

**Briefing Paper**

**Giftedness, Arts Study, and Work**

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**COUNCIL OF ARTS ACCREDITING ASSOCIATIONS**

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# Giftedness, Arts Study, and Work

## Introduction

This paper addresses issues often raised in the course of discussion and decision-making about whether to major in an arts discipline at the college level. It is intended to assist all those who take part: prospective students, their parents, private teachers, arts executives and faculties in higher education, and high school arts teachers and guidance counselors. The intent is to address fundamental concepts, and explore them in some depth. Though basic, the approach is consciously and fundamentally philosophical to provide a foundation for thoughtful, practical decision making.

Decisions about what to study are both special and ordinary—special in the sense that they are critically important to each individual, and ordinary in the sense that these decisions are made by tens of thousands of young people each year. This text proposes a posture that combines calm, reason, and sensitivity. It is based on the premise that multiple options and alternatives are and should be open to particular individuals, and that a realistic framework for thinking through individual solutions must be developed. It encourages respect for the large number of choices for using giftedness in the arts to serve individuals, society, and the arts disciplines themselves.

The text is in two parts. The first orients by providing definitions and concepts. The second clarifies by providing responses to questions often asked about relationships among giftedness, arts study, and work. Both parts consider issues that remain the subject of detailed study and debate. The goal is not to take sides, but rather to open conceptual territory useful to finding the best decisions for individuals.

## Part One: Overview

### Basic Definitions and Facts

- Imagine all of the things that human beings do. What they do at work, at rest, and at play constitutes the field of human action. The arts disciplines represent major areas on this field. Other areas are the sciences, the humanities, law, politics, religion, and all other disciplines, professions, and vocations. Human giftedness, creativity, and work are applied in the arts areas and all other areas, and thus across the field of human action as a whole.
- Most individuals have the capacity to gain basic access to all areas of human action. In a sense, elementary and secondary education provides the means for such access. Although we all are present on the same broad field of human action, almost everyone is more gifted in one or more areas and less so in others.
- It is too simple to suggest that an individual's intelligence rises where his or her gifts are, or falls where they are not. Rather, giftedness might best be considered as a peculiar intensity and insight, a recognized talent, propensity, or ability with which an individual's intelligence asserts itself in a given area of human action.
- Work is carried on across the whole field of human action. Each area of the field involves particular habits of mind, subject matter, and processes. Each area uses these in various combinations to make its particular contribution.
- While there are recognizable differences among all areas of human work—differences that make it possible for one practitioner to be called a medical doctor, another a linguist, another

an administrator, and another an artist—there are also commonalities that bind all work together. There are characteristics by which all good work can be identified—for example, is the work applicable to the job at hand, does it function as it should, does it have or promote integrity and wholeness, is it satisfying or beautiful in concept and execution, does it serve?

## Basic Ideas

- Since the field of human action is so vast, each component area so complex, and connections among the areas next to infinite, it is important to begin with the uniqueness of people themselves before we consider learning, learning before we consider the arts, the arts before we consider careers, and careers before we consider jobs.
- It is essential to remember that the particular order and priority of things individuals are drawn to and love to do is a direct reflection of who each is as a unique human being.
- People have the will and the need to accomplish things in one or more areas on the field of human action. Learning is a primary means of enabling individuals to do their best work.
- Education is a process by which what each person loves the most can be developed to its fullest capacity in the context of the wider framework of learning, career, and job.
- The arts are a primary means of learning and major areas of endeavor. They encompass many and varied careers. Within those careers are unique jobs performed at unique times by unique individuals.

## Study and Work

- Work in the various arts disciplines requires specific sets of attributes. The art forms are different among themselves, and within each art, there are multiple responsibilities and specializations that require a variety of gifts, preparations, and orientations. But among the arts as a whole, there is a common responsibility that occupies a position of great honor and service on the field of human action. This is the job of cultural formation, including the creation and presentation of works of art, teaching, scholarship, policy development, and administration.
- Most disciplines associated with the various areas on the field of human action use speech logic and resulting verbal expression as their primary, often exclusive, mode for thought, analysis, and presentation. Exceptions are mathematics, the visual arts and design, dance, and music. Although grounded in speech logic, theatre involves combining speech logic with visual, movement, and often, musical logics. In addition, mathematics and the arts all make use of speech logic and verbal expression in a variety of ways, primarily to construct explanations, analyses, theories, and contextual frameworks for the primary “languages” of these disciplines. The implications of these various logics and their application for students educated and trained in the arts are enormous. Such students not only learn the ways of speech logic and mathematical logic, but also a variety of kindred logics and expressive languages peculiar to the individual arts forms themselves.
- Simple giftedness in any area is never enough. The development of giftedness involves building knowledge, skill, and intelligence, including the ability to use speech, mathematical, and other logics. Logics associated with each art form are employed to create, understand, and perform work *in* that art form. Education in the arts disciplines involves the development of knowledge, skills, and intelligences to work fluently with these logics in various contexts.
- Since all areas on the field of human action are connected at many levels, and since the various logics of the various areas are available and useful to all, the natural course of in-depth work in

an arts discipline involves building bridges to other disciplines. A strong general education thus uses and establishes bridges to the arts, just as it both uses and establishes bridges to and from all disciplines and practices.

- The existence of these bridges connecting areas on the field of human action produces a typical pattern as learning and work progress. Individuals may demonstrate giftedness in certain areas, but not in others. They work to enhance their gift, and through this work, both develop and are drawn to discern other kinds of giftedness within themselves. Work leads them to perceive how bridges can be built to all areas of learning. They also discover that it is not necessary to be gifted in an area to travel there. This is one reason why individuals showing gifts in the arts at an early age often develop tremendous gifts in other areas as their education progresses.

### **Worth, Giftedness, Greatness, and Success**

- It is important not to confuse giftedness, greatness, and success. In any area of human action, there are few individuals who can truly be called “great.” Greatness is not the only, or often not even the most important, criterion for success. Just as for every J.P. Morgan, there are thousands of successful bankers, financiers, and brokers, for every Beethoven, Shakespeare, Rembrandt, or Martha Graham, there are thousands of successful, effective arts professionals.
- The arts are perhaps the only area on the field of human action where greatness is allowed to overshadow success to such a degree. Like all other fields, the arts require a large number of successful people working in various parts of the total enterprise. Remember, every world-famous artist took a first lesson from someone. Therefore, there is no one definition of success in the arts disciplines, or in any other field. Success is measured in terms of objectives reached, work accomplished, integrity exemplified, and service rendered. Success and fame are not always synonymous.
- Just as there is a spectrum of giftedness across areas on the field of human action, there is also a spectrum of giftedness within specific areas. Giftedness is extremely complex; thus, to be gifted, even supremely gifted, in an art form may not be enough for success, much less greatness, unless supported and enriched by personal attributes that shape and guide in certain ways. It is all but impossible to know all of these attributes in advance, especially how they will play in the changing contexts of values, culture, and other conditions within which an individual must study and work.
- It is especially important to avoid substituting one kind of giftedness for another. For this reason, the ability to make a difference in the arts or in some other area is not necessarily the same as the ability to exhibit giftedness in that area. For example, every arts enterprise requires individuals with gifts in management and finance irrespective of artistic giftedness.
- Function and worth are deeply related: all work in the arts must have worth, whether or not the art work is created for some functional use. This means that quality, dignity, integrity, and eloquence are integral to the making of all art, or for that matter, to the making of everything.
- It is critical to recognize the tremendous differences among people. There are no hard and fast rules or formulas that will produce specific results in terms of giftedness, greatness, success, and worth. Each individual confronts the field of human action as an individual, but not alone. There are vast resources of experience, wisdom, and organized activity to be tapped and considered in individual decisions. For those who are gifted, it is wise to create a set of priorities that focuses first on worth, next on success, and last on greatness. At least, this seems the best way to begin, since greatness only reveals itself after tremendous study and effort.

## Part Two: Typical Questions and Basic Answers

### My Education

- ***I am not sure which major to pursue because I feel I have multiple talents/gifts. How can I decide what to do?***

Students should choose a major that attracts them, a discipline they wish to spend time with, to pursue in-depth. The center of their studies should be that which they love the most, for what we love is usually an indicator of how we are “put together,” what our mission or sense of direction is. Making choices about fostering and using multiple gifts is not like choosing between good and evil, or light and dark. There are many good choices because relationships of gifts and connections among different kinds of work produce a tremendous array of fulfillments and satisfactions.

A gifted and intellectually thirsty student who attends a solid institution, drinks in everything from the major and work in other disciplines, synthesizes, and avoids the trap of selecting out of the education only that which may apply to a specific vocational future, will be ready for far more futures and career paths than those which bear the name of the major or any of its related sub-parts. It is not uncommon for students who have majored in one of the arts disciplines to seek and find many career paths outside the arts. This is not because arts-related jobs are necessarily scarce (some are, some aren't) but because arts majors who have worked hard to build their capabilities are, more often than not, diversely capable people. The desire to make art or to bring a sense of artistry to whatever is undertaken vocationally never really goes away. Therefore, the choice of undergraduate major, while critically important, does not fix any student's future.

- ***How do I know that I am or will be getting an education that liberates my artistry and intellect by expanding my capacities, and thus my potential?***

While fundamentals of content and process are essential for competence in any discipline, subjects must be taught liberally, in a liberating fashion. Teaching subjects only as methods or techniques for access to immediate career paths or as mere sets of facts narrows capacity and capability rather than expands it.

A good education balances mastery of fundamentals with teaching and learning that demonstrates how each body of knowledge and skills is not just an end in itself, but rather part of a vast network of interrelated thoughts and actions. These responsibilities are borne by the curriculum, by teachers, *and* by students. In the final analysis, whatever an institution offers, it is the gifted, curious, and hard-working student, with a mind bent on synthesizing and making connections, who will be the most flexibly and comprehensively prepared.

- ***Well, if this is true, why should I major in anything at all? Why should I not enjoy a completely general education?***

Because focus is both natural and reasonable. It is consistent with the presence of specific inclinations and gifts within individuals, and with the way work is organized in the world. Generalities and specialties develop out of and along with each other. Pursuit of general knowledge leads to specialties, but understanding specialties requires general knowledge, both within and across disciplines. Relationships of breadth and depth are central to the world of work and the life of the mind. Each is important in the development of a productive human being. Further, both specialties and generalities are dynamic, not static. Each builds and inspires the other. Vibrant, creative specialists normally seek ever expanding connections to generalities as means of expanding the scope of their efforts and pressing their work outward into new territory.



Since no two of us are alike, that is, since each human being is special within the genre, it follows that to want to particularize is a reflection of our inborn particularity. To major in something is to follow through on the way we are as individuals. To generalize and synthesize is to follow through on the ways we are as a civilization, as a community.

- ***Why should I pursue an academically based or comprehensive education program in an arts discipline when the whole world is seemingly focused on popular culture?***
  1. Popular culture, as complex and far-reaching as it can be, is not all there is. Simple numbers tell us this. Unless one defines popular culture as everything at any given time, there are always arts styles and genres that are more popular than others. However, the fact that a particular area is not the *most* popular does not mean that there is no room for success or reward in that area. Individuals should follow their gifts and inclinations. Even a small part of the total market can be large. One percent of the U.S. population is over 2.5 million.
  2. The languages, grammars, structures, and logics of each arts disciplines have been developed over the centuries. These underlie all the works in these disciplines whether currently popular or not. A comprehensive historical perspective teaches lessons about art and its disciplines, quality, immediate or lasting popularity, and the relationships among them.
  3. The lines between cultural categories are often blurred. In one sense, the pursuit of quality, which is central to art and which lies in the heart of education, has less to do with what kind of culture is “done” than the integrity and creativity with which work is produced. When education is about comprehensiveness—popular and classical, old and new, academic and vernacular—issues regarding excellence, synthesis, integrity, goodness, and quality of life begin to sort themselves out logically in individual sets of values and priorities.
  4. More and more people creating popular culture are comprehensively trained. Later, they simply focus on a particular kind of artistic work.
  5. Most educational institutions attend to work in many cultural categories, including work with various levels of current popularity. At best they do this without compromising the integrity of any genre or type of art.
  6. A number of institutions have developed remarkably successful programs in the arts that deal specifically with preparation for work in popular culture as presently defined. These same institutions, almost without exception, also provide course work and offer degree programs that focus on the continuation and extension of great historic traditions in culture.
  7. Education and training in the arts that focus comprehensively on method, technique, intellectual engagement, and historical/cultural perspective provide by far the best personal equipment for engaging multiple cultural objectives, either intellectually or in the workplace.
- ***What if I do not want to major in the arts, but continue my studies in an arts discipline at the college level?***

Most institutions offering arts majors welcome the participation of non-major students in various arts courses, performing groups, and activities. Many institutions offer minors in the arts; others offer opportunities for double majors in the context of liberal arts programs. There is no reason to give up serious study in an art form you love because you have decided to concentrate more in another area. In many institutions, it is possible to continue private study in the art forms, work in supportive roles for performing groups and exhibition spaces, and otherwise contribute to the artistic and cultural life of the campus community.

## The Arts As a Field

- ***How do the arts disciplines work in terms of a livelihood? What concepts and structures of advancement and occupational variety are present in the arts?***

Within each arts discipline, there are many careers and even a larger number of jobs. Each enterprise in the arts requires a variety of specializations. Some specializations occupy the careers of thousands of people. Other specializations may involve only one or two people in the entire nation. The patterns of livelihood vary somewhat by specialization. These variances are not significantly different from those found in other professions. For example, compensation and working conditions for college teachers of the arts are not that different from those of other college teachers; freelance artists have similar patterns of livelihood to freelance workers in many other fields.

Advancement implies staying in one career area and working toward greater recognition, higher quality work, heightened esteem, and quite possibly, increased income. It also includes the possibility of widening the scope of one's work, gathering related skills and insights, and moving to larger, more comprehensive responsibilities. As is the case in all other professions, possibilities for advancement are vast and, depending upon an individual's giftedness, initiative, and capabilities, he or she may start at entry level and rise to the heights of the profession through knowledge, skills, initiative, hard work, creative flexibility, and the ability to make wise decisions based on comprehensive understanding.

There is tremendous occupational variety within the arts. For example, in the field of music, an undergraduate degree in performance might easily lead to graduate work in musicology and doctoral studies in ethnomusicology. An individual so prepared would face a large number of possible career paths—ethnic or folk music performance, college teacher, critic, museum official, etc. Each would integrate acquired knowledge and skills in different ways. Another individual might major in dance and, through graduate studies in kinesthesiology, coupled with further work in medical studies, wind up in arts-related medical practice and therapeutic work. A major in studio art/design might continue with business studies and enter a career in design management, developing products and communications for a major corporation. Another individual might acquire an undergraduate degree in theatre with an emphasis in acting, turn to legal studies, and then become a trial lawyer or an attorney specializing, perhaps, in entertainment or copyright issues. The possibilities are endless.

- ***How many people practice the profession or work in a specific discipline of their undergraduate college major? What can I “do” with the discipline or major that I choose?***

Given the broad range of disciplines represented in college majors, it is normal for an individual to work professionally in a field outside the major. For example, everyone who majors in a foreign language does not become a translator or college professor. Individuals with undergraduate majors in foreign languages are found across the spectrum of professions. The same is true for almost all majors, including arts majors.

Perhaps the best question to ask oneself is where a particular undergraduate major can lead. Does my major enable, facilitate, or obviate the possibility of my gaining knowledge and skills that will enable me to undertake further study or work in a particular area? It is extremely important to make careful determination between what enables, what facilitates, and what obviates or makes impossible.

- ***What is competition really like in the field? How competitive is the institution that I will be attending?***

Above all, don't think of competition as something present only among arts professionals. Our culture is extremely competitive—often dangerously so—from top to bottom, from career to career, and from job to job.

More useful education and career planning questions are: What is my view of competition, how competitive am I, and what kinds of competition are natural and attractive to me? Am I more inspired by competition with myself or by competition with others? Your answers to these kinds of questions will have more to do with your performance than the more abstract question of competitiveness in the field. Fields aren't competitive, people are. Fields may contain excellence and quality, but only people can pursue excellence and bring quality to the field.

It is the moral and ethical nature of people that brings a certain definition and contour to competition. Unfortunately, the arts contain kinds of competition that can be unhealthy and even destructive. This condition does not lie inherently in each art form itself, but rather in the people who make, study, and teach the art and control its institutions. However, the same is true among electricians, plumbers, lawyers, politicians, parents, physicists, chefs, clergy, and countless others.

Educational institutions, like fields, are not inherently competitive. Institutions contain people, values, and traditions which together influence values about competition. It is important, sometimes critical, that your own values regarding competition match those present in the institution.

Here is one last perspective: if excelling is not perfection, but the process of becoming better than you were yesterday, then competition can be viewed as the process of becoming better than you were yesterday in the presence of others. This is a different view of competition than winning at all costs, or winning over others.

- ***What is the importance of credentials? What kinds of credentials make a difference in opening doors to careers and career-related opportunities?***

Remember, a college degree is its own credential. There is no denying that people with college degrees have remarkably increased career options and opportunities.

If you are considering teaching at the college or graduate school level, you should be prepared to earn the highest degree appropriate to the particular arts discipline. In many cases, this means the doctorate or the Master of Fine Arts degree.

Certain arts-related vocations such as music, art, dance, or drama therapy, as well as public and parochial school education, mandate credentials that are most easily obtained by earning the appropriate college degree. As important as a college education is, it is essential to remember that in many aspects of the arts professions—auditioning for a stage role or a position in an orchestra, seeking representation by a gallery, etc.—it is how you perform, not where, how much, or with whom you were educated and trained that finally counts. This is true even though the quality of your education and the quality and intensity of your stewardship in the discipline will always combine in a unique way.

Credentials, where applicable, either provide or enable entry into the profession. After that, it is what you are and become capable of and what you achieve that, in the final analysis, constitutes your chief credential.

- ***I don't want to teach, and I know that I do not have the potential for a major career as a studio or performing artist, yet I have this love. What is left for me to do?***

Plenty. Here is one way to think about it. We think of performance as doing something, and teaching as showing somebody how to do something. Yet, these two things are all there is: the only two things a human being can do in any field is to do something or to show how it is done. Thus, a carpenter either builds a house or shows someone how to build it; a heart surgeon either performs a heart transplant or shows someone how to perform it. By the same token, a dancer either performs a *pas de bourrée* or shows how it is done, a music therapist either performs therapy or teaches it, and so on. In this sense, there is no human being who does not, in some way, do both even though he or she may prefer doing something over showing someone how.

“Performance” is a comprehensive word that goes far beyond the usual arts-based definition of creation and presentation in the visual and performing arts, and “teaching” is a comprehensive word that goes beyond the profession-based definitions associated with schools and scholarship.

Majoring in something will of necessity mean that you will do it or teach it, or both. But in the case of the arts, doing them or showing somebody how to do them is a vast world of action, taking in much more than being a concert master, a diva, a lead actor or dancer, a major exhibitor, or a person professionally identified as a teacher.

## **Possibilities and Capabilities**

- ***What are my chances for the “big time”?***

Small. As is true in all fields, “big time” is less important than “all the time.” The most critical thing is a steady flow of work and service in a good workplace. The “big time” comes—sometimes at once, more often gradually—to that very small percentage of people who benefit from a combination of remarkable proficiencies, good fortune, the right connections, and fortuitous timing. As is true with other fields, the arts world—the greater percentage of it—is filled with highly gifted, imaginative, productive people who have come to learn that fame, as desirable as it might be, has little to do with the nature of art, and that artistic goodness, creative integrity, service to others, and fulfillment can take place at any level.

- ***Am I gifted enough (is my child gifted enough)? How do I know?***

Remember from before that there is more to the arts than the “big time,” that there is a need for personal integrity, artistic goodness, and success in a broad range of professions as well as for greatness. Remember that giftedness indicates something higher than average, and that the level of engagement reveals the extent of giftedness. Institutions of higher learning that care deeply about quality and comprehensiveness and are dedicated to the present and future well-being of each student have developed standards and expectations whereby students will come to understand relationships between the extent of their giftedness and the demands of the work that draws on that giftedness.

- ***How do I best assess how creative I am and in what areas or disciplines my creativity will flower most productively?***

Creativity, like giftedness, is a matter of degree: everyone is to some extent gifted and creative. But spending too much time on self-analysis will probably get you into a muddle. If

you are creative, you will find out in many ways from many people and in many contexts. Essentially, you will find it as you work to become educated.

Creativity is never a secret; hence, truly creative people are not very good at keeping their creativity to themselves. Listen to your teachers, your parents, your religious leaders, and other mentors, and consider how they view you, your initiative, and your work.

What kind of work do you do best in a particular area? In the area or discipline for which you have a gift, what kind of work would you choose to do if you could do exactly as you wanted without worrying about money? If asking *what* is more important than asking *why*; if persons, places, and things continually take precedence over thinking things up and turning your imagination into actuality, you may have some indication about your natural creativity. In your field of interest, how easy is it for you to make new things or in the case of performance, to make old things new? How much do you enjoy making something from nothing? Are you more excited about mastering existing technologies and techniques, or about using them to build from scratch?

- ***How do I find out how entrepreneurial I am, and how can I use this information wisely in making plans for life, my education, and my career?***

Given that entrepreneurialism today usually means creation of wealth, the word “entrepreneurial” may be misleading. The creation of financial resources is essential, but creation of other kinds of wealth is also essential if a society is to thrive, reach its potential, and serve its people. Instead of asking about your potential as an entrepreneur, ask yourself about your energies and initiatives, especially as they work into how you interact with people, how you seek out opportunities, especially those which are not all that apparent or that do not quickly jump out at you.

Most truly successful people create work out of something instead of waiting for it to appear. This approach is central to work in the arts disciplines. There is such a thing as an interiorized creativity—a private way of doing things which, for one reason or another, may never show itself or connect outwardly with opportunity and availability.

In addition, you might ask yourself the extent to which you view everything you study and do as having potential for future use and service.

- ***How do fame and giftedness relate to each other and to the arts?***

Most famous artists are gifted in some way (sometimes more with entrepreneurial than aesthetic skills), but not all gifted artists are famous.

It is important to realize that many arts professions contain no equivalent to the corporate ladder. Fulfillment depends more on personal growth within the discipline. Working in set circumstances benefits from qualities such as personal integrity, seeking to perform better each day, and an attitude of service both to people and to the art form itself.

- ***How do excellence and giftedness relate to each other in the arts?***

Excellence and giftedness are closely related. But giftedness alone does not produce excellence. Excellence is a lifelong quest, a constant effort, a source of both satisfaction and disappointment. Excellence comes through nurturing giftedness with dedicated effort.

## From Learning to Work

- ***How can I/we be assured of a return on our educational investment? Are the arts disciplines involved with marketable skills?***

A good education is based on the premise that all learnable things are connected and thus can be related to each other. Therefore, a good education presents a course of study in which a particular set of learnable things can be crafted into a set of knowledge and skills that is flexibly useful. This usefulness is created and enhanced by the ability to make connections among learnable things.

A good education is one that assumes the importance of wisdom over knowledge, and knowledge over information. While encouraging steady inquiry into a specific discipline or area, a good education further assumes the importance of synthesis over separation and of career preparation over job training. In the midst of inquiry into how things are made, how they work, how they can be taken apart and reconstructed, how they can be intelligently explained, how they interact, and how they can be created, a good education provides opportunities for innovative thought, clear expression, and avenues to further study and inquiry.

It is easily demonstrated that students who have been provided this kind of education and respond to it affirmatively are eminently equipped to face a variety of vocational futures, irrespective of the major they have chosen. Because arts majors are familiar with the highly intellectual modes of thought required to create and recreate the arts, and because they are fluent in at least one logic beyond speech logic and math logic, their minds are regularly engaged and developed in multiple dimensions. For this and other reasons, arts students seem particularly adept at working independently, and making numerous micro- and macro-decisions as they create and perform. They are able to bring multiple perspectives to conditions and problems. They are known to be good self-starters and, in ways uncommon to many other disciplines, are trained to deal regularly with ambiguity and open-endedness. They can find more than one successful solution. Taken together, these multiple ways of training multiple intelligences within the same gifted individual create enormous potential for career flexibility, entrepreneurial creativity, and connections within and outside of the arts.

- ***Now that I understand how many possibilities there are, and what might possibly lie ahead, how do I find direction as to staying in the arts or pursuing other disciplines? How do I best find out what the particular options and opportunities are for me?***

The simple answer is to gather information, seek counsel from others, and think diligently and deeply about your findings and impressions. Remember that every decision, no matter how well thought out, involves some risk. No one can know the future, or predict where a specific decision will lead. On the other hand, some decisions are clearly wrong, and some that are wrong can be avoided by honest analysis of accurate information, good ideas, and wisdom.

In essence, your own growing sense of who you are, what you love most, and how you might use it to work and serve in the world can be coupled to the example and advice of others. How, for instance, did the dean of the school you might want to attend move from a performance or studio discipline to becoming a successful academic manager, or how did Václav Havel move from play writing to politics? An equally important question is, what knowledge and skills did these individuals obtain to make possible such movement across types of work?

Think also about what history tells you concerning the enormous potential of human creativity. Think about how much you are willing to risk one thing because another thing calls. Consider

what you value most and the costs you are willing to bear in order to remain steadfast with that which you value.

When seeking advice from others, be wary of those who tell you immediately what they think you should be doing, or the specific job or career for which you are suited. By the time you are ready to work, and certainly by the time you reach your most productive years, the world of work will have evolved and new types of jobs will have been created. Also be wary of those who have such narrow views of an art form and work within it that they cannot conceive of any possibility outside their own vision. Remember that there is such a thing as vocational addiction, the exact opposite of vocational love.

Ask yourself what you expect the source of your satisfaction to be. What are your priorities beyond your career? How do the usual natures of success in the field you love correspond with all your priorities?

If you choose the arts disciplines as a career, be prepared to live modestly, being able to find more satisfaction in the quality of your work than in economic reward, or even in social position. Be prepared to create and enjoy a different kind of wealth than can be expressed in financial terms, the kind of cultural and spiritual wealth that is essential to the functioning and well-being of the world.

Fundamentally, the answers to these two questions must be found by you, through your own means, for your own purposes. Fortunately, these questions do not have to be answered once and for all during the period between high school and college. They can and should be asked and answered constantly throughout higher education and career. It is particularly prudent to begin posing and answering such questions now, because, as is the case with the arts themselves, practice improves results. Those who are practiced at asking and answering these questions are in the best position to make the best adjustments as their life unfolds.

### **Further Information**

- ◆ Talk with artists and teachers in your community about their arts profession and its efforts nationally. Are they members of professional organizations in their field? Do these organizations have career brochures or other information? When considering various careers and jobs, think about what you want to do day after day more than what you want to be.
- ◆ Seek information from a number of institutions that teach your arts discipline. The best way to begin is through the institution's admissions office. Faculty and administrators of arts programs in higher education are more than willing to share information, experiences, and advice about education and work in the field.
- ◆ For information concerning the basic content of degree programs in the arts on a nationwide basis, you may wish to review the accreditation standards of the National Association of Schools of Art and Design, the National Association of Schools of Dance, the National Association of Schools of Music, or the National Association of Schools of Theatre. These standards are contained in the Handbook of each Association, and may be obtained for a fee by writing or calling, or by visiting our joint Website. Our address, telephone and facsimile numbers, and Website address may be found on page i of this document.
- ◆ For information from successful arts professionals, seek consultation with individuals in your immediate area. Seek advice from your own teachers. Seek experiences that place you in different settings so that you can compare your abilities and aspirations to different groups of

young people. Talk with arts professionals about jobs they do, what their working life is like, how their work fulfills them.

- ◆ Use personal contacts, your library, and the Internet to seek more information. Remember to make distinctions between public relations and serious analysis. It is highly unlikely that you will repeat any individual's career path, no matter how successful or famous you or they may be. For example, remember that because one or more graduates of a particular school have achieved in certain ways is no guarantee that by attending that school your accomplishments will be the same. Look for what the broad range of graduates have accomplished, not just those that gain the most public attention.
- ◆ Listen critically and respectfully to all that you are told, but never be afraid to seek additional advice or another opinion.

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