

...tunes, was representation of the lower classes as a whole—for instance, laborers and peasants. But that too changed with the advent of repertory opera during the 1850s. The combination of lower prices and gradually increasing prosperity made opera—still much more important in Italy than symphonic music—so widely accessible that when Giuseppe Verdi left Turin by train for Paris in 1894, ordinary citizens and workers staged a demonstration to bid him farewell.¹³¹ Thus, by the end of the nineteenth century, at least in many parts of the world, good music had become available for widespread popular consumption.

MUSIC COMPOSITION AS A PROFESSION

WE SHIFT our focus now from broad socioeconomic trends to the particular choices composers made, or were impelled to make, among alternative ways of keeping body and soul together. Chapter 1 identified hypotheses advanced by earlier writers that provide broad themes for the analysis here. In particular, it is said that the late eighteenth century in general, and the experience of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart in particular, marked a transition from the support of composing activity through patronage and church employment to private market alternatives, which in turn meant that composers became freelance artists accepting the risks of creating for the market. We shall find here that changes did occur, but they were more gradual and evolutionary.

THE EMPLOYMENT ALTERNATIVES

Composers earned their bread in many ways. They included working for the church, serving in noble courts, securing support in other ways from wealthy (mostly noble) patrons, and engaging in freelance activities, which in turn took a diversity of forms. It should not be surprising that many composers availed themselves of more than one such opportunity, sometimes simultaneously and sometimes at differing career stages. As Simon McVeigh observes in his excellent book on concert life in eighteenth-century London, “No musician working in London for any length of time made his entire living from concert work, and the career of most musicians was an ever-varying cocktail of different enterprises.”¹³² In pursuing multiple activities, composers had to allocate their limited time and energy among competing alternatives.

Church Employment

From at least the time of the Renaissance, European musicians found countless opportunities to be employed in the churches as organists, choir directors, and (in the most affluent churches) Kapellmeister presiding over music ranging from a capella singing to full orchestral performances. Virtually all Roman Catholic parishes of any size and most of the Protestant churches, except those following the most conservative

Calvinist and Puritan precepts, needed at least an organist, who in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was expected to perform some of his own compositions as well as using public-domain materials.

In the smaller parishes the persons who filled these jobs were poorly paid, but they were at least assured, as a nun who taught the author in elementary school used to say, of "three squares and an oblong." In the more important churches and cathedrals, the Kapellmeister's position was highly attractive and eagerly sought. Had he been blessed with better health, Mozart's career need not have ended in a morass of debt. Mozart had applied successfully for a position that would have made him the successor to Leopold Hoffmann (1738–1793), Kapellmeister of St. Stephan's cathedral in Vienna.² Hoffmann's salary was 2,000 florins per year (£205, or five times the annual income of a fully employed building craftsman in southern England) plus generous emoluments, which, with his various other sources of income, would have allowed Mozart to live comfortably. But Mozart died before he reached his thirty-sixth birthday while Hoffmann, whose health was not considered good at the time, lived on unexpectedly until 1793. Half a century later, the thirteen-year-old Camille Saint-Saëns chose to concentrate on organ performance at the Paris Conservatory instead of piano because it offered better employment prospects at a French church.³

The level of musical performance that churches could sustain was adversely affected by the confiscation of income-earning church lands in Austria under reforms initiated by Emperor Joseph II and in France following the revolution of 1789. But as the Mozart and Saint-Saëns examples testify, employment opportunities remained.

Support from the Nobility

A second major source of support for composers during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was found in the noble courts, many of which, we have seen in chapter 2, competed to outdo one another in the excellence of their orchestras and operas. Actually, support came in two main forms: from employment in the court and from subsidies more or less detached from work obligations.

Employment opportunities in court orchestras or Kapellen ranged from instrumental performance positions to directorship of a court's musical establishment, with salaries steeply graduated according to the responsibilities attached. Usually those who were proficient enough to be remembered as significant composers rose to the top of the ranks and enjoyed substantial salaries—for example, Johann Sebastian Bach at Köthen, Johann Stamitz in the famous Mannheim / Schwetzingen musical organization, Joseph Haydn at the Esterházy palaces, and Haydn's

brother Michael under the Prince / Archbishop of Salzburg. Occasionally a musician rose even further by modern-day values, becoming political adviser to a sovereign, as castrato Farinelli (Carlo Broschi, 1705–1782) did in the court of Spain's Kings Philip V and then Ferdinand VI.⁴

Some nobles and other wealthy individuals were also patrons of the arts, and as such provided outright subsidies or continuing pensions to particularly worthy composers. Sometimes these required a quid pro quo, such as delivering a commissioned work, but in other cases none was required.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and well into the nineteenth century, composers commonly dedicated a work to a wealthy hoped-for patron and sent it to him, unsolicited, accompanied by profuse flattery. The etiquette of the times called for the would-be patron to provide in return an appropriate honorarium, but this was not obligatory, and many ignored the gesture. The Elector of Brandenburg failed to acknowledge J. S. Bach's gift of the six Brandenburg concerti and let them lie, unplayed and unknown, in a musty cupboard. Bach is believed to have been sorely disappointed when he traveled in 1747 to Potsdam, improvised on a theme given him there by Frederick the Great, and then dedicated to Frederick his magnificent *Musikalisches Opfer* (Musical Offering), but received neither an honorarium nor travel expenses from the king.⁵ On the other hand, he was handsomely rewarded with a golden goblet containing 100 Louis d'or (= £114) for dedicating to Count Hermann von Keyserlingk the so-called Goldberg Variations.⁶ While in London Joseph Haydn performed twenty-six musicales for the Prince of Wales, but received nothing in return. When the British Parliament later settled the prince's substantial debts, Haydn sent a bill for 100 guineas, which the Parliament paid.⁷ Beethoven sent to King George IV of England a dedicated copy of his *Wellington's Victory* battle symphony, but heard nothing in return. He did not let the matter rest, however, and through his musician friends in London, a payment of £600 was finally negotiated ten years later.⁸ He was less successful in dedicating his Ninth Symphony (*Choral*) to King Friedrich Wilhelm of Prussia. The king sent him in return what was purported to be a diamond ring, but proved on careful examination to contain a cheap stone worth 300 paper florins (£12).⁹

Subsidies with little or no return performance obligation were not unusual. During much of his London career, George Frideric Handel received from the royal family an annual pension of £600, only £200 of which was tied to musical instruction Handel provided members of the family.¹⁰ Beginning in 1787, Mozart received from the court of Emperor Joseph II a stipend without duties of 800 florins per year (£46, or 1.2

times an English building craftsman's annual earnings). During the early years of his stay in Vienna, Beethoven received from Prince Karl von Lichnowsky an annual pension of 600 florins (£50), which ended in 1806 after a dispute over a requested performance at the prince's summer estate. In 1809, when Beethoven was about to accept a position in Kassel, Germany, three patrons persuaded him to remain in Vienna by guaranteeing him an annual pension of 4,000 florins. Its purchasing power eroded dramatically owing to inflation and currency reforms in the wake of the Napoleonic wars, but the renegotiated pension continued to provide significant support to Beethoven through the rest of his life.¹¹ Perhaps the most generous royal subsidy known went to Richard Wagner from King Ludwig II of Bavaria. During the last two decades of Wagner's life Ludwig conferred upon him personal cash gifts estimated at 500,000 marks (£25,000) along with substantial loans, later repaid, to finance the construction of and heavy losses incurred by Wagner's Festspielhaus in Bayreuth.¹² Even so, the criticism aroused in Munich over Ludwig's generosity forced Wagner to ask his publishers for supplemental loans.¹³

Members of the nobility were not the only ones who provided financial support to struggling composers. Tchaikovsky, for example, received between 1877 and 1890 an annual pension of 6,000 rubles (approximately £700) from Nadezhda von Meck, a widow whose deceased husband had accumulated a fortune through railroad building. The annuity is said to have contributed a third of Tchaikovsky's yearly income.¹⁴ Perhaps the most unusual subsidy was from one composer to another. In 1838 Niccolò Paganini, recognizing that he was dying but not that unwise investments would bring him financial difficulties, gave the struggling thirty-seven-year-old Hector Berlioz 20,000 French francs (£782, or 13 times an English building craftsman's annual earnings).¹⁵

FREELANCE AND OTHER PRIVATE SECTOR ACTIVITY

The increasing prosperity of a music-loving public opened up many opportunities for composers to earn a living through activities supported by neither the church nor noble patrons. Gradually, privately organized orchestras came to replace the orchestras and chamber concerts supported by the nobility. These provided employment for composers as performers and directors. In accepting such positions, however, composers continued to be employees. A more important departure was the pursuit of freelance opportunities in which the composers were in effect independent agents with the discretion to choose at arm's length which

tasks they would undertake and which they would decline.¹⁶ These freelance activities assumed numerous forms.

Composition and Publication Fees

For one, there was a demand for the composition of specific works in exchange for a fee or honorarium. Already at the start of the seventeenth century, we have seen in chapter 2, the creation of new operas was organized in this way throughout much of Italy and in England. Opera impresarios negotiated with composers case by case for composition to a particular libretto, sometimes suggested by the composer but usually by the impresario. Fees and other terms of the agreement were individually negotiated. Analogous commissions were given out by private individuals and orchestra associations. Mozart's commission in 1791 from an anonymous nobleman (much later discovered to be Graf von Walsegg) for the composition of a Requiem is a famous early example. The Philharmonic Society of London negotiated with Beethoven (in the end unsuccessfully, because of coordination and health difficulties) for first performance rights on Beethoven's still-to-be-composed late symphonies.

Fees could also be earned by selling compositions to a music publisher. A few composers born in the seventeenth century, such as George Frideric Handel in London, Georg Philipp Telemann in Hamburg, and François Couperin in Paris, earned appreciable sums through the publication of their music. The market for serious works was thin, however, and the fees offered by publishers were modest. Publication became an important source of income only a century or so later in the time of Beethoven. It was so important that we devote to it a special chapter, chapter 7, and leave it without further discussion at this point.

Performance Income

Composers often earned at least a part of their living by serving as featured guest performers, either with an orchestra that needed special talent, as in concertos, or in performances that emphasized the composer as a solo or accompanied artist.

An early representative of the guest artist school was Jean-Marie Leclair (1697–1764), who travelled widely in northern Europe, appearing as guest violinist with various orchestras, before he received a standing appointment as musician in the court of King Louis XV. Although guest artists were occasionally used in earlier concerts, the idea of paying a star instrumentalist a large fee to enhance concert attendance may have originated with London impresario Johann Salomon (1745–1815)

in 1793 (two years after Salomon's first concert series featuring Joseph Haydn as resident composer and conductor). Salomon retained composer Giovanni Viotti (1755–1824), considered Europe's leading violinist, to appear as soloist in his orchestral concert series for the unprecedented season fee of £578.¹⁷ (Higher fees had been commanded by opera singers, but not by instrumentalists.) By the second half of the nineteenth century the guest artist tradition was well-established, with soloists such as Joseph Joachim (1831–1907) and Johannes Brahms playing violin or piano solo parts with numerous European orchestras.

Much more prominent were the artists who embarked upon a grand tour to feature themselves as performers, often in conjunction with accompanists and/or vocalists. A well-known early example was the 1763–1765 tour of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and his family to arrange child prodigy performances in Munich, Stuttgart, Mannheim, Paris, Brussels, and The Hague, among other locations. At the age of ten, Johann Nepomuk Hummel undertook a similar trip with his father, returning home only five years later. Netting nearly 11,000 Reichsthaler (£2,200) after deduction of expenses, the tour was much more successful financially than that of the Mozarts.¹⁸ The difference, it would appear, lay in more patient and careful planning of concert locations by father Hummel. Hummel's later adult tours, while on leave from Kapellmeister duties at Weimar, are said to have brought him "a modest fortune."¹⁹ After a limited youthful tour with his father, cellist Luigi Boccherini embarked in 1767 upon a freelance concert tour with violinist Vincenzo Manfredini (1737–1799) that carried him eventually to Paris and then to a permanent position in Madrid. John Field (1782–1837) travelled widely through western Europe demonstrating pianos manufactured by his mentor, Muzio Clementi, before settling in Russia during 1803. The grand tour tradition reached a pinnacle with the spectacularly successful and lucrative European tours of Niccolò Paganini and Franz Liszt. The successes of the two were related, since Liszt is said to have learned his audience-pleasing showmanship from attending a Paris concert by Paganini in 1831.²⁰ So spellbound were listeners by the solo performances of Liszt that Clara Schumann, who supported her sizable family through extensive concertizing, arranged her early tours to avoid appearing in venues where Liszt had played, or was scheduled to play, during the same time period.²¹

Some well-known composers were adept at solo performances and enjoyed giving them; others lacked the crowd-pleasing gift or were unwilling to make the sacrifices necessary to succeed. Beethoven had substantial early success as a piano soloist in Vienna, but had to end his performance career in 1808 as his deafness progressed. Carl Czerny, an excellent pianist and composer of unusually challenging piano études, is

said to have done little concertizing because his playing lacked spectacular effects.²² Frédéric Chopin's public performances were infrequent and confined with few exceptions to small halls, in part because his sublime playing was quiet, projecting poorly in a large room. To Franz Liszt he explained, "I am not fit for concerts. Crowds intimidate me. I feel poisoned by their breath, paralyzed by curious glances, and confused by the sight of strange faces."²³ Johannes Brahms was an outstanding pianist, but limited his public performances in his early career, partly because, as he explained in an 1855 letter, "my aversion to playing for people has got quite out of hand. At times I am seriously frightened."²⁴ To earn a living, however, he overcame his apprehensions and commanded considerable sums as a solo performer. After he achieved financial security, he cut back his concertizing sharply because, as he explained to his father in 1862, "I could now go on giving fine concerts, but it's not what I want to do; for it would take up so much of my time that I wouldn't get to much else" [such as composing].²⁵ During the 1860s and 1870s, Richard Wagner went on concert tours to alleviate his chronic financial needs, earning 18,000 florins (£1,800) from 1875 performances, but feared the concerts would so delay his work on *The Ring* and other operas that he would die before completing it.²⁶

Entrepreneurship

Most freelance composer-musicians of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were content to offer their works to patrons, publishers, and impresarios and to perform in concerts organized by others. Some, however, accepted more or less extensive entrepreneurial functions for the performance of their compositions.

Georg Philipp Telemann directed regular concerts of Leipzig's Collegium Musicum in the early 1700s, as did Johann Sebastian Bach between 1729 and 1741. Admission was charged, but little is known about the division of proceeds among Telemann and Bach as organizers, the (mostly amateur) performers, and Zimmermann's Coffee House, where the concerts were held. From the 1720s to the time of his death in 1767 Telemann performed similar entrepreneurial functions, organizing concerts as a sideline to his duties as church and school music director in Hamburg.

As we have seen in chapter 2, London during the eighteenth century was the scene of many privately organized concert series.²⁷ Among the most famous of them was the Bach-Abel series beginning in 1765. Organization and risk-bearing for the series were undertaken by Johann Christian Bach, the son of Johann Sebastian Bach, and Carl Friedrich Abel (1735–1782). At first the concerts were highly successful. But then

the rent was trebled at their concert hall; a move to a different location failed to attract remunerative audiences; and the purchase by Bach of a large house at Hanover Square was even more unprofitable. Receipts fell from £3,959 in 1774 to £1,505 in 1775 and further in later years. As losses accumulated, Abel dropped out of the partnership, leaving Bach heavily in debt.²⁸

A conventional way of bringing one's compositions and often also one's performance skills to the public's notice in eighteenth-century Vienna and other parts of continental Europe was the subscription concert, also known as an *Académie*. Mozart pursued the method with considerable success during his early years as a resident of Vienna. As we saw in chapter 2, his first series of three self-initiated concerts in 1784 attracted 176 advance subscriptions at a package price of 6 florins. The standard procedure was for the composer to announce in advance the contemplated program, seek subscriptions, and if all went well, rent the hall (or preferably, have it provided gratis by a nobleman), hire the necessary orchestral players, and proceed. If subscriptions were inadequate, the series could be cancelled. This means of hedging proved important for a concert series announced by Mozart in 1789, by which time Austria was at war with the Ottoman Empire, many Viennese residents were absent from the city, and taxes had been raised. Only a single person—Mozart's faithful backer, Baron Gottfried van Swieten—subscribed, and the series was cancelled.²⁹

Beethoven sold subscriptions for some of his self-organized concerts in Vienna, usually offered as single events, and for others he depended mainly on box-office receipts. Julia Moore reports that use of the subscription approach declined sharply during Beethoven's early Vienna years—a phenomenon paralleled nearly simultaneously by a drop in London concert series.³⁰ The timing coincidence suggests that war worries and increased taxes due to the Napoleonic wars were important contributing factors. From a meticulous study of Beethoven's finances, Moore concludes that “even though half of his concerts were failures financially, a few profitable concerts sustained Beethoven's optimism for many years.”³¹ She infers more generally (p. 286) that “public concerts were risky ventures during this period, and the composers who dared to organize their concerts were either optimists or gamblers in spirit.”

One-off concerts were undertaken by composers without a formal subscription mechanism, although it was customary to sell tickets in advance. The experience of Hector Berlioz illustrates the range of conditions. When Berlioz traveled through central Europe during the 1840s and thereafter, his concerts were usually arranged by local impresarios or nobles, who paid all the expenses and typically offered Berlioz half of the receipts.³² In Paris, however, the principal concert venues—the Opéra and (later) the Salle du Conservatoire—were frequently denied him,

at least partly in reaction to his sharply worded articles as a music critic. He therefore had to arrange and finance most of his own Parisian concerts, including a series of several concerts annually between 1834 and 1842 at which both his own music and that of others was presented in the Salle du Conservatoire (from which he was systematically excluded after 1843).³³ Serving as impresario for the performance of his own music posed special problems because, unlike Mozart and the youthful Beethoven but like Beethoven of the *Missa solennis* and Ninth Symphony, his works typically required massive orchestral and choral forces, most of whom had to be paid. In 1844, for example, he secured a temporary building used for an industrial exhibition, recruited a thousand instrumentalists (including 36 double basses) and singers, and advertised the advance sale of tickets for a “gigantic concert” that would feature selections from his own works (including *Symphonie fantastique* and a *Hymne à la France*).³⁴ On the morning of the concert, after one partial and one full rehearsal, advance ticket sales amounting to 12,000 francs were sufficient to defray only half of the expenses already sunk. But as the day advanced, eight thousand Parisians streamed in to hear the concert,³⁵ raising total ticket sales to 32,000 francs, out of which, after all performance expenses, taxes, and police fees were paid, 800 francs remained for Berlioz as organizer and composer.³⁶ Large losses incurred when he hired the Opéra Comique for the premiere of his *Faust* in 1846 were recouped only through a profitable concert tour in Russia. This and similar experiences led Berlioz to write about a nightmare he had during the 1850s:³⁷

I dreamt that I was composing a symphony. . . . I had gone to my table to begin writing it down when I suddenly reflected: “If I write this part I shall let myself be carried on to write the rest. The natural tendency of my mind to expand the material is sure to make it very long. . . . When the symphony is finished I shall be weak enough to allow my copyist to copy it out, and thus immediately incur a debt of 1,000 or 1,200 francs. Once the parts are copied I shall be harassed by the temptation to have the work performed; I shall give a concert in which, as is sure to be the case in these days, the receipts will barely cover half the expenses; I shall lose what I have not got; I shall want the necessaries of life for my poor invalid [wife], and shall have no money either for myself or for my son's keep on board ship!” . . . I threw down my pen, saying, “Bah! I shall have forgotten the symphony tomorrow.” But the following night the obstinate symphony again presented itself . . .

Berlioz's experience was extreme, but it illustrates a more general point: that organizing and financing one's own concerts could be a nightmarishly risky business.

Opera during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, we observed

in chapter 2, was typically organized in much of Italy and in London when groups of wealthy individuals joined to build an opera house and subsidize regular performance seasons, entrusting to a private impresario responsibility for bringing together the various forces required and assuming many contractual risks.³⁸ The impresario's function was a specialized one, demanding skills more like those required in the realm of business than for musical performance. Composers contracted with the impresario to write the score, participate in rehearsals, and often to conduct, typically from the harpsichord, the first three performances. But there were occasional exceptions in which composers served also as impresarios.³⁹

The most important early case was that of George Frideric Handel.⁴⁰ After several years as a freelance composer of operas and diverse other works in London, Handel was named salaried musical director of the newly organized Royal Academy of Music in 1719, which became for a while London's principal opera company. The Academy was financed initially by subscriptions of at least £200 each from 63 wealthy individuals (by other accounts, 73), who were called upon repeatedly in subsequent years for additional levies to cover operating losses. At first Handel's responsibilities were largely creative, writing operas, recruiting talent, and overseeing the opera program. By 1729, however, the Academy's subscribers had tired of being dunned for additional funds, and their participation ended. Financial responsibility was thereupon taken over by Handel in partnership with Swiss émigré John Jacob Heidegger (1666–1749). Their productions lurched perilously between profit and loss. Crucial to the group's survival were subsidies from the royal family, which in the 1732–1733 season comprised 20 percent of total receipts.⁴¹ The situation was made even more difficult by the formation in 1733 of a second competing opera company, the Opera of the Nobility, which among other things lured away from Heidegger and Handel several of their most talented singers and imported from Italy the most renowned of all castrati, Farinelli. In 1734 Heidegger ended the partnership. Handel then continued to stage operas on his own initiative, with occasional help from Heidegger, relocating to Covent Garden and developing a new and more successful format, English-language oratorios. The oratorios rescued him from what otherwise would have been financial ruin and in the end, after numerous reverses, made him a wealthy man. In serving as entrepreneur and impresario for his own operas and oratorios, Handel among other things sold tickets from the residence he had purchased at 21 Brook Street (now a Handel museum). In 1739, Handel began selling individual entrance tickets, permitting attendance by middle-class citizens who could not afford the traditional season's subscription.

Even without the difficulties of presenting Italian-language opera to uncomprehending Londoners, Handel's contemporary Antonio Vivaldi was less fortunate in taking on impresario functions. Vivaldi claimed to have written 94 operas, many of them lost to posterity, as a sideline to his teaching and *maestro di cappella* duties at the Ospedale della Pietà orphanage.⁴² He also served occasionally as impresario at some of the lesser Venetian opera houses, producing both his own and other composers' operas. In 1736, however, he overstepped his luck, accepting a commission to produce a three-year series of operas, some written by others and revised by him and another original to him, to be performed in the papal city of Ferrara, 114 kilometers from Venice. All of them failed, in part because he was forbidden to enter Ferrara by the local cardinal on grounds of alleged immorality — that is, for not fulfilling his priestly duties by saying Mass regularly, and because he was accompanied on tours by a female opera singer-companion. Thus, he was forced to entrust local production functions to a substitute, who managed them badly. And after the obstinate cardinal's transfer from Ferrara, Vivaldi's own Ferrara opera failed artistically. He became mired in litigation over alleged contractual debts amounting to 6,000 Italian ducats (very roughly, £1,200), 60 times his annual salary at the Ospedale.⁴³ In 1738 he lost his Ospedale position and was reduced to selling freelance works to the Ospedale and wealthy patrons. In 1740 (some accounts say 1741) he travelled to Vienna, hoping to revive his fortunes by writing operas for a Viennese theater. In this too he was unsuccessful. He died there in 1741 and was given a pauper's burial.

Richard Wagner served as impresario and manager of his own opera productions after he settled in Bayreuth. He, too, incurred substantial losses. The first Bayreuth festival of 1876 recorded a net loss of 150,000 marks (£7,250). Unlike Vivaldi, however, Wagner was saved by the generous patronage of Bavaria's King Ludwig II.

Teaching

Many composers earned a living through teaching. As economic growth enriched the middle class, we have seen, individuals who wanted to perform music at home demanded instruction in the art and skills of playing instruments. Also, as noble establishments reduced or eliminated their court orchestras, opportunities shrank for learning instrumental playing by doing, increasing the need for alternative ways of training professional musicians.

Some musicians such as Franz Schubert and Bedřich Smetana turned to teaching as a last resort, because they found it difficult to earn a living through music in other ways.⁴⁴ Julia Moore concludes from

a study of Viennese estate records that during the Napoleonic wars, as noble courts were retrenching, there was a marked increase in the number of musicians who described themselves as *Klaviermeister*, which she interprets to mean that they derived most of their income through teaching.⁴⁵

For a few musicians, providing private lessons was a successful means of accumulating wealth. When he returned to London in 1784 after a long piano performance tour on the continent, Muzio Clementi took up teaching and claimed to have given lessons 16 hours per day. By the turn of the century, he had amassed a fortune of some £15,000—capital to finance his entry into music publishing and later piano manufacturing, which increased his wealth even more.⁴⁶ As one of Vienna's leading independent piano teachers, Carl Czerny gave private lessons for some 12 hours per day, leaving at his death a fortune of 100,000 silver florins (£10,000).⁴⁷ In 1818, Beethoven asked Czerny to play the solo in the premiere performance of the Fifth Piano Concerto (Emperor), but Czerny was too busy teaching to prepare adequately.⁴⁸ Twelve years later, however, when his finances were solid, Czerny reported to Felix Mendelssohn that he was spending less time teaching and more composing, since the latter yielded a better financial return.⁴⁹ Thanks to his entrée into the most fashionable Paris salons, Frédéric Chopin became the favorite piano teacher of wealthy Parisians and, until his health failed, earned sufficient income to live stylishly.⁵⁰

A good reputation among the wealthy citizens of a major city permitted piano teachers to command substantial fees for an hour's instruction. Clementi normally charged one guinea per hour. Coming to London from Austria in 1791, Joseph Haydn was astonished to find that, like Clementi, he could command a guinea (£1.05) per hour—more than a week's earnings for an English building craftsman.⁵¹ Chopin's standard fee was 20 francs per lesson, which in the 1830s was equivalent to three-fourths of a guinea. For more run-of-the-mill piano teachers in Vienna at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Moore reports, the standard fee appears to have been one florin, or one-tenth what Haydn charged in London.⁵² From his more affluent Viennese students, on the other hand, Mozart obtained one-half gold ducat per hour, or about £0.25.⁵³

Composer-teachers engaged in price discrimination, charging lower rates to less affluent students. Particularly promising but impoverished students were often given free lessons. Mozart not only charged the nine-year-old Johann Nepomuk Hummel no tuition, but also took the youth into his household (in 1787) and let him reside there without compensation for nearly two years.⁵⁴ Antonio Salieri asked fees only of his noble and rich middle-class students; others, such as W. A. Mozart's

son Franz, Beethoven, Carl Czerny, Franz Schubert, Ignaz Moscheles (1794–1870), and Franz Liszt, received free instruction.⁵⁵ Czerny also instructed Franz Liszt without pay; Liszt in turn charged his students in Weimar nothing. In Leipzig Clara Schumann had a less philanthropic approach. She would not accept Leipzig students at all because she apparently believed she would lose respect engaging in commercial transactions with her fellow citizens, but she consented to take on visitors from abroad at a fee of two thaler (£0.3) per hour.⁵⁶

Teaching students of mediocre talent was an onerous task, and composers begrudged the time teaching took from more creative work. As Mozart wrote to his father from Paris in 1778:⁵⁷

Out of good will I gladly give lessons, especially when I see that someone has talent, enjoyment, and the desire to learn. But to have to go to someone's house at a particular hour, or to wait at home for someone, that I cannot do, even if it brings in money. That's impossible for me. I leave it to other people who can't do anything but play the piano. . . . The talent that a kindly God gave me in such abundance I can use composing.

Soon after his arrival in Vienna during 1781, Mozart informed his father that he had taken on four students but wanted no more:⁵⁸

I can have as many as I like, but I'd rather not have so many—I want to be better paid than the others, and in that respect I'd rather have fewer. . . . I'd rather have three pupils who pay me well than six who pay me poorly.

After his financial fortunes worsened, however, he told a benefactor in 1790 that he had two students currently and wished to raise the number to eight.⁵⁹

Beethoven had numerous students (including Czerny) during his early Vienna years. As his health deteriorated, however, he limited his teaching mainly to his patron Archduke Rudolph, and even then, he observed in a letter, if he didn't show up for the Archduke's lesson, it was a crime against majesty, but if he did show up, all he got was a stamp to be displayed when he collected his 1,500 florin yearly pension.⁶⁰ Chopin complained about students who left for their summer holidays and failed to pay their past-due fees—a problem with which the husband of a twenty-first-century piano teacher can readily empathize.⁶¹ When his strength ebbed as a result of tuberculosis, Chopin's teaching manner with middle-class students became testy and ironic—but not for his high-society students, with whom he was always charming and considerate.⁶² Edvard Grieg is said to have looked back with bitterness on his early years in Norway, “when almost all his energy went into instructing young ladies who wished to play the piano, instead of being available for more creative work.”⁶³

In addition to giving private lessons, composers could earn their bread teaching in schools. A few composers, such as Tomaso Albinoni, Jean-Philippe Rameau, and Bedřich Smetana opened their own formally organized schools. Most, however, worked in schools organized by the church, the nobility, or local governments.

The existence of formal music schools can be traced back to church choir schools established at York, England, in A.D. 627, Salzburg in 774, and Lüneburg, Germany, in 995.⁶⁴ By the sixteenth century in England, as many as 40 choir schools could be counted, the best of which was the Chapel Royal in London.⁶⁵ Some European universities offered courses in music, and musical training was an accepted part of grammar schools' curricula on the European continent. Especially important to the development of music in the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries were schools in a few key continental cities—notably, Leipzig, Venice, and Naples. The Thomasschule of Leipzig was founded in 1212 to train boys to sing in the local churches. It was not the only such school in Germany, but stood out for its distinguished cantors during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—notably, Johann Sebastian Bach and Johann Kuhnau (1660–1722). In Venice, a significant contribution was made by four orphanages (*ospedali*), which initially housed orphaned or abandoned girls, but which later accepted girls from middle-class families drawn by the excellent education the *ospedali* provided in both music and the liberal arts. During the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries the *ospedali* had as faculty members many of the most distinguished Venetian composers, including Antonio Vivaldi, Giovanni Legrenzi (1626–1690), Nicola Porpora (1686–1768), Johann Hasse (1699–1783), Baldassare Galuppi (1706–1785) and Niccolò Jommelli (1714–1774). Their orchestras gave weekly concerts for the citizens of Venice and performed at civic and religious events. The modern term “conservatory” stems from the four *conservatori* of Naples, founded during the seventeenth century. Initially they, like the *ospedali* of Venice, were founded as orphanages and as schools for the poor.⁶⁶ During the seventeenth century they began to emphasize musical education, training composers inter alia for the Neapolitan opera and drawing from all over Italy young castrati, who were given a superb musical education to start them on careers as opera singers. Students from poor families were admitted free after rigorous screening; others paid fees. By the outset of the eighteenth century they were considered Italy's leading institutions of musical education. Political and economic instability then precipitated closures and mergers, so that by the first decade of the nineteenth century only a single conservatory, the Real Collegio di Musica, survived.

Meanwhile other conservatories were being opened. In 1795, the Conservatoire National de Musique et de Déclamation was established

in Paris, inheriting and adding to functions from the earlier École Royale de Chant. Additional conservatory foundings occurred at Bologna in 1806, Milan in 1807, Prague in 1811, Vienna in 1817, London (the Royal Academy of Music) in 1822, and many others in successive years, including Leipzig in 1843, Berlin in 1850, St. Petersburg in 1862, both Venice and Rome in 1877, and Amsterdam in 1884.⁶⁷ Music education had become a systematic public undertaking spread throughout the world, drawing important composers onto faculties and turning out new generations of musicians, some of whom would become composers.

A SYSTEMATIC ENUMERATION

Musicians also earned their living through work largely unrelated to composition or performance. We now advance, however, to investigate the choice of career paths from a more quantitative perspective. We analyze data on the sample of 646 composers born during the two centuries from 1650 through 1849.⁶⁸ How the sample was compiled is described more fully in chapter 1.

In interpreting the data that follow, it is important to recognize that there was a slight upward trend over time in the number of composers drawn into the sample, which was 141 for those born between 1650 and 1699, 148 for 1700–1749 birth dates, 168 for 1750–1799 birth dates, and 189 for the 1800–1849 cohort.

For each sampled composer, a battery of information was coded on birth and death dates and locations, years worked in diverse nations, and occupational experiences. This chapter draws mainly on the occupational information, with categories including church and noble court employment, freelance activity of various types, employment as a performer or director of a private sector orchestra, and various other categories that will be explained as we progress. Each coded activity was given a score of 3 (principal activity), 2 (secondary activity), or 1 (tertiary activity), taking into account both intensity and duration. Subjective judgments had to be made, but the process was reiterated until there was no longer reason to believe that serious systematic biases had intruded.⁶⁹ Needless to say, many composers pursued multiple means of earning a living, sometimes switching principal occupations in mid-career and often carrying several jobs simultaneously.

Composers' Occupational Experiences

We begin our analysis of how composers earned their living by examining the support they received from the nobility, ranging from counts to