

THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF A MUSIC COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM ON THE LIVES OF YOUNG PROFESSIONAL MUSICIANS

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The music profession is undergoing many changes due to social, global and economic exigencies. Professional musicians are now challenged to serve many roles while working with distinct populations in diverse educational, community-based and performance settings. University-community partnerships have been central in the provision of hands-on musical experiences that are likely to aid students in the transition between professional training and future careers (Ilari, 2010; Soto, Lum, Campbell, 2009). While institutions of higher education continue to develop connections with their community constituents through engagement and educational programs, it is the musicians, themselves, who are involved directly in program delivery (Myers, 2006).

Community engagement programs provide diverse and far-reaching music education-oriented experiences that benefit the university students and community constituents. This study focuses on a community engagement music program at a large American urban private university and describes and analyzes the contributions of participation on the professional lives of the student musicians. While descriptions of programs and their outcomes exist in the literature, in most cases, it is the perspective of an observer that is present. This presentation includes an analysis of meaningful experiences and impact of participation as described in interviews by 20 current and past participants by giving voice to the university student participants. Areas of particular interest are the skills gained through teaching in the program, impact on professional identity, perceptions of personal role in the community and current engagement within communities. Also included is discussion of findings with regard to the education of the professional musician and implications drawn for music education.

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