrumentalist (banjo, guitar, fiddle, mandolin) he also must keep up his instrumental skills if the new material requires different instruments. He does not want to be left behind. He reflected on what happens when performers do not work on their act: "There are
poor old guys we all know that just didn't change their style. When Hank Williams died [late 1950's] they just kept on doing it and now they're laughed off stages. They never got their timing together. They still play a bit wonky and they're still out there trying. These old timers, they break your heart, man." So Duke keeps learning because "there's that scare factor there, that you don't want to get left behind."

Not stagnating requires more than just learning new tunes, it also requires constant "hidden work" to keep an act viable. Duke recounted to me his activities over the course of several days preceding our interview. He was learning a new song which featured a difficult fiddle part. He figured he had already put in 35 hours learning the tune, lyrics, and fiddle part. In total he estimated it would take a total of 50 hours of preparation to present a 4 minute song. Aside from adding new material to his act he was simultaneously engaged in what he termed "off-stage work": making a five foot tall sign, a logo, letterheads, a promo kit, getting pictures developed and seeing agents. To keep his act viable he was "working 12-14 hours a day." The day of our interview was his first day off for a long time and he felt he needed it because: "I'm usually working 10-12 hours on music even when I'm not working performing 4 hours a night." He scales down his off-stage work to 4 hours a day when he is gigging. But he feels to do his work properly he must "still do an 8-
hour-a-day job, at least."

I queried him about how he viewed "hidden work" and whether or not he thought the general population perceived musicians as not working. He felt the general public's erroneous perceptions were based on ignorance of how extensive, and relentless, are preparations for performance. Duke stressed, "If you don't constantly work, then you should be slicing up meat in a factory or something like that." He saw the need to "constantly be on the ball - business-wise, music-wise, personality-wise." If not, "you can get everything else right and you screw up one of them and - whiff - you're gone."

"Back stage" work always exceeds "front stage" presentations. Not only is the bulk of a single's work hidden and therefore not noted, it is also unrelenting, even when there is no employment. Duke's summation points out that constant effort is required in an industry where there is always a new crop of cultural workers to replace those who fail to sustain their careers or fall by the wayside due to the rigors of the occupation.
The first week is o.k., but the second week is a real drag. (Eric)

Well, gas and stuff, and restaurant food [is expensive when you travel]. You’re always constantly looking for that extra cheap restaurant to get your meals. I bought myself a little coffee percolator and a little thing to boil soup in, or I might go to a deli and get myself some sandwich meat, and have soup and sandwiches and keep my costs down that way. But you get tired of doing this, and you get right back into restaurant food again. You’re constantly looking for that special deal, you know. (Jon)

A recurrent complaint about the occupation is the rigor and necessity of travel. Willie Nelson’s popular country song, "On the Road Again" paints a romanticized version of musicians as a band of gypsies rolling down the highway, seeing things they’ll never see again, excited about going places they’ve never been before. This may happen occasionally but often road work is tedious, redundant, lonely, and, ultimately, alienating. Just like the myth of musician’s work as "money for nothing and chicks for free", Nelson’s myth represents the road as the ultimate freedom from the world of 9-5; only occasionally does this myth lend itself to reality.

All singles at one time or another have performed "on-the-road" - connotating that the work takes place away from their normal domicile, if indeed they have one. To maintain full employment in a market such as exists in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia most singles must travel, not always extensively, but as Sol, the agent expressed when I
asked him why so much travel was involved: "There are only so many rooms in-town and when you cut the market into the different segments of the business - pop, country, piano bar - there are very few places for an entertainer to work 52 weeks a year, in-town, full time. An entertainer has to realize that if he wants to be an entertainer, there has to be travel. If he wants to be a couch-entertainer, then fine, he can work in-town. But I can't guarantee him full-time work."

Some singles abhor travel, which leaves them feeling isolated and unable to function well without the support of friends and a sense of community. Other singles prefer being on-the-road, either because they prefer rural areas, and audiences, or because finding work is often easier since isolated gigs are usually the hardest to fill. (Sol stressed that there also are seasonal variations in finding and filling venues. In summer everyone wants to travel, in winter it is the opposite.)

Moe's first reaction to going on-the-road is to feel sorry for himself. It is on the drive to the gig that he constructs a fantasy about "doing a real good job, and meeting neat people and really enjoying things." More mundane concerns are based on what condition his decidedly used van is in for the trip like gas, tires, oil, insurance, etc. Because radio reception is often poor in the mountainous regions of British Columbia, he warms up his voice by "singing
[his] brains out," on the drive to the gig.

Jon has a newer vehicle so his main concern is setting out his wardrobe and personal effects. He believes it is important to be presentable and dress well on stage, with proper stage clothes. He takes with him "cosmetics and stuff. It's almost like a woman 'cause I have hairspray and use mousse, and get my hair styled." Last thing he does before he leaves home is turn on the telephone answering machine, "in case that agent phones for that Hollywood gig that never comes."

Ian estimates it takes him about 36 hours to prepare properly and gather up all the clothes, papers, and medicines he will need for the duration of the trip. Some trips can last for months. He sums up what other singles commented on about their preparations for travel, which I can also attest to: "It sounds as though these things are only going to take 5 minutes to organize, but one does dither a bit and wander around in ever decreasing circles." Perhaps, this is so because singles are often reticent to go on-the-road when they "go it alone". They must learn to be self-contained and self reliant.

Since many British Columbia singles live in the Lower Mainland region and a lot of their work is at venues outside the immediate area, gigs often require extensive travel and subsequent outlay of money for expenses. In an occupation that can be fairly portrayed as a 'hand to mouth' existence
it is sometimes hard to get to gigs without cash reserves or credit cards. Agents and venues will not advance travel expenses for the act to get to the gig.

One road trip of Jon's will serve to illustrate the extensive time and money a single may have to invest in order to keep steady employment. His seven week tour started on Vancouver Island. He was in Victoria for a week, then stopped briefly at his seldom visited apartment in Vancouver (90 km - 3 hrs. traveling time) to "grab another shirt, some socks and underwear." From Vancouver he drove to Banff, Alberta (924 km - 12 hrs.) worked there two weeks and then proceeded to Burns Lake in Northwestern British Columbia (1006 km - 12.5 hrs.). From there he went up to Fort St. John in North central British Columbia (500 km - 4.5 hrs.) and then back westward to Terrace (969 km - 12 hrs.) and then to Prince Rupert on the coast (160 km - 1 hr.). From there he drove back down to Vancouver (1543 km - 19 hrs.) on three hours sleep, stopped briefly again at his apartment and then caught a ferry to Vancouver Island and a gig in the central part of the island (150 km - 3 hrs.). In total he drove approximately 6,735 km (4,811 miles) that took him a total of 64 hours of driving time. (This does not include his travel around the towns where he was working.) I was interested to ascertain what a commercial rate for that amount of travel would be so I contacted the British Columbia Automobile Association and they quoted me a rate of 31.4 cents per kilometer as
depreciation and running expenses on a vehicle of the type that Jon drives. An approximate cost of Jon’s trip without his food and personal expenses, and higher prices for commodities in isolated areas, based on this figure would be $1,510. This represented a sizable portion of his wages. Estimating his wages to be $3,500 for the seven weeks Jon would have outlaid over 50% in hidden as well as visible expenses.

Jon remarked that that road trip, very similar to others he has done, was not too bad as it was summer. He could keep costs down by sleeping outside his truck on a foamy mattress in his sleeping bag, but he said he had to "hope the bears didn’t get me." Jon said winter travel is even more expensive because then he must rent a room and also worry about being delayed by bad weather or the possibility of the equipment getting frozen or stolen.

When Ian lost out on a long term gig in Northern British Columbia (as related in chapter 3,) he had to drive back home (a 3186 km./1918 miles - 38 hrs. round trip) and then drive back north again to Fort St. John (2506 Km./1558 miles - 32 hrs. round trip) three weeks later. All the while he was at home he was without any income whatsoever due to the difficulty of booking last minute gigs after his cancellation. So Ian’s cancellation cost him $2000 in wages plus road cost for an extra 2,796 km. (1738 miles) which at the going depreciation rate is approximately $900. Without
effective recourse to legal redress on the loss of wages, singles are very much disadvantaged when performing both on and off the road.

Going on-the-road is a grind and often unprofitable. Because the cash outlay is spread out over various items (food, gas, lodging, etc.) and several days, the total costs, although considerable are not always apparent.

Being on the road has evolved its own mystique for musicians. They mythologize it in stories and songs as the suspension of responsibilities and the lure of the open highway. But too often, like Agar's independent truckers (1986), a single moves through time and space, suspended from normal social intercourse. When he returns to wherever he calls home he must still pay bills, have an emotional life, and find personal satisfaction. His humdrum day-to-day world maintains its own momentum, even in absentia. A major reason for the episodic nature of single's episodic employment is that most singles reach a "burn out" stage; some sooner, some later, which they psychologically can not surmount. Many informants left the impression that they cannot continue to travel ad infinitum and ad nauseum without jeopardizing their love of music, and along with it their personalized glimpses of the dreams that made them set out on their career.
course in the first place. The journey some singles take in response to the 9-5 world they choose to deviate from, may in fact be only a momentary detour. A single is very much of the world, even if his mythologies sing him bittersweet songs to have him pretend he isn't.
It's a lot easier to get a place going when you're really comfortable with yourself. The [magic] starts to flow through and gets projected out there. (Moe)

Once a single gets to the gig he must attend to another aspect of his multi-faceted occupation, the public relations skills of performance; that is, convincing total strangers to relate favorably to him, and his music.

Getting through gigs is directly concerned with how a single negotiates the conditions of a public performance with the other principal social actors involved in it (Manning 1983). Chapter 3 examined how singles interact with agents and managers in respect to gaining employment. We have acknowledged in the last chapter the significance of 'back stage' activities (the "hidden work") a single undertakes in preparation for performance. Let us turn our attention to the 'front stage' relationship between singles and audiences. How do singles interact with audiences? Does the habitual presence of alcohol characteristic of this type of workplace affect the quality of the interactions that take place there?

Before proceeding to the specifics of singles' interactions with audiences and management, it is necessary to investigate briefly and reiterate the range of work
singles actually do. A single presents music for money, although there may also exist an individual esthetic rationale. His activities take place within the context of an "art world" based on "networks of co-operation" (Becker 1980). A single's presentation can be viewed as a "work performance", at the lowest level of "purity" in what Goffman terms the "theatrical frame", and can be characterized as an event where viewers openly watch people at work and show no regard for the dramatic elements of their labor (Goffman, 1974).

The work activities of a single also exhibit some of the characteristics of a "social celebration." Manning suggests that celebration has four constituent features: one, celebration is performance and involves the presentation of cultural symbols; two, celebration is entertainment, regardless of the extent of overt ideological or practical underpinnings; third, celebration is public; fourth, celebration is participatory and not intended for "disengaged spectators" (Manning, 1983:4). For singles, however, all criteria are not necessarily present: a gig is a social celebration because cultural symbols are presented in the songs the singer sings, the way he sings them, and the way they are received and responded to; a gig is entertainment, even though it may be an adjunct to the sale of food and beverages; a gig is public, if patrons are legally of age and able to purchase refreshments; a gig is
sometimes participatory, other times the audience is a "disengaged spectator" (Manning 1983.) This latter aspect of celebration is most problematic for singles.

At some gigs audiences are not expected to participate actively. The music is specifically designed to require only passivity; that is, listening. In these circumstances the single and his work are part of the ambiance of the venue and the single does not presume or encourage active audience response. However, at times a single has been hired to present an act that requires response: dancing, singing along, or kibitzing between performer and audience. When response is not forthcoming, and the single performs in an interactive vacuum a key ingredient of celebration is missing and the gig becomes a "job", a service presented to fulfill an obligation and gain a reward and not undertaken for any altruistic reasons of 'art', or sharing, or celebration. Without positive audience response gigs are easily relegated to merely mercenary exercises; the single putting in his time while doing the job on auto-pilot without interest or interaction. He becomes a "disengaged spectator" of the social reality he intended to help construct.
I've spent more gigs singin' to the waitresses than the people. Usually I try to get a little [response] - if the energy's there - I'll put out so much, but if it's not comin' back, then it's just another gig. But if it starts comin' back, then there's no limit to where we can go. (Moe)

It's very frustrating to have to play to an empty house or to an audience that aren't joining in or just sitting there, revolving on their digits. (Ian)

As Howard Becker noted in his forward to Kamerman and Martorella's *Performers and Performances* (1983) the performing arts fundamentally differ from all the other arts in that the consumer (audience) is front and center at the moment of presentation. Performing artists therefore receive instantaneous censure or praise. It is the danger of the high-wire act on which a performer balances ego and social expectations that gives performance its excitement, and its catastrophes. To lessen the chances of failure, the performing arts strive to eliminate chance from as many of the processes as possible. They attempt to "rationalize" what they can control and mystify or mythologize what they can not. There is a "fine dialectic" (Becker, 1983) at work in the performing arts that juxtaposes an urge to control the processes with a concomitant urge to experience excitement at the instant of creation.

The subjective nature of performance, precludes definitive statements on it. It is an infinitely variable process not at all amenable to simplistic explanations or judgements because it is comprised of a wide range of human
concerns and predilections that are difficult to unravel, predict, or re-create. What is possible, however, is to examine the needs performance answers and articulate the purposes it potentially serves. Wilson, in his treatise on the psychology of performance suggests that performance has its roots in "our instincts to imitate, to play, to explore, and to imagine worlds beyond our own" (Wilson, 1985:27). Performance can help to enlarge perceptual capacities and allow individuals to experiment with a full emotional range of experiences: joy, fear, and grief.

The idealized performance task of a single is to take their "talents", turn them into a personal and musical "statement" and transform a "crowd" of anonymous individuals into an "audience"; an audience that will consume food and beverages and subsequently transform the venue's owner from an altruistic "patron of the arts" into an "entrepreneur". Ideally, everyone involved should be satisfied; the performer creates and gets paid, the audience is entertained, and the venue makes money in excess of the cost of hiring the act. Audience responses vary depending on the circumstances, they may listen or dance, but for the moment the performer, audience, and venue have jointly created a larger entity, analogous to a celebration (Manning, 1983). However, the sense of celebration tends to evaporate by the time audience members get to the parking lot, the venue gets cleaned up, and the performer turns off the amplifier. None of the
participants may remember the particulars of the occasion but only that it was satisfying. Neither the process nor the result is usually analyzed, to analyze might destroy the ability to spontaneously enjoy. Most audiences do not want to have to "work" at their "play", but the performer has had to work so that the audience could play.

In this idealized scenario the single may not have looked on the gig as a "job" since the performance was enjoyable. He may say "I played really well tonight", suggesting that when the gig goes well, he may view being a single as fun (play) and not drudgery (a job). A positive response may be sufficient compensation for the extensive hidden work that has gone into the presentation.

The success and failure of this interactive process is expressed in culturally relative ways. When the performance is successful, the single expects signs of approval in the form of attention, applause, tips, and/or congratulations. Conversely, if the performance garners a negative response then the single can expect no applause, no tips, and probably, no future employment. The strength of adulation ranging from (hysteria to polite response) or censure (indifference to active aggression) is another variable, but a performer can instantly ascertain the level of acceptance or rejection. Unsatisfied patrons tend to vote with their feet; they leave. At the same time a single's performance is unique in the creative arts because it is closely linked to
alcohol consumption in the workplace, an element not present in many other creative undertakings and an element that must be considered in examining the work singles do.

A primary method a single uses to manipulate the social rituals is to "read" an audience and the on-going dynamics of the immediate situations (audience/performer, audience/audience) and react accordingly. These "situational adjustments" (Becker 1977) are a prerequisite to successful performance. They allow an individual to adapt to, and adopt, whatever criteria a specific situation requires for success. This chameleon-like quality is the instant assumption of roles in direct response to what the single perceives the audience requires of him. (For example, if a single has been playing folky, introspective music and a group of loud patrons wearing cowboy hats and boots come into the venue, their dress and demeanor would suggest to the single that they most probably would prefer country music so he had best switch his repertoire to up-tempo selections by popular recording artists if he wishes to provide them with "appropriate music".) Such roles are not necessarily based on him as a distinct individual (often it is expressed in the songs requested or chosen for inclusion), but rather the cultural image he projects and the attendant expectations, obligations, and rewards. Goffman (1974) suggests the term "frame analysis" for the process of instantaneously shifting a person's social output in response to the social input.
received. Any performer, to be successful, must continuously engage in "frame analysis," although they would not label it as such. A single uses music and entertainment to transform the anonymity of strangers into a sense of momentary community. This is the ideal. The real may vary considerably but informants all catch glimpses of it often enough to keep them believing that, given the proper circumstance, they can make it happen.

David Sudnow, in his book on learning to play jazz piano improvisation, *The Ways of the Hand*, wrote that he had to learn to appreciate that the improvised melody being constructed could only be effective if done with an appreciation of the other elements involved — namely the rhythm, the chordal structure, and the instrument itself. It was only when he had sufficiently absorbed all these other elements (almost to the point of a sub-conscious virtuosity) that his melodic improvisations began to approximate those of the masters he emulated. Not in an imitative manner, but rather on a level of fluidity and expression that had been absent.

So too, singles' work of performance can be viewed in the context of a social improvisation. The nitely performance becomes the melody, the audience and venue set a rhythm, a basic "cultural vocabulary" establishes a chordal pattern, and finally, the solo performer becomes the instrument that ultimately is the vehicle of expression. It was only when the
distinct elements of the process were absorbed at an almost subliminal level that Sudnow's improvisations began to progress. Similarly, only when the distinct elements essential to a single's social improvisations (i.e. the ability to "read" an audience and present appropriate musical selections, while simultaneously being musical) are successfully incorporated into their personal subconscious that singles are able, under amenable circumstances, to perform their work successfully, and with a degree of satisfaction.

The end result of a performance should be an opportunity for both audience and performer to momentarily step outside their respective realities and briefly create a new reality that, although transitory, can still reconfirm underlying social values.

On a good night, the "magic" of performance can happen. On a bad night, all the informants stressed that four hours can last forever.

MUSIC

[I perform] because I love music. I love listening to it and I wanted to learn to play, so I could be like the people on the radio. (Jon)

The service singles provide is important because music is an important component in most people's lives. It can provide pleasure, emotional solace, and inspiration. It can also serve as the catalyst to emotional release and the
suspension of responsibilities. Exactly how music influences human responses is as complex as that of the nature of performance. Music, its production and appreciation, are comprised of the interaction of the basic physics of sound and our human acoustic processing system, and the social environment where music is learned, experienced, and recreated. Since singles vary widely as to musical expertise, there is no cut and dried method to decipher 'good' or 'bad' musicians, or music. If it is socially appropriate, it is successful, which is not the same as being good; and if it is inappropriate, it is unsuccessful, which is not the same as being bad. Problems arise when the primary social actors constructing a musical celebration – the performer and audience – cannot distinguish or compromise between the two.

When singles perform they and their audience presume an entire substrata of conscious, sub-conscious, and unconscious ideals that underlie the social situation. The single's ability to recognize, and manipulate, these subjective cultural symbols and processes makes for a successful performer and performance. The hardest work a single does is to learn to present 'appropriate' music consistently. An aspect of the choice of 'appropriate' music by a single is an appreciation of the difference between 'conventive' and 'inventive' music. Bar entertainers deal in 'conventions' – socially shared stereotypes, formulae, myths, and musical patterns lodged in the 'collective mind' or musical
heritage...[and] 'inventions' - unique insights, discoveries and esthetic techniques contributed by the musicians creative power" (Lewis, 1982:186). Often musicians work as singles because they think that they can bankroll their creativity through it. What often happens is the venues are unsatisfactory or the roadwork too exhausting and it is hard for them to keep their sense of purpose and spark of creativity. Instead of acting as a stimulus to creativity, performing as a single can evolve into the opposite. Creative burnout often accompanies road burnout.

Just as the organization of "art worlds" is based around 'conventional' ways of doing things (Becker 1980), so too, the conventiveness which permeates single's "art world" extends not only to the ways they get gigs (the structure of their occupation), but also to the songs they perform. In many gigging situations it is difficult, if not counterproductive, to 'play your own music' partly because patrons in unfamiliar social situations or surroundings usually prefer music and symbols to which they can easily relate, assimilate, and react to communally. New music requires attention and attention is often difficult to command at a single’s gigs. It is not a concert situation where an audience goes expecting to experience new compositions. Sol told me that acts that insist on performing their own music are more problematic to book because "the agent may admire the material, but if the room hates it then there's no return
bookings," and as has already been discussed, his primary concern is to keep the venue. Consequently, Sol, and most other agents, prefer a standard repertoire (usually reflected in the act's songlist) for whatever genre of music the venue demands. This makes slotting acts into rooms easier. Agents and managers do not like surprises, for they feel there is already sufficient unpredictability present in their businesses. They prefer singles who can present conventional music inventively.
"LOOKING FOR THE FRIENDLIEST FACE"

I can’t predict when the magic’s gonna happen. I can’t say, "O.K. Magic, Let’s go!" (Moe)

The interaction of performer and audience is not an easily analyzed process. Like performance it is subjective. One major drawback is that the composition of an audience can change drastically, several times, over the course of a performance. Also a single’s own output and interest is not always consistent from performance to performance. A performer can not predict what a response will be; there is not any definitive formula that guarantees that an action will elicit the desired response. At best, a performer can 'guess-timate' based on his ability to learn, recognize and manipulate cultural symbols. Singles themselves are cultural symbols and inherent in the work of singles is an understanding of what they represent and how they can best fulfill the expectations their society has of them.

All singles have to learn to deal with audiences. Without an audience there is no employment and without a responsive audience there is no celebration. For most singles, work without celebration is not enjoyable and is relegated to an economic activity. Many singles, however, prefer not to view their music solely from an economic perspective because there is also an esthetic component. Singles reach different accommodations with audiences, some emphasizing their musical talents, some their ability to be
entertaining. Each has his own procedure to attempt to engage the audience in his presentation of self.

Moe has a simple procedure that he follows when beginning a performance. He tries to personalize a potentially anonymous social encounter by focusing on one individual. That individual becomes the object of his efforts. He told me: "I'll pick out somebody and I'll just sing to them. And I'm gonna make them like me. I'm gonna find the friendliest face and then as the other faces get friendlier, I'll spread out the energy a little more." What Moe abhors the most is acquiescing and allowing himself to be ignored. He feels strongly about seeing it happen to other performers: "I just hate, and feel sorry for these poor little wimps that are up there singing to themselves." Moe will not allow himself and his talents to be treated as inconsequential. If he can focus on one single person and make that person react he has constructed an audience in a room of indifference and feels he is a performer, and not background "muzak."

Tiny also feels strongly that it is up to him to create the performance reality. If he is unable to distract an audience from the peripheral activities and aural onslaught that are present in most British Columbia venues (televisions, pool tables, dart boards, video games, etc.) then he feels he "has got a problem if he can't draw them away from the TV." His high-tech act features extensive
technology which he uses innovatively and with which he can command audience attention. Tiny is successful in creating a performance reality; he also commands the highest wages in the local market.

Ian's sing-a-long act needs audience participation. He admits that he "absolutely feeds off the audience." He finds it easier "to get their lips moving before their feet" and will 'work' an audience by trying various styles of songs until he gets a response. If his more esoteric material is not successful then he switches to more familiar songs. He continually focuses on getting the audience to react by discovering the appropriate songs "they can hum along to, inside their heads, if nothing else." Once he has started a song, however, he does not worry about the audience until the end. Then he must make another judgement as to what to sing next. Sometimes getting a positive response is intense work and it is frustrating "if they are in a completely negative mood because all you're doing then is pissing against the wind." Ian's act rises and falls on getting patrons to respond. If they fail to the gig ends up "thoroughly frustrating and entirely un-happy making" for Ian. When he puts out energy, he wants it returned. A strong collective response energizes his performance.

Eric found interacting with audiences difficult primarily because of the bar environment in which he attempted to present his act. It was a primary reason why he
quit performing as a single. He found that by performing in "low-life" places he got back "low-life" energy. He did not feel superior to his audience: "It's not as if I was sitting there thinking 'I am better than these people', and as if I had nothing to learn from them, but it was just the kind of experience that they wanted. That was what was really frustrating to me." For Eric, a bar was not a sympathetic locus for his act.

Eric zeroed in on a critical element of a single's work and the environment within which they attempt to construct a celebration: their workplace activities are mediated by alcohol. As Eric observed it was frustrating because "when you are dealing with alcohol you have a different kind of energy than you get if they're drinking cappuccino, or something." He felt that what he wanted to give they did not want to receive; they were drinking and his music demanded sober reflection.
"UNDER THE AFFLUENCE OF INCOHOL"

I came on stage at a local "Amateur Concert", introduced as the featured "professional" entertainer, and I took one look at the audience and realized, they weren't drunk! They weren't talking, they were actually paying attention, totally. The first thing that happened was my mouth got completely dry, then my diaphragm muscles contracted and I couldn't breathe. Then I went to hit the guitar and my fingers were shaking so bad, I couldn't hold the chord either. I was absolutely frozen. If it were in a bar and they were all kinda throwing up on each other and fighting, I could handle that, but these people were paying attention. A sober audience is a frightening thing! I stumbled through one song, the stage fright, and left. (Moe)

The influence of alcohol is seldom remarked on in the literature on musicians and performance. No matter how benignly social drinking is portrayed in media advertising, singles must constantly deal with audiences that are ingesting a depressant drug, not always to the point of incontinence but often enough to cause singles to reflect on the relationship their performances have to alcohol. Alcohol mediates the performance. In fact, it is the economic rationale for singles and many other musicians finding employment in the first place. Alcohol presents a paradox, therefore, that is, at times, insurmountable: drinking among members of the audience is definitely encouraged; yet over-drinking can render the appreciation and/or the relevance of the performance, and the performer, increasingly problematic. The physical response of the audience, and often the single as well, to alcohol can be viewed as falling along a fairly predictable trajectory: initial discomfort in an fluid social
setting; the ingestion of a few drinks to 'loosen up'; the momentary relaxation of social discomfort in the form of conversation and dancing, and in the case of the performer, the illusion of a more relaxed presentation. However, sometimes further drinking leads to personal conflicts and the disintegration and fracturing of the carefully constructed patina of social cohesion.

These interactional ricochets, if you will, lend an element of chance to the social occasion. A single can find himself forced to attempt to deal with the totally unpredictable reactions of individuals in an audience who can be responsive and enthusiastic one moment and treat the performer with loathing the next. Even though he presents the same type of songs, there can be totally different responses. Some individuals are quite reasonable at a lower level of intoxication and aggressively unreasonable at a higher one. Fights and altercations between singles and members of the audiences are not unknown. I personally have been punched, spat at, and had all four tires on my vehicle slashed in response to unknown slights on my part to someone in the audience. Even sitting at a table on a 'break' can lead to conflicts by involving the single unwittingly in domestic disputes. The performer, as a stranger, becomes a convenient scapegoat for personal disputes that most probably preceded, and most certainly will follow, the gig; these are disputes which alcohol ignited.
Not only are interactions with audiences influenced by alcohol but those with management and staff are also. When I was embarking on a career as a bar musician I was advised by an older musician that it was best to deal with managers over money matters (i.e. payment or advances) after their second cup of coffee and before their second drink of the day. The evolution of more professionalized management in many venues has helped to rectify this situation somewhat, but incidents with abusive, surly management and staff (occasionally resentful of a single's wages relative to the visible hours worked) are consistent elements in the tales musicians tell. The difficulties of dealing with substance abuse in the workplace are present at every performance and part of occupational lore and mythology.

Just as agents mediate between singles and venues, so too is alcohol an omnipresent mediator between the single and the audience. Alcohol is the fuel that fires the engine that spins the wheel that singles try to hang on to. It would be perhaps too extreme to say that alcohol contributes to making the wheel one of "perpetual misfortune", as Mac suggests, but the industry is predicated on the ideal notion of socially sanctioned substance use, and the occupational reality of occasional abuse, by all the principal social actors. In North America, and from personal experience elsewhere in the world, the performance of popular music and alcohol are inextricably intertwined.
This discussion of how singles deal with audiences, management, staff, and alcohol can be summarized by an observation Dewey offered me toward the end of our interview. After twenty years of experience, Dewey was fully aware of the lack of objectivity in his interaction with patrons, and they with him and his music. He also appreciated that the entire process of putting himself on public display to participate in and contribute to a social celebration was overwhelmingly subjective. He could however present me with his personal guideline: "For years I considered this sentence sort of summed it up: The audience is a gorilla. You know it’s senseless trying to figure out the reasoning behind it, or why they want to do this or that. I mean, they’re just bigger than you, play for them." I interjected, "Don’t argue with them...and don’t steal their bananas?" He agreed, wholeheartedly. "You never know what a gorilla will do after five or six banana dacquiris. It might ask you to play "Proud Mary" or worse still, insist you dance with them to it."

GETTING ON IN THE WORKPLACE

The waitresses and bartenders have their own trip going, you know. It’s kind of a semi-professional relationship ‘cause they know you’re just passing through. (Moe)

Staff and management also figure in how singles get through gigs; management are often involved only peripherally (unless it is an owner managed venue) and then only with "back stage" activities while staff are witness to their
"front stage work. Because almost all singles perform at a
different venue every week they must constantly interact with
a different group of co-workers. Most strive to establish a
good rapport for the duration of the gig.

Mac told me he feels the most critical element is
communication, not just initially but throughout the
engagement. For Mac, the relationship can be arduous because
"there are so many variables working with different
bartenders, waitresses, the audiences, or the bouncers. If
you get on the wrong side of them or they don't like your
face or something they can totally wreck a week's worth of
work for you, or a night's." He makes a point of immediately
addressing any contentious issues (usually centered on song
selection, volume, and territoriality); that way everyone has
clearly delineated spheres of control.

A very pragmatic approach was adopted by Benny. "I try
to be friends with them because obviously they're the people
who are hiring you and paying you. Even if you don't like
them, you know, you still try to be friends with them." The
majority of the time he finds management and staff alright to
deal with, although having to be amenable all the time can
compromise his autonomy: "I guess you could call it suck-
holing." But Benny extends friendship first and gives the
situation the benefit of the doubt, "I just be myself, and
they be themselves."

Duke finds dealing with managers more straightforward
than dealing with staff. With managers he feels the bottom line is sales, "If you make him bucks, he's gonna be happy 'cause that's your job." He feels that staff sometimes turn on the musician because he is an outsider and will be gone in a day or two anyway. If business is slow they resent that the musician will get the same wages regardless of sales while they suffer a loss of tips. He recalled being flattered that a former barmaid who had purchased the venue asked him for suggestions about how she could make the gig better for the musicians. In Duke's experience that was a too rare request: "You learn after a while, just hold your tongue, don't bother saying anything 'cause they're not gonna do it and they're just gonna think you're trying to interfere in their business." Duke knows success takes a degree of co-operation, but he has personally established distinct criteria that he will not compromise.

Jon is a firm believer that without co-operation in the work place his work is not enjoyable: "If I can't get along with staff members and management I almost might as well pack up and leave because they're part of the family there." He views each venue as a family situation. He does not perform well if he does not feel comfortable: "I probably don't sing as well either, because there's bad feelings within the environment." A purely self-protective reason for establishing a good rapport with co-workers is that they will be more inclined to come to the aide of the single if he has
problems with audience members. When Jon has been hassled by abusive patrons he has had staff intervene and say to the patron, "Look, you better let up, or else you're gonna get kicked out." Most importantly Jon stresses mutual respect and effort in the workplace. He resents being treated as a "dime a dozen musician" and always performs better if a sense of camaraderie is present.

Although Ian is not usually "overly impressed with management and staff", he recognizes that a successful performance evolves most easily if everyone is mutually supportive. He must sing well and be entertaining, the management must put together a good staff, and that staff must encourage patrons to drink and enjoy themselves. He can not be successful in isolation: "it's a hell of a thing to say but you're basically there to sell drinks and you're pissing into the wind if the staff wonders around with their 'whatevers' up their 'wherevers'."

THE VIEW FROM THE MANAGERS DESK

Management and staff hold strong opinions on singles. Their views are instructive because they are not concerned with the type of esthetic concerns that might be important to a single. To most staff and management the single is a small part of the total process of their service industry, they grant that it is an important part, but it is also a replaceable one. The very interchangeability that singles
resent, their co-workers see as a benefit. If one single does not go over well, there is another, next night, next week. Turnover in performers is as natural as the turnover of an audience's composition.

In order to ascertain how management viewed singles I conducted several interviews with managers, some of who were also proprietors, and others who were employed on a straight salary basis. The composite drawn from these interviews I have personified as one individual, Belinda. She represents ten years of management experience with major chain hotel franchises and as an independent owner/operator and in that time has seen literally hundreds of singles pass through her employ. She views singles as part of the total hotel package: "Rooms make the money, but amenities, like singles, help sell." She felt singles were a special breed, "so dedicated to a dream that they will sacrifice anything and everything for it, and they do." Belinda's overall impression of singles is that they "seem lonely, delving so deeply into music that they lose the outside world." She also feels they have difficulties getting emotionally close to people because of the constant movement. She told me she was struck by the fact that they seemed "encapsulated". She observed singles dealing with loneliness, which she feels goes with the job, in different ways. Some do not drink until the last set and then are drunk by the end of the night and sleep all the next day. Others are extremely dedicated to their musical dreams. She
recollected coming to work at six o'clock a.m. to find a single in the lounge working on his own compositions and recordings. He had been there since closing time the night before. She admires such commitment. Belinda feels that because singles can get so myopic they sometimes lose sight of audiences and staff. And to her a good rapport with audience and staff is important to the atmosphere she attempts to insure for her lounges. A good audience and staff is half the battle an entertainer faces, but the single must make the extra effort to make a connection. Belinda noted that, "They will forgive poor musicianship and mediocre singing but they will not forgive the lack of a personal relationship, or at least the illusion of it. They want the singer to be singing just to them." Belinda must be concerned with the bottom line, sales, because that is how she rationalizes continued entertainment to her regional office. She feels singles, although solitary, have a contribution to make to venues such as she manages and rewards to reap if — and it is a big if — they can overcome what she views as the intrinsic loneliness and 'road weariness' of so many performers she has employed.
Belinda gave a cogent summation of the types of singles she has encountered. Her typology is a very accurate facsimile of what agents told me in my queries along the same lines. It warrants inclusion at length because of its comprehensiveness. She said, "there are three categories:

1) Those who demand, or have to have, approval from other people; i.e., an audience, fellow workers, spouses and friends. These are what I perceive to be the entertainers. The more feedback they get, the more they perform. These are also the ones that will cater to an audience; thus, would be what I would consider the best act for a lounge like mine.

2) Those who need only self appreciation or approval. These are the acts that are using their time on stage only as a means to finance their real goals in the musical field. This could be writing, composing, or production. This type is usually so encapsulated in their own world that they do not relate well at all to the audience. They will look down on an audience, feeling that they are not educated enough to appreciate their talents. These are probably the true artists.

3) Those individuals who have some pretty good talent and have found that they can make a living just doing gigs. They truly like music, but do not excel either as an entertainer, or as a musician; they are average at what they do, but have no big goals and ambitions. They probably wouldn't know anything else to do. This type will do okay if they can receive some stimulation from management, co-workers, and the audience.

Staff most often are concerned more with the immediate work environment. Their main concern in interacting with the single is the appropriateness and volume of the music. If the music does not please the clientele or match expectations then a major source of staff wages, tips, can evaporate. Staff are aware that mismatches between acts and venues do occur but their hourly wages are often so low (except in
union bars) that they cannot afford to be the victims of someone else's incompetence. They resent being caught up in the learning process of novice singles, new agents, or incompetent management.

Overly loud music is a frequent complaint of staff members. A waiter intimated to me that "I know musicians are used to it loud because they have all this expensive equipment on stage and they want to use it. But if we can't hear the patron's orders and the bar tender can't hear us then it's as royal pain in the ass. I hate getting a headache at work. It makes me actively dislike whoever is giving it to me." If an act is consistently inconsiderate, then it is likely the staff will make a negative report to the management and it is doubtful the single will ever be rehired, if they are even allowed to complete the engagement. Another important concern mentioned by staff is territoriality. They do not want the musician to go behind the bar and serve themselves or stand in the waiter's and waitress's 'stations'. (Nor do performers want anyone to use their stage area.) On a long term gig the single might come to be considered a full fledged member of the staff and be accorded rights and privileges. However, most gigs are of short duration (two to six nights), and may not repeat for several months. Consequently, singles are considered short-term occupational subcontractors like plumbers, electricians, etc. There is a central difference in how services are
completed, however, because a single presents a performance and his work is on public display. The essence of a single’s work is that he must quickly connect with audience, staff, and management, provide a specific service, and then disengage himself from the "community" of the venue; only to spin the wheel again elsewhere and hope eventually it becomes a wheel of fortune. The more that singles spin the wheel the more they realize that the odds for success are not in their favour. This realization can lead inexorably to "burnout" making the getting of satisfaction and livelihood much more problematic.
Singles perform for two main reasons: to get livelihood and/or satisfaction. They are not mutually exclusive, but the impression left by informants was that both could only rarely be enjoyed simultaneously. An adequate livelihood for most singles is one that allows him to perform music as his primary occupation while also providing for his basic economic requirements. Exactly what constitutes an "adequate livelihood", however, is an extremely subjective matter. Similarly, what constitutes satisfaction is subjective. For most singles, satisfaction is based on believing he is good at what he does and is recognized by his society as making a valued contribution. In order to achieve either of these goals the single must affect numerous compromises. The choices are not necessarily diametrically opposed or exclusive, but rather may be juxtapositions of emphases that are dependent on situation and intent. A single must reconcile being a musician with being an entertainer, appearing self confident while being paralyzed with stage fright, assuming a public persona while maintaining a private one, and, finally, affecting compromise between personal and societal ideas on work as fun, and/or, fun as work.

These juxtapositions are not necessarily dichotomies,
nor are they consistently present in the same ratios at every gig. Adaptive strategies, "career contingencies" (Becker, 1963), however, must continually be invoked to facilitate the pursuit of livelihood and satisfaction. This ability to remain flexible is paramount in an industry that revolves around the unpredictable and the ephemeral. Those singles who can effect the necessary compromises can get a livelihood and satisfaction; those that can not or will not, do not. It is not simply a matter of raw talent or musical expertise. Rather, it is the ability to analyze situations and affect compromises, both in and out of the workplace.

This chapter poses the questions: What kind of economic lifestyle does work as a single offer? What are the aspects of the occupation that bring a single the greatest satisfaction? Conversely, what aspects of the occupation elicit the greatest dissatisfaction and alienation? These questions provide a broad framework within which to investigate whether making music for money can give singles what they need to get by financially and esthetically.

WORKING HARD FOR THE MONEY

In order to stay alive, at all, you have to work six days a week, every week. If you do that, that will just cover your gas, your meals, and the rental or payments on your equipment. (Moe)

All singles by definition perform music for remuneration. It is what makes their interest in music not avocational, but rather, vocational. Most have been able to
make performing their sole source of income at least episodically during the course of their careers. Some quit because they felt the wages do not compensate them sufficiently for their time and effort. Others accept the wage scale and just get by. Most feel their lifestyle and musical aspirations are restricted by their low wages and poor working conditions. A select few make sufficient incomes to enjoy what they consider to be an adequate income. The predominant sense gathered from informant's subjective comments was that gaining a steady livelihood was as insecure as many other aspects of the occupation. When asked if they felt being a single could provide a reasonable livelihood, their answers suggested that the potential existed, but not the probability. Their responses could be characterized as a qualified collective, 'yes.'

Jon felt he could make a 'good living' at music, but his first qualification was that it was only possible if "you don't have a family." He could "get by" by going on the road but recognized that "then of course you'd never be a proper father." To do that he would need to stay gigging in-town or be a recording artist. For Jon, a second qualification was that in order for the occupation to remain economically viable he would have to move out of his apartment. He would then have a better chance of making a reasonable living, and he would have "a lot of money to spend on equipment and that kind of stuff." No longer having a home base would free up
money for equipment which in turn hopefully would increase his booking price and bookability so that he would get better gigs, in-town. But then he would need a permanent place because in-town gigs rarely provide accommodation. Jon’s remarks may appear contradictory, but many singles find themselves facing similarly contradictory situations.

When I asked Dewey how he was doing financially he said, "I’m doing alright for the amount of time I put in. I am competitive to an eight hour day." When he started out in music he thought he would be a millionaire soon. That facet of his dream has since faded a bit. He also recognizes that the occupation has a major drawback: the lack of pension plans or unemployment insurance. Most singles are not affiliated with established musicians unions because they feel, with some justification, that the unions are irrelevant to their concerns. Consequently, singles find themselves either not eligible for what future income plans are available for performers, or lack the disposable income and/or business acumen to make use of commercially available retirement plans. What balances this drawback for Dewey is that he does not have a mandatory retirement age. He doubts he will still be performing in his 60's and 70's, but he knows he can still teach at that age. For him, music is slightly better than a hand-to-mouth existence. Being a single can offer a comfortable living, if one accepts that it is often undependable.
Leo sees the occupation as marginal and he finds performing six nights a week to be "a hell of a way to make a living." The optimal financial situation for him would be to have a regular gig in-town and a regular cheque coming in for songwriting or performance royalties. Just like the computer programs he designs for the visually impaired, he knows that his musical talents would be most economically viable if they could be replicated, and distributed. That is why he wants to be able to record, and market, his own music.

I was particularly interested in Leo’s opinion of the financial aspects of the occupation, based on his previous experience in the business world. He offered a cogent overview: "From a capitalistic point of view it’s just supply and demand. The number of people who are willing to play music and not get paid very much for it allows the people who are paying for the music to pay pretty low wages for musicians." From this perspective Leo finds that overall "it’s not a great career given the cost of equipment, what is involved, the incredible effort and practice, and time put into it." He feels that it can be a "great career" if you are a sought after graduate musician or conductor from a prestigious music school, or one of the local studio "Brahmins", the few vocal and instrumental sight readers who monopolize the Lower Mainland’s recording and jingle scene. Since Leo is legally blind and has his degree in history, these routes are not readily available to him. He now
subsidizes his love of music with designing computer software. Perhaps having a primary income outside of performing allows Leo to have a more philosophical attitude about music and money than a single scruffling to make ends meet with more limited options.

Only one informant volunteered any information on his financial affairs. The major topic of discussion by musicians about money is usually the lack of it. Or, how much of it they need to purchase a new piece of equipment or finance a record or song demo. Financial acuity is not a prerequisite for the occupation. Benny recounted to me what his earnings were for the preceding three years. His wages, between 1985 and 1987, have shown a steady increase from $10,000 to $13,000 to $16,000 (Canadian currency). He considers the occupation to be "not too bad, but not too good, either. You can make enough to survive, put it that way." But the money is not Benny's only concern. His dream is to be like Gordon Lightfoot or Willie Nelson (well regarded singer/songwriters). He asserted that, "If I don't make it, I still had fun trying to make it." Benny sees music as being potentially economically viable even while ambiguously conceding, "It's not the greatest business financially even though there is good money to be made, if you know how to save and how to promote, and everything else."

For Mac, the occupation is "pretty marginal" because he always finds himself "struggling along." What is most
difficult for him to reconcile is the apparent lack of rationality in who gets paid what. Like Dewey he has trouble accepting that "you get some guys who are just complete burnouts that are up there doing it, and other guys who are complete wizards and are doing it, and they're getting the same bucks as the burnouts." He finds the system difficult to figure out and told me, "If you can figure out a system to end it all, sign me up!" I could not offer him any startling insight because I had also been perplexed by the arbitrariness of wages. I have personally performed in-town gigs for two nights for $170 and also nearby out-of-town gigs for $500. I performed the same songs the same way with very little difference in travel time. At $500 for the gig I felt economically satisfied, while at $170, I did not.

The most financially successful of my informants, Tiny, had a unique problem. He had been audited by the tax department. He said, "income taxes are scary," and initially found tax concerns a perplexing problem because in his experience most singles either do not earn enough to have to pay taxes, or they perform under assumed names and/or get paid in cash. He did discover, however, from talking with other musicians and patrons that many people had similar tax concerns, "especially self employed people" and subcontractors like himself. Since Tiny lives with his wife and children he found it hard to pay tax penalties, put money aside for new taxes, and meet on-going household expenses. It
is a situation, a pitfall of success, that most of the informants will not have to face, although they all would like to have Tiny’s problem.

DISSATISFACTION

To me, the main importance is that music was meant to be fun. If you’re not having fun with it, you shouldn’t be doing it, at all." (Benny)

When asked what were positive aspects of the occupation, informants invariably immediately recounted what were major causes of dissatisfaction that could, and often did, contribute to a sense of alienation, or 'otherness', (feeling disconnected to the social world around them) analogous to that noted in the ethnographic accounts of Pilcher (1972) on longshoremen, and Agar (1986) on independent truckers.

Earlier discussions in this thesis have already focused on intra-personal conflicts arising during getting into the business, getting gigs, and getting to and through gigs. This section’s focus will be on aspects of alienation that singles feel retard the getting of satisfaction: anonymity; the difficulty of establishing and sustaining personal relationships; and, the lack of a sense of community. These elements of alienation need to either be surmounted or accommodated if the single is to continue to ply their trade successfully.
"Each gentle dream we dream is a song being sung to an audience of one." (Karl Erikson)

While Benny may altruistically suggest that singles who do not like what they are doing should quit, to leave the occupation is not always easy. Exiting is especially problematic if the individual views music as an intrinsic aspect of their social and psychological makeup.

The question of alienation is very important in any examination of the work of being a single. In the course of doing research, and in private conversations with singles and personal experiences over the years, I have often encountered attitudes of extreme alienation. The causes of alienation among singles can profitably be examined from the perspective of classical Marxist thought. A single is only worth what someone is willing to pay for their musical labor, so talent becomes a commodity. They also work within a service industry where work tasks are fragmented and where workplace protocol and territoriality precludes their involvement in the larger economic activities of the venue. Singles very rarely are the owners of the venue at which they perform, although they may and usually do own their 'tools'.

Marxist analysis also suggests that human beings are quite literally made for work. In the case of some workers, like singles, the producer and that which is produced are one and the same thing. To separate the singer from the song is difficult. Therefore when there is a disjuncture between the
goals of the producer/product (the single and his act) and the consumer (the audience and management) as to the value and intent of what is produced (the performance), alienation can result.

Alienation is the disconnection and separation that results when workers are unable to maintain a stable connection to their social world because of "un-natural, alien work arrangements" (Erikson, 1986:2). Alienation can assume various forms; such as, the loss of contact with the product workers produce; the lack of involvement in the work process itself so that work is no longer creative; the cessation of a sense of community because workers are in direct competition with each other; and the onset of a sense of ennui when work becomes merely a means to make a living.

This all-too-brief summary of Marxist thought about alienation reiterates opinions expressed by informants about what they felt were negative aspects of the occupation. Singles felt that when their acts were ignored they lost interest in the music they performed; they began to lose musical creativity; they became disconnected from any sense of musical or social community because of competition for work and attention. Music ended up as merely a "job", no longer directly concerned with esthetic considerations.

Erikson contends that the sub-division of labor and a lack of control over work are the primary instigators of alienation in the modern workplace. This seems applicable to
singles. Being an episodic sub-contractor the single really can not expect to be anything more than a marginal participant on the periphery of the day-to-day operations of a modern hotel, bar or restaurant. A sub-division of labour in of itself does not guarantee alienation. However, if the single is consciously excluded from any sense of commonality with other employees, then the working atmosphere may be strained. The perception of a lack of control over one's work would seem to be a decisive contributor to alienation among singles. As this thesis has indicated, at several levels singles do not hold effective control over conditions of their work. They are at the mercy of agencies, employers and audiences – all of which must be deferred to and/or manipulated in different ways. A continual balancing act between the three can leave the single feeling their work is out of their effective control – which in some respects it is. The only latitude often available to the single is in the actual selection of music during the performance. This too can be prescribed or tightly restricted depending on the venue and the ability of the single to project an aura of competence to management, staff and patrons. This projection or gloss of competence is important because it can compensate for negative attitudes about musicians in general. Relative to other jobs a single has some choice as to where they will work, how much they will work for and for how long. However, for some singles, restrictions that regulate the minutiae of
the work may seem intolerable when in fact they may be very lax relative to other types of employment.

Several informants mentioned incidents where they felt management or staff intruded on their ability to do their work. Moe recalled that one owner/operator put a large alarm clock on the bar that was set to go off in forty-five minutes regardless of whether or not Moe was in the middle of a song. The clock was set for fifteen minutes when he took a break so that his time on and off the stage was closely regulated. The owner/operator also gave him a list of songs that "people had applauded to" and Moe was to stick to the list and not perform any other material. Benny recalled that at the "low-life" hotel where he did his first agency gig there was a long list on the wall detailing how long the sets were to be and how to interact with patrons. He found this absurd since the audience was aggressively disinterested in him and it made no real difference whether or not he performed at all. Still management insisted he take note of their instructions. (I performed at this same venue and remember that the bartender insisted on turning on the juke box while I was on stage. At first I was insulted but then realized it was such a surreal situation I might as well savour it. So I began to play guitar along with the records and eventually was able to synchronize my drum machine to the juke box. I then "lip-synched" also. All the while the list of the "do and don'ts" of "bar-room etiquette" was right next to me on the wall.
Like Benny, I felt intruded on and it certainly was an alienating experience, but unlike Benny I appreciated the situation's comic scenario.) Most singles resent being told how to do their work. This resentment of outsiders infringing on a musician's performance has been noted by Becker (1953), Peterson (1965), and Faulker (1983, 1971), among others.

By extension alienation does not exist solely within the workplace. It spills over into the entire fabric of a person's life. The world of work and leisure may be delineated clearly in a temporal sense, but that is not always an easy separation to maintain in the mind. "The moods of the workplace are carried across the threshold into the household, and of course, the moods of the household are carried back, and the ways in which the two are played off in the organization of a person's life is a critical part of the larger puzzle" (Erikson, 1986:6).

In the larger context of a person's life there are numerous indicators of alienation. Traditional ones are responses such as absenteeism, grievance filing, and quitting. Erikson views these as hidden votes on the quality of work and have been correlated with alienating work environments in studies which were concerned with the long range effects of work environment on personality (Kohn and Schooler 1982). Erikson suggests that "taking drugs and drinking too much and sinking into a kind of numbed depression are correlated with alienating work conditions."
Erikson’s observation is an excellent description of "burnout" for singles. Erikson also suggests that the disruption of ‘normal’ hours of activity contributes to a loss of a sense of family and community. Singles find it hard to play softball or take night courses or engage in other common modes of social interaction because of the hours they work. Add to this that they often work in unfamiliar and often unhealthy physical environments and consistently experience social encounters mediated by alcohol and it should not be unexpected that a sense of alienation might arise. The solitary nature of the occupation, combined with an often disjointed social life, is an integral part of a single’s travel-intensive work. Many informants stressed that, while working as a single, they often found it difficult to establish and nourish the types of personal and social relationships that could contribute to a sense of personal identity and self satisfaction.

ANONYMITY

Generally, I think all musicians feel that when you’re up there, and the lights are shining, and you’re doing it, you’re God. And when you’re walking around in the day, you’re just a bum. (Mac)

A primary aspect of alienation that singles experience is anonymity both at and away from the workplace. For many singles, two paradoxes they deal with constantly contribute considerably to a feeling of anonymity: 1) being the sonic centre of attention while performing and yet at times being
completely ignored while performing and, 2) being the social
centre of attention while on-stage and socially invisible
when off-stage. These are cruel contrasts for singles'
performance sensibilities and some have grave difficulties
adjusting to the necessary separation of ego from art.

These conflicts are most in evidence when singles work
on-the-road where they may not have a social support group
to help them cope with an unsupportive work environment.
Singles also often find themselves with large blocks of free
time. The usual performance is 4-5 hours. If a single sleeps
8 hours there still remains 12 hours which the single must
fill with meaningful activity. If the hours are empty then
the single is "killing time", busying himself with tasks to
try and impose some sort of regime, and by projection,
meaningfulness, on his solitary existence. When a single is
"killing time", too often his creative spark also dies in the
process, and alienation can infest the gardens of (artistic)
good intent.

Continual movement from place to place, gig to gig,
makes superficial social encounters the norm, often times
precluding the development of more intimate relationships and
friendships. If a single is made to feel, or allows himself
to feel, an outsider often enough, eventually he will define
himself thus. He must adopt strategies to cope with the
social and occupational reality that a solo musician in a
strange place is going to be perceived as a stranger. If he
does not implement survival strategies, the self-fulfilling prophecy of musician as perennial outsider can leave him a victim, a "burned out" casualty of life on-the-road.

Moe succinctly stated how he felt about being anonymous while performing as a road musician, "You’re a hero at night, you’re a real star and everybody wants to take you back to their house for a party. They want you to bring your guitar and introduce themselves to other people as ‘Hi, I’m a friend of the entertainer.’ But when you’re not on the stage you’re a nobody, you’re a bum." He remembered a gig he had done in a small logging town on Vancouver Island that to him seemed to go on forever: "I spent 3 weeks in Ladysmith, that’s too long. There’s nothing to do there and I didn’t know anyone." What made it worse was that his accommodation was poor and the venue was doing almost no business, but Moe had to be ‘on-call’. "There were no customers in the bar which made it really depressing. I had no TV in the room and it was the kind of place where the bed had three legs on it. Whenever a customer came into the bar the manager’d take a pool cue and bang on the ceiling and I’d have to come down and sing for them."

When asked how he had eventually filled his days in Ladysmith, he replied, "You just wonder around and look at the shop windows and when you get kind of depressed you go and buy yourself a shirt or something. It’s horrible." Still the gig seemed to go on interminably. Out of desperation Moe
found himself going across the street to the pet store window and watching the gerbils mate. Three weeks of being a stranger in a strange place had had a decidedly deleterious effect on Moe. His recollection may appear to be a surreal scenario, but similar situations are experienced by many singles.

Benny noted that he had had some good times on-the-road, but had to force himself to be outgoing and active rather than remain anonymous and inactive. A major solace for him when on-the-road is songwriting because "it's a great emotional time to write because you're feeling this loneliness, and I have to have emotions to write a song." Benny gets incentive and song ideas from the people he meets and what they relate to him about their lives. He finds songwriting beneficial because "it keeps you interested, for a little while. You get kinda bored shopping." Benny tries to fight boredom by socializing, writing, and rehearsing, but still finds that sometimes it is a losing battle. He cannot always overcome the tedium of the road, "You try to keep yourself busy and when you've got nothing to do, that can be very, very tiring sometimes."

Jon also recounted experiencing the pangs of anonymity while on-the-road. He summed up how he feels overall about road work with this bleak assessment: "You can only sit in the hotel so long, or go down to the coffee shop for so long, or walk in the rain so long before you're totally drenched."
and depressed." "Killing time" when the weather is good is no problem for Jon, since he engages in an array of outdoor activities. Winter time is the most difficult for him because British Columbia's climate can be cold and rainy. When he finds himself inside a lot he either hangs around the mall, or his room. However, he said, "You can only watch so much TV and only practice so much a day because when you're performing 4 hours a night your throat gets worn out." His main recourses are to get out into nature, and force himself to interact with people. He enjoys the out of doors: "Being out in nature is like being with my God, my maker. When I get out and walk for a whole day, just consuming the fresh air and the scenery, it rejuvenates me and really helps me keep going." Interacting with people is also important, "there's always nice people on the road. If you have an open mind, open heart, and are susceptible to talking to strangers and being the first one to take that bold step and say 'Hello', you can combat that lonely feeling somewhat. But that lonely feeling is usually the need to be close to someone."
PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

[Introduction Moe uses when performing] 'Good evening ladies and gentlemen', I'm Moe and I am a 'born again' bachelor. I don't intend to get married anymore, but just about every three years I'm going to find a woman I hate, and buy her a house.

You can maintain a relationship if she is willing to go through the extra work involved in staying at home and keeping the home fires burning while you're out conquering the world. Not many women are willing to do that in this day and age and I can't say I blame them. I mean, why should they? Would I be willing to do that? Would I be willing to bury my life? (Leo)

I meet a lot of guys out there [as an agent and musician], they sing their hearts out and when they get their cheques, they send off support payments. They're paying for kids they had from a woman they lost while doing the job. (Moe)

Jon's remark at the conclusion of the previous section that singles need to relate directly to someone, illuminates an area of the informant's personal lives that has a critical influence on how well they adapt to occupational demands. When a single is absent for extended periods of time it is often an arduous task to keep relationships viable where intimacy is limited to phone calls to the single's loved ones, usually collect calls. Many musicians find themselves accumulating sizeable phone bills trying to keep in touch with someone, back somewhere, but they are not always successful in keeping contact with significant others in their lives.

Two aspects of informant's statements, which are often a blend of poignancy and cynicism, stand out: how to cope with
loneliness and the issue of sexual fidelity; and, the effect of a negative self image on relationships.

All the informants felt the establishment and maintenance of intimate personal relationships were exacerbated by the culture, organization, and structure of the occupation. Many had been married or in serious relationships that had evaporated somewhere along the way in the midst of their career aspirations. Most had children who did not live with them, but who they supported. Some, however, held out hope that it was possible to strike a compromise between the emotional needs of their hearts, the creative call of their muses, and the financial demands of their pocketbooks, and the means that they believed might help them realize their dreams, their occupation. Many singles write and sing love songs; living them is another matter entirely.

Moe, having been both a single and an agent, had a blanket assessment of singles, the occupation, and relationships: "It ruins personal relationships you have 'cause you're on the road all the time." Moe doubts relationships can remain monogamous, or committed: "Let's face it, if you're six weeks on the road, you can't expect her to be there when you get back, and if she is, she's lying."

Jon was ambivalent about going on the road on an extend tour. He enjoyed the travel and adventure but admitted that
loneliness and the lack of prolonged intimacy often dogged him. He said it was hard to remain faithful, "You can't really have a steady girlfriend if you go on the road, I mean, how do you remain faithful after 7 or 8 weeks. You know there's always someone who takes an interest in you, or you in them." When asked if the recent AIDS issue had affected his sexual activity on the road, he remarked, "Well, you have to be a little more selective, but it doesn't seem to matter now because disease can be with very classy people as well as all the way down to skid row." However, he would prefer a monogamous relationship: "I'd rather have a steady girlfriend [because] you're not going to get a disease as long as you're both faithful. Maybe if the women was special enough I could maintain being faithful after 2 or 3 months of being on-the-road." Like Moe, he is dubious his partner could remain faithful during his long absences, even if he did: "I can't expect a woman to be faithful to me if I am gone for 2 or 3 months. Or even want to maintain a relationship unless they really liked their freedom."

Leo also found maintaining intimate relationships while he was working as a single to be difficult. He said that with the stability of his present relationship and the AIDS scare he does not meet a lot of women. In the past he did establish liaisons, some lasting and some proverbial 'one night stands'. He feels some musicians stay on-the-road because: "you do meet people sometimes. The musician is seen as having
a skill, or talent but that can be a negative thing because the women you meet aren't necessarily the ones you want to meet. They are often lonely people running away from something, and you're the person they can sort of dump on, and jump on."

The myth of singles engaging in an endless stream of one night affairs was laughable to Benny, "Since I've been on the road [3 years] I had one, one night stand and that was that!"

Brief romantic encounters are not what Benny prefers. He recognizes that that might be an incentive for some singles, but not him. He did try to maintain a relationship with a woman while performing out of town but she was a 'workaholic' and he was mostly gone. When he came back into town she had her life organized around him not being there so he felt left out. Benny finds relationships "very hard". Even if he had a woman back home he admits she would have cause to be leery of his fidelity because "when you're around women all the time, temptation is right there, sitting in front of you."

Tiny resented that there were societal expectations that he be a "party, animal". Married since his early 20's, he and his wife had found "hard times being on the road," but not unsurmountable ones. They initially bought a trailer so they could travel together but she opted for staying in one place and working. Now he performs exclusively in-town but maintaining their relationship requires constant effort because he is very busy with his career. When asked what
behavior audiences expected of him he responded: "The first question is 'well, are you coming to the party? Come on, smoke some dope, Look at that broad over there, she's crazy about you, man. Go for it. Surely you must screw around on your wife, you're a musician'." Tiny felt that the audience preferred that image of him, "they don't want you to be a laid-back kind of guy." His on-stage persona is high energy and borderline demented, but off-stage he feels he is totally the opposite: "but the audience would like to think of me as a crazed person all day long. They want me to be the party animal all the time. So if they invite me to their party, I'm gonna be the hit of the party. I'm gonna be a real funny kind of yahoo guy. But I am not." Tiny is so successful at projecting and marketing an image that he has had to learn to deal with its consequences.

Aside from the effects of loneliness on relationships, another concern of some singles was how a negative self-image could have a deleterious effect on their personal lives. For both Eric and Leo, a negative self-image was a problem while working as singles.

Eric recalled that keeping a relationship going while performing in bars put a lot of strain on his primary relationship because: "I was so unhappy. I felt under a lot of pressure all the time because I was not financially secure. And there was a lot of pressure to be danceable and give the people what they wanted, even though it really
wasn't what I wanted to give them." Being a single did have a major positive influence on his life since Eric met his wife at a gig where she was a manager. He realized that to give the relationship the opportunity to remain strong and viable he had to quit playing in places that put a strain on him, his self-image, and his primary relationship.

Leo also felt strongly that being a struggling musician made him harder to live with and made it harder to keep a relationship afloat. None of his relationships survived when he was doing music full time. When asked why he thought that had happened he replied: "I really think it was hard for me to carry on a serious personal relationship when my mate is making 2 or 3 times as much money as I am and I am working just as hard, or harder. You feel sort of stupid in a way, because, whether we like it or not, our self worth is determined to some extent by the amount of money we make."

Leo thinks that particular view of success is, in itself, too simplistic because he objectively knows he does not need much money to be happy, but he does require recognition that what he is doing is recognized as being accomplished in his field of endeavor. Being a financially marginal musician, who felt he was working hard but was as of yet unrecognized, was very hard on Leo and whatever relationships he established. He knows that leaving full-time music and branching out into other fields contributed to the stable relationship he now enjoys.
Personal relationships are not totally tied to occupational considerations but they do color a single's perception of themselves and therefore their work.

LACK OF A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

They say the road will cost you your wife. Now, I never believed that until my marriage broke up and yeah, it does cost you a lot of personal [and community] relationships. It costs a lot because you don’t get to see the people you love as much as you should and God knows, they’re not going to last forever and neither are you. There’s a lot of precious time that gets lost by being on the road. (Duke)

Another aspect of alienation remarked on by informants was the lack of a sense of community. A perceived lack of community can be a direct outgrowth of a single spending extensive periods of time travelling. Road work, by its very nature, entails the suspension of close ties not only with intimate partners but also with kith and kin.

There are two aspects of community present in this investigation: that of a larger musical community of singles; and that of the single as a part of a larger social aggregate. Whether or not there exists a musical community of singles is debatable. (Community here is used to refer not to a geographic locus, but rather a "community of interest" where individuals "share a set of norms which in turn define roles for them" (Merriam and Mack, 1960:211).) Singles possess a sense of community different from that of country or rock band members or ensemble performers such as symphony or big band members because singles do not operate as part of
a collectivity, but rather as soloists.

In their study of the emerging jazz community, Merriam and Mack (1960) identified three elements of alienation and self-segregation in the social, psychological, and physical world of jazz performers. They suggested that the underlying causes of the jazz musicians' attitudes of rejection were: the rejection of jazz itself and the jazz musicians by the general public; their isolation from the general public by the nature of the occupation; and, the inherent occupational dilemma that places being a creative artist and a commercial artist in contradictory roles, at opposite ends of a continuum leaving the musician in the middle to effect a compromise (Merriam and Mack, 1960:213).

These criteria also apply to the working world of singles, with a few qualifications and may contribute to a sense of alienation. First, the music singles perform is not necessarily rejected by the general public; rather audiences are often indifferent due to the environment in which singles present their music. Second, the single is in many cases isolated, spatially and temporally by the nature of the occupation, especially if the single must resort to road work to insure fuller employment. Third, whether one performs conventive or inventive music is usually decided quite rapidly when a single enters the occupation since most venues and agents demand conventive music. A single may be able to present a limited amount of inventive material, but
as Sol remarked, the overwhelming emphasis is on being
cventive inventively."

Rather than being classified as a full blown community,
singles could more accurately be described as members of an
occupational category because they remain atomized
individuals who may or may not share an occupational
ideology, and may or may not exhibit expected behaviors.
Singles are often precluded from extensive interaction with
other singles because typically they work in isolation from
one another and are often in direct competition for limited
available employment. Singles may think of themselves as
musicians, but most often lack a clear cut identification
of themselves as singles and consequently, any extensive
sense of specific musical community. When financial demands
require that a musician perform, working as a single often
ends up as a 'court of last resort' because of the ease with
which singles can come and go from the occupation.

Leo expressed a yearning for a sense of community,
perhaps because he grew up in an isolated village where a
sense of community was instilled early. When Leo left
performing and took a 'day-job' he noted there were two
immediate changes in circumstance: first, he had a steady
income - "[With] a lot more money coming in things did change
for me in a very positive way in terms of my own self-image";
and second, he felt a return to a sense of community: [It was
good] just to feel part of the community again. [One] aspect
of being a musician that is quite hard to take is the loneliness of it and the sense that you really are an 'odd duck' because I tend to think work is a very social thing. For most people who work 9-5, the social aspect of the job means a lot more than they would care to admit. But I think, and studies have shown, that when people retire the hardest thing is the lack of [socializing]. They're at home by themselves whereas before you go to work, you have coffee with your buddy, you sit and talk about things, you have lunch together and maybe a beer afterwards. There's a lot of that that went on in a lot of my jobs. I've always been a sort of social animal, and that didn't happen nearly so much when I worked as a musician."

Leo's observation highlights a contradiction many singles experience: the work they do takes place in a supposedly social setting but they do not themselves necessarily feel a part of the socializing.

If a single cannot cope with aspects of alienation that have been examined here - the contradiction of 'otherness' amidst sociability, the difficulties of establishing and maintaining intimate personal relationships and the generalized feeling of anonymity - he may quit the occupation entirely. If he does not quit he may only perform part time and try to reintegrate himself into the larger community, or, he may retreat further into himself until he ends up becoming what Mac termed a "complete burnout." "Burning out" is not
uncommon among singles and it can extinguish, at least momentarily, the beacon that highlights the musical dreams that all singles cherish.

GETTING SATISFACTION OR A REASONABLE FACSIMILE THEREOF

"Satisfaction is when I've done a song and know that I've done it good, and at the end, even if people don't clap I still know I did the song really well. It's not all crowd or audience participation, it's also how well you think you're doing." (Benny)

"Getting an ovation or encore at the night is a very satisfying thing. It still means a lot to make that connection with an audience. I need that feedback. Let's face it, there has to be some satisfaction or we wouldn't keep doing it." (Leo)

"I am only really concerned with making a living." (Ian)

Informants have mostly presented the occupation as only a marginal livelihood. They also have noted that there are difficulties with societal attitudes towards them and in their interactions with their co-workers. Therefore, there must be other concerns which take precedence over income.

Getting satisfaction appears in various guises for singles. There are three general areas emphasized in the informant's accounts: self satisfaction based on primarily personal criteria; satisfaction arising from interaction with other people; and, satisfaction predicated on financial gain.

Satisfaction for Leo is rooted in continual growth, musically and personally, and in doing a "professional job." Leo told me he keeps sight of the fact that "the reason I got into music is that it is a beautiful thing. When I hear a
truly great musician I am absolutely inspired, about as much as I can be inspired." He also appreciates the music business as a 'game', and observed that satisfaction can arise from playing it well. Initially he thought in terms of making beautiful music and having people like him and appreciate what he does. But then he realized that part of the game was to make money. He resisted doing things he felt at the time seemed wrong to him. When he took a wider view, however, he realized that if his goal was to make some money then "learning 'Me and Bobby Magee' (Kris Kristofferson) was a smart thing to do if it made me a more saleable commodity." Playing the game well could compensate for some of the occupation's shortcomings.

Dewey also gets satisfaction out of learning and improving his musicianship; that is one reason why he now performs with foot bass pedals instead of investing in sequencers or relying on his extensive library of backing tapes. He needs the stimulation as "a mental exercise". Dewey emphasized that challenge keeps him musically up to date and he told me, "I enjoy the challenge of just improving myself." (He also expressed satisfaction that he only had to work 4 hours though his pay was equal to 8 hours for many other workers. This remark seems somewhat contradictory because he was well aware of the hidden work he had invested in compiling his background tapes.) Dewey responds to the demands of applying his musical knowledge in innovative ways.
because at root what he likes most is "the whole idea of music," listening to it, learning it, performing it, composing it, and, just enjoying it.

Tiny's satisfaction also arises out of adherence to personal standards. Even though he continually receives critical acclaim, and the attendant rewards, he feels best about playing the tunes to his satisfaction, even if he has played them "over and over and over and over again." Tiny is glad people respond favorably to him, but he must feel his act (including the actual performance and the new tunes he incorporates) meet his own standards. He sets high standards and meets and maintains them often enough to keep himself on top in the local market.

Hearing people say to him at the end of the performance, "We really enjoyed your music and we had a great time and we're coming back to see you again" is the greatest satisfaction Benny gets. He vividly recalled a middle-aged woman telling him that she had been coming to dances for 25 years and the dance he had organized and performed at was the best she had ever attended. (Benny likes to rent a hall and put on a dance before going on extended road trips. He invites his friends and uses the dance to recharge his soul batteries before venturing forth, alone.) Another performance he recollected was one where he was able to excite the audience to the point where three men were dancing on the tables. These types of incidents inspire him to continue
performing. He is very cognizant of audiences. He told me, "Without those people I'd be a nobody, I'd be singing to four walls." Even when he is performing to four walls during a slack performance he still fantasizes, "I just sit there and I imagine I'm on top of the stage with 20,000 people in front of me yelling and screaming and having a great time." Benny's joy from interacting with people carries him through the down times.

Financial concerns are paramount to Mac. He said with resignation in his voice, "You always do have to feed yourself. Economics do the dictating." He also knows he cannot blame the place or the people because "the onus is on me. It's my state of mind. It's my attitude to what I'm doing there." He admits his attitude is changing which means it is difficult for him to continue to perform in what he considers less than optimum circumstances. Partly because of his extensive musical training on violin and his present studies in a local music program, he feels creating 'art' is his greatest satisfaction. Unfortunately he finds it near impossible to maintain a positive attitude about performance "in places [i.e. Bar rooms] that aren't conducive to making art." So, for Mac, financial matters have superceded satisfaction based on self fulfillment and musicality, and interactions with other people.

Benny's statement (which opened this section on dissatisfaction and satisfaction) that music was meant to be
fun, is his powerful indictment against staying on in an unsatisfactory work situation bereft of the enjoyment and satisfaction he believes music has to offer: "To me, the main importance is music was meant to be fun. If you’re not having fun with it, you shouldn’t be doing it at all." Benny’s optimistic outlook, that satisfaction is attainable and Mac’s pessimistic assessment, that finding it in a bar is unlikely, are separated by 15 years of experience. Benny sees the occupation as a freeway to somewhere. Mac sees the occupation as, at best, a pothole-filled cul de sac. For Benny and Mac, as well as the other informants, the getting of satisfaction is a personal journey, one where fresh legs and strong lungs tend to carry one the furthest.
CHAPTER 7
GETTING BACK TO THE FUTURE

What keeps me pursuing my musical goal is I see myself getting better every time I play a song. [If] I come back to a room, and am getting way more applause, and [owners are] coming to me with a pen and a calendar, [saying] "when can we book you again", then things are improving. If that stops, then it's time to quit. (Jon)

The ultimate indicator of how singles view their occupation, not withstanding all the negativity and cynicism that often lurks beneath the surface of their remarks, is whether or not they themselves plan to continue working as singles and musicians, and, whether or not they would encourage their offspring to be involved with music, either avocationally or vocationally.

Informants have identified in detail what they perceive to be the drawbacks of the occupation: the problematic relationships of control between the major social actors who construct a performance; the extensive hidden work they must engage in to produce their act; and the alienation that can accompany a solitary life/work style. But informants also have articulated what some of them see as the positive aspects of their work: self satisfaction from challenging themselves, doing their work well, and having the opportunity to be musical; the enjoyment of interacting with the people they meet in the course of their work; and, what some singles see as the relative financial rewards (wages per hour) compared to other occupations.
All of the informants projected some future involvement with music, though not necessarily the single's occupation, and most would encourage their children to have some music in their lives. There seems to exist an intrinsic love of music (and its 'magical' ability to occasionally transport them to another level of consciousness), and also a need to perform that appears to override the more mundane aspects of making music for money. Single's spend years honing skills in order to present themselves for public appraisal and they accomplish this with varying degrees of success because success itself can mean very different things to all of them and they come to the occupation with varying degrees of talent; talent that is not always capable of bridging the private world of the soul to the public world of paid performance. When problems arise in the bridging process, many singles retreat into a 'world weary' posture that attempts to mask the reality that while they may truly love music, they cannot always reach an accommodation with the marketplace.

REINTRODUCTIONS AND PROJECTIONS

Over the course of this investigation, informants and their views on various questions have been inserted in a selective manner, depending on what their views were and, indeed whether they held opinions on all the topics raised in the interviews. In order to re-acquaint the reader briefly
with the informant's ambitions and realizations and to reiterate aspects of their careers, the remainder of this chapter will juxtapose their personal projections for the future, within and/or outside the single's occupation, with their projections for the musical futures of their progeny.

At 36, Moe has had several careers, including those of bank manager and medical technologist, but he most closely identifies with being an entertainer and musician. He sees himself in the future as "popping in and out of entertaining," but he sees the main focus of his future work as being a booking agent. Part of his current musical dream is to take some of the acts he has encountered and help them to success: "to be the guy I was looking for when I was starting out." He feels he now knows the pitfalls and pluses of the entertainment business so he can be an effective promoter and mentor. However, Moe is very adamant that he would not encourage his children to be involved with music as a profession because he feels it takes a cherished art form, demeans it and turns it into drudgery. His view is bolstered by what he has observed as an agent: "The occupation can take people and make them compulsive drug and alcohol users, and fibrilators." He would encourage music in a family setting, perhaps because he grew up in a large family, but music for money should be avoided at all costs because, "it takes something sacred and makes it obscene."

When Duke was twenty he thought he would be an old man
if he was still playing at twenty-five. But now at forty he
sees himself as continuing at least until he is in his
fifty's. He observed that "George Burns and Wilf Carter
are still doing it" (entertaining in their old age). Duke is
branching out by studying music formally, as well as taking
acting courses so that he can "maybe be an old character
actor when I get too much of a crusty old curmudgeon to be on
stage all the time." For him music will always be a big part
of his life regardless of how little it contributes
economically.

Duke and his companion are expecting a child soon and
Duke is already working on "a legacy for him" containing
music by Wilf Carter, Bach, and Beethoven. He is proud to be
a second generation musician and prouder still, to be
preparing to pass on his love of music to a third generation.
He believes in music so strongly and hopes their child will
respond to his encouragement, "in fact if he doesn't, man,
I'll be very disappointed if he wants to be something goofy
like a doctor or a lawyer, Good Lord!" He wants a musical
mobile over the crib so that the first images the child
absorbs are musical ones.

Jon is now in his mid thirty's and believes his goal of
performing only in select venues is obtainable. He emphasized
that he will continue "as long as I see myself getting better
each time I play, getting more applause, [with owners] coming
to me with their pens and calendars saying, 'when can we book
you again'. If that stops then it's time to quit." He also wants to record more because he found the process of putting his dreams on vinyl a valuable learning experience: "I've got hundreds of records in my closet, they could sit there and rot. But the learning experience alone has been worth the money that I spent on it." Jon maintains an optimistic view amidst his personal reservations by continually challenging himself, "you've got to keep setting goals for yourself; as long as the doors are open to you, why stop?

Jon has a teen age son who lives with the mother. He plays bass in rock band. When asked if he had encouraged his son, Jon replied he never had said "look, you gotta be a musician because your dad is one." Rather, he urged him to complete his schooling first. Still, at fifteen, his son is determined to make music a livelihood. Jon feels his son is proud of his father's occupational accomplishments and that may have helped created a role model, but he strongly believes that "musicianship is kinda in the blood."

Tiny, also in his mid-thirty's, sees himself continuing to focus on his talents as a live performer and recording artist. He hopes to take his local success and penetrate the larger markets. His hi-tech act allows him to be musically expansive on stage; so he presently has no urge to perform in a group. During his years as a MIDI consultant and equipment salesman he met musicians who have gone on to play with internationally recognized rock bands, so he is sensitive to
the toll that success can take on an individual and their loved ones. He admitted to having depressed periods when he wanted to get a 'day-job', feeling "this is ridiculous, I'm fed up with it." But his love of music always pulls him back. Musical performance is what he thinks he does best, feels best doing, and plans to continue doing.

He and his wife also invest time, effort and money into their three children's musical interests: "For both of us as parents the schooling is extremely important. Most of my money goes into the kid's education. They're very busy kids," Tiny wants them to be more musically literate than he is and also profit from his technological expertise. He hopes to impart to his children that the success they see him achieving is the result of hard work and a certain amount of luck, but education can help smooth their passage from amateur to professional.

Dewey, in his late thirty's, admits that he no longer sees his early visions of commercial success as attainable, or even necessarily desirable: "I am too old to do it in the first place, and I can't do it anyways, it hurts my ears, it's too loud, and I'm not interested." His extensive musical education and multi-instrumentality would allow him to teach, if he so chooses. Dewey already has experienced physical problems with his hands so he is aware that he may have to have a contingency plan if live performance becomes impossible. He knows he will always be involved with music
but he sees a deeper involvement with writing as the next logical progression in his musical career.

Since Dewey himself had little parental support to become a musician, he would support his offspring if they had musical inclinations and really wanted to become performers: "I think any livelihood is a good one, if you want to do it." Dewey would be able to help by drawing on both his occupational and teaching expertises.

Leo is now in his early forties and has successfully affected some compromises with his music. He left the occupation to become, initially, a career counselor for the Canadian Institute for the Blind, and then, as an outgrowth of that work experience, a computer programmer for software for the visually handicapped. His programs are now marketed internationally and he is relieved to be free of depending solely on music as his livelihood. He always was conscientious about his music, "I took it very seriously. And it was my income, there's no ifs, ands, or buts. I wasn't on welfare. I wasn't doing a day job or working part time. It really was a real job." But being a single was not always economically or emotionally sufficient so he does not project himself as working full-time in music in the future. His love of music remains just as impassioned, but he has found a more stable means of livelihood with which it can be subsidized.

Leo related that he initially found his own children's
lack of interest in music perplexing since he had encouraged them. He now feels that the "musical connection" is relatively rare. He would prefer more involvement on his children's part but accepts that their lives have their own dynamics. Leo feels strongly that "to become a musician there has to be an incompleteness in your life that music fills." His own incompleteness was that he had a handicap that eliminated him from certain occupations. He thinks his own children's incompleteness is filled in other ways, via sports and computer programming. Perhaps because Leo had to overcome his visual disability he is acutely aware that children need something to make their passage through adolescence easier. For him music was a means to that end. He is glad that at least his children have discovered their own means.

Benny is the youngest of the informants. In his mid-twenties he exudes optimism, but also a keen perception of the values and culture of the country audience at which he is aiming his career. He sees a clear progression in his accomplishments and also has laid out plans to reach larger markets for his music through his recordings. Benny, at this stage of his career, is content with himself and views the not always pleasant road work as part of 'paying his dues', experiences that will prepare him for success later. "It's all part of the process. Usually overnight sensations don't last very long. Everything just comes at them all at once and then once they're finished, it's all gone. They're left
standing there alone." Benny is working and planning to insure he is not left standing alone but rather has a firm base from which to branch out. He knows the occupation can be mercurial, but he feels if he learns as he goes he can hold on to success when it arrives. "If fame all of a sudden does come, it's gonna hit you hard, so if you start to lose it, obviously if you've got enough knowledge you can hang on to it and keep it within your grasp." Benny approaches the business the way he sings, in tune and at a comfortable tempo.

Benny would not force music on any children he might have, although he is so immersed in his career that children are not really a consideration now, "If they want to do music just for their own pleasure, let them do it. That doesn't mean they have to do what I do." If, however, they were interested in music as a career he would offer advice, "I'll tell them, right down the line, it's not all it's cracked up to be. People think you sing all night long and it's great, but there are down parts about it. When you're on the road, you're alone."

Ian, in his forty's is the oldest of the informants, and presently is in a transitional period where he is trying to move his folk music and sing-a-long format out of the bars and into festivals and concerts. He has experienced some discouragements over the years but feels, "I may be able to avoid inappropriate gigs in the future, for the most part."
He projects that the folk festival and community concert circuit would be satisfying musically and esthetically and also would stimulate his enjoyment of travel and meeting new people. He wants to be sure, however, that he does have a unique act to offer, "to get into these programs is not difficult, but [it is important] you have something that's really positive to present." He would not be surprised if he were still musically active in five years but doubts the same in another ten years. He has several plans under way which would allow him to hang up his guitar, at least professionally. He did leave open the chance that he could quit entirely: "If we win the lottery, then the guitar will be in its case so fast its feet won't touch the ground. And disappear into the case never to see the light of day again. Except for folk festivals or folk clubs."

Ian definitely would encourage his children to be exposed to music: "Absolutely, I would make sure that they were learning music until they were old enough to make decisions for themselves and could break away from it. It's impossible to be poor with music in you."

After years of private classical lessons on violin and years as a road rock musician and single, Mac has recently begun attending a college program in music so he can increase his skills and level of musical literacy. Mac experienced severe health problems and during the height of his illness he despaired of having a musical career but at 36 and in
better health, he can re-initiate some of his musical dreams. "Now I feel differently. I felt my career was kind of ended in a way, and if all I had to look forward to was bars and lounges for the rest of my life then, 'Oh my God! where's the gun'?" Regaining his health and returning to school moved his focus to what he loves in life, and music is a very high priority. When asked if music had contributed to his recovery, Mac reiterated a point he had made earlier in the interview about attitude: "Somehow I am in this situation and in order to make the best of it, it's my attitude [that is crucial]. I am here, as I am, so I might as well enjoy myself for being here, because I am here!" Mac has had to overcome so much physically that he is convinced he can overcome his weariness of doing music in places that are not conducive to the creation of art. In his heart of hearts, he is still a creator and resents spending precious time being a "hack."

Whether or not to have his daughter become involved in music presented Mac a tricky dilemma. She had shown exceptional musical talent from as young as two and a half years and at eleven now writes and sings her own songs. But Mac is unsure if he should encourage her or let her interest take a natural course. He freely admits to being in the latter stages of being 'burned out', so he does not feel he can objectively separate his love for his daughter from his hatred of certain aspects of the occupation. His compromise is to encourage but not push her musical interests so that
her decisions are based on her own mind and not his biases based on his own frustration with a career that "has not really come to fruition", and the fact that he was forced to study from the age of five and a half by his parents.

Eric has quit playing gigs in venues connected to alcohol since, in the past, alcohol-related gigs were too soul destroying for him. It was very negative to present a gift, his music, that he felt was continually being rejected by audiences and agents. The spiritual component of his life is very important to him and he realized that to keep his love of music alive, his career as a bar musician had to end. He feels he is better off working as a waiter or carpenter than living the nightmare that gigging became for him. He wants to write and record music that heals or conveys joy to listeners. In bars he felt the patient was beyond revival. Eric's musical energies are now directed to collaborating with a musical partner. His life will still involve music but will be channelled to areas beneficial to his spiritual well being.

The main outlook Eric would like to impart to his children would be that attitude is all important and that, "What you love can be a great way to make a living." What is important to Eric is to present the things one loves in an
environment where they can be shared. He realizes there are prices to pay but he is "working on a belief system that would like to believe [that music] could make a difference in people's lives," just as it has for him, and he hopes, will for his children in the future.
CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The purpose of this thesis has been to explore how musicians/entertainers, otherwise known as "singles", "work". A resource model suggested by Wallman (1979), as well as ethnographic methodology, has been employed to illuminate the special characteristics of the occupation. The "human scape" (Agar, 1986) we have constructed shows them to be solitary, often nomadic and largely anonymous musical subcontractors who perform at a wide variety of venues in British Columbia. They are part of an "art world" (Becker, 1980), and obtain employment either through their own promotional activities or those of entertainment agencies.

Although there may exist "folk" conceptions that what they do for a livelihood is not "really" work, but rather play, their occupation, in fact, demands diverse skills including those of musician, entertainer, promoter and equipment technician. Singles produce, manage, and convert resources (including musical and social skills, time, transport, occupational networks, social relations) into a livelihood and, therefore, their activities fall within the realm of an anthropological definition of work (Wallman, 1979).

We have noted that control in the world of the single, including physical, psychological, social, and symbolic forms...
of control (Wallman, 1979), primarily lies with the other social actors with whom the single constructs a public celebration (Manning, 1983). This occupational reality, at times, makes it problematic for singles to perform. For example, singles often gain employment through a "broker" (Paine, 1971), entertainment booking agents who control access to gigs and information. Similarly, during gigs, the music singles most often have to present is "conventional", or popular, music and not "inventive" music (Lewis, 1982) of their own creation. Audiences and co-workers often exercise direct control over the act's choice of material.

We have also noted that much of the work singles do is "hidden work" (Wadel, 1979), preparation that is undertaken "back stage" (Goffman, 1974) so that "front stage" presentation can take place. This "hidden work" goes un-noted because audiences and co-workers (venue staff and management) are often unaware and unconcerned that the act a single presents for public appraisal has required considerable training and preparation.

We have examined the sequence of a single's career by focusing on the "gettings", the different factors and tasks that culminate in the actual performance. The case studies used to gather data displayed unique characteristics, just as each individual had an idiosyncratic "career history" but some general patterns have emerged.

"Getting into the business" is predominantly a
haphazard process, as were the informants' introductions to the tools of their trade. The nature of a single's relationships with family, peers, and educational institutions were seen as variable, but singles who received early positive reinforcement from family and peers may have had an easier time adjusting to the vagaries of the occupation. Institutional educational systems had little effect on single's choice of career. Music was not stressed in school curricula and, within existing music programs, "popular" music was seen as predominantly a "folk" activity.

Once informants made the transition from making music for fun to also making music for money they inevitably came into contact with the structure of the occupation. "Getting gigs" revolves around the single/agent and the single/management relationships. Singles felt that too often the agent's loyalties layed with the venue and not with the act. Informants related numerous incidents where they either were booked into rooms where their music was "totally and utterly inappropriate" or the agency failed to insure that the gig would take place as arranged. If difficulties arose the single effectively has no legal recourse as written contracts and/or oral agreements are difficult to enforce.

The composite agent, Sol, (introduced in Chapter 3) countered that too often singles have unrealistic expectations of agents. He felt an agent's only purpose was to offer work and not to become involved in the management of
a single's career. Consequently, due to disputes, many singles self-book in an attempt to exercise more control over the conditions of their work. Their efforts may not be economically rewarding, however, because the wages they receive do not always compensate them for the extra effort.

"Getting to the gig" concerns a single's relationship with his musical repertoire and occupationally related travel. In the case of "high-tech" acts, the preparation of tapes and sequencer computer disks can be very time consuming. The finished product presented to an audience is technologically sophisticated but also requires a large investment in time, expertise, and equipment. "Mid-tech" and "low-tech" singles also invest considerable energy into preparing material especially if they are multi-instrumentalists. Travel is an unavoidable fact for most singles if they wish to maintain full employment. Going "on the road" has been mythologized in songs and literature as a means of escape from responsibilities and conventional "nine to five" lifestyles. Many singles, however, find life on the road to be personally problematic because it can be lonely, and, because costs are high. The financial and psychological drain can contribute to creative and occupational "burnout". Few singles can sustain indefinite travel.

"Getting through gigs" highlighted a single's relationships with audiences, management, and staff. Single's interaction with audiences centers on the subjective nature
of performance itself. A single must learn to "read" an audience, based on commonly held cultural assumptions, assume whatever role he feels is indicated, and present appropriate music. However, the process of performance is not predictable so a single can present exactly the same act to different audiences and get very different responses. The unpredictability of audience/single interaction gives performance its excitement, but it can also result in feelings of failure. An important influence on the relationship between audiences and singles is that the encounter is mediated by alcohol and, therefore, is potentially more problematic than musical performances that take place without the presence of alcohol or other drugs.

Getting on well in the workplace with co-workers was seen by most informants as also being critical to a successful engagement. Since all the workers involved in the performance are ideally part of the same "networks of cooperation" (Becker, 1980), they are dependent on each employee being competent in their individual tasks. A good rapport with staff and management can help a single defuse confrontations with audience members, and a good performance by the single can increase co-workers income through increased tips and sales. The composite manager, Belinda, observed that singles are a unique breed of individuals who can make a valued contribution to a venue if they can overcome what she termed their "encapsulation", and strive to
relate intimately to both audiences and co-workers.

"Getting livelihood and satisfaction" inquired into singles' economic and personal relationship with the occupation. Most singles found the work economically marginal and expressed dismay that competent and incompetent performers seemed to receive the same wages as did proficient performers. The economic unfeasibility of the occupation was only one of several issues that informants felt could contribute to alienation and dissatisfaction with their work. Other negative issues were their feelings of anonymity, the difficulty of maintaining personal relationships while "on the road", and the lack of a sense of community, either social or musical. These issues, taken together, were too much for some singles to bear so they have left the occupation to pursue other livelihoods.

Singles do however gain satisfaction from other aspects of their work. Aside from an intrinsic love of music, the principal areas from which they derived satisfaction were self fulfillment and self challenge, interactions with audiences, and, the relative financial rewards of the occupation compared to other employment available to them.

"Getting back to the future" showed that even though many informants had experienced disappointments with the business of music, they still loved music itself. Most planned to keep music a part of their lives, even if they were unable to perform as a livelihood. Most also hoped their
children would be exposed to music. However, some felt making
music for money instead of making music for themselves held
the potential to taint the enjoyment of music for its own
sake. They wished their children to profit from
their own, not always positive, experiences of trying to
bridge the private world of the soul with the public world of
performance.

This thesis has typified the occupational culture of
singles as one of solitary subcontractors plying their trade
at various venues across British Columbia. As "independent"
workers, singles are similar to other solitary nomadic
workers such as long distance truckers, traveling
salespersons, bank examiner/auditors, and professional sports
referees. These occupations also consist of workers who
perform essentially the same tasks in varied locales. A major
contrast is that these independent workers tend to operate
out of a "home office" to which they return periodically.
Many singles remain on the road for extended periods without
any direct connection to formal institutions or corporate
entities.

The single has many occupational features in common with
workers in other entertainment occupations. Like strippers,
comedians, symphony conductors, and hookers, singles are
often sustained by the chance that they may be "discovered"
somewhere along the line. Being "discovered" is not usually
an aspect of the career aspirations of truckers, bank
examiner/auditors, or traveling salespersons. For a single, the possibility exists that they might be heard by someone who will be impressed enough to invest money or furnish contacts with record companies or music publishers, just as a comedian might be heard by a producer and get a chance at a television appearance. As ephemeral as these possibilities are, the mythologies of entertainment occupations typically contend that acts are occasionally plucked from obscurity and deposited into "stardom". These instances are not common, but not uncommon enough to destroy the ability of performers to believe that it can happen to them. To believe success can happen, despite all evidence to the contrary, is a necessary ingredient for remaining in an entertainment occupation. Perhaps that is why some singles tolerate what they perceive as indignities and less-than-optimal work conditions in order to sustain their musical dreams; they truly believe they have something to say with their music. The trick is getting someone, somewhere, somehow, to listen.

The nature of the methodological approach used in this thesis bears comment, both as to its efficacy and the affect it had on the research and the researcher. As a "knowledgeable insider", I brought a supposed awareness of how the culture, organization, and structure of the occupation were intertwined. In retrospect, I realize that although I recognized the broad outlines, I was not fully aware of some of the "wheels within wheels" that keep the
industry spinning. In some respects, especially with respect to the work of booking agents, I was a very much an "outsider".

Along with personal experience, I also carried the burden of prejudices and attitudes I had been socialized to as a musician. My feelings towards agents and management were, quite frankly, not too positive. However, hearing their stories I began to appreciate that they too were tangled in the web we have collectively woven. I found myself grateful that I was not an agent or a bar manager.

During the course of research I was also performing as a single. Researching and performing simultaneously presented some interesting situations. At times it was hard to do interviews on a break after having been ignored by the very people I was approaching for information. To have a "lounge lizard" leap off the stage and inquire, in hopefully not too academic terms, how they as patrons, co-workers, or audience members reacted to singles, might have seemed odd at first. However, many "odd" things take place in bars so they may have thought it was part of my act, "the singing anthropologist".

In a sense, becoming a researcher on my breaks distanced me from the gig and eventually from the occupation itself. I saw myself as part of a larger process, public performance, and did not take it quite so personally if I was ignored, nor as egotistically if the gig went well. I also became more
cognizant of how I was manipulating cultural symbols, such as the songs chosen, to optimize a positive response. But perhaps most importantly, I came to appreciate the very real gap between the idealized objectivity of social science research and the subjective nitty gritty of having a bartender turn on the juke box while I was playing or having a patron slam his cowboy hat into my microphone because the song I had just played had been his ex-wife's favorite. At moments like that I confess to having jettisoned objectivity. My subjective reaction was to wonder why I was a musician at all, and furthermore, why should I expend the energy to study such a problematic occupation.

My own occupational journey came into clearer relief when while talking with informants I realized that many of the goals they aspired to I had already achieved. I had had a modicum of success on a local level as a musician. I had made records and heard my songs on the radio, done television shows, produced records and had a shot at "success". When I listen to their aspirations, I restrained myself from interjecting that the type of problematic relationships they struggled with as singles existed in different guises at other levels of the entertainment industry.

Overall, using "insider" ethnography as a methodology seems to have been a valid means of investigating the work singles do. As a "knowledgeable insider", I had the background to instill a degree of confidence in informants.
My experience as a musician in a sense validated me as a social science researcher. Some of the informants may have thought it was very clever scam for me to get paid to study something I already knew a bit about.

Finally, I came away from the research aware that, although as a social science researcher I could rationalize intruding on informant's occupational lives, I could not rationalize intruding on their personal dreams. They had an inviolate right to their own ambitions and realizations.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Our exploration of the occupational lives of the informants: Moe, Duke, Jon, Tiny, Dewey, Leo, Benny, Ian, Mac, and Eric has raised a number of questions which are not addressed in this thesis. The present study is limited in scope but can provide a basis for further investigation of singles. I would like to indicate in broad terms several areas of future quantitative research. One would be an investigation of audiences' and co-worker's view of the value of singles' work so as to illuminate why they are perceived as "playing". Other would include an examination of the number of gigs and incomes of singles working the local market to discover the extent of employment; an exact accounting of costs incurred in presenting an act to find out if the cash outlays needed to keep an act viable result, in the long term, in better paying gigs; a detailed chronicling of the longevity and evolution of musical careers to
ascertain if doing a "single" act is a stop-gap measure between band or recording situations or if singles are committed to solo performance. Quantitative studies in these areas might be difficult to implement because they deal with personal finances and informants were reticent to divulge much about their incomes, primarily because many do not pay taxes on their music earnings. These type of studies, however, would investigate fuller the extent of economic and social marginality.

Further qualitative explorations might include: a study of singles and their support relationships with spouses, lovers, families, and friends since these relationships can be viewed as a resource to be called on; the nature of occupational experiences for female singles and whether there are gender differentiations in how singles are perceived and in turn perceive themselves; a more detailed ethnography of the spouses of singles, past and present, and how a career in music affects relations in the home; the nature of psychological adjustments singles make while trying to remain inventive in a work environment that emphasizes conventional behavior; reasons for the similarity in repertoire among acts; correlations between success as a single and movement into other levels of the entertainment industry such as recording and concert appearances; and finally, whether any type of career planning is feasible in a capricious occupation.
Finally, an extensive content analysis of song lyrics, literary references, and media representation, both contemporary and historical, might shed more light on whether or not the present image of the "popular" musician as a "player", rather than a "worker", has historical antecedents. Another avenue of investigation, specifically with respect to song lyrics, would be a survey of "popular" tunes where the writers comment on how they think musicians are perceived by non-musicians. In a sense, successful songs like "Money for Nothing", through the use of irony, profit from the very misperceptions they deride.
"Making Music for Money" was composed by Alex Harvey. An album of the same name appeared on Capitol Records in the United States and was released in 1973 or 1974.

CHAPTER 1

"MONEY FOR NOTHING"
(MARK KNOPFLER/STING)

LOOK AT THEM YO-YO'S THAT'S THE WAY YOU DO IT, YOU PLAY THE GUITAR ON THE MTV, THAT AIN'T WORKING THAT'S THE WAY YOU DO IT, MONEY FOR NOTHING AND YOUR CHICKS FOR FREE. NOW THAT AIN'T WORKING, THAT'S THE WAY YOU DO IT, LET ME TELL YOU, THEM GUYS AIN'T DUMB. MAYBE GET A BLISTER ON YOUR LITTLE FINGER, MAYBE GET A BLISTER ON YOUR THUMB.

WE GOT TO INSTALL MICROWAVE OVENS, CUSTOM KITCHEN DELIVERY.
WE'VE GOT TO MOVE THESE REFRIGERATORS.
WE'VE GOT TO MOVE THESE COLOR TV'S.

THE LITTLE FAGGOT WITH THE EARRING AND THE MAKEUP, YA BUDDY, THAT'S HIS OWN HAIR. THAT LITTLE FAGGOT GOT HIS OWN JET AIRPLANE, THAT LITTLE FAGGOT HE'S A MILLIONAIRE. I SHOULD'VE LEARNED TO PLAY THE GUITAR, I SHOULD HAVE LEARNED TO PLAY THEM DRUMS. LOOK AT THAT MAMA SHE'S GOT IT STICKING IN THE CAMERA, MAN, I WISH WE COULD HAVE SOME. AND WHO'S UP THERE? WHAT'S THAT? HAWAIIAN NOISES? HE'S BANGING ON THE BOTTLE LIKE A CHIMPANZEE. THAT AIN'T WORKING, THAT'S THE WAY YOU DO IT.

GET YOUR MONEY FOR NOTHING, GET YOUR CHICKS FOR FREE. 1985 (CHARLESCOURT LTD./RONDOR MUSIC (LONDON) LTD./VIRGIN MUSIC (PUBLISHERS) LTD. Used by Permission.

The lyrics of this popular song cogently express popular perceptions as to whether or not musicians, especially non-institutionalized ones, such as member of rock bands and singles, actually "work". The 'blue-collar' perspective of the song's narrators definitely suggests that they don't. Informants for this study related numerous incidents where the question "what do you really do for a living?" was posed to them by audience members.

I personally have encountered "single" acts in areas as diverse as Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Belize, Guatemala, and Singapore. There is also a "circuit" in Japan and Taiwan where Western entertainers work.
Mullen (1987) and Sanders (1974) have commented on this dichotomy. Mullen (1987:28) suggest the following contrasts: a "musical artist" focuses on musical skills, is self-orientated, and prefer their own repertoires; whereas a "musical entertainer" focuses on audience interaction and pleasure, is audience orientated, and adjusts the repertoire to suit the audience.

Musical genres are difficult to summarize, the following synopsis serves to highlight major differentiations. "Pop" music is the technically sophisticated music that is featured on Top-40 Radio, MTV television videos, and is a mainstay of the record industry. "Folk" is often performed on acoustic instruments with less elaborate production techniques than "pop" music. Thematically it may deal with more 'traditional' subject matter and song styles. "Middle-of-the-road"-"MOR"- is lighter in style and production than pop music. "Country" covers the gamut from 'traditional' country and bluegrass, with its roots in the American South, to fully produced 'uptown' country aimed at urban audiences. At times country can be almost indistinguishable from middle-of-the-road and light pop. "Ethnic" music is based on immigrant traditions. Because of recent immigration to Canada there are ethnic groups which are able to sustain their own musicians. They perform both commercially and in connection with ethnic community activities. "Sing-a-long" consists of North American or English 'standards' with repetitive and familiar lyrics designed to encourage audience participation. This style of music is found in certain venues such as pizza parlors and 'English' and 'Irish' pubs. These summaries are rather broad in scope and do not account for the many gradations that exist within each genre. However, singles should be at least passingly familiar with a wide range of genres. A wide repertoire is an asset for gaining employment and indispensable for providing suitable music for divergent audiences.

Personal telephone conversation with the Manager of the Liquor Control Board, (Mr. Nichols) British Columbia Provincial Government, Victoria, B.C. April 18, 1988.

In June of 1988 the Provincial government of British Columbia introduced legislation to extend its control over the type of entertainment that can be presented in venues. This is partially the result of incidents with "exotic" dancer acts which were deemed to have exceeded 'public standards of decency'. There also have been incidents with respect to musical acts and comedians who specialize in "blue" humor. Liquor Board employees related to me that, between approximately 1975 and 1985, bars were able to charge more for drinks while entertainment was performing as long as
signs were posted to that effect. Cabarets often charge a "cover charge" to help defray the cost of live entertainment. This practice is not common with singles.

My own musical career includes over twenty years of experience as a "single" and musician/singer in Canada, the United States, Australia, Central America and the Middle East. I am still active part-time in the occupation. As a recording artist and songwriter I have recorded three albums, one with EMI of Australia and two with United Artists of Canada, and numerous singles in professional recording studios in Sydney, Toronto, Los Angeles, Vancouver, and Edmonton. I have had over sixty copyrights recorded and released in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Germany. I was under contract as a writer with Screens Gems Music (Toronto and Los Angeles) for three years and active in the recording and commercial industries as a producer, writer, and singer. In 1978 I received a Canada Council Arts Grant to write a historical musical about the settlement of the Cypress Hills region of Alberta and Saskatchewan.

See Mann, 1975 in regards to the ethical difficulties of doing fieldwork in a bar setting when the researcher is an "insider."

Becker (1963), Bennett (1980), and Hebdige (1979) have commented on this in specific reference to musicians and youth groups.


Bennett, 1980.


Bennett, 1980.


Although this thesis' primary emphasis is on the conversion of resources into livelihood, Wallman's discussion of the difficulties inherent in analyzing intangible products such as art is of interest, if only tangentially. Singles' performances fall into the category of activities which have little practical value even though they may be indirectly connected, mythologically or symbolically, to important social functions such as weddings and public celebrations. Sometimes, an art-object or performance of this
kind may be held in high esteem and its maker accorded high status. However, Wallman stresses that: the worker still...has no control over the value of such work, it can not be self projected since it depends on the appraisal of clients, audiences, or customers. In reality, it is their work and not the producer's. It is work only if the receptors define it as such. The receptors determine value, not the initiator. Consequently, those whose product is not subject to standard evaluation are most likely to feel ambivalent about identifying with the work they do or the social assessment of it (Wallman 1979:19). Although this raises a number of interesting issues, these rest beyond the scope of the examination undertaken in this thesis.

For a discussion of "front stage-back stage" activities and other aspects of performance see Goffman, 1974.

Bar and restaurant staff intimated to me that female singles tended to perform "laid back" music that was not conducive to active liquor sales. They also criticized their often limited repertoire. However, some venues specifically request female acts, while others specifically do not want them.

The informants represent what the researcher, in consultation with industry professionals, deemed to be a cross-section of: ages and experience (22-45 years of age, novices/veterans); the extent of technological accompaniment ("low-tech", "mid-tech", "high-tech"); their preferred musical genres (country/pop/middle-of-the-road); the subjective opinions of their peers and agents with respect to their occupational success ("marginal"/"in demand") and finally, the degree to which music acts as their primary source of income (part-time/full time). [Note -- these informants are identified in Chapter 2.]

Age range -- over 40 (Ian, Leo, Duke), between 30-40 (Moe, Eric, Tiny, Jon, Mac, Dewey), under 30 (Benny).

Technological accompaniment -- High-tech (Tiny, Dewey, Mac), Mid-tech (Moe, Duke, Jon, Benny), low-tech (Ian, Eric, Leo).

Preferred Musical Genre -- Country (Moe, Duke, Benny), Pop (Tiny), Standards and Pop (Mac/Dewey, Leo), "Middle of the Road" (Jon, Eric), Folk (Ian). All acts have mixed repertoires which they adjust to suit the occasion.

Subjective opinions of "marketability" remain confidential.

Extent of involvement with occupation at time of study-- Full-time (Jon, Tiny, Dewey, Benny, Ian, Mac), Part-time (Duke, Moe) Not active (Leo, Eric).

Agent estimate that approximately 60% of the single acts they handle are guitar orientated. The other 40% is made up
of keyboardists (piano, synthesizer, accordion). Guitar acts tend to predominate in pubs and taverns, especially those that feature "country western" music. Keyboardists are usually preferred by the larger hotels, especially for their lounges and dining rooms. I personally have worked as both a guitarist and pianist and found that piano lounge patrons were possibly not as aggressive as those in pubs and taverns. Conversely, tavern and pub patrons can be more responsive, especially if dancing is permitted. These distinctions may be moot points. A former musical collaborator cynically remarked to me after a long stint in a major hotel "supper club" band, "no matter how proud they are when they walk in, they all crawl out the same." Audience variations were fairly irrelevant to his actual work as a musician, he had found it problematic to distinguish between aggressive and passive indifference.

21 The Lower Mainland of British Columbia consists of the Vancouver and Victoria metropolitan areas and portions of Vancouver Island. The approximate population is one and half million and is the largest trading area in the province. The informants live in the Lower Mainland but many of them perform throughout British Columbia, Alberta, and the Yukon Territory. The major entertainment agencies are located in either Vancouver or Victoria.

22 Many singles experience episodic careers. It is not uncommon for them to sell their equipment and take a "day job" or a "straight job" only to return to music later. Informants related numerous incidents where difficulties in personal relationships or dissatisfaction with their "straight jobs" precipitated a return to music as a livelihood.

Further to this, Siddique and Turk (1983) note that the issue of "orderly" and "disorderly" careers has a bearing on the level of satisfaction of workers, specifically in the area of family life. They suggest that "disorderly" careers tend to lower worker's self image and negatively affect the quality and very nature of their interactions with others. The disorderly careers of many singles may contribute to a negative sense of selfhood for it "fosters a damaging rather than an affirmative occupational and total identity...[it] tends to lower self esteem making the worker vulnerable to rather harsh criticism from friends, relatives, and co-workers (Wadel, 1979a:110-111)

23 That is, the data does allow for "logical inference", since emphasis was placed on the "theoretically necessary linkages among the features of...case studies" (Mitchell, 1983:206-207). In particular my theoretical analysis is guided by Wallman (1979) and Wadel (1979).
Ethnographies which include the recollections of other individuals working within larger occupational entities include Applebaum 1981 (construction workers); Agar 1986 (independent truckers); Bennett 1980 (rock band musicians); Gamst 1980 (railroad engineers); Hockey 1986 (army recruits); Pilcher 1972 (longshoremen); Spradley and Mann 1974 (cocktail waitresses); and Wolcott 1973 (high school principals).

Triangulation is a technique that facilitates the locating of a third point if two are already known. This is used extensively in land surveying. In Denzin’s use of the term it is suggested that if an informant’s statement is effectively corroborated by several other witnesses the statement can then be assumed to have taken place as described by the initial source of the information.

Career here is used in both a vertical sense, movement up and down within a hierarchical structure, and a horizontal sense, movement within a bounded level. Within the musical hierarchy of British Columbia singles would occupy a lower vertical level, above that of street performers but below that of successful recording and/or concert artists. Horizontally there are distinctions made between working in the "toilet" circuit of run down inner-city taverns and playing in more "upscale" venues in the larger hotels and pubs. Often entry level singles must "pay their dues" by spending time in the less attractive venues.

Becker uses the term "art world" to "denote the network of people whose cooperative activity, organized via their joint knowledge of conventional ways of doing things, produces the kinds of art that art worlds are noted for" (1982:x). The aesthetic evaluation of whether or not a single’s performance can be considered "art" is irrelevant to the fact that he is still a part of an "art world"; as are the agents, owners, staff members, and audiences. Wadel also alludes to this distinction. (1979:383) To pursue this further, who in fact is the "artist"? Becker suggests that although one individual is usually accorded the bulk of the praise, or the blame, "it is sociologically more sensible and useful to see the work as the joint creation of all" (Becker 1976:41); those who conceive it, perform it, equip it, and, receive it. "This makes problematic the co-ordination of the activities of all these people" (Becker 1976:42).

Becker seems to suggest that while the "conventive" way is to view the performer as the sole artist, it might be more "inventive" to view the support staff and audience as equally "artistic".

See note # 2.
An informant related to me that he also rarely went to the clubs to see other acts. He remarked, "when I've got the time, I ain't got the money, and when I'm making the money I ain't got the time."

Manning, 1983 posits four central features to social celebration: performance, entertainment, public exhibition, and participation. MacCannell (in Manning 1983:5-6) points out the relationship of leisure, consumption, and cultural performances in what he terms "cultural productions". They are dramatic presentations that include: a model (an embodied ideal), an influence (themes, norms, and motivation derived from a model), a medium (the communicative context of the model and influence—a celebration), an audience (fans, constituents, followers) and a producer (those who create, control, direct, and enact the presentation. The performances of singles would qualify as "cultural productions" because they possess a model (the idea that drinking, dancing, and socializing are part of the "good life"), an influence (media/advertising images), a medium (music, whatever the genre), an audience (patrons and staff members), and producers (agents, management, and staff).

Frith, 1984.

Bennett (1980:11) refers to these activities as a "bundle of tasks".

The term "gig" is commonly used by musicians and agents to refer to any type of paid musical activity. I would like to quote at length from Bennett's description of the derivation of the word. "Most recent meanings of the word gig derive from its use by earlier twentieth century popular musicians as a term for performance events where social dancing might be expected to take place. The fascinating thing about the term is its long and revealing historical association with popular music and dance, apparently beginning as a medieval European term for a type of stringed instrument used by Islamic musicians. This in turn became a word for instruments of the viol family, an Irish or English popular dance form of the sixteenth century (jig) often associated with vulgar comedy and most likely introduced into North America, and a movement in seventeenth and eighteenth century European art music suites (for example, by J.S. Bach). Even the term's non-musical associations with spinning tops, vehicles such as carriages or small boats, or spears and snares for fish or frogs can be understood as images of risk and movement which are not incompatible with its musical meanings. Although derivative terms such as 'gigolo' have been associated with popular music and dance culture since the mid-nineteenth century, the recently generalized American use of the word to mean any job points to a revelation and acceptance of
musicians's ways of seeing the world. Perhaps this is because musicians are now popularly recognized as cultural leaders whose styles of living are presumed to be worth emulating. In any event, the musicians I observed used gig to mean a piece of musical work..." (Bennett 1980:83)

Similar to Bennett, the use of the term gig in this thesis helps "to distinguish the special nature of individually contracted events of employment from the more common notion of job, which connotes an economic permanence which is absent from most musicians' lives." (Bennett 1980:84)

CHAPTER 2

In his study of Basongye musicians in Zaire, Merriam comments that although their status is low (exhibited by the statements of the villagers that they would not wish their children to become musicians), their importance is high. "While his behavior may be censured, his presence is desired" ...[villagers remarked that] life in a village without musicians is not to be considered" (Merriam, 1979:3).

The issue of professionalism is one of ambivalence for many musicians, especially singles and small ensemble players. Are they professional when they get paid for what they do? Or, are they professional when they are recognized by society as having attained some of the criteria of a "profession"? - i.e. the activity is socially necessary and distinct; the workers are organized into an association and control admissions; a formalized examination is required for entry; ethical concerns are codified; control over members is often legalized (licensed) thereby giving the profession control over its members that may supersede civil authority. (Dunkerley, 1975)

Pavalko (1971:26) provides a heuristic continuum to differentiate between a occupation and a profession:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Profession</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Theory, intellectual technique</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Relevance to social values</td>
<td>Not relevant</td>
<td>Relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Training period A. B. C. D. Subculture</td>
<td>Short Non-specialized Involves things subculture</td>
<td>Long Specialized Inv. symbols</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Motivation</td>
<td>Self-interest</td>
<td>Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Autonomy</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Commitment</td>
<td>Short Term</td>
<td>Long Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Sense of community</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Code of Ethics</td>
<td>Undeveloped</td>
<td>Highly developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A single possesses a mixture of these criteria. For example, while there is an absence of codified professional theory, social values are often personally relevant. Also, as in a profession, the training period can be quite long; specialized; involve symbols and their manipulation; and as musicians, a subcultural identity is present. Motivation may be rooted in self-interest but informants also expressed the view that they provided a needed service. Autonomy is limited for singles, but commitment, although episodic, is often long term. A sense of being a part of a greater community may be undeveloped but that may be the result of the nomadic nature of the occupation. It may be effect rather than cause. Adherence to a code of ethics is problematic in a business as unpredictable and insecure as the entertainment industry.

Attempting to define 'professionalism' using these admittedly heuristic criteria is difficult. It points out that singles operate in the interstice on an occupational/professional continuum. A more fruitful approach is Merriam's (1974) suggestion that although degrees of professionalism (as well as the type of renumeration) among musicians may vary, the crucial point is whether or not the musician is acknowledged as a "social specialist". "This kind of recognition is the ultimate criterion; without it, professionalism would be impossible. Although the individual may regard himself as professional, he is not truly so unless other members of the society acknowledge his claim and accord him the role and status he seeks for himself" (Merriam, 1974:125.) In this regard the question of whether singles are professional or not is subject to individual interpretation on the part of both singles and society. Potential conflict can arise when expected rewards and anticipated behaviors from both parties do not dovetail. If there exists ambivalence as to whether or not singles "work" then it follows that any consensus as to professionalism is equally problematic.

Boles and Garbin suggest two distinct, and contrasting approaches to the study of occupational choice processes. One, based on Katz and Martin (1962) is termed "adventitious" and views "occupational choice making as essentially accidental, non-rational, spontaneous, and based on situational contingencies" (Boles and Garbin 1974:110). The second approach, "purposive", is based on the works of Ginsburg et al (1951) and Blau (1956) and sees occupational selection as the result of "more or less... rational decisions."(Boles and Garbin, 197:110) Rational considerations are central to the purposive process and peripheral to the adventitious. Boles and Garbin suggest a compromise approach that they label "equilibrium". It stresses that occupational choice is a combination of the "interaction between certain predisposing conditions and
variou~contingecies, and a continuum of rationality exists, with regard to the occupational choice process." (Boles and Garbin, 1974:111).

The choice of career for singles can most often be viewed as "adventitious", and occasionally one of "equilibrium."

MIDI technology opens up vast possibilities for the use of sound. Synthesizers allow for the reproduction of a multitude of sounds from the natural world (i.e. recreations of tubas, violins, tambourines, oboes, snare drums, etc.), and "found" sounds created by the synthesist. Computers and sequencers act as digital tape recorders and play back the information that has been entered into them. Different manufacturers may employ differing technologies to recreate and create sound (i.e. Yamaha - FM Synthesis, Roland - Linear Synthesis) but MIDI allows their units to be interfaced with those of other manufacturers.

The rate of change in musical technology is quite rapid and a "high-tech" single must be fluent on his equipment. He can not take time on-stage to try and figure out how it all fits together. As the technology available to home consumers has improved there has been a concomitant rise in the expectations of the sound quality in the presentation of live music. Patrons who listen to high quality digital reproduction at home are less likely to be tolerant of an act with a muddy sounding amplification system, distorted speakers, and a "tinny" sounding drum machine. They may not be able to articulate why the sound is inadequate but their ears tell them that quality is lacking.

The use of high technology raises the issue, at what point does the performer become the victim of the technology he employs and can technology become a straitjacket rather than a boon to creativity? The use of all a single's equipment is predicated on the availability of electricity; no electrical power, no performance. Also the musician using an electric drummer becomes to a large extent a slave to the quarter note. He is locked into the tempo set by the machine. Sophisticated drum machines are programmable, they even feature a function to "humanize" what the machine has dehumanized, but the metronomic predictability of drum machines can further homogenize acts that already may feature similar repertoires and even the same backing tracks.

Aronowitz (1973) points out that a study of assembly line manufacturing in the auto industry suggests that worker satisfaction does not necessarily increase with technological improvements. Rather, if the work becomes too stultifying, workers tend to quit, unable to endure the tedium of dull, repetitious tasks. A "high-tech" single, especially one that does not constantly bring in new material, stands the very real danger of getting very bored with his act and that is usually very apparent to audiences, management, and agents,
and eventually can affect the acts' economic viability.

A "high-tech" act is also less flexible while performing because time is required to change tapes or enter new data into a computer. Doing "requests", usually a not uncommon occurrence, is much easier for a "mid-tech" or "low-tech" act because all they have to do is change the drum pattern and away they go. A non-technologically orientated act may in the long run be more "entertaining" and as remarked earlier, most venues and audiences prefer entertainment to technology.

Bennett (1980) defines 'popular' as things that are widely distributed, things that anyone can come in contact with, things that are shared by entire communities, and things that require no prior training to appreciate.

CHAPTER 3

Singles do not always appreciate the 'hidden work' engendered in the endless cajoling, wheedling, and mediation with employers that agents must engage in. However, those singles that have worked as agents have a much better appreciation that the agents job is besotted with the same uncertainties that plague a single.

The culture of musicians is resplendent with tales of agents' supposed ineptness and venality. These tales in turn become part of the folklore by which new musicians are socialized. Distrust of agents is therefore intrinsic to the power structure of most musical activities. This type of semi-institutionalized animosity has been mentioned in respect to other occupational relationships between musicians/studio orchestral contractors (Faulkner, 1971), musicians/bandleaders (Nye, 1986), and sidemen/leaders in rock bands (Bennett, 1980).

Further to the examination of the term "gig" that appears in the endnotes for chapter 1, there are other aspects of gigs that are important. Similar to Bennett this paper uses the term gig to "distinguish the special nature of individually contracted events of employment from the more common notion of job which connotes an economic permanence which is absent from most musician's lives." (Bennett, 1980:84) [Emphasis added] Permanence, or rather the lack of it, is a focus of much of what singles talk about. The unpredictability of the occupation is a real concern as it makes financial planning difficult, if not non-existent. Because the work is often episodic the only hedge a single can use is to be prepared, musically and mentally, to perform at various types of functions. Bennett (1980) delineates several types of gigs; all of which a single will perform over the course of a career: social gigs — purely social
events or gatherings such as dances and parties; ceremonial gigs - such as weddings, graduations, etc.; bar gigs - the mainstay of most singles, duos, and bands; and lastly, the most difficult to achieve, steady gigs (house gig), - which entails a prolonged stay at the same venue. Each of these types of gigs require different repertoires. It would normally be socially inappropriate to play a popular ballad like "To All The Girls I loved Before" as the wedding dance for a middle aged couple both on their third or fourth marriages. But then again, I actually had it happen, so what is socially appropriate is as unpredictable as other aspects of the occupation.

CHAPTER 4

Sol mentioned that one of the problem with singles using taped backgrounds was that they sold tapes to each other and eventually had similar repertoires. Consequently, this homogenization became detrimental as venues, and audiences, became bored with the lack of uniqueness of the acts.

Musicians frequently have difficulties obtaining credit as their episodic employment and mobility make them poor risks for credit card companies and lending institutions.

He had spent a total of 5 weeks out of 4 months there, and then was working on those weekends he was there.

CHAPTER 5

Although alcohol is the only drug substance legally available in British Columbia bars and taverns, I have often observed, and been invited to join, patrons making "trips to the parking lot" to smoke, inject, ingest, or purchase, other substances such as marijuana, cocaine, and crack.

By way of example, I would like to remark on a gig I did recently at a tavern in rural British Columbia that illustrates some of the criteria Manning suggests and also one method of accommodating a "disengaged" audience. In an ideal scenario, all of Manning's criteria are present. But as an ideal type it serves only to suggest the component parts. Often however, either all criteria are not present or there is a lack of consensus, a disjunction, on the part of the major social actors as to the intent of the celebration. In my mind I performed music suitable for a concert where an audience listened intently; for the patrons, listening intently was far removed from how they wanted to spend their payday, it was a chance to dance, drink and socialize; for the management, I was there to provide entertainment and help
sell more alcohol. Our perceptions of the intent of the exercise were as varied as the participants. Had I been a novice, I might have felt insulted by the lack of attention I received. I preferred to view it as benign indifference.

After 20 years experience I was aware that my primary function was to get people dancing so they would socialize, get thirsty, and perhaps have an extra drink or two. For me the weekend became a "job". I helped sell more liquor than would have been sold had I not been there, but for me it was not a social celebration. It was not a totally negative experience. Being occasionally ignored is an occupational hazard. Knowing how to accommodate it is a mark of either occupational maturity, or resignation.

I was hired by an agency to do a three day gig at one of British Columbia's major ski resorts. It was a very posh hotel complete with pool, sauna, steam room, etc. By most musician's standards it was a choice venue. The weekend I was booked also happened to be a "Celebrity Weekend" where Hollywood types are flow up to the resort to cavort and enlighten the locals both on and off the slopes. Simultaneously, various other functions and conventions were also going on, so the hotel was a beehive of activity.

On the second day of the gig I was informed by the management that a physician's convention was going to be occupying the lounge where I had been entertaining so they would not need my services during the normal evening hours. However, since they were paying me for three performances they felt that I should play during the afternoon the daily 4 and 1/2 hours stipulated in the contract. I was not in a position to argue since they owned that block of my time regardless of what musical activity I was engaged in.

So I started work at 3:30 p.m. in the lounge, but the lounge had no patrons as they were all on the slopes or busy watching for celebrities. The staff also was not really present either as they were busy preparing for the evening's private function and were not in the lounge area. So I sat there in a room that seated at least 100 people in a 5 star hotel in a lovely mountain setting and sang to myself for a full 4 1/2 hours. No one come in to listen and the only vague human contact was with the supercilious manager who came by on his rounds and eyed his watch to check that I wasn't somehow shortchanging the hotel on the 4 1/2 hours I 'owed' them. It was irrelevant that no one was there to listen.

He finally suggested that I put a speaker outside as there were some patrons at the pool and outdoor hot tub who might be able to hear me although they could not see me and I could not see them. I was totally anonymous and most probably indistinguishable from a MUZAK tape, a disembodied voice emanating out of the ozone.

It was difficult to pass 4 1/2 hours entertaining myself
as it was not in the least entertaining, it was an painfully prolonged soli-liquy. But they had paid for my time and they were entitled to it. It was definitely work; I was exchanging time for money, but was it performance? I was dressed in a suit and tie exactly as if people were present, I sang the same basic repertoire, I played the guitar with the same level of competence as if the room had been jumping with dancers and party-goers. But there was no audience, no response, no incentive; nothing. It was not 'art'. But it was absurd.

I did take, however, the liberty of not introducing myself or the songs as I thought that smacked too closely of the onset of a severe personality disorder. Anyone else who sat in a public place and talked to themselves, loudly, for 4 1/2 hours would probably be reported to the authorities and queried as to their mental state. For a lounge musician it was "business as usual", or rather, business as usually unusual. It was just a case of "making music for money, instead of making music for me."

Nye, (1986) reports a method of "reading" an audience for a resort band's performance. He labels these "educated guesses or hypotheses". They are the visual, aural, and sometimes olfactory signals that experience, "paying one's dues", teaches a musician to decipher. It is a critical skill because without the ability to choose "appropriate" music, to match the mood and the occasion, the musician may find employment problematic. What follows is a brief overview of some of what I term "guess-timations" -- observations I have made from the stage:

What is the audience wearing? What types of drinks are being served? What kind of vehicles are in the parking lot? Are they smoking 'roll-your-owns' or using cigarette holders? These are all clues as to potential musical repertoire. (I.e. If they are drinking beer with tequila chasers while watching MTV it is unlikely there will be much demand for material from the Big Band Era.

What is the age structure of the audience? Older audiences often prefer music that is slower in tempo, and softer in volume and subject matter. They also are more conversant with various dance styles so the dance mix can include Latin, Polkas and Two Steps. Younger audiences generally prefer up-tempo tunes at a higher volume level. They also are often not as musically literate so material may be limited to songs currently on the radio or MTV. There is also often a general rise in ambient noise level as the evening proceeds. As inhibitions fall, volume tends to rise.

What is the general economic level of the audience? Affluent audiences tend not to want to "boogie", gyrate, immediately after a five course meal. As risque as they might get is a little hip wiggling to "Kansas City" or "Big Bad Leroy Brown", but usually only after the suitcoats, ties and
bright lights have disappeared. Liquid lubrication also assists this process. However, foundry and mill workers coming off the second shift on a Friday night might be ready to dance immediately.

What is the regional origin of the audience? Regional preferences are often quite distinct. In the United States, Southerners will generally prefer country music while Midwesterners might enjoy a polka. Light jazz and rock might be best for a West Coast crowd. In Canada, an audience of Maritimers might want to hear regional songs about squid, jigging or some other regionalized identifications.

Is the venue in a rural or urban area. Urban/rural audiences can vary considerably, both as to repertoire, and response. Some singles prefer either the sophistication of the former or the enthusiasm of the latter.

What is the level of proficiency among the dancers? If they are schooled dancers then Latin or Big Band rhythms might be appropriate. If not, early rock and roll, disco, or rock groups such as Creedence Clearwater Revival might be easiest to dance to.

Another important variant is that the audience does not remain static. In the course of an evening the audience may "turn over" several times, necessitating divergent material. Also, management may specifically demand a particular style of music in order to attract, or repel, a certain clientele.

There is no cut and dried method to optimum song choice. Acts that have prearranged "sets" of material can end up out-of-synch with their audience, unable to deviate from the order of songs on their tapes or sequencer.

Simple rhythms (either fast or slow) combined with familiarity and repetition are often successful in providing a balanced performance. However, these guidelines are neither predictable nor dependable. Sometimes, thankfully, the audience reacts in a totally unexpected manner and then the performance takes on a life of its own. The aforementioned clues, however, do at least suggest possibilities in choice of material.

For a detailed account of the formation and dynamics of hotel communities, within which many singles work, see Robert Prus and Stylianos Irini's Hookers, Rounders and Desk Clerks - The Social Organization of the Hotel Community, 1980. Gage:Toronto. Specific references to musicians are contained between pages 136-143. Comments made by Prus and Irini's musician informants parallel those made by the informants for this study.
Agar, Michael.


Applebaum, Herbert.


Aronowitz, Stanley,


Aquilar, John.


Becker, Howard.


Bennett, H. Stith.


Blau, P.M., et al.


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Eckstein, H.


Elkan, Herbert.


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Fagin, Leonard.


Faulkner, Robert.


Frith, Simon.


Gamst, Frederick C.


Geertz, Clifford.


Ginzberg, E. et al


Godbey, Geoffrey.

Goffman, Erving.

Hall, O.

Hammersley, Martyn, and Paul Atkinson.

Hannerz, Ulf.

Harrison, G. Ainsworth.

Harvey, Edward.

Hebdige, Dick.

Hockey, John.

Holzberg, Carol and Giovannini, Maureen.

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Kohn, Melvin. and Schooler, Carmi.


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Lewis, George H.


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Mann, Brenda.


Manning, Frank.


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Marcus, George E. and Michael Fischer.


MacCannell, Dean.


Merriam, Alan.


Merriam, Alan. and Mack, Raymond.


Merton, Robert.


Mitchell, J. Clyde.


Mullen, Kenneth.


Nash, June.


Nye, William P.

Paine, Robert. (ed.)


Pavalko, Ronald.


Pelto, P.J. and Pelto, G.H.


Peterson, Richard.


Pilcher, William.


Prus, Robert and Irini, Styllianoss.

1980 *Hookers, Rounders, and Desk Clerks* Toronto: Gage.

Sanders, C.R.


Schwimmer, Erik.

Siddique, C. Muhammad and Turk, James L.


Spradley, James, and Mann, Brenda.


Sudnow, David.


Turner, Victor.


Wadel, Cato.


Wallman, Sandra. (ed.)


Waterman, Christopher.


Westby, David.


Whyte, W.F.


Wilson, Glenn.


Wolcott, Harry.

APPENDIX # 1

The following non-verbatim questions formed the basis for interviewing informants. When possible the questions were asked sequentially but when diversions occurred they were allowed to progress until an opportunity arose to re-direct the conversation. This general format was applied to all musician interviews. Interviews with non-musicians were not structured along the same lines but rather dealt with issues raised by the musicians in regard to the nature of informants' specific relationships with agents, owners and/or managers, co-workers, and audiences. An effort was made to keep the interviews non-formalized in the sense that academic jargon was avoided as much as possible so as not to intimidate the informants. The responses themselves that are included in the text of the thesis are those of the informants. Some editing, however, has taken place. All personal and business names have been deleted although geographic references have remained intact. Some out-of-context, repetitive or noninformational materials (such as "eh?", "you know", "er", "uh huh") have been reduced in order to facilitate the flow of the narratives, hopefully, without destroying their flavor.

ALL INFORMANT NAMES APPEARING IN THE TEXT ARE PSEUDONYMS.

THE QUESTIONS

The questions were framed around the "Gettings", the tasks which singles have to engage in in order to function in the occupation.

"GETTING INTO THE BUSINESS"

What was the nature of your family's interest or support in your musical aspirations?

What did your peer group think of your musical interests? Did music help you socially?

Did you perform music with other people or was it a private activity?

Was the formal educational system influential in your choice of music as an occupation? Did you have private instructions?

"GETTING GIGS"

How did you become involved with entertainment agents and agencies?
Do you self-book, and if you do, why do you do so?

Have you established work related networks? Are they beneficial?

How much effort do you put into preparations such as rehearsals, instrumental lessons, voice training?

What are the nature and extent of travel arrangements for out of town gigs? What are accommodations like?

How much effort do you put into preparations such as rehearsals, instrumental lessons, voice training?

What are the nature and extent of travel arrangements for out of town gigs? What are accommodations like?

How do you interact with management and staff?

Are there certain areas of the bar which are off-limits to you? Are there areas of the bar you feel are yours?

How do you find dealing with audiences? Are there methods you use to manipulate their response or clues you respond to?

Do you feel the presence of alcohol affects your performance or the audience's reaction to it?

What problems does the actual room present to you when setting up your equipment and sound? Are stages usually adequate?

"GETTING SATISFACTION AND LIVELIHOOD"

Given the nature and extent of external controls, what do you do to gain a sense of satisfaction? Is it difficult to perform when the work is unsatisfying?

Do you think the occupation is a viable economic activity or is it a marginalized livelihood?

"IDEAL VERSUS THE REAL"

In a perfect world... the perfect (gig, act to book, audience, employer, co-worker, entertainer) for you would be what?

"ARTIST OR ARTISAN"

Do you consider yourself primarily an artist, someone who invents, or an artisan, someone who recreates what others have invented?
"FUTURE"

Do you expect to continue working as a single? Do you intend to stay involved with music? Would you encourage your

"RELATIONSHIPS"

Do you find it hard to maintain personal relationships when performing on the road? Does working as a single affect your sense of community, both musical and social?

"STUPID QUESTIONS"

What are some of the questions you are consistently asked by outsiders about your work, if in fact they see it as work? Why do you think they might not see it as work?