HIGH SCHOOL CONTEMPORARY A CAPPELLA:

A DESCRIPTIVE PHENOMENOLOGY

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Dissertation Prepared for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

December 2015

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Burlin Sr., Thomas B. *High School Contemporary A Cappella: A Descriptive Phenomenology*. Doctor of Philosophy (Music Education), December 2015, 219 pp., references, 223 titles.

This study examines the phenomenon of contemporary a cappella music making found in high school settings as curricular and extra-curricular offerings. Past music and music education literature has focused exclusively on contemporary a cappella at the collegiate level. Through application of a descriptive phenomenological method and incorporation an educational-sociological lens, this study advances an understanding of the educational benefit and social value of membership in contemporary a cappella at the high school level. Six recent members from three regions of the United States provided data through individual open-form interviews in which questions were derived from the participants' own speech. I incorporated phenomenological reductions and processes to negate researcher bias during data collection, analysis, and the formation of a general structure and constituent meanings of membership in high school contemporary a cappella. Participants utilized traditional music skills, individual talents, conceptions of popular culture and music, and in-group socialization to facilitate music making and reify membership. Expressing the value of group membership, individuals acted to benefit the group by cultivating social bonds, developing and fostering personal/shared connections to songs, identifying and purposing individual talents and skills, and gaining an understanding of each members' unique contribution to membership. Discussion includes implications for music education and suggestions for future research.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my committee members, I am sincerely grateful for the enormous effort you put into ensuring my success throughout this process. Your advice and expertise were invaluable sources of encouragement over the past 4 years. Dr. Donna Emmanuel, you were the first to see value in my writing ten years ago. You taught me to refine and purpose my philosophy and that tradition is not a master. Dr. Don Taylor, you are my paragon for conscientious teaching, scholarship, and servant leadership. Your work makes the world a better place and makes your students better persons. Dr. Sean Powell, this undertaking might have been too ambitious if not for your invaluable contribution. Thank you for hearing my cry and lowering a rope.

To my dear friends Christina Svec, Ben Price, and Brian Peebles; thank you for your contributions to this study and my well-being. My hope is that we are always each others' sounding boards. Thank you Dr. Nate Kruse for starting me on this project, nurturing my sociological perspective, and encouraging me to go out into the world and see what I find. Thank you to Deke Sharon, Amy Malkoff, Dr. Joshua Duchan, Ben Bram, Robert Dietz, Jonathan Minkoff, Courtney Jensen, and the many high school directors and students I cannot name, for letting me into your worlds.

Thank you to my parents Jack and Monica Burlin and Barbara Hornbuckle for doing so much for Tommy, Lily, and Grace while I researched and wrote. I could never have done this without you.

I dedicate this work to my wife Cindy Burlin and the God who, in His mercy, brought me to her.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The tradition of contemporary a cappella (CAC) has recently become a visible movement within American high schools. Although no research has been performed to understand this growth, the existence and expansion of high school CAC is observable by way of organizations, camps, competitions, and materials designed to capture the business of existent and potential high school CAC programs. The increased popularity of CAC within American culture; as evidenced by major motion pictures, television shows and Internet offerings; is likely to result in increased interest in participation in such ensembles, and possibly, traditional choral ensembles as well. High school choir directors and researchers may wish to better understand the phenomenon of CAC to determine its appropriateness within formal education.

Collegiate CAC programs are typically non-academic, student-organized and led clubs (Mayhew, 2009). With recent increased visibility within popular culture, a small number of studies have been performed to uncover the organizational structures and cultural norms of (Duchan, 2007; Paparo, 2013). Music education researchers have suggested possible educational benefits of participation (Mayhew, 2009; Paparo, 2013), yet no research has been published in this vein. Research is needed that will allow educators to evaluate the efficacy of CAC music and ensembles for educational value and compatibility within or alongside traditional choral programs. The lack of scholarly research into CAC may leave the education community with little objective information to evaluate the utility of CAC ensembles within choral programs, practices of established programs, and supportive evidence useful for advocacy.

Because there is a lack of scholarly research into this growing phenomenon, studies that aim to shed light on CAC at the high school level may fill a gap in music education literature.

This study was performed to gain an understanding of the experience of membership in CAC choirs modeled as curricular and extracurricular programs at public high schools across the United States of America. In this dissertation, I examined the phenomenon of high school CAC through the rigorous application of descriptive phenomenology to uncover the structural features of high school CAC and provide music educators and researchers with an understanding of the phenomenon and its relevance for formal music education. This first chapter provides background for the study and a rational and theoretical framework that guided the development of research questions.

CAC Defined

CAC is a genre of music performance that typically combines unaccompanied singing and popular music. From novice Internet searches to the jargon of practitioners, an assortment of terms and spellings exist in reference to the musical style of CAC. Although the term contemporary is problematic, it is preferred over popular or pop in this dissertation because it is the standard terminology used within music research (e.g., Duchan, 2007), within associations of practitioners (viz., The Contemporary A Cappella Society), and by retailers such as J. W. Pepper and Hal Leonard.

Although it is something of a misnomer, the Italian term *a cappella* (in the style of the chapel or church) is pervasive and has become synonymous with unaccompanied vocal music. The argument could be made that the term *a cappella*, or *ACA,* without the addition of any prefix, is the preferred term among its practitioners; however, such conflation in the context of music education research could be seen as misappropriation to educators with more traditional sensibilities.

The term *popular music* can be understood in context to mean music styles that would play on a non-classical new-music radio station from the 1940s to present day. Although the term popular music was in use before the 1940s, it was often used in a way that reinforced a high/low dichotomy of musical taste as examined by sociologists of the time (Gans, 1974). Prior to the widespread use of wireless broadcasting, "the music that was heard may have been considered popular, but the overall size of the audience was proportionately and considerably smaller" (Ross, 2001). Household access to radio technology gave many Americans the opportunity to sample and choose from many musical offerings. The radio was a part of everyday life for most Americans during the 1940s with music making up 80% of radio content (Nohavec & Morgan, 1947). The confluence of ample access to and ample choice in music empowered consumers, and to a degree, democratized new music creation (Balk, 2006; Nohavec & Morgan, 1947).

Based on the examination of literature, organizations and businesses; I offer the following working definition to aid the reader in understanding the premises and goals of the research within this dissertation: CAC is a style of performance in which groups of any size recreate songs, often of a popular music style from the 1940s to present, without the use of traditional musical instruments other than the voice or body.

Historical Context

CAC singing is a mainstay of the Ivy League college experience; a movement that started as an all male exclusive experience changed in the 1970s when many elite colleges began to open their doors to female students (Duchan, 2007). New CAC groups continued to spring up on college campuses across the country, where CAC was often advertised through large "publicity campaigns, using email messages, word-of-mouth, posters, table-tents in dining halls, chalk

drawings on student walkways, website announcements, and pieces in local print media such as the student newspaper" (p. 199). As the genre expanded, some professional ACA groups found mainstream popularity and won multiple Grammy awards such as Manhattan Transfer (8 awards 1982-1991) and Take 6 (8 awards 1988-2002) (Duchan, 2007).

CAC music reached the American audience in the 1980s and 1990s through popular performers such as Billy Joel, Bobby McFerrin, and Boys II Men (Duchan, 2007). In the 1990s, the PBS show *Where in the World Is Carmen Sandiego?* featured a CAC group, Rockappella, and brought the genre to a younger generation (Duchan, 2012). With the influence of Deke Sharon, a former member of Tufts University's Beelzebubs, the Internet became a resource for those who wished to start college programs. Sharon expanded the genre through the creation of the Contemporary A Cappella Society in 1991, the *Best of Collegiate A Cappella* compilation albums (*BOCA*) in 1995, and the National Championship of Collegiate A Cappella, now called the International Championship of Collegiate A Cappella or *ICCA*, in 1996 (Duchan, 2007).

Interest in CAC grew in parallel to social media sites such as Facebook and video hosting sites such as YouTube. Collegiate groups like Strait No Chaser, originally from Indiana University, found an audience on the Internet and parlayed their fame into successful careers. The abundance of a cappella versions of popular songs on YouTube was the impetus for recording artist Ben Folds to commission a greatest hits album using collegiate CAC groups found on the site (Duchan, 2012).

CAC became a regular occurrence on primetime television in 2009 on NBC and FOX networks. The popular FOX show *Glee*, featuring the fictional group The Warblers voiced by Tufts University's Beelzebubs, exposed CAC style to a wide audience. The Warbler version of Katy Perry's "Teenage Dream" debuted at number 1 on iTunes (Apple, n.d.) and number 8 on

the Billboard Hot 100 list, surpassing the original recording, at number 13 in its 17th week on the chart (Prometheus Global Media, n.d.) NBC's show *The Sing-Off* was a primetime competition that features CAC groups exclusively. Like other competition shows, judges critiqued each performance and the at-home audience voted to help groups advance to the next round. The show brought the genre to a wide audience and allowed for many of the general American audience to learn about CAC (Rees, 2010).

CAC continued to reach the American public through Internet offerings, television shows, and the *Pitch Perfect* movie franchise. These movies, about the culture of collegiate CAC, brought CAC singing into the mainstream of popular culture (Prometheus Global Media LLC, n.d.). In 2015, a second *Pitch Perfect* movie opened as the top-grossing movie across the world and became the highest-grossing musical comedy of all time (IMDb, n.d.).

CAC has gained and maintained attention in popular culture for many years. No other popular form of music can so clearly relate to the experience of high school choral ensemble membership. Examination of CAC popularity reveals that, in each case, high school aged students were the driving force behind CAC popularity (IMDb, n.d.; Prometheus Global Media LLC, n.d.). From *Glee* to *Pitch Perfect*, the individuals that were most interested in CAC, as shown through spending, were students. As written (in part) in response to *Glee* and *Pitch Perfect 2* honors at the 2015 *Teen Choice Awards*, "The teens have spoken – and they love fast cars, a cappella, and vampires" (Woo, 2015). Considering the genre's influence within popular culture, specifically with high school aged students, the music education community may wish to understand more about CAC and its possible implications for music education.

Personal Rationale

I have found that my research interests tend to originate from personal experiences. In recent years, I spent a considerable amount of time watching CAC groups on the video-sharing website YouTube. As I continued to search for CAC music making, I found I often preferred a cappella arrangements to the original versions of songs. I assume that my background as a chorister fueled my initial interest, but as a subject of study, my interest in CAC is related to my experiences as a musician and teacher.

High school CAC is relatively new phenomenon, yet contemporary songs have often been included in the repertory of many choirs. When I was a young singer, I always enjoyed the opportunity to sing contemporary songs in a choral setting but found that choral performance lacked the feel of the original. There was an incongruence to attempting the stylistic features of popular songs in adaptation for choir and a constraint to rehearsing and performing these songs in the same manner as the other pieces of our repertoire. It felt awkward performing from risers under a conductor. I felt unsuited in my tuxedo. The music we made felt more like a straitjacket, despite the gratuitous musical direction to perform the song freely.

When I think back to my time in secondary school, I find it hard to remember many moments from those performances. Yet, my fondest memories from that time are informal opportunities to make music, like when some friends and I taught ourselves the parts to Billy Joel's "For the Longest Time" (Joel, 1984), or when some upperclassmen took me aside and taught me one of the parts to the "hear some funky Dixieland," a cappella section of The Doobie Brothers' "Black Water" (Simmons, 1974). Although I would not have described it as such at the time, I formed a CAC group with some of my friends my junior year of high school.

My high school had a Valentine's Day tradition/choir fundraiser where students could send each other singing telegrams. Some friends and I decided we would offer to sing some CAC songs such as "For the Longest Time" as well as some barbershop songs. Our surprise appearances in classrooms were well received and led to a string of low-paying performances at bridal showers, baby showers, and other parties our mothers gave. We performed because we liked spending time with each other. We liked singing, and singing to an audience that was only a few feet away. We liked singing the songs we loved and singing the requested songs that held deep and personal meanings to our audiences.

I have often felt hypocritical as a chorister, music major, and as a music educator because the bulk of my studies have prepared me to teach styles of music that I do not always prefer to listen to in my leisure time. When I became a music teacher, I wondered if there was something selfish in perpetuating my conception of choral music education and whether my teaching could become more relevant to the lives of my students. As a school choir director, I tried to incorporate arrangements of popular songs in my curriculum; I attempted to find examples that sounded similar the original, using similar sounding accompaniment, correct rhythms and the like. I once tried an arrangement of Ray Charles' "Georgia on my Mind" with my junior high students; the movie *Ray* had just been released and I had heard many of the students singing the song (Carmichael & Gorrell, 1930). I heard students mention that they wanted to sing something they knew, and this piece seemed to be a suitable compromise. When I introduced the piece, students were excited, but the excitement soon waned.

My students were clearly frustrated with attempts to rehearse our version. The arrangement included a great deal of detail, making use of ubiquitous slurs, glissandos, tenuti, and sixteenth-note ties to parrot Ray Charles' off-the-beat singing style, yet, there seemed to be

something insincere about trying to capture the spontaneous way in which Ray Charles would perform the song for homophonic voice parts. I found it interesting that something that sounded so natural on a recording looked so complex on paper.

Listening to recordings might have helped students capture the style but could not help the students "lock in" precise rhythms because Charles performed the song differently in each recording, and none of the performances we could find closely matched our arrangement. What I thought would be a light diversion turned out to be a most challenging arrangement, requiring painstaking, line-by-line review. I remember thinking that there was something ironic about having to spend the most time rehearsing the only song we were singing that the students already knew.

It seemed to me that students wanted to sing songs they knew and would often complain, "Why can't we sing some of *our* music?" Although I would often give individual students the opportunity to sing popular songs at talent shows and other school functions, I could not possibly give each child that opportunity, nor could I spend a great deal rehearsal time on such endeavors. Yet, adapting songs that were meant for solo voice and back-up band into choral arrangements seemed difficult or even wrong. These difficulties I encountered gave me the opportunity to reflect on my goals for my choirs and my personal teaching philosophy.

I was committed to giving students a wide breadth of experience, but I was not sure if those experiences should extend to here today, gone tomorrow fads of popular culture, especially when such songs were readily accessible to students outside of the classroom. Additionally, I questioned whether it was possible to adapt popular music for choir without doing a disservice to the original song. I asked myself whether I would be encouraging my students to listen to inappropriate material, what musical skills and knowledge could be gained and how the

incorporation of popular music might affect my students' willingness to study typical choral music among other questions regarding artistic integrity and educational benefit. In the end, I found that whatever the obstacles might be, it was important to include performance of culturally relevant material in a portion of all of my classes, yet I never fleshed out a path to the inclusion of popular songs that fully satisfied my concerns. When I discovered CAC, I had a moment of acknowledgment that the style might present the answer that I had been looking for.

Background for the Study

In preparation for this dissertation, I contacted high school directors from many regions of the United States of America who offered CAC as a curricular or after-school program. These contacts led me to CAC festivals across the country where I gave presentations, worked with high school and collegiate groups, and appeared on expert panels. In conversation with high school directors, I observed that the majority of high school CAC programs were formed after 2009, with some directors citing the influence of aforementioned popular television shows. Among these high school CAC programs, few were found to have exclusively performed CAC music before the mid-2000s.

In each example, I found CAC to be an addition to curricular offerings and not a replacement of traditional choirs. Some high school CAC groups were seasonal; groups would form for a particular time of the year only to disband and reform at the same time the next year. In some cases, a traditional choir would expressly transition into a CAC group for part of the school year to compete in CAC events. Ensembles that exclusively performed CAC were often integrated as after-school programs, offered in addition to regular music classes.

The inclusion of CAC, as either a separate elective, after school program, or embedded within a typical curriculum, could allow for a more inclusive atmosphere and greater choice for students. In 2011, the President of the National Association for Music Education addressed the need for greater choice in school music programs:

> While there is certainly value in offering high-end music classes to challenge exceptionally talented and motivated students, programs that fail to offer alternatives that appeal to other students abandon any pretense to inclusiveness and turn music into a competitive sport. (Shuler, p. 8)

In a national demographic study of high school seniors, researchers found that nearly 80% of students chose not to participate in school music ensembles (Elpus & Abril, 2011). John Kratus contended that the difference between "the nature of music in the world and the nature of music in school" has brought music education to a point where it is no longer culturally relevant (2007, p. 45). Scholars have noted that popular music and the way that it is created is in contrast with traditional school music ensembles and the authoritarian nature of the music director (Allsup, 2003; Finnegan, 1989; Green, 2002; Kratus, 2007). Classroom conditions may leave students with few opportunities to improvise, create, and collaborate in small groups, as well as few "opportunities to create new music that is culturally meaningful and self-reflective" (Allsup, 2003, pp. 24-25). CAC may offer an alternative for students who do not wish to join a traditional school ensemble. CAC may be particularly attractive because it gives students the opportunity to engage with styles of popular music within a classroom context and because of the popularity of CAC in American culture.

There is little information on what CAC looks like at the high school level, because it has not received much scholarly attention. Although research has been conducted to explore collegiate CAC (Duchan, 2007; Mayhew, 2009; Paparo, 2013), it is unknown if high school CAC resembles the collegiate model. CAC has received little attention in music education

publications; nevertheless, there is ample anecdotal evidence that high school CAC is a growing movement and is already in existence within music programs across the country. Without research into high school CAC, choir directors may not have sufficient information to support or oppose inclusion and would lack evidence to support advocacy. Teachers, music education advocates, and researchers could benefit from an understanding of the varying models of CAC programs to gauge the potential benefits of high school CAC. Therefore, there is a need for researchers to explore the phenomenon of CAC at the high school level.

Need for the Study

With the popularity of a cappella featured on television shows, movies, and top-grossing pop and country albums, CAC may currently be the most visible genre of music in popular culture to have direct ties to institutional music learning. Although many programs exist at the high school level, no scholarly research has been attempted gain insight into the phenomenon of high school CAC.

Scholarly research drawn from descriptions of high school CAC members may be of benefit to music educators and researcher that wish to implement or better understand this growing phenomenon. Insights derived from membership in these programs may elucidate the educational benefit and appeal of high school CAC. Such research could allow music educators and researchers to evaluate the possibilities and construct a vision for the future of high school CAC as it moves from nascent forms into an established mode of music making. Examination of high school CAC programs as enthusiasm for CAC grows in popular culture may benefit students, music programs, schools and communities.

The spread of CAC could benefit students in several ways:

- Students may have greater opportunity to reflect on their shared cultural values and identity through popular music study.
- Students may have greater opportunity to engage in democratic practices while making musical choices in a less authoritarian and restrictive environment.
- Students may have greater opportunity to engage with culturally relevant music in a more authentic way through creative emulation and through informal and mutual learning.
- Students may experience an intrinsic benefit of group membership stemming from greater group autonomy.
- Students may expand on their musical abilities by transferring their knowledge and skills to a novel situation.

This study gives teachers insight into how they can facilitate learning and provide the appropriate environment for CAC to thrive in their schools. The choice to include a CAC program may benefit directors, schools, and communities in varied ways, both latent and manifest:

- Teachers may increase the appeal of choral programs to students, by including a genre that is flourishing in popular culture;
- Teachers may increase cultural relevance by allowing for students to engage with music through learning style prevalent in out-of-school learning;
- Teachers may increase community through the sharing of cultural values;
- Teachers may increase out-of-school relevance by allowing for students to practice at democracy;
- Teachers may increase the visibility of school music programs by showcasing an ensemble that is more portable than typical bands, orchestras, or choirs.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to describe a general structure of the essential features of high school CAC membership. Results of this study were expected to shed light on the lived experience of membership in high school CAC groups from the perspective of student members.

This study was designed to allow the researcher to investigate the phenomenon of membership in high school CAC groups by examining students' retained memories and perceptions of rehearsal and performance as described through their pre-reflective speech in one-on-one interviews. An educational sociological lens was applied to language a general structure of essential meanings and to delineate the structural processes of socialization in social/psychological and educational terms applicable to the field of music education. I anticipated that descriptions of high school CAC members would shed light on the growing phenomenon of high school CAC and encourage a new line of music education research. I anticipated that in applying phenomenological techniques, I would be able to refine a durable understanding of high school CAC through analysis of participants' speech.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose, scope, and timing of literature reviews vary by research paradigm (Creswell, 2009). In a descriptive phenomenological study, the timing and efficacy of literature reviews may deviate from the standard expectations of a dissertation format. Consider the following: the impetus for most phenomenological research is the intuition of a shared experience and not a continuation of previous lines of research; literature reviews are often used to narrow the scope of a study while phenomenologists are tasked with remaining open to all possibilities; descriptive phenomenologists analyze only primary sources and a literature review is often an *a priori* analysis of secondary sources. Nonetheless, phenomenologists can utilize mindful processes to theoretically render past knowledge inconsequential, timing performance of a literature review.

When performing a descriptive phenomenology, a researcher must put aside prior knowledge and theories of the phenomenon under investigation. The bracketing of past knowledge and research allows the investigator to search for the essence of a phenomenon without influencing analysis and participant responses during data collection and (Dahlberg, 2006; Giorgi, 2009). Hamill and Sinclair (2010) suggested researchers refrain from reviewing relevant research until such analysis has drawn to a close. Because a review of literature is required as part of a research proposal, some have indicated that performing research without first synthesizing past research is impractical (Chan, Fung & Chien, 2013).

Still, no researcher can declare an interest in a subject matter and absence of preconceptions toward that same subject. Although this may seem to cause a gap between theory and practice, a strength of descriptive phenomenology is the ability to render any and all prior

research inconsequential during research phases of data collection and analysis. As is explained at length in *Chapter 3*, the implementation of the phenomenological reduction throughout the research process negates the influence of past research regardless of literature-review timing. The use of the phenomenological reduction allows for the emergence of meaning from the perspective of the participant with minimal influence from the researcher (Giorgi, 1985; 2009). Such a tool, properly utilized and attached to an appropriate philosophical basis adds credibility to studies by addressing the relationship between the researcher and the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

In theory, proper use of the phenomenological reduction guarantees that performing a research review does not contaminate data collection and analysis. Moreover, reviewing relevant research can clarify the lexicon of a phenomenal field and thereby reduce possible barriers of language encountered during participant interviews. If you speak with someone who is an expert in a certain area, she will no doubt use expertise language to speak about that area. For this reason, literature reviews can impart a better understanding of references participants may make without tainting the data with researcher assumptions. I included this review of relevant research to shed light on issues of high school CAC by examining research from previous articles related to CAC at any level.

Research into any iteration of CAC has not addressed the utility of CAC to fulfill any specified curricular goal. Outside of music education, CAC research has focused on the history, musical and social processes of collegiate CAC (Duchan, 2007). I did not find scholarly research that explicitly addresses CAC within the high school setting, however, music educators have examined collegiate CAC making. Research into CAC within music education have focused on the differing perceptions of CAC among group members and music faculty regarding

social/educational value, vocal techniques and health, and the affiliation between CAC groups and school music departments (Mayhew, 2009); and the music making and culture of CAC groups (Paparo, 2013). In each examination of collegiate CAC, research focused on the way musical processes are negotiated within the social context of CAC group membership.

There is evidence that the CAC experience is understood to be different from other ensembles in two (possibly interrelated) ways: musical differences and structural/social differences (Duchan, 2007; Mayhew, 2009; Paparo, 2013). Although there is no research available to confirm that the phenomenon of CAC at the high school level adheres to the collegiate model, the results of the present study would be of most benefit to the field by allowing comparisons between the typical experience of high school ensemble membership as well as the experience of collegiate CAC.

In this literature review, because of the lack of literature addressing the musical and structural/social aspects of high school CAC, I utilized collegiate CAC research to illuminate what is known about the musical aspects of CAC and their relationship to the structure and social interactions of the ensemble. Research into collegiate CAC has indicated that the structure of groups, the emulative processes of musical arrangement, and the processes of teaching and learning are aligned with the structure and processes of popular music making (Duchan, 2007; Mayhew, 2009; Paparo, 2013). I utilized educational research into popular music to connect the ties between the musical form and the way popular styles are often learned and performed. Examining research into collegiate CAC choirs and the practices of popular musicians may provide the most relevant parallels to the phenomenon in question.

CAC is in part defined by its relationship to popular music; research into the musical processes of popular musicians may be of relevance. Furthermore, because this dissertation was

designed to benefit music educators, an attempt was be made to delineate the problematics of popular music study within American music education from a historical vantage point, including consideration of the intrinsic and extrinsic value of popular music. Specifically, within the section titled *Popular music in American music education research*, problematics of popular music study is divided into two parts, *Foundations of popular music exclusion* and *Instructional quality and popular music education*.

Within *Foundations of popular music exclusion*, I address assumptions of the intrinsic value of popular music in the United States of America from a sociological perspective. Central to the debate of popular music inclusion is the social value of musical preference and philosophical implications of inclusion. Research into the musical preferences of Americans is introduced in the sub-subsection *Musical preference and implications for music education*, along with specific theories of musical preference and research trends within music education. In the sub-subsection *Philosophical debate over popular music inclusion*, I delineate the concept of popular music inclusion by major philosophical perspectives of music and education.

In *Instructional quality and popular music education*, I discuss popular music inclusion in the classroom with attention given to practical concerns. No research in music education has suggested popular music pedagogy could or should completely replace typical music instruction in American schools. Popular music instruction has only been discussed within American music education research as supplemental to traditional music education. Although much of what a teacher does is prescribed by governing bodies, outside forces may influence curricula but do not result in directives for the day-to-day workings within a music class. Thus, the individual teacher may possess some freedom in supplementing the standard education of students. As individual

music teachers have control over many aspects of instruction, it was necessary to discuss the motivations of individual teachers in respect to popular music inclusion.

The changing role and influence of the American music teacher is discussed with respect to the expansion of access to popular music throughout the 20th century in *Music technology*, in which the utilization of music propagation technologies and accompanied concerns to music education traditions are illuminated through articles found in the Music Educators Journal.

In *Authenticity*, I address the current status of popular music inclusion in schools. In this section, I explore the term *authenticity* to uncover the most appropriate ways in which popular music study can be incorporated into school curriculum. I reference experts in popular music pedagogy to support a vision of popular music inclusion based on the processes of popular music making. In *Informal Learning*, I explain relevant models of learning to consider the feasibility of facilitating informal processes within formal education. As the most recognizable and concrete example of popular music pedagogy (Mantie, 2013), I examine Lucy Green's *Music, Informal Learning and the School: A New Classroom Pedagogy* (2008a), through published critiques written by music education scholars. Because teaching popular music may present many challenges, I delineate difficulties associated with implementing informal practices of popular musicians in schools. Responses to these critiques are informed by Green's book (2008a) and published responses (2008b.)

In *Research in popular music making*, I describe the music making processes of school-aged popular musicians through relevant research. As these processes exist outside of the classroom context, research drawn from popular music making in its native setting inform discussion. In *Classroom experiments in popular music making*, I explore recent attempts to incorporate popular music making into classroom settings.

CAC Research

Joshua Duchan's (2007) dissertation concentrated on the culture and history of collegiate a cappella through ethnographic field research. In his examination of several collegiate CACs in and around Boston, Massachusetts, Duchan discovered social themes relevant to the experience of collegiate CAC including community, self-worth, and the accumulation and display of social capital. Because Duchan found that social and musical practices were intermingled, it follows that discussion of musical decision-making must be discussed with attention paid to the social structures that shape them.

Duchan (2007) addressed the way contemporary collegiate a cappella choirs sought to both emulate recording of popular songs and improve on the original songs through skillful arrangement. The concept of emulation was found to be important; participants believed that the ability of audiences to quickly recognize the song could determine how well the arrangement was received. Participants believed that when the arrangement better approximated the original recording, the audience enjoyed the performance more. Emulation was a basis for decisions regarding accompaniment syllable choice, vocal percussion, and vocal affect. Participants invoked the concept of strait-tone singing to distinguish themselves from what was associated with classical music and jazz crooning. Typical choral *Ahs* and syllables associated with doo-wop were thought of as less favorable than syllables that better approximated instruments used in specific songs. Vocal percussionists often mimicked different parts of the drum kit, using a consistent lexicon of sounds. In the emulation of instruments, participants often pantomimed to portray the instrumentation of source recordings.

Adherence to the original recording through emulation is necessary to the successful performance of a popular song; however, artful variation of the song through skillful

arrangement is equally important (Duchan, 2007). Although emulation and originality may seem diametrically opposed, creative and original arrangement were found to be necessary components of successful performance. Although groups purchased commercially available arrangements, they also wrote original arrangements of popular songs. Members negotiated stylistic choices through group discussion throughout the rehearsal process, altering written arrangements to create points of interest and to break from the monotony of strict emulation. Some of the more common techniques used in arrangement included musical quotation, formal expansion, variation of texture, movement of the lead part to different voices, and reinterpretation of the lead part by a soloist. Skillful arrangement and adjustment allowed for variation in the supportive voices adding points of interest to the music and keeping group members engaged. Newer members learned musical skills and norms from experienced members within rehearsals. Musical choices were "motivated by powerful social forces, such as the desire to share the spotlight between members of a group. And while musical excellence is often a group's objective, it must be matched by social cohesion and camaraderie" (p. 303)

Duchan (2007) found that membership in a CAC allowed for self-directed music making in which social and musical processes shape each other. The roles members played were important to the formation of individual and group identity. Musical and administrative roles allowed members to accumulated social capital and grow in musical, social and political faculty. Norms and musical skill were learned and propagated from experienced to newer members through the rehearsal process. The goal of creating high-quality arrangements and performances allowed for members to grow in musical skill. Numerous participants in Duchan's study reported additional benefits related to their roles within CAC groups such as time management from

balancing the needs of the group with academics and business skills from administrative roles attained within a group.

Mayhew (2009) studied the perceived value of membership in collegiate CAC by examining the beliefs of group members and vocal/choral faculty. Mayhew designed a survey to compare perceptions regarding the educational benefit, vocal taxation, and the needs of CAC groups with regard to music department affiliation and supervision using a six-point Likert-type scale. Although there were differing opinions regarding issues of vocal health and the need for faculty supervision, both faculty and students generally agreed on the positive educational value of membership in CAC groups. Respondents agreed that CAC offers valuable performance experience, opportunities for student leadership, and opportunities to compose and arrange music for singers.

In an ethnographic case study, Paparo (2013) investigated the musical practices and culture of a mid-western collegiate CAC group. Paparo discovered the themes of "music-making culture; fraternity; alumni involvement; autonomy, leadership, and hierarchy; and value of participation" (p.19). The group's music making culture was found to conform to concepts of informal learning in which musicians are self-directed, utilize culturally relevant music, incorporate individual skill, utilize technology, model musical ideas aurally, and learn music and social skills through mentoring and peer interactions.

In each study of collegiate CAC, reference is made to the social structure of the group as a vital component of the CAC experience (Duchan, 2007; Mayhew, 2009; Paparo, 2013). Paparo (2013) noted that the autonomous structure of CAC groups informs both the music chosen and the way it is taught. Some structural characteristics of high school CAC may differ from collegiate CAC because of the differing roles and authority within the culture of high school

ensembles. High school CAC may reflect a hybrid of collegiate CAC and traditional high school ensembles, which often include emphasis on proper re-creation of notated music under the direction of a teacher/conductor (Allsup, 2003; Bess & Fisher, 1993; Green, 2008a). The amount of authority and direction that a teacher relinquishes to students may vary between schools and will likely influence the social climate of a high school CAC.

Popular Music in American Music Education Research

In 2013, Roger Mantie published a content analysis of popular music discourse within English-speaking music education publications to investigate research and educational practices by nationality. Mantie found that international concerns often addressed practical issues related to increasing instruction quality in existent popular music programs, but American research centered on issues of legitimacy and preservation. One telling difference in discourse was found in the conception and use of the term quality, which was found in each of the 81 articles included in Mantie's content analysis. In international journals, quality was invoked to address student learning through encounters within popular music pedagogies. In American discourse, quality was used in discussion of the legitimacy of popular music study and "attendant fears over the erosion of quality teaching of quality music" (p. 343).

Mantie pointed to the work of Pierre Bourdieu as factoring "significantly in the history of music education in the United States" in a "conflation of quality with taste" (2013, p. 342). To understand this influence, historical theories of musical taste can provide a background to the discourse of American music education research and popular music. This is of importance to the current investigation because, as Mantie indicated, the course of popular music education research in America has focused specifically on issues of preservation and the appropriateness of

the curricular use of popular music. Furthermore, music education research in the United States, whether experimental or natural, in application or preference, might have been influenced by ideology:

> Because popular music is not a recognized or recognizable form of mainstream music education in the United States—that is, it is not recognized appreciably by important accountability and centering institutions that regulate normative standards— music educators are left with few options, even if they do believe in using popular musics in the classroom. Although this is only speculative, orthopraxy does help to explain international differences in both practice and discourse. In places where the use of popular musics in the classroom is "normal" and teachers are not adversely subject to narrow norms of professional conduct, discourses follow suit; in places where using popular music in the classroom lies outside the norm and teacher conduct is regulated strictly, discourses adopt rationalizing if not defensive forms. (p. 346)

The above term orthopraxy is used to suggest that teachers and researchers might have felt coerced to replicate a systematic norm that regards classical music as more valuable than popular music. Whether coercive or not, as Allsup (2011) wrote, "it stands to reason that anyone who has invested a great deal of time and energy into a lifelong artistic pursuit will be passionate about his or her chosen field" (p. 33).

Certainly, interest in classical music can be assumed as part of the decision to pursue credentials in music education. It may be logical to assume that many who chose to pursue a career in teaching music will have enjoyed traditional-ensemble experiences in school; they may have an interest in replicating those experiences for a newer generation. Should such reasoning give credence to self-replicating system, extension into publication may explain an imbedded point of view in preference/taste research in which a primary (stated or unstated) goal is classical-music enculturation. However, any such discussion must be viewed through the historical conditions that influenced the shaping of music education in the United States.

Foundations of Popular Music Exclusion

The sociology of music education in modern times has focused primarily on the division between high class and low class on the basis of taste as a division between classical and popular music forms (Froehlich, 2007). Weber, Adorno, Bourdieu, and many other sociologists have dissected musical taste as a preference and result based on class distinctions (Gans, 1974). Such debate in the United States can be traced to the German theory of Mass Culture imported from the 1920s Frankfurt School of thought (Froehlich, 2007).

Typified by figures such as Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, mass culture theory is a perspective that hints at the intellectual superiority of German art music; it centers around the division between the cultured: those that exhibit a predilection for high-class art forms, and the masses: those that passively accept the low-status music to which they are subjected (Adorno, 1941). To avoid confusion, it must be noted that high-class and low-class in this context does not equate to dominant and subordinate culture in terms of power structure; an important point if one chooses to view modern critical theory as a continuation of the Frankfurt School. Instead, mass culture theory viewed popular music as a ploy of the dominant class used to perpetuate hegemony. Mass culture theorists, as well as the philosopher and phenomenologist Jose Ortega y Gasset, who coined the term massification, advocated against mass (popular) culture; denouncing it as a lesser art form, an example of commercialism, and a possible harm to society (Gans, 1974).

Using jazz as a term to encompass all popular styles of music, Adorno denounced popular music as the basest form of musical expression (1936/1989-90). Adorno denied that popular forms of music are made by common people and instead used imagery of machines to suggest that popular culture is mass-produced using the industrial techniques of the age, for the

subversive purpose of pacifying the masses—a typical position of mass culture theorists such as Adorno, Horkhemer, Marcus, and Benjamin (Froehlich, 2007; Spillman, 2002).

Bourdieu (1984), in his book Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste, posited that taste is taught from a young age. He suggested that the purpose of taste was to denote status, distance individuals of high status from other groups, and to perpetuate status by guiding children of high status individuals toward a taste appropriate for their places in society. In extension, Bourdieu equated higher levels of education to highbrow or refined tastes and distance from lowbrow or common tastes (Bryson, 1996). From this perspective, culture can be seen as social distinctions but also as a type of capital that an individual could attain through the development of proper taste and education. Since American education came under the direction of Horace Mann into the time of John Dewey, education philosophy has reflected a similar view of schooling as a means to morality and social mobility (Brick, 2005). This accumulation of cultural capital can then be seen as endemic to the purview of schooling from the progressive perspective, namely Horace Mann's conception of school as the great equalizer (1848), the influence of Darwin's (1859/2003) evolution theory (including the influence of Herbert Spencer [1864]), and John Dewey's progressive education (1928) (cf. Abeles, Hoffer, & Klotman, 1994; Coffman, 1987; Greene, 1965; Rideout, 1982; Whitehill, 1969).

Bourdieu equated higher levels of education and status to what is thought of as highbrow or refined tastes and avoidance of lowbrow or common tastes (Bryson, 1996). This cultural capital of the highly educated helps to perpetuate economic differences between groups; however, this may not be the case in contemporary America (Peterson & Kern, 1996). To Lamont (1992), Bourdieu's suggestion that high-class individuals tend to be musical snobs might have been apt in Bourdieu's home country of France or localized regions of the U.S., but it is

more likely that in contemporary America, high social status denotes inclusive musical tastes. Lamont gathered data from high-status males in the United States and France and found while French men exhibited exclusive tastes, American men of status had tastes inclusive of diverse styles.

Some sociologists and anthropologists have suggested that distinct classes no longer exists and that status can be best understood as the ability of individuals to penetrate social boundaries (Lamont & Molnár, 2002; Western & Wright, 1994). From this modern perspective, higher social status can be equated to higher social mobility, defined as the freedom to move between different social groups including groups of friends, different neighborhoods, professional associations, and political associations (Western & Wright, 1994). According to Habermas (2001), it is within these public spheres that people engage in democratic processes.

Evidence from multiple sources indicated that persons with more education tended to have more inclusive musical tastes (Bryson, 1996; Jackman & Muha, 1984; Peterson, 1990; Peterson & Kern, 1996). Longitudinal studies of taste indicate, in each of these cases, American tastes have become more similar (Peterson & Kern, 1996; White, 2001). The notion that high-status Americans require education in western-art music to gain or maintain cultural capital may no longer be defensible.

Musical preference and implications for music education

The position that classical styles of music should be taught in schools above other styles can be traced to these theories prevalent among the twentieth century social elite and dominant in sociological literature. If one agrees with Bourdieu, that high-class taste equates to greater cultural capital, a teacher may find it logical to instruct students primarily in classical music so students have the opportunity to gain status in society. Music education, as a system, could then

implement classical training as an intervention to combat the mass-culture machine. However, theories of social structures may not come to mind as teachers and administrators make curricular decisions.

Curricular choices are implemented because of perceived benefits to students and society. The legitimacy of popular music must then be viewed in light of the possible effects outside of the classroom and into the future. Should classical music be in decline within society, teachers may be weary to make any changes that draw focus away from classical repertoire. Since 1982, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) has periodically administered the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) to gauge the music participation and listening habits of American adults. After the 2008 administration of the SPPA, the NEA (2009) reported that classical music within society is in decline:

> A smaller segment of the adult population either attended arts performances or visited art museums or galleries than in any prior survey…From 1982 to 2008, audiences for performances in classical music, ballet, non-musical theater, and—most conspicuously, jazz—have aged faster than the general adult population. Even among the most educated, adults are participating less than in previous years. (NEA, 2009, p. iii)

Some explanation of this lack of participation in high-culture arts was pointed directly at music education:

> A single survey cannot explain all reasons for the nationwide decline. But this report offers many possibilities, not only for locating likely causes, but also for seeing a way forward. Take one observation: since 1982, the share of 18-24-year-olds who report having had any music education in their lives (now 38 percent) has dropped by more than a third. (p. iii)

In the above explanation, the NEA may have indicated that music educators have a responsibility to teach students to enjoy high-status music. This point was strengthened through data mining that indicated arts participation in grade school as a strong predictor of adult participation in attending Western-art music concerts and personal art creation and performance

(Kracman, 1996; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011). Using data from the 1992 administration of the SPAA, Bergonzi and Smith (1996) found that those who had received substantial school training in the arts were nearly four times more likely to attend art performances than those who received little or no education in the arts. Such data might give credence to the widely held belief as observed by Jaffurs, "Many educators believe that classical music is in decline because our students are not being trained to understand it" (2004a, p. 13).

As a curricular choice, popular music education must prove some benefit to individual students. Within music education literature, popular music has often been deemed unsuitable for study because of a perceived lack of complexity. In Foundations of Music Education by Abeles, Hoffer, and Klotman (1995), the authors echoed mass culture theorists in equating the enjoyment of art music to the ability to delay gratification, "A characteristic of upper-SES people that affects musical preference is a willingness to postpone immediate satisfaction in order to gain an ultimate goal…The promptness of gratification [is a] vital role in determining the value of musical works" (p. 128). Herein, the authors referred to Leonard Meyer's (1967) theory that the ability to delay gratification is a sign of maturity.

Historically, since the phonograph made such music readily available, music educators have sought to increase appreciation for classical music through the creation of music appreciation curricula and music memory competitions (Birge, 1966; Katz, 1998). Early psychological research studies concluded that listeners enjoyed classical music more and popular music less after repeated listening (Gilliland & Moore, 1924; Washburn, Child, & Abel, 1927). Such a perspective has allowed music education researchers to design experimental studies examining how to increase preference for classical music in children.

In his comprehensive review of music preference research, Finnäs (1989) wrote:

> Studies have shown that young people generally prefer pop and rock music to music of a more serious and traditional nature, thus challenging music educators to broaden young people's musical taste by helping them to develop a more positive attitude to those types of music that are typically not favored by youth culture. (p. 2)

Many studies have been designed to understand student preferences or increase preference for classical music through increased exposure or guided listening (cf. Bradley, 1971, Finnäs, 1989; Gregory, 1994; Hargreaves, 1984; Getz, 1966; Peery & Peery, 1986; Ritossa & Rickard, 2004) and increased formal training (cf. Fredrickson, 1999; Geringer, 1982; Price & Yarbrough, 1987; Shehan, 1984; Siebenaler, 1999; Wig & Boyle, 1982). With some contrasting results, the majority of such studies support the notion that increased exposure equates to increased preference, however, research has not addressed whether such results remain stable over time or result in a change in preference for one style of music over another. Other studies have mapped the ages at which people will be most open to classical music enjoyment (cf. Hargreaves, Comber, & Cooley, 1995; LeBlanc, Sims, Malin, & Sherrill, 1992; LeBlanc, Sims, Siivola, & Obert, 1996). Studies have investigated the effect of authority-figure or peer approval (cf. Alpert, 1982; Boyle, Hesterman & Ramsey, 1981; Darow, 1977; Furman & Duke, 1988; Greer, Dorow, Wachhaus, & White, 1973; Inglefield, 1972; Pantle, 1982; Radocy, 1976). Although results indicate that adult and peer approval cause increased preference, results may not have a lasting effect and may vary by musical style (Brittin & Sheldon, 1995). Preference research has been extensive, however, bibliometric research has shown a steep decline within music education publications; authors theorized that the decline was due to changing philosophies, specifically, the decline of aesthetic education (Diaz & Silveira, 2014).

Philosophical Debate over Popular Music Inclusion

Changing philosophies within the music education sphere may have caused a decline in taste/preference research. At the height of the interest in changing music preference, Bennett Reimer's (1970) aesthetic philosophy of music education was in wide adoption (Alperson, 1991). With the goal of creating a unified philosophy for music educators and advocates, Reimer gave credence to a focus on the great works of classical musicians. However, newer (praxialist) philosophies such as David Elliott's (1995) Music Matters gave credence to studying musics of all cultures with emphasis on cultural understanding, practices, and values.

In American education, music programs have been included in schools for utility relating to religion, morality, patriotism, industriousness, and productive use of leisure time (Westerlund, 2008). Such justifications have given way to the concept of music for music's sake; notable scholars such as Bennett Reimer, Elliot Eisner, and Leonard Meyer have advocated that music should be studied solely to understand and experience its unique intrinsic properties. Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, in which music is named as a separate and distinct way of knowing the world, has given credence to the study of music in abstraction (Alperson, 2010).

Music educators may have appropriated Gardner's theory to suggest that musical ability may be the only way that some students can achieve success in school. However, researchers have typically found the opposite, that those who participate in music tend to score above average on intelligence measures and academic achievement measures (Elpus, 2013; Harrison, Asmus, & Serpe, 1994). Elpus (2013) suggested that this trend is likely the result of a selection bias, "the current body of research literature might suggest that music is somehow attractive to those students who are already more likely to perform well academically" (p. 191). Researchers in myriad fields of education have disputed Gardner's theory, noting the high correlations

between different intelligences, the narrow scope of the eight intelligences of Gardner's theory, and the convenience of utilization for maintaining the status quo of educational offerings (White, 1998).

The perspective that music should be studied solely for its intrinsic qualities can be contrasted with positions held by scholars such as Howard White: "thorough study of music must necessarily include a study of those people who practice and perpetuate the art and the social role that they play" (1964, p. 430). Scholars such as Paul Woodford, James Mursell, Max Kaplan, Barbara Lundquist, David Elliott, Marie McCarthy, and Thomas Regelski have taken the position that the practice of making music must be understood in the context of culture (Elliott, 1995; Jorgensen, 1997; Kaplan, 1966; McCarthy & Goble, 2002; Volk, 1998; Woodford, 2005).

No discussion of the representation of culture through music would be complete without mention of ethnomusicologist John Blacking. In 1987, commenting on Percy Grainger's contributions to ethnomusicology and music education, John Blacking asked, "How can we teach people through music-making that there is a larger social world outside and a richer world of experience inside each individual?" Experience being the key word, Blacking asked music teachers to focus on the music rather than the culture and to let the aesthetic beauty of music transcend culture and society and lead to tolerance and understanding. However, to Blacking, a focus on music did not require a teaching of music, "It should be remembered that musical communication can always be intuitive and does not depend on conscious appreciation of either the sound structures or the social organization and cultural patterns which they represent" (1969, p.42). From this viewpoint, Blacking found no reason to include popular music within education, "A person does not have to be educated to appreciate good contemporary music; he only has to be a contemporary person with a mind unclosed by the indoctrination that passes for formal and

informal education" (1969, p.42). Blacking's primary concern was with making music of one's own culture as an important part of being human and important in the education of feelings and intellect (Blacking, 1981). To Blacking, this music-making role was maintained through enculturation and non-formal learning in all parts of the world except in the West, where it was maintained through music education (Campbell, 2000).

It must be admitted that, within the context of the Western European classroom, Blacking was critical of teaching music for cultural or social understanding. He often wrote about the social value of music and social motivations to make music, but did not see a point to teaching skills if the goal is appreciation and shared social experience (Blacking, 1973, 1981). Although Blacking would have educators focus primarily on improving students' musical skills, it cannot be concluded that he wanted educators to limit study, in the broadest sense of the word, to Western art music. Blacking was critical of the elitist sentiment in music education and the division of music (popular, folk, art) within a culture:

> The implication that there was, or ever has been, a unilinear evolution of music, that there is one foundation rather than many, ignores the complex class structures of the society of which the so-called Western European musical system was a part. It ignores the facts that this system was practiced by only a minority of the population, and that when different groups came to power, they often brought with them the music of their class, which may well have sprung from different foundations. (Blacking, 1987, p. 13)

Blacking focused on improvement of musical ability because of the unique properties of music as a way of knowing the world. He believed, as many music educators do, that the reason to study music must be tied to the unique aspects of music that cannot be addressed though other means. However, this perspective that music can be decontextualized has been criticized as Eurocentric and distortive of reality concerning diverse cultures:

> In my opinion, it is insufficient to limit one's studies to African and African-American music, complex and fascinating subjects though these are. As Sterling Stuckey (1987, 64) noted, Africans came "from cultures in which work and art were united so completely that any notion of art for art's sake lacked meaning." Any perspective that ignores the social context in which African and African-American musics have been created and performed automatically distorts the truth about both. While one can examine the style and history of European repertories without reference to the social context in which they were created, this is impossible in the case of African cultures. (Wilkinson, 1996, p. 265)

Nevertheless, we cannot conclude that Blacking did not value the culture and context of music making, as it was his life's work. Blacking's writings indicate that experiencing music of many cultures could lead to understanding about one's own culture, yet he feared that the inclusion of teaching about culture would lead to a shallow understanding of diverse cultures and manifest itself in collections of mildly representative folk songs (1987). Such a criticism is directed at teacher and resource quality. Koza (1996) echoed this concern, finding that multicultural education to most educators simply pertains to a change of curricular materials. A similar sentiment has led researchers to examine multicultural inclusion to find whether intercultural understandings of race, gender, and class are included in any meaningful way (Miralis, 2006).

Although debate continues on whether curricular offerings allow for the inclusion of diverse musics in authentic and meaningful ways, there has nonetheless been an overwhelming sentiment in modern music education that the perspectives of diverse cultures should be included in music classes (Miralis, 2006). Included in many statements of the National Association for

Music Education such as The Tanglewood, Housewright, and Centennial Declaration is the challenge to educators to include diverse styles of music within the classroom (Choate, 1968; MENC, 2000; 2007).

Music exists within a social context and is inextricably tied to human culture. Music both expresses and reinforces social values (Dalhaus, 1982). Although music may be written by a person or group and modified over time, it is commonplace and appropriate for music to be examined from the context within which it is created. Such study may allow students to better understand the cultural context of different styles of music.

Democratic theorist John Dewey wrote that music is created within a social context: "For while it is produced and enjoyed by individuals, those individuals are what they are in the context of their experience because the cultures in which they participate" (1934/2005, p. 339). To understand music in context, music educators often include information about the composer as well as the time period, region, political climate, et cetera. As Vulliamy and Shepherd (1984) wrote:

> If the significance of music is irrevocably linked to the patternings of individual minds, then it must likewise be linked to the fluid, dynamic and abstract patternings of the social world that lies behind the creation and construction of those minds. (p. 60)

A piece of music is then an example of a unique vision and simultaneously an artifact situated within a socio-cultural context. As with any other artifact, a piece of music can be a window into a time and place. Along with entirely musical reasons for music study, understanding "musical practices of different cultural groups" can be instrumental in "helping them [students] to understand the intensions of those who undertake them, as well as the social, historical, and cultural conditions in which they organize, exist and have meaning" (McCarthy & Goble, 2002, p. 21).

If studying historical and diverse music allows for opportunities to understand culture, then studying current and popular music allows for students to reflect on their own culture. Music has been described to "offer the immediate experience of collective identity. Other cultural forms…can articulate and show off shared values and pride, but only music can make you *feel* them" [emphasis in original] (Frith, 1987, p.140).

For as many contexts in which music is made, there are at least as many reasons to make music. As a culture changes in its values, so does its music (Dalhaus, 1982). For this reason, engaging with current and popular forms of music may offer students the opportunity to reflect on the values they share with others of their community. The inclusion of popular forms of music in a music curriculum allows students to explore their own society and shared cultural values.

Laura Resnick stressed the importance of fostering shared cultural values in her presidential address to the American Educational Research Association in 1987. Resnick wrote that the processes of school learning do not reflect the ideals of democracy valued in American society. Explaining democracy as a negotiation of competing ideas through dialogue, Resnick discussed the need to foster democracy as a social process and value, predicated on a shared cultural knowledge:

> If we value reason and reflection in social, political, or personal life, we must maintain a place devoted to learning how to engage in this extremely important process. School, at its best, is such a place. There, reasoning and reflection can be cultivated, and a *shared cultural knowledge* [emphasis added] that permits a population to function as a true society can be developed. (p. 19)

Resnick declared that education should reflect the process of democracy in which consensus is achieved in dialogue of competing ideas. For the social process of democracy to take place, students need to have a shared cultural knowledge on which to build shared values. To Resnick (1987), a shared knowledge of culture is necessary so

that members of a society are well informed when making decisions that impact the public. To prepare students for their active role in society, students should be included in decision-making in the classroom (Allsup, 2003; Freire, 1995). For students to work democratically in a music class they will create "a context from which they are familiar, conversant, or curious. The materials the students choose to explore will represent a world that is theirs, a world they understand, a world that defines who they are" (Allsup, 2003, p. 35).

David McAllester (1968) wrote about the need for inclusion of culturally relevant music styles in music classes, and their connection to the democratic principles of education:

> "We affirm that it is our duty to seek true musical communication with the great masses of our population. While we continue to develop and make available, to all who are interested, the great musics of middle class and aristocracy, we must also learn the language of the great musical arts which we have labeled as "base" because they are popular…The resulting enrichment of our music will, we hope, give it a new vitality at all levels, and provide a united voice that can speak, without shame, of our democratic ideals." (p. 138)

According to Dewey, the democratic process is predicated on this "united voice" in the form of communal knowledge (Campbell, 1995; Dewey, 1916, McAllester, 1968). When different groups are the exclusive bearers of different knowledge, mutual understanding cannot take place. For this reason, study of myriad popular styles from diverse cultures can lead to the shared understanding and conversations in which democracy can function. If music education is to provide a shared cultural knowledge necessary for the democratic process to take place, an education in many popular styles of music is appropriate.

Democratic theorists hold that education can only happen when teachers and students cooperate to make schools work (Apple & Beane, 2007a). By valuing the input of the students, teachers can foster an atmosphere of mutual respect. Because musical taste is largely a social

construction, the study of popular music can offer insight into American culture and musical understanding (Mueller, 1956). From a democratic perspective, the music with which students are familiar can form the foundation of a system of theory because students learn by building on what they already know, connecting new knowledge to prior knowledge (Campbell, 1996). By learning new concepts through the lens of what they already know, students gain a context on which to build musical understanding.

Individual tastes are reflective of different cultures, socioeconomics, and ethnicities within a community. The communication of differences can enrich communities by expanding the "range of views it might consider" (Apple & Beane, 2007b, p. 11). By including diverse styles, mutual respect can be fostered and a shared vision of the future of democracy can spring from shared cultural knowledge and understanding.

Although the music education community has recognized the importance of popular styles of music, instruction in classrooms has proven difficult to change. Secondary music education in the United States might be in danger of losing its cultural relevancy if it does not progress with an ever-changing society (Bates, 2009; Green, 2002; Kratus, 2007; Williams, 2007; Woody, 2007). As popular music and educational practices have transformed to meet the needs of modern students, music education has remained stagnant (Cutietta & Thompson, 2000; Woody, 2007). While dwindling classical concert attendance and dwindling classical record sales reflect a growing disinterest toward Western art music, other styles of music such as hip-hop, rock, and rap thrive in the popular culture (National Endowment for the Arts, 2009).

When the general populous does not place exclusive value on classical styles of music, it may become difficult for music educators to justify the continued prominence of traditional music study within curricula (Kratus, 2007). Allsup (2012), in discussion of the democratic

principles of education, cautioned that inclusion of diverse music should not go so far as to supplant traditional experiences for students, "as long as the end is student growth, and not simply the survival of the chosen tradition" (p.185). Allsup wrote, "moral education is helping children to discover, cultivate, and enlarge their best selves," and, therefore, it relies on both the familiar and unfamiliar (p. 185). Although some may consider it pandering and doubt the educational value of including popular music, as long as participation remains a choice, teachers must consider the education of all students. With musical tastes being dissimilar from the offerings of secondary music classes, many students might find that music classes are irrelevant to their lives and may opt out of participation.

Instructional Quality and Popular Music Education

Teachers may fear the acceptance of popular music as a mode of study for many reasons other than sociological theories and philosophical considerations. As discussed by Mantie (2013), discussion of popular music inclusion is not only a question of legitimacy but of faculty. Should facilitation of popular music study require different skills and expertise (Folkestad, 2006), teachers may be hesitant to embrace change. These concerns may lead teachers, who may be experts in many respects, to doubt their abilities and question their role within the classroom (Allsup, 2011).

Concerns for student and teacher accountability (Allsup, 2008) and the ever-changing landscape of popular musics (Davis, 2013; Green, 2002; Middleton, 1990) may cause teachers to question inclusion should learning require incessant changes to materials, curricula, assessment, or classroom management and structure. Teachers that have received no training may feel unable to facilitate popular music study (Davis & Blair, 2011; Wang & Humphreys, 2009). If instruction

lacks concrete and testable objectives and procedures or historical precedence, teachers may question the rigor of popular music education (Heuser, 2005; Strauss, 1984). Should students acquire skills and knowledge in individualized and sporadic ways (Green, 2008a), teachers may not be able to recognize learning taking place. Should popular music study require the teacher to take a different role in the classroom (Allsup, 2008), teachers may fear outcomes of student behavior, performance reviews from administrators, and students abilities to transition back to formal lessons (Green, 2008a). If teachers, students, parents, or administrators measure success via competition, teachers may fear the loss of time to prepare for competitions and outcomes of diminished achievement and status among peers and the community (cf. Cox, 1989; Forbes, 2001; Hinckley, 2001; Mantie, 2013; Rogers, 1985).

Music technology

Although the inclusion of popular music in education may seem to be a recent development, early discussions have been inherent to debate over the role of technology in music classes. The role of the music teacher has come under question ever since technologies first made popular music available. Simply through availability, popular music has changed the power relationship between teacher and student. As technology has changed, so has the locus of cultural experiences, the ethos of expertise, and opportunities to learn, create, and share music without the aid of a teacher (Boespflug, 1999; DeNora, 2000; Dunbar-Hall & Wemyss, 2000; Kratus, 2007; Nilsson & Folkestad, 2005).

Early music education in the United States was based in vocal-group performance and relied on teachers' ability to instruct students to sing (Mark & Gary, 1992). With the invention of the phonograph, more Americans began to enjoy music through listening rather than performing (Williams, 2007). The role of the teacher first changed when the technology of phonographs led

to the advent of music appreciation as a curricular goal or elective class (Katz, 1998; Mark & Gary, 1992). Mass marketing of phonographs advertised that Americans could come to appreciate good music through repeated listening (Katz, 1998). Although popular music records were made, the phonograph was touted as a way to civilize the masses and to gain status in society; this resulted in the creation of phonograph/music societies across the country and music memory contests for school children (Katz, 1998).

Education was demanded of radio stations from the onset as radio stations were required to devote a portion of airtime to public service (Cuban, 1986). As early as 1928, daytime radio programs such as The Music Appreciation Hour brought musical experiences into classrooms across the U.S. These programs offered music that was unavailable to many students outside of the classroom, especially in rural areas, and grew in popularity as schools everywhere felt the impact of the Great Depression (Cooper, 2005). The radio created the condition of uniformity as programs often provided listening guides and assignments; students across the country listened to the same examples, took musical aptitude tests, and were provided with over-the-air instruction (Cooper, 2005; Nohavec & Morgan, 1947).

Education pioneers such as Marguerite V. Hood and Benjamin Darrow had high hopes for the use of the radio as a teaching tool. Darrow, in his 1932 book Radio: The Assistant Teacher, wrote, "the central and the dominant aim of education by radio is to bring the world to the classroom—to make universally available the services of the finest teachers, the inspiration of the greatest leaders and the educative power of unfolding world events which through the radio may come as a vibrant and challenging textbook of the air" (p. 79).

In 1944, the well-known musician Fred Waring wrote an article for the Music Educators Journal that began with the following:

> Why is it that so often when the music teacher asks her class for its choice of what to sing, hands go up excitedly and the so-called "popular" songs are named? And why does the class sing these songs with such fervor and enthusiasm? This is certainly not by voluntary design of the music teacher. And it is surely not to this end that the hundreds of colleges and conservatories have set up two- to four-year courses in music education, giving thousands of prospective teachers intense training in music-education theory, methods, and materials. Where, then, have the students learned to sing these songs?
>
> The answer is that in almost every home there is another teacher of music whose influence on the musical development of school-youth is as strong, if not stronger, than their formal training in the schools. This teacher is the radio. Her store of musical knowledge is tremendous, the variety of music repertoire at her finger-tips [sic] almost inexhaustible, and her teaching methods very simple and effective. She doesn't tell her pupils what to sing, and doesn't require them to do exercises in order to learn how to sing—and yet she is successful. She has to be. Her very existence depends on her ability to make attractive and entertaining what she has to offer. How well she has succeeded is evidenced by the size of her following. (p. 20)

In the above quotation, Waring identified the radio as a music teacher. Although possibly inflammatory, it is nonetheless true that the radio made popular music available to students and thereby influenced the musical development of the youth. It seems as though, to the chagrin of music teachers, Waring indicated that expert music teachers could no longer satisfy the musical aspirations of students.

James Mursell (1947), in a special issue of the Music Educators Journal (celebrating the 100-year anniversary of Thomas Edison's birth), reflected on what implications new media forms would have on the music classroom. Mursell wrote that much as the engine replaced the sails on boats, technology would replace many facets of the music classroom. Mursell thought that the wide variety of available music would encourage participation in music, but when discussing the issue of teacher expertise, he seemed to play both sides of the coin, explaining:

> They can help enormously in putting music education on a broader operating basis, that is, to make it appealing to far more students, and feasible for far more teachers. This is our clear strategy for the immediate future, but the limiting factor, as always is technique, and the need for highly specialized expertness…But the new technologies make it possible to organize serious,

> repaying, inspiring music study at all levels without extreme expertness on the part of the teacher…A grade teacher who wants her children to sing but distrusts her own voice can turn to recorded or broadcast music or sound film. (p. 21)

From the above statement, Mursell's view of the future of music education does not hinge on teacher expertise. Such writing might add to any anxiety music teachers would have for including such technology in the classroom as a slippery slope toward the demise of the profession. Education through radio media never achieved universal acceptance, partially because most radio stations were commercially owned and partially because many superintendents did not put radios in classrooms (Cuban, 1986).

As popular music became more available through television, educators might have begun to notice a growing disconnect between classroom music and popular music. In the age of television, popular music in America became intrinsic to youth culture and a breaking away from traditional values (Baskerville, 1971). As televised scenes from Vietnam created a dissent among the youth, protest music became a more and more popular art form. Protest music soon became the heart of the antiwar movement (Baskerville, 1971). The antiwar movement grew with music always as a center point, making the case for the removal of troops from the field, through song. The lines between young and old, anti and pro-war, and hippie and square could also be divided along the lines of pro- and anti-rock and roll music.

The implications of this deep connection between television, music, and social groups was discussed in the context of education by Eickmann and Fowler (1970):

> These media…create environments that shape people. They represent processes that can alter human behaviors. For the teacher, the message is clear: the electronic environment has created a new student who must be dealt with in those terms. Awareness of print as a medium must now be supplemented by knowledge of the newer technologies of communication, so that the best of both can be exploited educationally. (p. 33)

Music educators differed in opinions on the possible uses of popular music and its value for study. In response to many scholarly articles that declared the inferiority of rock music, Fowler (1970) attacked such assertions as antiquated:

> Music educators who maintain such views are the last holdouts for the melting-pot theory of American Public Education. They still believe that their job is to take every child that comes into the schools and hone his taste towards the traditional European-based musical art….We are beginning to see that a plurality of cultures produces a plurality of musics. Not everyone should like the same music—nor share the same taste. (pp. 38-39)

Perhaps the most prominent call for the inclusion of popular music in schools was from the Tanglewood Declaration, an outcome from the 1967 Tanglewood Symposium, in which music educators challenged the profession to include music study of all periods, styles, forms, and cultures. Included in their report was a strong emphasis on current tends and popular teenage music (Choate, 1968). As president of MENC, Wiley Housewright (1969) wrote,

> There is much to be gained from the study of any musical creation. Rock, soul, blues, folk, and jazz cannot be ignored. To delimit concert halls, schools, and colleges to a steady diet of the "masters" is as absurd as permitting only Euripides, Shakespeare, and Moliere to be performed in the theater. Music education must encompass all music. If students' musical attitudes are to be affected by music education, the music teacher's openness to new music serves as a necessary model. The Music Educators National Conference, through its Tanglewood Declaration not only accepts rock and other present-day music as legitimate, but sanctions their use in education. (p. 45)

In the modern age of personal listening devices and the Internet, such issues have compounded. In his controversial article Music Education at the Tipping Point, Kratus (2007) wrote that the traditions of music education were no longer compatible with the needs of modern students. Kratus (2007) argued that digital music capabilities have fundamentally changed the way students interact with music and musical communities, yet teachers have ignored this shift to follow traditional and personal goals. Although music, musical experiences and creation have changed over the years, teaching may have remained unchanged:

> The teaching model most emulated in secondary ensembles is that of the autocratic, professional conductor of a large, classical ensemble…In many cases, the ensemble director selects the music, makes all the artistic decisions regarding interpretation, and shapes the resulting performance through tightly managed rehearsals to match a preconceived notion of the piece, correcting errors along the way. (pp. 45-46)

Researchers have commented on the growing divide between school-music and the prevailing popular-music culture (Allsup, 2003, 2004; Boespflug, 1999; Finnegan, 1989; Green, 2002, 2008a; Kratus, 2007). In the age of personal media, individualized tastes among youth may require a rethinking of social spheres and musical communities (Kratus, 2007). Congruently, outside of music education, practices have changed focus to individual needs and the individual goals of students (Packer, 2001). Yet, music education continues to follow a relatively unchanged model of performance-based, large-group ensembles (Allsup, 2003; Kratus, 2007; Small, 1998). As tastes have become highly individualized, so too have the means and processes of music creation (Boespflug, 1999; Nilsson & Folkestad, 2005). The use of popular music has been suggested as a means of closing the divide between in-school and out-of-school music, however, the process of making/recreating popular music may be applied in inauthentic ways (Boespflug, 1999; Cutietta, 1991; Green, 2006; Green, 2008a; Woody, 2007).

Authenticity

Scholars have noted sharp contrasts between school music making and the environment in which popular musicians learn (Allsup, 2003; Boespflug, 1999; Campbell, 1995; Cutietta, 1991; Finnegan, 1989; Green, 2008a; 2002; Jaffurs, 2004a; Small, 1998; White, 2002; Woody & Lehmann, 2010). Teachers may find it difficult to view the classroom as a space for authentic musical/cultural exchange, to reconcile informal music making and learning within formal

education, and to negotiate the role of the teacher when popular music making typically takes place in the absence of authority.

Authentic transmission of the processes of popular music making into the classroom may pose challenges for educators. Woody (2007) suggested that many teachers are not opposed to inclusion of popular music study, "It is *not* [emphasis in original] that they reject popular music. They are not philosophically opposed to teaching the performance of popular music, but they fear they wouldn't know the first thing about actually doing it" (p. 36).

To some scholars, authenticity is guaranteed by specific types of instrumentation (Gilbert & Pearson, 1999) or as a reference to instrumentation and overall sound qualities using the term sonic design (Fornäs, 1995; Moore, 2002; Taylor, 1997). For some, authenticity is used in reference to the difference between rock (authentic) and popular (commercial) music (Grossberg, 1992; Shuker, 1998). Other scholars define authenticity as truth to a cultural experience (Middleton, 1990), honesty of experience (Grossberg, 1992), or purity of practice (Bohlman, 1988).

In music education literature, the term authentic is concomitant with culture, that is, the processes and contexts in which such music making naturally occurs (e.g., Davis & Blair, 2011; Green, 2002, 2005a, 2005b, 2006, 2008a; Woody, 2007). Authenticity may be best understood as the processes and contexts in which a style of music is learned, created, performed, produced and distributed (Bowman, 2004; Firth, 1987; Toynbee, 2000). Yet, the classroom environment is distinctly removed from the natural culture of popular music making. Consequently, attempts to transfer the culture and practice of popular music making to classroom situations cannot be considered authentic in the strictest sense (Abril, 2006). Simply put, authentic music study requires an attempt to recreate the culture of its origin.

Robert Cutietta (1991) referred to the inauthentic use of popular music as the "bait and switch" technique, that is, using popular music for social means or to ready students to study classical music (p. 27). A current leader in the field of popular music education, Lucy Green (2008a) has taken issue with the inauthentic use of popular music in schools, she observed that "whilst a huge range of such musics have entered the curriculum, the *processes* [emphasis in original] by which the relevant musical skills and knowledge are passed on and acquired in the world outside the school, have been left behind" (p. 3).

Lucy Green argued that the best way to facilitate authentic study of popular music is through the informal learning practices utilized by musicians in out-of-school settings (2002, 2005, 2008a). Informal learning follows a nonlinear path to learning because it is oriented toward a product rather than a process (Resnick, 1987). In such a heuristic model, skills are learned to deal with an immediate task rather than to prepare for future learning. In short, informal learning gives students "more autonomy to decide on curriculum content and to direct their own learning strategies" (Resnick, p. 185). Curricular objectives, spiraling and scaffolding are less of a focus in informal learning because learning is often surprising and individualized. Product oriented group work is employed, in which members fulfill different roles and learn different skills in order to complete a group task. In this way, group members learn different skills and knowledge while working toward the same goal. Members may then be called on to speak to an issue in which they have the most expertise. This is reflective of out-of-school learning in which shared cognition is valued over individual cognition (Resnick, 1987).

Informal Learning

Green (2008a) defined principals as fundamental to the informal learning processes of popular-music musicians:

- Informal learning "always starts with music which the learners choose for themselves."
- The "main method of skill-acquisition in the informal realm involves copying recordings by ear."
- Informal learning takes place alone and with friends, "through self-directed, peer-directed and group learning."
- Skills and knowledge "tend to be assimilated in haphazard, idiosyncratic and holistic ways, starting with 'whole', 'real-world' pieces of music."
- Popular musician approaches to learning skills and knowledge "involve a deep integration of listening, performing, improvising and composing throughout the learning process, with emphasis on personal creativity." (p. 10)

Without familiarity with, and inclination towards a song, there is rarely impetus for a popular musician to learn how to play the piece (Green, 2008a). This can be contrasted with formal music learning in which new repertoire is often unfamiliar to the student. Although copying often involves reading music or watching others perform in person, on the television, or the Internet, performances are viewed in reference to how the audio recording sounds. That is, the performer knows how a piece of music sounded in its original form before attempting to play it. Green speculated that working in friendship (self-selected) groups, rather than teacher-selected groups, ensured that students were less likely to experience problems of personality while working without the constant supervision of the teacher. Green linked the issue of friendship to choice, autonomy and enjoyment (p. 121).

The out-of-school norm of unsystematic assimilation of skills and knowledge has implications with regard to the educational norm of sequenced learning objectives and benchmark assessments. For this reason, general objectives are spread over multiple lessons, and assessment is often based on performance, group participation and through informal teacher evaluations (Green, 2008a). The concepts of listening, performing, improvising, and composing are the foundations of learning goals for Green's informal learning project and can be assessed in

any way a teacher sees fit. Green's underlying principles of how popular musicians learn do not yield precise educational outcomes or serve as a model for how to incorporate popular musicians' practices in the classroom. Rather, they contain assumptions that serve to underpin the pedagogical stages of Green's project to real-world learning.

Informal learning can be understood through contrast with formal and non-formal learning. Formal learning (institutionalized) and non-formal learning (non-institutionalized or self-lead) are both structured learning processes in that they are intentional, systematic and include predetermined learning objectives, organized into a hierarchy of concepts and often into a predetermined amount of time. Conversely, informal learning is unstructured and practical, without set sequence, manifest-hierarchical concepts, or fixed objectives other than the task at hand. Informal learning is the process by which people learn native language, cultural norms, and childhood games. One practical example of informal learning is on-the-job training; corporate offices and restaurants frequently pair trainees with experienced professionals to provide the trainees with first-hand experience in the performance of the actual job. The informal hands-on approach is estimated to account for 80% of job-related learning, yet the vast majority of company time and money is spent on formal training (Cross, 2007).

Although the concept of informal learning may appear to be straightforward, there are difficulties when considering the use of informal practices inside the formal education sphere. Edwards and Usher (1998) posited that it could be difficult for educators to reconcile informal learning with the "serious" activity of education. They surmised, "in its liberal form, education is about establishing a boundary…between itself as a 'serious' activity and other less serious or non-serious activities such as leisure" (1998, p. 86). This issue may lead to questions of how to teach and the perceived triviality of what might be taught when education is replaced with

learning. As posited by Gorard, Fevre and Rees (1999), with "learning replacing education, the boundaries around education as a field of study are breached since almost any activity can be seen to involve learning" (p. 437).

Popular musicians have been found to learn by emulating what they hear and through peer examples, while school musicians tend to learn from notation (Campbell, 1995; Green, 2002; 2008a). Without a standard such as notation to judge performance, or a set of objectives to judge learning, teachers may find it difficult to conceptualize their role in the education of students in regards to music and teaching expertise. Green's conception of informal music learning does not require teachers to become experts in all trends of popular music. The role of the teacher is primarily a facilitator, allowing students to create their own goals, diagnosing students' needs in relation to their goals, and modeling through demonstration while giving suggestions when needed.

Green (2008a) acknowledged that educational norms present obstacles for the inclusion of informal practices. Such practices may conflict with teacher requirements, as music teachers are often required to conform to pedagogical norms and strict construction in which "lessons should be clearly structured in distinct parts, including an introduction with specific aims, a variety of activities in the middle, and a closing activity" (2008a, p. 29). Under the Green model, teachers "establish ground rules for behaviour, set the task going at the start of each stage, and then stand back and observe what the pupils were doing" (Green, 2008a, p. 24), but incorporating precise objectives is counterintuitive to informal learning strategies. "Rather the generic aim of listening to a song and copying it was an ongoing objective that stretched over a number of lessons" (Green, 2008a, p. 25). Teachers do not need to spend a great deal of time lecturing when students are engaged in self-directed, co-operative learning. Less structure is

necessary when students exhibit a great deal of self-motivation and become responsible for "organizing and structuring their own teaching and learning strategies" (Green, 2008a, p. 2).

With regard to Green's informal learning model, Allsup (2008) questioned what teacher training would look like and whether the use of informal learning practices would be alarming to observers:

> To outside observers, music teachers who apply informal processes in informal settings may appear to be doing very little. The children in Green's Musical Futures project decide the friends they wish to study with and the music they wish to learn. They spend most of their time copying what they hear from CDs. In Green's curriculum, where professional educators are prohibited from setting explicit educational targets and learning objectives, even a friendly critic is left wondering just how a music educator is trained in informalist teaching, to what uses are put a teacher's content expertise, and the degree to which an acquaintance with instructional theory is even necessary. (pp. 4-5)

Many teachers involved in Green's research, outlined in her book, Music, Informal Learning and the School: A New Classroom Pedagogy (2008a), shared this concern. As a part of the Musical Futures project, involving public schools in London and Hertfordshire, England, teachers were worried that they could face criticism for not actively teaching students or admonishment from a school official whose job it is to inspect classes. In fact, in one formal observation an inspector rated a lesson unfavorably; however, in all other observations, results of inspector visits were "highly favorable" (2008a, p. 29). Similar questions have arisen in regard to cooperative learning techniques espoused by Bruner (1996), and specifically in music making by Pogonowski (2002) and Small (1998). Pogonowski (2002) described the role of the teacher as mentor, indicating that such techniques give teachers the opportunity to learn alongside their students and assess strengths and weaknesses. Small (1998) indicated that the role of the teacher as all-powerful director is precisely what is wrong with music education and does not encourage students to take an active role in music making. As a part of the Musical Futures project, to avoid confusion on the part of observers, teachers and educational experts created documents to help

teachers explain to observers what an informal learning lesson should look like at particular stages (D'Amore, & Price, 2006).

Green (2008a) recognized that informal practices can appear to "throw up conflicts between their [teachers'] existing views of professionalism" but insisted that "any conflict is more apparent than real"(p. 2). With regard to informal popular music education, Green pointed to the wealth of knowledge held by popular musicians with little to no formal training as a reason to incorporate informal learning practices of popular musicians in the classroom. Although informal learning could possibly be used to justify any course of study, the uses Green outlined were meant to supplement, not replace, formal learning and adhere to many of the same curricular goals such as critical listening, performing, improvising, and composing. In her conceptualization of popular music pedagogy, Green suggests that neither formal training nor informal music learning is sufficient as a full education in music. Green finds that informal learning strategies alone do not provide the breadth of knowledge necessary to provide a complete school music education, however, incorporation of informal music making may allow for greater autonomy, creativity, and intrinsic motivation (Green, 2005, 2008a).

Research in Popular Music Making

Research into the informal leaning of popular musicians can clarify the distinct skills and knowledge attained and may justify the inclusion of such practices within music classes. Several studies have been performed to illuminate the context and processes undertaken by musicians who learn to make music outside of school. Of most relevance to the current research are studies that address popular music learning of school-aged children through observation and interviews.

Green (2002) collected interviews with rock band members to understand the learning experiences of popular musicians. The study included 14 musicians between the ages of 15 and

50 that played in original music or cover bands in London, England, in 1998. In the interview process, Green asked musicians about their growth in musical skill and experiences with formal music learning. Results were used to compare learning concepts of formal and informal music learning and provide implications for the inclusion of informal concepts in formal music classes. The results of Green's study for the basis of her understanding of informal music learning are outlined above.

Because Green's study was performed in England, and public education has included instruction in popular music since the late 1980s, school-aged participants in her study were exposed to some popular music education (Green, 2002). Students appreciated the inclusion of popular music study in schools and incorporated the terminology used in music class to discuss musical choices in rehearsal with band members. However, participants did not find learning in music class to be similar to or relevant to popular music learning and worried that poor teaching and formal learning of popular songs would result in participants becoming less interested in popular music making. Missing from music class were the processes used by popular musicians of working in self-selected groups and the importance of social interaction, transcribing from listening to recordings, and improvisation.

Campbell (1995) explored the informal learning processes of popular musicians to better understand the way young rock performers grow musically and how skill is transmitted in teaching and learning. In a multiple case study of band rehearsals with two adolescent rock bands in Seattle, Washington, Campbell collected interviews and field notes to undercover individual learning, dynamics of group membership, and socio-musical aspects of rehearsing in a garage band. Campbell described the locations and length of rehearsals, the adequacy of the musical instruments, and the instrumental breakdown of each band.

Six of the nine participants in this study previously played in public school bands. Three participants had played saxophone while the others played trumpet, trombone, or clarinet (Campbell, 1995). None of the participants were still in a school band. Their decision to play in rock bands seemed to focus around issues of enculturation. These adolescents typically had musical homes in which a parent or sibling played rock music of an earlier generation, had friends that played rock music, or were heavily influenced by music videos and other media.

The practice of song-getting emerged as a point of interest; band members spent much of their time listening to recordings and emulating what they heard (Campbell, 1995). Song-getting was found to be the primary goal of both rehearsal and individual practice and the primary way band members grew in skill. In this way, learning was product based and connected to close emulation of recordings. Participants show growth in individualized and group technical skills through the emulation of popular songs. The need to aurally recreate chosen songs became the basis on which the members jointly structured rehearsal. Each song a band learned to play was frequently practiced so members could retain and perfect their parts. Previously learned songs were rehearsed before band members attempted new repertoire. Members learned from each other through demonstration and explanation based around chord progressions and form (e.g. chorus, verse, bridge). Members that were recognized to have more expertise took on the role of music leader, helping and modeling for less experienced members.

Campbell found that bands hoped to transition from reproduction of popular song to the creation of original music (1995). Original music seemed to be written in private by individual band members and then brought to rehearsal for evaluation and input. The author noted that the original songs seemed to follow conventions found in other songs the bands practiced. Once the

group members learned the essential elements of the original song, they were given license to create their own parts.

Jaffurs (2004b), motivated by Green's (2002) research and modeling Campbell's (1995) methodology, performed an ethnography with a fledgling garage band composed of 3 male and 2 female youths in a suburb of a Midwest city in the United States. Jaffurs observed conducted interviews with parents, observed and recorded rehearsals, collected field notes, group interviews, and used a think-aloud protocol to facilitate a group interview as participants watched a recording of their rehearsal.

Jaffurs (2004b) found that participants were skilled in verbal and nonverbal communication as they transmitted skills and criticisms to each other. Body language and musical communication informed members when they were out of step with the group. Members would signal that they wanted everyone to stop by playing noticeably louder than the others. Less experienced members would seek help from other members thought rehearsal.

Musical discussions within rehearsal tended to focus on tempo, balance, chord choices and "melodic 'licks'" (Jaffurs, 2004b, p. 196). Jaffurs believed that participants worked democratically with no member in charge as participants made choices about composing, instrumentation, and rehearsal scheduling. Many compositional ideas, including the majority of lyrics, came from outside of rehearsal and were developed in the group setting. The majority of difficulties were related to choosing lyrics for songs and simultaneously performing. Discussion during composition often focused on lyrics as well as form and balance.

Classroom Experiments in Popular Music Making

The abundance of research into the skill acquisition and learning of popular musicians has given credence to experimentation with popular music learning in formal education. Through

a grant from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Green (2008) developed an informal approach to popular music making as a part of the Musical Futures project. Green implemented her pedagogy in Twenty-one London and Hertfordshire public schools from 2002 through 2006. Students formed self-selected ensembles and chose instruments, selected songs to emulate from CDs they brought from home and created original songs of a popular style. To gauge the effectiveness and potential difficulties of the program, data were collected through class observations and individual interviews with teachers and students.

Green (2008a) found that students were more motivated in the learning process when they were self-directed and felt a sense of autonomy. Green emphasized that emulating audio recordings allowed students to learn skill often missing in typical music classes through exploration and experimentation. Although many students were at first overwhelmed by the autonomy they were given, they were motivated to discover and develop the musical skills necessary to perform popular songs and the social skills necessary to cooperate with group members of differing social and musical skill levels.

In the latter stages of Green's (2008a) project, students applied popular music principles to the study of classical music. Students reported a greater ability to emulate and compose in a classical style and a greater appreciation of classical music after learning popular music skills. Green hypothesized that such skills could transfer to many styles of music:

> However unfamiliar its intersonic meanings might sound to the ears and however distant its cultural delineations might be, they would, as with classical music, have found it more approachable, meaningful and enjoyable as time went by…as was echoed again and again in countless interviews, it was the *approach to learning* [emphasis in original] that made the tasks more meaningful and the musical experiences more positive…it is based on the real-life learning practices of musicians drawn from the world outside of school; it is fundamentally developed by learners through learning; it is therefore accessible; it affords autonomy to the learner; it involves group work; and is holistic. (pp. 176-177)

Adaptations of the Musical Futures project described above have been the subject of case studies in Australia (Jeanneret, McLennan, & Stevens-Ballenger, 2011), Canada (O'Neill & Boespflug, 2011), and the United States (Jones, 2014). In each case, authors note student growth in musical and social skills. In Jeanneret et al. (2011), authors reported that middle school-aged students maintained high levels of engagement springing from the positive relationship between teacher as facilitator and students that felt empowered to make choices and direct their own learning. Students learned to communicate effectively with each other and teachers and became better musically skilled on instruments, playing in ensembles, listening to others, and improvising (Jeanneret et al., 2011). In a similar study with middle school-aged students, O'Neill and Boespflug (2011) found that the project led to greater student engagement and skill in composing, playing in an ensemble, and emulation through listening. The authors reported that students displayed growth in leadership skills through group collaboration and students began to identify themselves as musicians, spending additional time on the project outside of class.

As the subject of a 2014 dissertation, Jones adapted primary stages of the Musical Futures project as an after school program with high school band students. Jones met with eight students after school for one hour twice a week for six weeks to allow students to select and create arrangements of popular songs in self-selected groups. In a collective case study, Jones collected data in the form of student questionnaires, recorded observations, one-on-one semi-structured interviews, field notes, and student artifacts produced throughout the project.

As result of a pilot study, Jones chose to not complete all phases of the Musical Futures project, but instead chose to allow students to emulate songs from recordings in a six-lesson process that was repeated a second time (2014). In these steps, students were introduced to informal learning concepts and given choices of instruments, group membership, genre and song.

Students collaborated in their groups to arrange the chosen song and students performed the completed arrangement. Many of the results of the study are explained as the change in group mechanics between the first and second iterations of the six-lesson process.

In the first iteration of Jones' (2014) project, the eight participants chose to work as a single group. Progress was slow at first because members were hesitant to offer direction to the group. Once a consensus was established on specific songs to perform, those with more musical expertise began to take leadership roles, making decisions about the music and bearing much of the responsibility for transcribing from recordings. Although some members were inclined to take on leadership roles associated with the task at hand, they were uncomfortable with telling other participants what to do. Another student emerged as a leader to deal with administrative concerns and division of labor. Decisions thought to be of high importance were made through group consensus in which all members' opinions were valued. Students used much of their time to work in separated groups to create melody, bass lines, or percussion parts. Students emulated many of the practices they knew from formal band classes and transcribed using traditional notation.

In the second iteration of the project, the participants chose to form two groups (Jones, 2014). While students worked independently in the first attempt at informal learning, they became more comfortable with using the researcher/facilitator as a resource in the second iteration as their focus shifted away from quantity of transcription to the quality of the product. Many participants moved away from formal transcription, using notation to denote pitches but not rhythms. Students gained rhythmic accuracy by playing along with the recordings. After the second iteration of the project, students reported greater ability to collaborate, better listening skills, and growth in musicianship.

Through listening to recording, modeling, and experimentation, students became successful at copying and arranging popular songs (Jones, 2014). Although students were steeped in traditional band practices and lacked common terminology to communicate ideas, they used multiple techniques and productive discussion to engage in informal music learning practices. At the conclusion of the project, students reported increased listening skill to music they listened to outside of school and ability to listen beyond themselves within their band ensembles. Students were proud of the arrangements they created and spoke positively about the project.

Drawing on research into informal learning and democratic education, Allsup (2003) conducted research with 9 high school band students in a rural town in upstate New York. Once a week for eleven weeks, Allsup met with students after school and asked them to create original music in the style of their choice, using any instruments available to them. The students elected to separate into 2 groups, one choosing to use traditional band instruments and the other choosing popular/rock instruments and music. In this ethnographic study, participants were given the opportunity to aid in the design and implementation of data collection through collaborative inquiry. Data was collected through multiple techniques including individual and group interviews, audio recordings and spontaneous discussions.

Students worked together through mutual learning (peer interaction that is self-directed and situation specific) and democratic action (setting goals through dialogue). Allsup found that mutual learning and democratic action (or discovery) gave students the opportunity to learn and acquire skills in unpredictable ways (2003). Students that chose to create rock music adopted popular music-making techniques. Musical ideas flowed from improvised playing and individual contributions rather than from discussion or any overall plan. The group that chose to work with

classical traditions had difficulty finding a unified voice, opting to compose separately after failed attempts to collaborate. In order to effectively collaborate, the students chose to switch genres and work as a jazz band.

Students from both groups found composition tasks to be enjoyable when they were able to work with like-minded individuals. The chosen genre was found as the largest determiner of a groups' culture, with the traditions of each genre determining the way students communicated musical and verbal ideas. Students believed that collaborative composition of classical music was particularly difficult, noting the reliance on individual concepts and choices such as orchestration and time period.

Informal leaning concepts have been applied to the study of popular music in elementary classrooms as well. The works of Green and Campbell, with application of democratic and social-construction theories, formed the impetus for an action research project involving twenty-four students in a mid-Atlantic fourth grade elementary class (Davis, 2013). Using ethnographic techniques of audio and visual recordings, field notes, participant observations and individual and group interviews, Davis (2013) engaged in a project designed to allow elementary students to engage in popular music making through aural copying, performance and composition.

Data were gathered over the course of four months, during which students met twice weekly for 30 minutes in their regular music class (Davis, 2013). After providing guidance through whole-group discussion and instruction, students worked in cooperative-friendship groups to emulate popular songs by listening to a recording and using classroom instruments, synthesizers and voice. In cycles of teacher-led whole-group instruction and separated groups, students chose a song for the whole class to emulate and investigated the instrumental texture and form of the song to grasp the repeating structure of chords and ostinati. Within groups,

students chose the instrument that all within the group would play and worked to recreate their parts through listening, hands-on discovery, peer-to-peer learning and group discussion.

Davis found that the use of informal practices through popular music gave young students the opportunity to develop musicality and play expressively, without the need for traditional music notation, by playing by ear and making performance decisions (2013). Emotional connections to music and engagement in learning were higher and more immediate when students were given the power to choose the style of music presented in class. Using music belonging to the students' world outside the classroom fostered personal-emotional connections, allowing students to "expand their own feelings" and develop social identity (p. 41).

Conclusions

As is discussed in *Chapter 3*, it is the duty of the descriptive phenomenologist to disregard the present material during the bulk of analysis so that the collected data are not analyzed through the milieu of preconceived theories. Furthermore, although CAC is by definition connected to the world of popular music, no assumption is made that the phenomenon of high school CAC will contain elements of informal learning and organization. In the present study, I only wish to describe the phenomenon of high school CAC from the meanings signified in the speech of participant/members. I am under no obligation to compare my results to past findings, but only to describe the features of the phenomenon related to student benefit. Once such descriptions are manifest, I may make comparisons between my findings and past research whether included within this review of literature or not.

In the articles presented above, both research and opinion based, there is embedded within a concern that traditional ensembles may offer a narrow view of musicianship that may

not be valued by the world outside of classical music. Alternative opportunities for students to engage with music learning and making, with attention paid to how such opportunities benefit students in ways that may not be present within traditional ensembles, should then become a focus of scholarly inquiry. However, the concept of musicianship is often described as competency-based. Although musicianship may be a result of experience, it is necessarily an interpretation of what is presented to the researcher. Therefore, any results that signify the notion of musicianship may point to the meaning of musicianship within a context, but not direct confirmation of its existence.

In this review of literature, there is little discussion on the appropriateness of popular music lyrics. I found it interesting that although many articles pointed to the appropriateness of lyrics as a barrier to inclusion for many teachers, such claims were not sufficiently supported by data, past research, or philosophical grounding. I do not, however, conclude that these claims are false. It must be noted that the vast majority of popular music includes singing and words, and therefore, a message.

The sonic qualities of popular music cannot possibly be divorced from the lyrics, yet music education researchers have chosen to shy away from substantive discussion of lyrics and song meaning. Moreover, such discussion seems to be missing not only from popular music discourse but also from music education in general. Research in choral and elementary music, as well as teacher training, seem to side-step the importance of lyrics. I have found that the majority of music education research that deals with lyrics in any way comes from preference research and popular music research. But, how can this be when choral music has always relied on text? It may be that the predominance of religious texts in choral music has led to an avoidance of the subject.

Along the same lines, missing from the discussion is the legality of performing, adapting, and recording popular songs. It may be that a lack of legal expertise about adaptation and derivation of original works, educational use, and public performance is seen as acceptable within music education research. In a certain light, one could infer that research related to the authentic inclusion of popular music study advocate breaking laws. Particularly troubling is the concept of popular music as a communally shared and owned when most popular songs are owned by a copyright holder. Although copyright law may seem vague and temporary, ethical considerations cannot be ignored (especially when research is experimental and vulnerable populations are involved). As researchers, we cannot search for truth while hiding it from ourselves. Nevertheless, there is a very real threat that attention to these details will lead to changes to the practices being researched.

Supporters of popular music inclusion often point to the significance of socio-cultural context and individual identity as important aspects missing from typical school music experience. However, as products of our time, do we not each interpret all art through our individual perspectives, reflective of our socio-cultural sphere? Ownership is often cited, but do students not gain a sense of ownership over the performance they create in all genres of music? And, do they not eventually gain a sense of ownership, over the song itself? Many of the claims for the social benefit of popular music education point to outcomes of community, but these authors do not seem to offer evidence that such community building is absent in traditional music experiences nor do they give scope to their idea of community as might be expected in light of contemporary culture.

Proponents of popular music inclusion point to student benefits and community benefits but often do not address any benefit to the director, administration, school, et cetera. Concerning

the teacher/director, popular music inclusion seems to come at her detriment as duties become murky and unpredictable, her authority within the classroom is theoretically diminished, and she is tasked with explaining the lack of structure and lack of evidential learning to parents and administrators. Such concerns may give understanding to why popular music research within the united states is most often conducted in general music classes (which do not place an emphasis on competitive performance) or as an after-school supplement rather than a replacement of typical experiences.

When experiments in popular music learning are performed with students already in typical music ensembles, it may be difficult to judge whether such inclusion could lead to more students participating in school music programs. Also, the results of such studies with United States band students may not generalize to a larger demographic, possibly only reflecting the results of the precise population of students that would not participate in such programs under some circumstances such as an alternative to band.

A large number of studies have been performed over the years to capture the ways in which students that participate in music ensembles are different from other students. What then, can be concluded about popular music studies that only include these students through experimental endeavors? School music programs exist in the United States that likely draw on popular music such as music technology courses, guitar ensembles, and CAC. Many of these programs have existed for multiple years, offering consistent and longitudinal looks at popular music inclusion, but the music education community of researchers has overlooked these genuine programs for the imaginary and abstract.

In his 2007 dissertation, Duchan tracked the beginnings of collegiate CAC from a few glee clubs at Ivy League colleges to colleges and universities across the country and around the

world. Although high school CAC may be in a nascent stage or only a trend, music educators and researchers would benefit from a better understanding of high school CAC, its culture, its focus, and its value. Should high school CAC continue to expand, and more schools offer CAC as a curricular subject, aspects of the phenomenon will become standardized. It is in the interest of the music education community to take notice, form opinions, and to learn and to teach before we are left out of the conversation altogether.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Research Design

A descriptive phenomenological research process as described in Amedeo Giorgi's (2009) *The Descriptive Phenomenological Method in Psychology* was chosen as the method of research for this study. Within the steps of analysis, supplemental protocols from Fredrick Wertz's (1985) "Methods and Findings in an Empirical Analysis of 'Being Criminally Victimized,'" were incorporated for its transparency through detailed descriptions of procedures performed within larger steps of analysis. This method allows the researcher to arrive at a durable understanding of essential meanings of a phenomenon from the pre-reflective (unplanned/extemporaneous) speech of those who have experienced the phenomenon first-hand (Giorgi, 1997). High school CAC has not been the object of much scholarly attention; for this reason, a holistic and atheoritcal approach that allows the researcher to remain open to all aspects of the phenomenon was deemed preferable over any quantitative approach that requires a priori knowledge of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

Descriptive analysis is achieved by structuring the invariant aspects of the phenomenon within the mind of the researcher while simultaneously applying mindful and intuitive processes to highlight and test the essential characteristics of the phenomenon. As with any application of phenomenology, analysis is understood to occur within the mind of the researcher (Giorgi, 2009). In a descriptive phenomenology, the researcher treats participant descriptions as the only raw data, using open-ended questioning and bracketing or bridling of assumptions to negate the researcher's influence during collection and analysis of data (Dahlberg, 2006; Giorgi, 2009). The raw data are transformed into constituents that allow for analysis of the participants' verbal

communication. Analysis often includes recording, transcription, separation of individual transcripts into meaning units, transformation of meaning units into their meanings as seen through a particular lens, thematization of individualized accounts, integration of individualized accounts and construction of essential characteristics of the phenomenon.

Through processes that are described below, meaning units are transformed to highlight the acts of consciousness that are specifically directed toward the phenomenon, first in the language of the participant, then translated into the researcher's voice through language appropriate and sensitive to an applied research lens. These writings aid in the process of looking horizontally across the experiences of multiple participants to find aspects of the phenomenon essential to its experience. Through the application of the phenomenological reductions, bracketing/bridling and free imaginative variation, researcher influence is minimized in establishing the eidetic (concrete/invariant) features of the phenomenon (Giorgi 1997, 2009; Moustakas, 1994).

Qualitative Paradigm

Phenomenology is not truly qualitative or quantitative. Phenomenological methods could be utilized in either qualitative or quantitative paradigms. The value of phenomenology as a mode of inquiry is that epistemological and ontological concerns are not taken for granted but inform each phase of design and implementation. Likewise, the question of paradigm is not then related to convenience or choice, but based solely on the research question. In this case, the phenomenon under investigation (high school CAC) is a multifaceted and diverse series of experiences. This research is interested in the experience of membership in terms of social and psychological understanding and educational value. Since learning is by nature individual and varied, first-person accounts are the best avenue to pursue learning related to the phenomenon.

Qualitative methodology allows for multiple points of view of a phenomenon, incorporates techniques that allow for the synthesis of multiple versions of a mutual reality, and utilizes data-collection tools designed to allow participants to give unique responses. The qualitative approach to research recognizes that there is "a difference between results and their meaning" (Giorgi, 2009, p. 64). Because the phenomenon of CAC is likely to include multiple-significant aspects of the experience, participant descriptions may offer more meaning about the essence of the experience than quantifiable data.

The objective of the qualitative study of a phenomenon is not to highlight or quantify a specific aspect, but to arrive at a holistic understanding of the phenomenon (Giorgi, 2009). Qualitative modes of inquiry value explanation over measurement and understanding over generalization (Bowen, 2005). A qualitative methodology was chosen because the purpose of the study is not to create an intervention based on an experimental hypothesis but to articulate and structure meanings emergent from the pre-reflective description of participants (Giorgi, 1985). The goal of this study is to utilize the lived experience of members of high school CAC choirs in order to arrive at a generalized understanding of high school CAC membership. A paradigm that allows for the description of the phenomenon from a subjective perspective is appropriate to understand the CAC phenomenon from the perspective of high school students. Since all perspectives are inherently subjective and incomplete, integration of these subjective accounts will provide a sense of a phenomenon based in objective reality (Giorgi, 1992, 1997, 2009).

Qualitative inquiry was chosen in part to gain a base understanding of the phenomenon of CAC in high schools. A priori assumptions would not allow for a researcher to remain fully open to the experiences of the participants or allow for detailed and organic accounts of those

experiences. Furthermore, the use of a hypothesis would restrict openness to the presentation of data and not allow for a full account of the phenomenon (Giorgi, 2009).

Phenomenological Methodology

Modern phenomenology is mostly based on the work of Edmund Husserl and can be broadly described as the study of human consciousness (Zahavi, 2003). The subjective nature of human consciousness necessitates that separated observers experience a single phenomenon in discrete ways. With the awareness that participants' experience may not be wholly objective, a philosophically based phenomenological approach is an appropriate paradigm. For a phenomenological researcher, reality cannot be divorced from how it is perceived by the observer (Zahavi, 2003). This position collapses the subject-object dichotomy relevant to most forms of philosophy and qualitative research as nonessential. The objects of the world are only available to us through intentional acts of consciousness. Therefore, the closest a researcher can get to the phenomenon is to investigate the consciousness of the person that experienced the phenomenon, rather than attempting to reconstruct the phenomenon itself from direct observation.

Giorgi explains that "phenomenology as a philosophy seeks to understand anything at all that can be experienced through the consciousness one has of whatever is 'given'… from the perspective of the consciousness person undergoing the experience" (2009, p. 4). The goal of studying anything at all through someone else's perspective compels researchers to contemplate the manner in which objects can appear to consciousness, how humans can intentionally interact with these objects, and one's own philosophical beliefs of reality and meaning.

Constructing Meaning

In other qualitative methods based in philosophy, the operation of research is rooted in the subject/object question: How does one come to understand the world? In phenomenology, the observer can only come to understand the world of objects through the observer's construction of objects through thought. Husserl explained the link between the subject (self) and object (other) as an intentional act of consciousness (Zahavi, 2003). The construction the observer makes becomes the observer's reality.

Branches of phenomenology are split along philosophical lines with corresponding views on researching, the role of the researcher, and how individual realities are integrated into a whole. Phenomenology as a philosophy can be classified into the two distinct perspectives of hermeneutical and transcendental (Vagle, Hughes, & Durbin, 2009). I must clarify that these distinctions are presented herein for utility. In truth, these categories are over-simplified to expose the two major approaches to research with human participants and give the reader some understanding of the risks of heedlessly attempting research without understanding the philosophical assumptions that give credence to method.

To best explain the different perspectives of phenomenology, I find it necessary to discuss subject and object though such discussion is a faux pas in phenomenology. If we consider the concepts of subject and object as mental constructions, they are then superseded by the concept of consciousness. If subject and object are both constructs of consciousness, the existence of an outside world of objects cannot be assumed as evidential (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962). It can neither be assumed that objective reality does not exist, yet, to perform research, one cannot assume both conditions simultaneously true, and therefore research will align with one condition or the other.

In hermeneutical phenomenology, reality is the product of the interaction between the human and the world. This presupposition assumes that the body cannot be removed from the mind; the subject cannot be separate from the object; and, most importantly for researchers, the researcher cannot be separated from the phenomenon. In this way, interpretation plays a critical role in the research process. From this perspective, an outside look at hermeneutical phenomenology could infer a subjective and subject-centered approach, as the researcher's subjectivity in a subject of the research.

The position of hermeneutical phenomenologists, at least in the context of research methodology, honors the concept of multiple subjective realities. For the sake of precision, it must be mentioned that both hermeneutical and transcendental perspectives in phenomenology can be described by the term *transcendental* because both perspectives construct knowledge made known through the exploration of how objects appear to humans through consciousness. However, hermeneutical phenomenology operates as an application of transcendental idealism, which presupposes that reality does not extend beyond each individual experience with an object. Hermeneutical (or interpretative) phenomenologists investigate the world as though meanings cannot transcend beyond individual experiences (Dahlberg, Drew, & Nyström, 2001).

In contrast to hermeneutical phenomenology, transcendental phenomenology, such as descriptive, realist or empirical phenomenology, research is performed with a slant toward multiple-subjective perspectives of an objective reality. Although these phenomenologies do not assume objective reality, functionally, they operate through application of *realism*: openness to the possibility that the world of objects may exist independently of consciousness. In phenomenological language, descriptive phenomenologists assume a transcendental truth about the phenomenal world that can be investigated through intersubjectivity (Zahavi, 2003).

Phenomenologists that work from this perspective search for universals of experiences that exist within separate individual accounts of experience. In short, there is an essential truth in each subjective account of a phenomenon, in the transcendental space between subjective accounts exists an essential truth beyond each individual experience but made real through those experiences (Zahavi, 2003).

Real and Irreal Objects

Husserl categorized all objects as being either real or irreal; Husserl described real objects as objects existent in space and time and regulated by causality. Irreal objects are then any objects that do not conform to all of the above criteria. Feelings, for example, are irreal because they exist in time and are thought to be regulated by causality, but do not exist is space. Participants' feelings are an important aspect of a phenomenon and are accessible through participant descriptions (Giorgi, 2009). Including descriptions of irreal objects, along with real, enables the researcher to explore the full experience of a phenomenon as it appears to the consciousness of the participant.

The Descriptive Phenomenological Method

A descriptive phenomenological method for psychology, as described by Amedeo Giorgi (2009), is the approach used in this study. However, modifications to the method were made in order to apply a sociological research lens. There are many advantages to employing Giorgi's 2009 method; among them is a philosophical stance that allows descriptions to be treated in a holistic manner. Interviews with participants that have experienced the phenomenon under investigation allow for in-depth and spontaneous descriptions to emerge with minimal influence from the researcher. Descriptions are treated as the only data. Examination of descriptions from

multiple participants, that have experienced the phenomenon in different situations, allows the research to describe invariant (eidetic) aspects of the phenomenon as a general structure of experience. Rigor is provided through the analysis processes of multiple holistic readings of the transcribed descriptions, the application of the phenomenological reduction, free imaginative variation, and audit trails.

Giorgi's (2009) descriptive phenomenological method of research is built on the transcendental philosophical work of Husserl. Husserl's approach gives priority to the understanding of consciousness because it is through consciousness that knowledge is accessed:

> Philosophical phenomenology makes explicit that it considers everything to be studied from the view point [sic] of consciousness (which can exist at many levels) or subjectivity (which also has levels). Consequently, there is a certain priority given to consciousness because it is the medium of access for any knowledge whatsoever. (p. 68)

The confluence of the study of consciousness and the belief in an essential communality/commonality to how humans experience the phenomenon leads descriptive phenomenologists to claim that this mode of inquiry is as valid as empirical research based on the scientific method, which does not take consciousness into account (Giorgi, 2009). This epistemological perspective gives precedence to understanding the act of perception as primary in the order of knowing anything and everything. If we can only know the world through consciousness, then interrogation of the acts of consciousness is a more direct route to meaning than an attempt to study the phenomenon itself. According to Giorgi, the pre-reflective descriptions of those who have experienced the phenomenon is the primary access point to one's intentional conscious acts directed toward the phenomenon (Giorgi, 2009).

Giorgi often applies descriptive phenomenology to the study of psychological phenomena such as jealousy. In this way, Giorgi delimits his study only so far as to treat the collected

descriptions in psychological terms. However, concepts such as jealousy could be studied from a biological, anthropological, evolutionary, or any number of other disciplines. As with any examination of what is given, a researcher must limit the study in some way because there is no such thing as an atheoretical tool (Denzin, 1978), "data gathering, therefore, is not distinct from theoretical orientations" (Berg, 2009, p. 4).

In the Husserlian tradition of philosophical phenomenology, a person's *lebenswelt* or life-world is the focus of inquiry. This consideration is often conceptualized as it was described by Merleau-Ponty: "man is in the world, and only in the world does he know himself" (1945/1962, xi). This first-person perspective of life-world experience can only be understood through a person's consciousness, which Husserl explains as intentional: consciousness directed toward objects. Consciousness is then understood as the natural attitude that a person uses to understand the world of objects within the person's social/cultural sphere.

The goal of data collection is then to employ the best method to arrive at pre-reflective meanings directed toward objects (experience), through after-the-fact descriptions (Giorgi, 2009). The primary data-gathering tool in Giorgi's descriptive phenomenology is one-on-one interviews. Qualitative techniques such as open-ended interviews are best suited to handle multiple views of a phenomenon (Bresler, 1995,1996). Interviews are used because the participants' perceptions of the phenomenon are the data. Therefore, language is the medium through which data are gathered and analyzed.

Sociological Perspective

This study was undertaken explicitly to benefit the field of music education. The phenomenon of high school CAC was dealt with in terms that can apply to the field. As

discussed above, implications for music education, derived from the experience of high school CAC, are likely to include musical experiences, social/psychological experiences and learning experiences within a group setting. All of these experiences may be studied within the frame of educational sociology. Such a perspective requires socialization, meaning both the gain of knowledge and the shaping of values, to be considered the purpose of education.

The phenomenon studied was a voluntary, recurrent, and temporary group activity. Such activities are best studied through a lens that can describe the phenomenon in both psychological and sociological terms (Steele & Zurcher, 1973). The phenomenon of CAC fits the criteria of what is described as an ephemeral role: "a temporary or position-related behavior pattern *chosen* [emphasis in original] by the enactor to satisfy social-psychological needs (Zurcher, 1970, p. 174). The sociological perspective was a best fit for CAC because participants freely selected the activity, which placed the participants out of the normal behaviors of everyday life and into a position relative to a select group of members (Steele & Zucher, 1973; Zucher, 1970).

An educational-sociological lens allows for the emergence of structures of meaning belonging to musical, social, psychological, and educational categories (McCarthy, 1997; Paul & Ballantine, 2002; Rideout, 1997; White, 1964). Music educators have been hesitant in adopting a sociological perspective because of the dominance of educational psychology (McCarthy, 1997). In a comprehensive examination of literature, Veblen and Olson (2002) suggested that educational psychology yields results that are too narrowly focused; they pointed to sociological research in music education as foundational to concepts of formal and informal teaching, authenticity, and community. The use of a sociological perspective may be particularly salient when considering contemporary/popular music. Vulliamy and Shepherd (1984) explained that the significance of music is inherently social, especially when considering contemporary music:

> Popular music is capable of making direct personal statements which are very much symptomatic of the 'here-and-now', and which can consequently be sensed by audiences as being of direct social relevance. (p. 73)

Limitations

The phenomenon of high school CAC could be studied through many disciplines. Some of the previously mentioned disciplines limit the findings to only address concepts of that field. The phenomenon of high school CAC likely have implications for concepts that belong to any number of fields. For this reason, it was appropriate to use an approach that is open to the emergence of all possible meanings. However, meanings can be described differently through different disciplines. Because the phenomenon studied was a recurrent and multifaceted group activity, I determined that a sociological approach was the most appropriate lens through which to engage the phenomenon. Through such a lens, I found it necessary to make modifications to the method of data collection as well as the goals of analysis.

Giorgi's application of descriptive phenomenology for psychology most often treats pre-reflective descriptions of situation-specific accounts of a phenomenon as raw data (2009). Therefore, researchers pose situation-specific questions such as "tell me about a specific moment when you experienced fear." Examination of poignant experiences with the phenomenon may not fit with the goals of the present study. The experience of membership in a CAC choir, studied through a sociological lens, may not be well served by situation-specific questions. Asking participants to relive a specific instance in space and time may not prove fruitful because of the frequency of experience and the complexity of the phenomenon of group membership.

Situation-specific questioning focuses attention on the monumental over the typical. This is appropriate in psychology when the participant is ask to talk about a feeling such as fear or betrayal because they are specific emotions that occur with respect to situation-specific stimuli.

With recurrent phenomena that may encompass any number of feelings and actions, it may be difficult to arrive at specific instances of an experience that shed light on the overall experience of the phenomenon through situation-specific questioning.

For example, if a researcher were interested in studying a typical golf outing from the perspective of casual golfers, it would be inappropriate to ask casual golfers to explore specific memories. If a researcher asked a participant to recount a specific episode of golfing, it would necessitate that the specific experience be more memorable than each other episode for some reason. Whether a positive or negative experience, from the recent or distant past, there would likely be something atypical about the experience in order for the participant to pick it over all other past experiences of the phenomenon. Should the golfers talk about sinking a hole-in-one or getting caught in a thunderstorm, the collected data could not be considered typical of a golf outing.

In such an example, the researcher would then be collecting data of anomalies rather than generalizable experiences of the defined phenomenon. It would be more appropriate to ask the question "describe what it is like to play a round of golf", "tell me about what typically happens when you play golf", or possibly "what would you expect to happen if you went to play a round of golf?" as an initial question that can facilitate long-form descriptions from participants. These questions are appropriate because they more precisely deal with typical experiences, which can yield a better understanding of the participants' life-worlds (Schwandt, 1997).

Without the ability to ask participants about experiencing a phenomenon in general terms, it would be impossible to synthesize the invariant aspects of a multifaceted phenomenon. Furthermore, generalized questioning may prove an absolute necessity when studying group membership; the experience of membership carries past propinquity with other member, into

many facets of life experienced individually, with non-members, with one or many group members, and so on.

The use of generalized questioning which does not refer to a specific instance has been criticized because it takes the focus of research away from actual lived experiences (Zahavi, 2005). To some phenomenologists, data may reflect what is label immanent consciousness (directing consciousness towards itself) as found in various reflection theories. However, these criticisms are based on psychological studies where poignant moments would likely dull or change over time in a participant's memory. This may not be the case in sociological studies where understanding one's place within a structure would grow over time instead of diminish. Though these acts have been excluded from study in the past, contemporary researchers have begun to describe these experiences as methodologically pure in light of Husserl's posthumously published material on self-awareness (De Warren, 2009; Zahavi, 2003).

The issue then becomes whether inquiry directed toward the generalized phenomenon as it appears to consciousness can yield meaning when, in phenomenological terms, meaning is often understood as the determinant relationship between a conscious act and the phenomenon (Zahavi, 1999). Does such inquiry remove research away from how the phenomenon appeared to the conscious and instead interrogate what Giorgi described as "the synthetic activity of consciousness" (Giorgi, 2009, p.119)? If consciousness is temporally experienced, can the human memory intuitively generalize phenomena or is reflection required? Does this type of inquiry require the subject (participant) to become the object, and can a participant be concurrently subject and object? Such questions have been previously explored through writings on the Husserlian perspective of experiential being and retention as aspects of perceptual awareness (Moran, 2005), endurance of intentionality in the consciousness (De Warren, 2009,

2010), and alterity (Zahavi, 1999, 2005). Such philosophical dilemmas underscore why phenomenology is most often the subject of theoretical research rather than employed as a method (van Manen, 1990).

If generalized thoughts are to be treated as raw and pure data within the framework of Giorgi's method, they must be pre-reflective. In his 1999 book Self-Awareness and Alterity: A Phenomenological Investigation, Dan Zahavi made strong arguments to support such thoughts as pre-reflective, first-order thoughts. Although a complete explanation of Zahavi's work is not possible herein, I will attempt to highlight the aspects of his work that are important to the question at hand.

First, it must be understood that a participant who is asked to talk about a phenomenon is self-aware and could have at any time reflected upon any past moment or moments of life (Zahavi, 1999). Such a statement puts the whole of psychological studies in question because memorable moments in life are exactly that, moments one tends to reflect upon. To get around this road bump, Giorgi asks research participants to think in a temporal way, being co-present in the present and past moment within a natural attitude to negate any meaning that might be introduced by the participant through reflective acts. However, simply by asking a participant to talk about experiencing a phenomenon initiates a level of reflection; to speak of an instance of a phenomenon requires the participant to have an indexical knowledge of the generalized phenomenon (Zahavi, 1999). Furthermore, while speaking extemporaneously about a specific moment, the participant will continue to contend with a general understanding of the phenomenon in order to speak about a moment relative to the phenomenon (Zahavi, 1999).

To Zahavi (1999, 2003), the question of whether generalized phenomena must be reflected on is based in Husserl's descriptions of natural reflection (thinking about one's

experiences, emotions, et cetera. from a subjective experience) and transcendental reflection (a methodological search for the meaning of a phenomenon internalized by the conscious and removed from worldly context). Zahavi pointed out that through self-apprehension (imagining oneself with detachment as a person interacting with the world, or an object among objects) natural reflection becomes immediately available to the conscious and does not require any mediated analysis. Zahavi would argue that this itself is an obvious outcome of interaction with the outside world within a natural attitude:

> The natural or mundane self-awareness is a constitutively founded self-apprehension. That which founds mundane self-awareness in not pure reflection, but pure prereflective self-manifestation. (p.183)

Without the explicit search for meaning, the natural reflection of participants remain pre-reflective, encompassing the work that the conscious mind inherently performs within the natural attitude (the assumptions we make, and take for granted, about the world around us.) Whether consciously or unconsciously, such is the nature of being human and is central to the intent of phenomenology as a method of inquiry. Questioning a participant under these circumstances then satisfies the criteria of pre-reflective speech. In phenomenological terms; in both kinds of questioning, the researcher is the only one contending with a transcendent phenomenon; the participant is revealing intentional acts of consciousness toward an intentional object (Zahavi, 2003).

Giorgi has admitted that some changes to his methodology would be necessary to fit within the discipline of sociology (Giorgi, 2009, 1997). This change to Giorgi's methodology does not deviate from his conception of phenomenological work so long as participant descriptions reflect the natural attitude and the researcher operates through the phenomenological reduction (Giorgi, 2009).

Initially, sociological phenomenology should be concerned with individual participants' typical experiences with a phenomenon rather than concrete examples when the phenomenon is recurrent and sufficiently complex. There are, however, many reasons that subsequent questioning could focus on specific situations. Note taking throughout the interview process will allow the researcher to determine if concepts raised by the participant can allow for subsequent direction to be framed through situation-specific questioning. For instance, if in the course of description, a participant may describe a psychological concept such as, "sometimes, I get frustrated with other members…" The researcher should then make note of the concept frustration and later ask the participant, "can you describe for me an instance when you were frustrated with other members?"

The data-gathering techniques employed in descriptive phenomenology preclude the inclusion of naturalistic collection techniques. Tools such as participant observation are not treated as data because they rely on researchers to discriminate through the natural attitude. For instance, a researcher may try to investigate a phenomenon such as a choir rehearsal and through observation may notice that a significant amount of time is consumed in the moving about of chairs. This may lead the researcher to conclude that chairs are an important aspect of the phenomenon. This sort of investigation, however, is interpretive rather than descriptive. Such a practice may hold no significance to the participants if they do not associate the time spent moving chairs as a part of the phenomenon of being in a choir.

If a researcher attempts to make observations of a phenomenon, any attention paid to one object requires the exclusion of co-present objects associated with the phenomenon. Such an observation requires the researcher to create bias, judging one aspect as more important than another. Furthermore, an attempt to observe the phenomenon at all as a part of data collection

requires a reductive bias as the researcher must choose when and when not to collect data. For clarity: although we may think of high school a cappella membership in terms of rehearsals and performances, membership is experienced outside of these confinements as well.

In descriptive phenomenology, meanings should not derive from observations. Instead, "description is the clarification of meaning of the objects of experience precisely as experienced" (Giorgi, 1992, p. 122). Furthermore, the inclusion of observations as data can restrict the openness of the researcher to the participants' perspectives (Giorgi, 1997).

The methods utilized in descriptive phenomenological research approach the phenomenon from the perspective of the participant. Observations, used as data, would give priority to the interpretation of a phenomenon by the researcher rather than the descriptions of participants. However, this does not preclude descriptive phenomenologists from performing observations. In fact, for a researcher to define a problem for study, observation is necessary. Observations can then be viewed as researcher assumptions that must be set-aside in some way as to not influence the analysis of data. The technique most often used for this purpose is bracketing.

Bracketing and Bridling

Bracketing, or the attitude of the epoché, is the act of setting aside presuppositions about the phenomenon in question as well as any given objects as they tacitly appear in the world. "It is not a matter of forgetting the past; bracketing means that we should not let our past knowledge be *engaged* [emphasis in original] while we are determining the mode and content of the present experience" (Giorgi, 2009, p. 92). The bracketing of past knowledge is a component of Husserl's phenomenological reduction. Taking on the attitude of the reduction is the way that phenomenological researchers remove themselves from the natural attitude of knowing the world

through preconceptions and instead observe the world by setting aside previous experience, seeing what is given only as it is given to the consciousness of the participant (Dahlberg, Drew, & Nyström, 2001).

According to Giorgi (2009), the phenomenological reduction requires bracketing of past knowledge and that "the object presented to consciousness must be understood as something that is presented to consciousness exactly as it is experienced and one does not claim that it happened exactly the way it was experienced" (p. 90). The researcher applies the phenomenological reduction and subsequent techniques to arrive at invariant meaning among the experiences of participants. It is important to understand that this reduction happens at the point in which the researcher is contending with the data. If observations are used, the phenomenological reduction requires the researcher to disband all preconceptions of the phenomenon and the setting in which it happens. If the data are participant descriptions, the reduction applies to the reading of descriptions without presumptions about the phenomenon. In both cases, bracketing is methodically achieved through reflexivity (examining and revealing one's biases) by admitting presuppositions and putting them aside in order to be open to meaning as it emerges from the data.

Many phenomenologists have questioned the effectiveness and transparency of bracketing in research (Dahlberg, Drew, & Nyström, 2001; Giorgi, 2009). Researchers often point to Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) who indicated that fully bracketing assumptions is impossible. Certainly, by the fact that the researcher has chosen a line of study, the researcher is more likely to view the world in a specific way because of predilection, even if past experience is forgotten. In response to such arguments Giorgi (1997, 2009) asserted that the purpose of

bracketing is not an attempt to forget past knowledge, but an attempt to not allow past knowledge to influence the present experience.

Dahlberg, Drew, and Nyström (2001) found that putting aside past knowledge may not be rigorous or transparent enough to satisfy the requirement of openness to what is present as it is presented (2001). Instead, they used the term *bridling* as a rigorous expansion of bracketing. Bridling is also an attempt to remain open to the experience as experienced, but goes a step further by requiring the researcher to constantly re-evaluate biases and how they may be presently interfering with the research process. In this way, bridling requires a researcher to be his or her own best critic (Vagle, Hughes, & Durbin, 2009). Dahlberg (2006), the inventor of the term, offered this comparison:

> With the term "bridling" we can cover first of all the meaning of "bracketing" (Ashworth & Lucas, 1998; Giorgi, 1997; Husserl, 1998/1913), that is, the restraining of one's pre-understanding in the form of personal beliefs, theories, and other assumptions that otherwise would mislead the understanding of meaning and thus limit the researching openness. The term "bridling moreover covers an understanding that not only takes care of the particular pre-understanding, but the understanding as a whole. We bridle the understanding so that we do not understand too quick, too careless, or slovenly, or in other words, that we do not make definite what is indefinite. (p. 16)

Bridled Assumptions

It is up to the reader to judge how well researcher assumptions are presented. Many qualitative researchers will organize their presuppositions in a single place within a paper. I have admitted my bias by writing a Personal rational for the study and Background for the study in *Chapter 1*. These sections serve as my reasons for this investigation and my past experience with the phenomenon. To include a higher degree of rigor, I include what I expected to find in the present study as well as information on how my involvement in a cappella led to the specific details of the study such as choosing locations for study and involvement with organizations and

gatekeepers of high school CAC. These expectations are considered in the following sections. During data collection and analysis I bridled my assumptions by being mindful of my biases at all times and weighing my assumptions against what was presented in the moment.

Expectations

In order to best understand my own notions of CAC, I examined my prejudices by posing myself questions prior to data collection. I expected some aspects of high school CAC to reflect aspects of collegiate CAC, popular-music learning, and informal learning. However, these questions and expectations may not have presented themselves through the processes of data collection and analysis.

1. What similarities and differences does high school CAC have with a typical high school choral programs and with collegiate CAC as researched by Duchan (2007)?

    1.1 Self-direction:

    > Collegiate groups are self-directed, members negotiate power through administrative and social roles and all members have some control (pp. 302-304). Song choice is often accomplished when a member arranges a song and presents it to the group; sometimes song choice takes place in rehearsal as groups listen to and emulate recordings. Song decisions are often based on how well the song fits with the groups identity, how well it fits the group's voices, and whether the song is popular (pp. 128-131).

I expected that students would feel some ownership of musical performance and indicate some freedom to evaluate progress during rehearsals and to voice their suggestions and criticisms. However, I presumed that the director would mediate these interactions. I expected the role of the director to vary greatly between programs, but I thought it likely that directors would control the majority of decisions including choice of music, creation or procurement of musical arrangements, voicing, and rehearsal structure.

    1.2 Structuring of rehearsal time:

> Collegiate CAC rehearsals may take four to eight hours per week and follow a standardized linear routine, often including business meetings, vocal warm-ups, repertory rehearsal and learning new music. Members in leadership positions set goals of rehearsal but the pace of rehearsal is influenced by negotiation of social and musical goals. All voiced opinions are valued and group decisions are made based upon the groups manifested identity, history, social and musical goals, and especially the perceived reception the performance will receive from the audience (pp. 136-138, 151-158, 189-194).

I expected the director would structure rehearsals by setting rehearsal time, procuring rehearsal space and structuring efficient use of rehearsal time. I expected for a lower presence of socialization within rehearsals.

1.3 Available and utilized resources:

> Collegiate CAC occurs in diverse spaces including dormitory common rooms and in typical music-rehearsal spaces through the aid of administrators and bureaucratic channels. College groups often raise money through concert sales to pay for equipment and recording sessions (pp.129-130, 253).

I expected that members would utilize what the director makes available in terms of rehearsal and performance spaces, live-sound equipment, and recording equipment. I expected that members wouldnot make monetary investments with the expectation of monetary gain.

1.4 Group size and gender:

> Collegiate CAC typical has a size of "between eight and sixteen singers and come in all-male, all-female, and mixed gender varieties" (p. 2).

I expected many groups would be of similar size in most cases but some groups would have quite a few more members. I expected that most high school groups would be mixed gender with fewer instances of all-male and all-female groups.

1.5 Mentoring structures:

> In collegiate CAC older members mentor newer members in issues of group identity and typical sound, song selection, negotiating campus politics, and arranging (pp. 168-169, 245).

I expected mentoring to exist between new members, experienced members, and alumni; yet, I expected mutual learning and mentoring to occur in informal spaces during CAC events and director-created opportunities to learn from collegiate or professional CAC members.

1.6 Modification of song arrangement during rehearsal:

I expected song arrangements to be altered during rehearsal based on input from members and the director.

1.7 Stylistic performance features:

> Collegiate CAC groups set goals of emulating recordings and balance emulation with the goal of originality. Group identity and aesthetic quality is important to collegiate CAC members and informs vocal production among other considerations such as formal expansion, musical quotation, solo interpretation, and humor. Typically, collegiate CAC groups avoid using vibrato and make an effort to create a full sound with focus on vocal blend. (pp. 3-4, 109-112, 168-169).

I expected the majority of vocal considerations to be determined by the director or arranger and vocal percussion to emulate original recordings. I expected members to express the goal of emulation but not a specific goal of originality. I expected visual performance to be a secondary consideration and vary dependent on the goals of performance and resources.

2. What similarities and differences does high school CAC have with informal music making and learning as researched by Green, 2008 and Campbell, 1995?

2.1 Emulation through listening:

I expected that the majority of high school CAC programs would utilize sheet music as the source material for creating CAC performances. Peer and director examples, along with listening to recordings, would likely aid the creation of arrangements and style-interpretation choices. However, I expected that vocal percussionists would use recordings as source material and apply knowledge learned from recordings to assist in creating arrangements.

2.2 Choice in musical selections:

I expected that members would feel free to suggest music but not to make unilateral decisions. Nevertheless, I expected song selection would reflect the musical tastes of members and choices to be negotiated in discourse between the director and membership. I expected that availability of resources such as suitable arrangements and student and director skills in arranging would factor into music selection.

2.3 Orientation toward the product rather than the process:

I expected the goal of successful performance (product) would outweigh goals of teaching standard music skills and knowledge. I expected performance goals would influence taught skills and self-taught skills. I expected that students would learn individualized skills to support the goal of successful performance.

2.4 Expertise through expansion of repertory:

I did not expect high school CAC to conform to Campbell's (1995) notion of song-getting. Because CAC requires performance of arrangements instead of adherence to original recordings, I found it unlikely that Members would be concerned with the accumulation of capital in the form of expertise through developing a repertoire; as such skill cannot transfer to new situations. However, I found it plausible that such an effect could pertain to members that recognize themselves as vocal percussionists.

2.5 Peer-directed learning:

I expected that peer-directed learning would be present in rehearsals with students demonstrating and explaining concepts to their peers.

3. What similarities does high school CAC have to out-of-school learning as researched by Resnick (1987)?

3.1 Individual cognition in school versus shared cognition outside (p. 13):

I expecedt shared cognition would be necessary to perform CAC music, I expected students to verbalize this need and speak to the formation and maintenance of social norms to create a sense of shared cognition.

3.2 Pure mentation in school versus tool manipulation outside (p. 13-14):

I expected that technologies would aid in shaping and sharing musical ideas, however these tool would likely only be utilized in rehearsal. Other than sound equipment and tools to locate preliminary pitches, I expected performance to reflect pure mentation.

3.3 Symbol manipulation in school versus contextualized learning outside (p. 14):

I expected the majority of learning would be symbol based with the exception of vocal percussion. However, it is necessary to recognize the difference between learning a song and learning symbol manipulation. With this understanding, I expected that the focus for students would be contextualized learning of a song with the utilization of notation (symbol manipulation) as a manipulated tool.

3.4 Generalized learning in school versus situation-specific competencies outside (pp. 15-16):

I expected that learning in high school CAC groups would result from situation-specific competencies. In my experience, high school CAC students typically gain a number of generalized music learning before joining a CAC group. The ability for students to focus on situation specific competencies might be the result of restricted inclusion in high school CAC groups to only students that exhibit sufficient musical skills.

Creating the Boundaries of the Study

The growth of CAC as a cultural phenomenon might have multiple antecedences as well as multiple consequences within the context of high school music education. To be of relevance

to the wide field of music education, an effort was made to include multiple and diverse experiences of high school CAC. The websites VarsityVocals.com and CASA.org, discussed in *Chapter 1*, provided an entrance into the world of high school CAC. In 2006, Varsity Vocals initiated the *International Championship of High School A Cappella* (ICHSA). On the *VarsityVocals.com* website, I accessed the results from each year's competition and looked for high school groups that had been competing for several years. I contacted several directors, expressing interest in their programs. In conversation with these directors, it became apparent that many of them were members of *The Contemporary A Cappella Society* (CASA).

I joined *CASA* on July 2, 2011. My membership gave me access to CAC forums and articles on the website. I found that high school CAC directors were eager to talk about their experiences. After I expressed that I was interested in talking to directors who have a lot of experience with the genre, I was referred to a choir director in Ohio who has written articles about high school CAC national and regional music education publications, reviewed albums for *The Recorded A Cappella Review Board*, and has directed a prominent high school CAC group.

I contacted the director and was subsequently invited to a CAC festival and clinic at his school. Twenty-six groups from four states attended the conference. I asked the director to identify the most knowledgeable directors for a study I titled *Contemporary High School A Cappella: A Roundtable Discussion with the Experts*. The study was approved of by the University of North Texas' Institutional Review Board and was held on November 12, 2011. From interaction with these experts, it became apparent that there were two typical models for high school CAC. One model, reflective of the ICHSA competition, in which a few members would hold microphones (typically a bass, vocal percussionist, and a soloist/lead singer) while the rest were picked-up by large-diaphragm condenser microphones spaced across the stage; this

model included choreography as an important feature of performance. The other model, reflective of popular a cappella groups (e.g., *Take Six* or *Rockapella*), tended to have less members, allowed for every member to have a microphone, and placed less emphasis on choreography, that is, allowed for performers to interpret movement as an outcome of musical affectation rather than adhere to set choreography.

Since the completion of the study, I have been invited to many festivals and competitions across the United States. I have spoken with many high school directors, collegiate CAC members, and professional CAC members. These practitioners identified diverse school programs that would be appropriate for this dissertation. To gain a diverse perspective in order to find the common essence of experience, I chose to include groups that were small and large, met after school and during school, followed the competitive model and the popular model, and were from disparate regions of the United States.

Participants

Participants in phenomenological studies must be made up of people who have experienced the phenomenon in question (Kruger, 1988). Because teacher/directors must take a prescriptive role in education they cannot be understood as having first-person experiences of membership or learning in this particular case. Only those with experience as student members were considered for participation in this study. To access participants with experience as members in high school CAC, I identified gatekeepers with direct ties to potential participants (Neuman, 2000). Participants were selected from four CAC programs from high schools in California, Massachusetts, Ohio, and Texas. Two members from each group, for a total of eight participants, were asked to participate in one-on-one open-ended interview. However, during preparatory work for this dissertation, the group California reached a level of fame that forced

me to exclude its members from this study. My attempts to replace the group with another from the region were fruitless and time-consuming as I discovered that one after another received substantial media attention are were linked to individuals with nationwide fame. In the end, six participants were included in the study. Boyd (2001) suggested that as few as two participants were sufficient to achieve plausible saturation in phenomenological studies, and Creswell (1998) recommended that phenomenological studies should have at least three and at most 10 participants giving long-form interviews and interviews should take no more that 2 hrs. Transcribed interviews will be used to arrive at an invariant and essential meaning of the phenomenon of high school CAC.

Participants were chosen to maximize the possibility of differing perspectives of the phenomenon. Expanding the range of possible responses made individual differences more obvious thereby aiding me in arriving at invariant aspects of the phenomenon (Creswell, 1998; Giorgi, 2009; Kerlinger, 1986). I incorporated different regions of the United States because it was expected that experiences of the phenomenon from disparate locations could provide differing examples of CAC. I chose to include two participants from each school to provide a diversity of experience in race, gender, socioeconomic, and voice part (e.g., bass, alto, soloist, vocal percussion).

Although each person may experience the phenomenon differently, using two participants from each program allowed me to better gauge the invariant experience within a particular situation through data triangulation. This provided validation when the data reflect similar experiences (Creswell, 1998). Through the incorporation of multiple perspectives from multiple instances of the phenomenon, I was able to assemble:

> An eidetic intuition, with the help of imaginative variation, that enables one to be present to a type of invariant meaning that not only accounts for the many

> disparate facts but also clarifies them in a deeper way. This is why various situations contribute to a deep meaningful structure rather than identical conditions. (Giorgi, 2009, p.85)

The purpose of individual interviews was to collect general descriptions of the experience of membership within high school CACs. The criteria then for inclusion in the study was that the participants could remember experiencing the phenomenon in sufficient detail and could extemporaneously recount the subjective experiences, through language, as they appeared to the participants' conscious thoughts.

Candidates for participation were recent members in high school CAC ensembles. In many descriptive phenomenological studies, it is common to limit participants to anyone who has had experience with the phenomenon and would view the experience through the natural attitude (Giorgi, 2009). As explained in the section titled Limitations, the difference between descriptive phenomenology applied to purely psychological phenomena and applied to voluntary and recurrent phenomena required alteration to Giorgi's approach.

The difference between the holistic phenomenon of CAC and psychological phenomena informed the selection of participants. If one asks a participant to recount a situation is which he or she experienced a psychological phenomenon such as jealousy, fear or anger, the individual will likely be able to pinpoint a specific instance and speak about the situation. Because the nature of the phenomenon to be studied is multifaceted, involving voluntary and reoccurring events, members too far removed from events may not have been able to provide descriptions of a specific situation but may instead have provide generalized understandings and accounts of their experiences with phenomenon. To ensure that participants had the ability to describe concrete examples of instances of the phenomenon (Giorgi, 2009), and that participants were

able to speak about the general phenomenon without reflection (Zahavi, 1999), only recently graduated members of high school CAC choirs were considered for participation.

When participants describe a phenomenon, it is important that there is minimal difference between the participants' conscious thoughts and the descriptions given through language (Giorgi, 1997). Measures were taken to ensure that participants had the facility to speak fluently and precisely about their experiences. For this purpose choir directors were asked to identify candidates for participation who had the ability to express themselves well through verbal communication.

Data Collection

Individual interviews

The goal of one-on-one interviews is to arrive at pre-reflective accounts of the phenomenon through participant descriptions. In order to arrive at pre-reflective meanings, some strategies were implemented: I built rapport with the participants prior to data collection and gave the participants little detail of how interviews would be conducted or their exact purpose (Giorgi, 2009). This was done so participants could not use premeditated answers to my questions.

Rapport

As previously stated, participants needed to be able to give account of their thoughts through extemporaneous speech. This required that the participants enter into long-form descriptions of experience through what can be described as a stream of consciousness. Participants had to be comfortable with speaking with me and having the interview recorded. For participants in Ohio and Texas, this comfort was achieved by building acquaintanceship between

the participants and myself by speaking with them at conventions, competitions, and in visits within their schools. I was not able to visit the Massachusetts school and instead built rapport by separate phone conversations prior to the collection of data. The directors at each school were accommodating in supplying background information on the program and selecting candidates for the study.

Giorgi explained, "one never knows when certain boundaries of intimacy may be encountered" (2009, p. 123). Rapport helped ensure the trustworthiness of the collected data because I built trust with the participants based on good faith. A researcher must make sure to not prod deeply if it becomes apparent that the participant is under emotional stress. Giorgi pointed out that a researcher should never value the research over the health of the participant: "in a conflict between ethics and science, ethics always triumphs" (p. 123).

Open-Ended Questions

To avoid the risk of directing the participant to speak to specific aspects of the phenomenon, open-ended statements or questions were posed, and only the broad aims of the investigation are made known to the participants. This is done so the data can emerge naturally and spontaneously from the participant. Specific goals of the investigation are not made know to participants so the researcher does not lead the participants to speak about specific aspects of the phenomenon or prepare their answers:

> It is theoretically desirable to have participants remain naïve…one does not need the raw data to be purified a priori but it needs to be complex and mixed precisely as it is lived, thick with ambiguities and relationships…The naïveté of the participant also helps to prevent bias because he or she normally does not know what the researcher is seeking and so is usually at a loss as to how to "please" the researcher and as a consequence relates the experience being described rather straightforwardly. (Giorgi, 2009, p. 99)

Procedure

Once acquaintanceship was established and the broad purpose of the interview was made known to participants, individual interviews were held, lasting between one and two hours. The conversations were recorded using a Marshal USB microphone and an iPad, resulting in high-quality digital recordings. All interviews started with the broad statement, "Tell me about your experience as a member of a high school a cappella group."

Subsequent questions were determined through in-the-moment note taking and bracketing of assumptions to determine concepts that are presented through the speech of the participant. This technique required me to employ a research lens, in this case an educational-sociological lens, to determine what elements were present in the participant's speech that required in-depth description. I then determined if the element found in the speech would best be addressed through generalized or situation-specific questioning.

Example

Should a participant describe membership in the following way: "Working with others is sometimes fun and sometimes frustrating", the researcher would make note of the need for further information about the concepts of fun and frustration, but also the general concept of working with others. Common sense would tell the researcher that the concept of working with others is not always fun or frustrating and so more information is needed on the general concept of working with others. In which case, the researcher might redirect with: "Tell me more about working with others in the context of your group."

This does not mean that the concepts of fun and frustration cannot be explored. Subsequent questions would address these concepts in depth. For instance, a researcher might posit: "What have you found to be frustrating when working with others?" This question, still

general (rather than situation-specific) allows the participant to delineate frustrating elements of working with others so that the researcher may follow up with situation-specific questions. For instance, if the response is “Sometimes, we can’t get people to show up on time” or “Sometimes, people want to talk rather than work on music”, the researcher can then ask “Can you describe a situation when people didn’t show up on time?” or “Can you talk about a time when people would not stop talking?”

This practice allows descriptions to transfer from general to specific, commonly referred to as the difference between story and narrative in qualitative interviewing (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). These in-the-moment decisions are vital to the collection process because they allow for in-depth descriptions of specific elements of the phenomenon, derived from the speech of the participant, and are most likely unrehearsed and pre-reflective. Such a protocol allows for organic descriptions that arrive naturally and spontaneously from the participant. In-the-moment note taking reduces researcher bias and helps the researcher keep track of concepts and how best to address them in subsequent questions.

When it appears that the participant is introducing no new concepts, the researcher can redirect the participant to return to the general phenomenon so that other concepts may be explored. Because it is important for interviews to follow a continuous path, an explicit introduction is used to redirect the participant (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The researcher may ask, “What else have you experienced as a member of a high school a cappella ensemble?” If new concepts are introduced, the research can then ask the participant to explore the newly introduced concepts. Once concepts or the participant has become exhausted, the research may conclude the interview. The researcher will then thank the participant for his or her time, remind the

participant of the right to quit the study, give contact information, and answer any questions he or she may have for the researcher.

The researcher interviews each participant a single time. A second interview would break the naïveté of the participant requirement as described above, possibly allowing time for the participant to anticipate questions and reflect on possible answers in an attempt to please or help the researcher (Giorgi, 2009). If the researcher forms any questions for a second interview, the researcher engages in premature analysis.

Testing the Research Instrument

An understanding of the interview procedure does not necessarily equate to competence as an interviewer. In the above procedure, the researcher is called on to make in-the-moment notes and create lines of questioning specific to the goals of the research interest without the use of interpretation. In order to assess my ability to create follow-up questions that were entirely directed from the language of the participant and specific to the phenomenon and educational sociology, a content validity panel of three music education researchers with expertise in qualitative inquiry, sociology and psychology were assembled. With the approval of the University of North Texas Institutional Review Board, written approval from a high school administration, and the completion of informed consent forms, a pilot test was conducted June 25, 2012.

The expert researchers were each informed of the specifics of the interview process and were asked to make in-the-moment notes and create follow-up questions as if they were conducting the interview themselves. Prior to a phone interview, the participant was reminded of the presence of fellow researchers, that the participant's data were to be used only to test the

research instrument, and was reminded of the participant's rights and the goals of the study as they are included on the informed consent form.

After the interview, the panel compared notes, assessed the method used, and the researcher's ability to utilize the method. The panel found that: the questions asked allowed for the participant to engage in pre-reflective long-form descriptions that appeared to be truthful to the participant's experiences; all four researchers referred to equivalent moments in the participant's descriptions as relevant to the phenomenon and educational sociology; all follow-up questions were derived from the speech of the participant, questions reminded the participant of what was said and subsequently asked for further description of what was given and no speculation or interpretations were present in follow-up questions; the researcher was capable of delineating the participant's speech relevant to the phenomenon and educational sociology through in-the-moment note taking and creating subsequent questions to exhaust the concepts presented by the participant.

Analysis

Amedeo Giorgi's (2009) descriptive phenomenological research process informed the design of the present research. Within analysis, meaning units were created, thematized and described through a chosen lens to arrive at the essential features of the phenomenon. Much of the work of arriving at the essence of a phenomenon was done within my own intuition. I employed mindful processes to remove influence and bias to arrive at the eidetic meaning of a phenomenon; these included bridling, the application of phenomenological reductions, and free-imaginative variation. However, intuition plays a role in phenomenological research because insight into participant's life world and the search for meaning must reveal themselves to the

consciousness of the researcher. Mindful processes were applied to test the revelations against possible errors in my judgments.

To arrive at meaning, I transformed raw data into meaning units, themes, and descriptions. To increase rigor, these processes were delineated to demarcate the exact operations that took place within transformation. The specific protocol of analysis I used for this study, introduced by Wertz (1985), was chosen for its rigorous and empirical approach and clearly defined steps. These steps of transformation adhere to the transformation process described by Giorgi (1985, 1997, 2009). Also, this process allowed me to create a clear audit trail so that future researchers could access data and transformations for any number of research purposes. The steps of transformation are: data constitution, individual phenomenological descriptions, idiographic structuration, and general (nomothetic) structuration.

Data Constitution

Data constitution is simply the preparation of raw data for analysis. Before analysis, each interview was transcribed from audio information to written form, participants were codified, and a master code was created. At this point, I treated all collected descriptions as data and analyzed all collected descriptions. "Phenomenology values possibilities and horizons and finds them to be vital for the determination of meanings" (Giorgi, 2009, p. 68). By choosing to analyze some data over other data, I would have engage in interpretation that could influence the outcome of the study. Instead, I transcribed all collected descriptions to ensure that no data were privileged over other data prior to analysis. At the point of transcription, participants were assigned participant numbers (i.e., P1, P2, etc…). This system of non-random codification, rather than random coding or the assignment of pseudonyms, was used to facilitate the steps of analysis.

Systematic codification with assigned-participant numbers allowed me to bridle knowledge of individual participants in order to treat the descriptions alone as data. Although pseudonyms are not used because by choosing names, I would engage in a priori interpretation, and, using names during analysis could encourage me to draw early conclusions and build associations.

Assignment of participant numbers such as P1 and P2 could influence the order in which data are analyzed. Should the researcher interview P1 first, transcribe P1 first, and follow the steps of analysis always using P1's descriptions first; the researcher might allow this order to influence analysis and attempt to structure latter participant descriptions into prematurely-structured assumptions. For this reason, the order of data transcription and analysis for each participant was randomized using a random number generated from a uniform distribution.

Individual Phenomenological Descriptions

In the process of creating individual phenomenological descriptions, I utilized multiple readings of individual descriptions, created and numbered meaning units, discarded irrelevant meaning units, grouped relevant meaning units together, and created a narrative of the resultant groups of units in the participant's own language.

Multiple readings

I began analysis by reading a complete transcription several times for a sense of wholeness. While reading, I contend with the implications for the phenomenon and my own perspective (in this case sociology), while bracketing/bridling assumptions within the scientific phenomenological reduction. Giorgi appropriated the word *scientific* to make distinction that attention is being paid to contextualized and discipline-specific items rather than universals of

human experience (1997). This same attitude of the scientific phenomenological reduction is utilized throughout analysis.

Meaning units

Once a sense of wholeness was understood, I started reading again from the beginning of the description to look for significant shifts in meaning. While reading slowly, within the reduction, being mindful of the educational-sociological implications and the phenomenon under investigation, I looked for changes in meaning, marking the page so the description could be broken into manageable units and numbered. Although this process is subjective, in that the researcher makes decisions, the process does not affect the analysis because "the meaning units themselves carry no theoretical weight" (Giorgi, 2009, p. 130).

Meaning units are simply created and numbered to make transformations more manageable and to aid other researchers, readers and critics with a point of origin where a link can be found between how the phenomenon presented itself to the consciousness of the participant and the researcher's transformations. This link adds trustworthiness to researcher's descriptions, providing evidence that the researcher is making every effort to avoid unconsciously discriminating meanings toward a predetermined outcome.

Irrelevant data

In this phase of data constitution, I contended with the meaning units to make certain that each meaning unit was related to the phenomenon under study. The purpose of this phase is only to remove distractions from the data. For instance, if an interview were to be temporarily interrupted by a phone call or bathroom break, this phase provides a transparent point to document and ethically remove extraneous information. Nevertheless, the researcher's

responsibility is to first look for any possible relevance a meaning unit could have before discarding it. The researcher will then document its removal by keeping a log of discarded meaning units by writing its number and declaring on what grounds it was removed.

Grouped units

This was my first attempt to categorize data into similar components. The goal was to make manifest the intentionality present in the participant's speech by grouping together numbered meaning units. The pre-reflective speech of the participant was understood to be insight into the participant's consciousness as the intentional act that links the subject to objects (Giorgi, 2009; Zahavi, 2003). In this step, I searched for the objects/experiences that were signified within individual meaning units and groups them together thematically.

First-person narrative

Once the meaning units were grouped, I reorganized the groups into a cohesive whole and removed numbers from the meaning units. I searched for similar and intertwining meanings that fit together in a way that was reflective of the participant's natural speech. The data could have been grouped in several different ways. For instance, an interview may be best grouped by topics and subtopics, chronology, feelings and actions, individual actions and group interactions, et cetera. My goal was to pattern these collections to create a linear narrative where thematic shifts were evident. This narrative allowed me to contend with sections of data from the participant's perspective that remain true to the participant's natural/naïve experience with the phenomenon.

Idiographic Structuration

The purpose of ideographic structuration was to shift analysis away from the experience of the natural world. I, as the co-present researcher, drew my attention to meanings attached to features of the phenomenon as they presented themselves the narrative (Giorgi, 2009). In this step, I broke the bond between the phenomenon and the world of objects to reveal the experiential meanings ascribed to the phenomenon. The researcher does not posit these meanings through interpretation, but is tasked with perceiving meanings by "being present" in a transcendental sense to the participant's conscious thought (Giorgi, 2009, p. 90). With the use of mindful and intuitive processes and through testing preliminary findings through free-imaginative variation, I examined individual narratives to find immanent meanings and place them by category into a structural unity for each case (Giorgi 1985; Wertz, 1985).

In this processes, I transformed the ordinary language of the participant into language that was sensitive to the aims of the research and chosen discipline. I was careful to continually bridle assumptions to remain open to the data while operating within the reduction and remaining sensitive to the research lens and phenomenon (Giorgi, 1997, 2009). The purpose this research was educational sociology and not philosophy, therefore, I was able to remain sensitive to the lens of educational sociology in examination of consciousness. I interrogated the narratives to intuit significations, classification, and themes inherent in present meanings.

As in other steps of analysis, levels of reduction are used to negate researcher influence on findings. However, reification of these processes does little to inform the reader of how idiographic structurations are realized. To give some clarity to the process, Wertz (1985) offered explanation of mindful processes that aid in arriving at meaning from texts. Wertz described these processes as general or specialized to indicate the moments of intuiting meaning, indicating that once recognized and acknowledged through general processes, specialized processes are

applied to scrutinize preliminary intuitions. It must be noted that these process "deeply imply each other" (p. 174) and can come into operation "successively, in combination, or all in one stroke" (p.175).

General processes

As the researcher reads a first-person narrative, general processes aid spontaneous and intuitive significations of meaning:

- Empathic immersement in the world of description (the researcher places himself in the place of the participant to co inhabit the participant's experience);
- Slowing down and dwelling (The researcher treats each description as new and not understood, dwelling on the situation in full detail);
- Magnification and amplification of the situation (each small detail of the narrative becomes the researcher's object of interest);
- Suspension of belief and employment of intense interest (The researcher breaks away from empathic immersion and concern for veracity to reflect on the moment, its antecedents, and its meaning and structure);
- The turn from objects to their meanings (The researcher examines descriptions as they are situationally participated in, experience, behaved, and precisely or generally meant). (Wertz, 1985, pp. 174-175)

Specialized processes

With each signification of meaning, the researcher must test notions against biases and norms. Besides the general processes listed above, the attitude of the epoché through bridling of assumptions, and the application of the phenomenological reduction; specialized processes are used to aid in reflection on the moments in which meanings are intuited:

- Use of an "existential baseline" (The researcher allows his understanding of the natural world and norms of daily life in which other phenomena predominate to act as a baseline against which the phenomenon and meanings are tested. Under these circumstances, the circumstances of the phenomenon can be examined for

its difference from other phenomena so that its features stand out and are identified);

- Reflecting on judgment (The researcher reflects on individual statements to examine his own understanding of the aspects of the phenomenon that are revealed though the statement and whether and how they are relevant);

- Penetration of implicit horizons (The researcher contends with meanings to examine what meanings are not presented but are implicitly attached to the phenomenon);

- Making distinctions (The researcher articulates categories by examining the differences between separate statements that relate to the same phenomenon);

- Seeing relations of constituents (The researcher explicitly seeks for relationships between categories to find relationships);

- Thematization of recurrent meaning or motifs (The researcher judges the relationships between constituents to articulate consistencies among meanings);

- Interrogation of opacity (One themes are articulated, there are often areas that remain underdeveloped. The researcher focuses on the persistent areas of unfit to contextualize their meaning for the overall structure);

- Imaginative variation and seeing the essence of the case (The researcher varies every aspect of every feature of the description, meanings, and themes to test whether changes to aspects of the phenomenon change the overall phenomenon);

- Languaging (The researcher consistently writes down his findings and frequently seeks out the most appropriate language for meanings, relationships, themes, etc.);

- Verification, modification, and reformulation (In the process of languaging, there is a possibility that the researcher will move further away from the experience of the participant. The researcher must return to the source material to be sure that the language remains true to the participant's experience);

- Use of existential-phenomenological concepts to guide reflection (As the researcher articulates the structure of an idiographic structuration in the language of a specified field, the researcher may notice aspects of the structure are similar to known concepts of the field. At this point, it might be valuable to reflect on such concepts to evaluate the completeness of the current research and aid in discovering meaning that the researcher might have missed. The purpose herein is not to incorporate structures of meaning into a well-known theoretical concept but to facilitate discovery of any implicit structures hidden in the source material without any theoretical or aesthetic addition). (Wertz, 1985, pp. 175-177)

Free-imaginative variation

Although free-imaginative variation is mentioned above, further explanation is necessary as it is implicitly connected to many of the above processes, it is historically significant to the implementation of phenomenology as a research method, and is considered the most rigorous and important tool a phenomenologist possesses:

> A key principle that guides research is the method of free imaginative variation, which Husserl illustrates with respect to the discovery of essences…an active imagination is helpful when trying to discover the essence of a phenomenon or attempting to clarify the meaningful structure of an experience. Free imaginative variation requires that one mentally remove an aspect of the phenomenon that is to be clarified in order to see whether the removal transforms what is presented in an essential way. If the given appears radically different because of the removal of a part, it is leaning toward being essential. If the given is still recognizable as the same after the removal of a part, it is most likely a contingent part. (Giorgi, 2009, pp. 69-70)

The articulation of meanings, themes, and systems of meaning are initiated through an intuitive process within the researcher's consciousness and they continually tested through mindful processes. These processes allow the researcher to articulate, categorize, and language meanings and systems of meanings that are essential to the individual experience of the phenomenon. Free-imaginative variation helps the researcher eliminate nonessential meanings as well as uncover missing meanings that are essential to the experience of the phenomenon. Variation is also instrumental in the final phase of analysis in which a general structure of the phenomenon is articulated, allowing the researcher to search horizontally with respect to other data "in order to ensure the eidetic status of the meaning to be described" (Giorgi, 2009, p. 154).

Individual ideographic structures

For each case, the ultimate goal of this step of analysis is the creation of ideographic structures that detail the experience of the phenomenon through the applied lens of the researcher

(educational sociology). In development of individual structures, the voice of the participant is abandoned for the language of the researcher and field. The researcher does not need to detail every meaning found within each narrative, but must present the essential structure of each case to show how each meaning "arises out of and in turn illuminates the subject's description" (Wertz, 1985, p. 178). Operationally, the structure of each individual case is utilized as headings and subheadings with categorized meanings incorporated into each section to highlight the salient features of the individual description. The researcher uses a third-person voice to describe the participant's experience, incorporating participant numbers (e.g. P1, P2, etc.) assigned during the data constitution phase of research.

General Structuration

In the final step of analysis, I worked to concisely present the general structure of the phenomenon by articulating the essential themes of meanings. I incorporated the individual structures of meaning into a general structure of experience and described the essential experience of the phenomenon. I incorporated diverse, individual experiences with the phenomenon of interest into a single structure with the purpose of articulating a durable essence of the experience of the phenomenon. As previously mentioned, my goal was to provide an understanding of high school CAC that would be of benefit to the field of music education through a lens of educational sociology. Therefore, a general structure of the experience of high school CAC is of more benefit than a universal structure of the experience.

Universal structures are the goal of phenomenological philosophy in which the essential characteristics of objects (formal essences) are identified as universally true (regardless of space, time, causality, corporality, etc.). Such structures require the application of a full transcendental reduction that could lead to unrecognizable abstraction. Instead, I utilized a *scientific*

phenomenological reduction to describe the context-rich essential meanings of human experience implicated by the object as intentional acts of consciousness. The limitations of such research is that results do not have the strength of universal truth and are limited by socio-cultural context:

> Basically, what is called for here is a generalization that takes place in what sociologists have called the "middle range." In part this is necessary because psychological reality is spacio-temporally limited and is highly influenced by the specific sociocultural context within which the individual experiences his or her situation. Finally, the contents of experience are very important for understanding psychological reality, and the essentialization of contents (morphological essences) is much more limited than formal essences. (Giorgi, 2009, p. 196)

In the use of the term middle range, Giorgi made reference to the work of Robert K. Merton (1957). Merton developed the term middle range in response to patterns he observed in the work of his contemporaries, as theorists gained notoriety from grand theories that reconceived the overall structures of society and each theory was incompatible with previous research. Some studies were large and abstract without much significance or practical applicability; other studies were of small scale: significant but non-generalizable, adding little value to overall understanding of concepts, theories, or methodology. Merton believed that for sociological research to be of benefit to society and for the field of sociology to progress, research should focus on neither the overall society nor individual, but build on empirical underpinnings and historically significant work to explicate limited sociological concepts within these two extremes (Merton, 1957).

A general structure of the phenomenon must take into account the experiences of all participants in the study. Discrepancies between ideographic structures aid the researcher in articulating larger themes that variations may cohabit by purifying and delineating the essence of the experience. The process of general structuration relies on all the processes explicated in the

development of ideographic structures. Nevertheless, Wertz (1985) described several processes that aid the researcher in making distinctions during this phase of analysis:

- Seeing the general features of individual structures (In developing individual structures, certain themes may have been articulated that permeate all cases. These themes are not automatically assumed to be essential to the experience of the phenomenon, but must be developed by rereading the individual structures and raw data to explore their cohesion and adherence to the articulated theme and variations of the theme. Further analysis in light of preliminary attempts to structure generalities will aid the researcher in determining the essentiality of such themes);

- Comparison of individuals (The researcher establishes convergences and divergences among individual accounts. Again, convergences do not necessitate that such moments of common meaning are essential to the experience. Conversely, divergences may shed light on immanent features of the phenomenon that were not implicated by all participants. Further reflection on the data and mindful processes will aid the researcher in making such distinctions);

- Imaginative Variation (Again, free-imaginative variation allows the researcher to creatively vary essences, themes, and structures. In this process, variation is applied to the general structures of experiencing the phenomenon instead of the individual structures. In varying general structures, the researcher has free rein to vary each and every aspect of the general structure to consider whether such variation would cause a shift between the subjects' intentional acts and the object. Commonly, once a preliminary essence is articulated the researcher varies aspects of a hypothetical instance of the phenomenon to observe whether such variation changes the general phenomenon to where it is no longer recognizable. Such variation will help the researcher articulate the essential features of the phenomenon. Also, minute variations to essential features help the researcher to intuit the most appropriate language to describe essential features). (Wertz, 1985, pp. 188-190)

The final process of analysis is the explicit formulation of generality:

As we have already seen implicitly in the above procedures, the researcher must language the general truths he sees. He must formulate the essential, that is both the necessary and sufficient conditions, constituents, and structural relations that constitute his phenomenon in general—all instances of the phenomenon under consideration. He must critically reflect upon his possible statements, "can we have the phenomenon without this?" If the answer, as evident in empirical data and imaginative variation, is "no," then what the statement expresses is necessary to the phenomenon. If "yes," it is unnecessary and must be dropped from his general formulation. The researcher then asks, "if we have just this, do we have the whole phenomenon?" If "yes," then the formulation is sufficient, and if

> "no," then it is not sufficient and more must be included so as to reveal the whole. (Wertz, 1985, pp. 190-191)

A general structure of the phenomenon was the result of articulating the essential constitution, eliminating nonessential meanings attached to the experience of the phenomenon, and languaging for a field of study while avoiding theory-laden meanings or jargon (Giorgi, 2009). A general structure is typically the length of a paragraph (Giorgi, 2009). In this study, I applied an intersubjective, educational-sociological lens to allow the structure to hold meaningful applications for music education.

The general structure formed the illumination for *Chapter 4*. The structure is presented as concisely as possible and subsequently unpacked with each high-level structure explored with examination of attributed strata and examples from the data. It should be mentioned that the general structure and expanded strata are not, for the lack of a better term, complete. Rather, the meanings I describe are the precise identification of the intentional objects garnered from the signifying acts of participant descriptions and presented in the most cogent language for a field of study and community of concern. The presentation of such a structure did not require completeness where completeness was not found within the data.

Unlike interpretive models of phenomenology there was no goal of creating a hypothesis or theory herein, only the structuring of invariant meanings attributable as constituents of the phenomenon. The benefit of such a result is that future researchers can utilize what is found and collect data with the goal of expanding on the present research. Descriptive phenomenology prizes empirical evidence and transparency over completeness and relies on the critical eye of other researchers:

> One makes sure the invariant sense to be described is accessible to the critical other….it is incumbent upon the researcher to make as explicit as possible the process he or she has lived through. That is why the process of determining the invariant sense is as protracted

> as it is. The critical other has the right to pursue the analysis as closely as he or she can. (Giorgi, 2009, p. 134)

The declaration and exposition of the general structure was then the purpose of *Chapter 4*. Exposition through description of strata and examples from the data formed the dual purpose of, displaying the processes I lived-out during analysis, and embedding a trail of thought that leads back to the raw data. My purpose was to display the relationships between the acts of consciousness embedded in the data and the object they signify as part of the overall phenomenon.

In *Chapter 5*, I discuss results, implications, and my own understanding of high school CAC. The purpose of a discussion section is to contextualize the phenomenon back into the world (Wertz, 1985). In discussion, I addressed the aspects of the research that could be of relevance to music education in pedagogy and research and made use of the results to infer possible benefits of the inclusion of high school CAC in American schools. I discussed my understanding of the phenomenon to suggest what role the music education community could or should have in the growth of high school CAC. I incorporated aspects of the results to be of particular relevance or importance to researchers and discussed questions about the phenomenon that remain and possible opportunities for future research.

Chapter 5 should not be considered a part of the research process, but a reflection on completed research. This separation is necessary to support the claim that the results from a descriptive phenomenology are trustworthy, evidence based, and verifiable through audit trails outlined by the researcher and an understanding of descriptive phenomenology. Discussion constitutes a change in the relationship between the researcher and the research. During analysis many measures were taken to ensure that I did not allow personal bias to confound the study, such restraints were no longer necessary once analysis was complete. In the discussion, I was

free to express opinions about the findings as far as appropriate in scholarly writing and within the limits of good taste.

Within discussion, I drew parallels and distinctions between the present research and other research and theories from other fields. It is important to note that I was under no obligation to revisit research presented within the *Chapter 2*-literature review. In addition, I was not restricted from discussing any research I found relevant to the results, whether included within *Chapter 2* or not. If aspects of a phenomenon are particularly consistent with past research or theories, phenomenologists should feel free to explore any parallels without fear that inclusion reflects a lack of foresight or the thoroughness of the literature review.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

In this study, I included the transcription and analysis of interviews with six individuals who were recent or current members of high school CAC groups from Massachusetts, Ohio, and Texas. Participants, three male and three female, were either 18 or 19 years of age and presented a diversity of backgrounds, ethnicities, and voice parts. Individual interviews (four in person and two telephone interviews) resulted in 8 hours and 49 minutes of recordings that I transcribed into 237 pages to serve as the only data for this study.

Transcripts provided raw data that I checked for accuracy by reading each transcript several times while listening to the corresponding recording. Transcripts were then individually partitioned to indicate significant changes in meaning, broken into meaning units, and then thematically re-ordered into groups of meaning units. Groups of meaning units were then ordered into a cohesive individual narrative for each transcript.

I read each narrative several times to get an empathetic sense of each case. As I read the narrative, I regularly consulted Wertz (1985) to ensure my use of mindful processes while my task became the identification of the intentional objects portrayed within each unit. While applying the scientific phenomenological reduction, I bridled my assumptions and previous understanding of high school CAC as I intuited and languaged potential meanings from an educational-sociological perspective. As meanings and structures appeared, I utilized free-imaginative variation to clarify and language the meaningful structure of the individual narrative.

I drafted individual narratives into categories that represented unique aspects of the phenomenon of high school CAC. I reworded the descriptions of participants that adhered to these categories from a third-person perspective in language relevant to educational-sociology.

The original language of each participant was placed below for my own referral in subsequent steps and to easily access evidence for my results.

I studied over each individual narrative several times as I continued to bridle my assumption within a scientific phenomenological reduction. I continued to refer to Wertz (1985) as I reflected on the narratives. As possible relationships between the data and general structures in individual narratives appeared in my conscious thought, I applied mindful processes to decipher the essential general structure of high school CAC. I applied free-imaginative variation to test my results against all possible variations of the essential structures of high school CAC.

The description provided below is the illumination of a general structure of the phenomenon of high school CAC membership. The structure provided is written from an educational and sociological perspective but contains no jargon or references to theories of learning, socialization, or otherwise. It is an essentialization and not a reduction of the descriptions provided by each participant. Although reduction is utilized in analysis, it is a reduction of the attitude of the researcher and not a reduction of the data. However, the general structure is by no means complete or a final word on what could be essential to the experience of membership in high school CAC. Nevertheless, the general structure is anticipated to be precisely what is signified through the intentional acts present in the speech of the participants. In other words, I expect that all meanings described in the general structure to be essential to the experience, not that all meanings attributable to high school CAC were uncovered.

Below the general structure, I have included a description of each member's group and delineated the general structure of the phenomenon into constituent parts. I utilized descriptions from the original transcriptions, with assigned participant numbers (e.g., P1, P2), to give the reader context and insight into the variation possible within the structure. My description of each

constituent is displayed to address the relationship to the general structure and the variation present in participant descriptions. Participant descriptions will appear below my own descriptions of each overall constituent so the reader can easily locate relevant descriptions. These descriptions often appear in long form and likely apply to more than a single constituent of the phenomenon; however, this method is used to allow participants' descriptions to appear without reduction and simplification. Just as each constituent signifies the overall structure, participant descriptions shed light on the interconnected way meanings are experienced in the natural world.

As mentioned, this description is devoid of jargon so that readers do not engender associations with previous theories and schools of thought. Nevertheless, I make use of the term socialization itself because the applied lens is educational sociology (the socialization of beliefs and values). Accordingly, many distinctions are made between in-group and outward or outside motivations. The use of these words applies to social life in general and does not reflect a phenomenological perspective of the role of the consciousness in understanding the world. An understanding of phenomenological concepts are helpful for understanding my descriptions, but not necessary.

The Essence of High School Contemporary a Cappella

High school contemporary a cappella is the process and the product of music making in which members invoke, utilize, and adapt the sonic qualities of popular music genres to create unique performances that include the human vocal apparatus as the only conventional instrument. Music making in high school contemporary a cappella is facilitated by members' conceptions of popular culture and socialization into membership. In production to performance, stakeholders conceptualize, evaluate, and modify a product to create optimal performances. In

the cultivation and display of the performance product, members utilize and adapt musical skills, build relationships among members, and experience popular culture.

Participant Backgrounds

This study includes the descriptions of participants from high school CAC groups in Massachusetts (P4, P5), Ohio (P1, P6), and Texas (P3, P4). Participants from Massachusetts were members of a 16-member group that met at least twice a week after school (often without a set schedule), competed in multiple competitions, and rehearsed with and without the participation of the director (the director would arrive after students to participate in approximately 70% of rehearsal). The director or individual students composed most of the provisional arrangements (the preliminary artifacts that supplied the basis for in-group arranging).

> P4: [Director] arranges, I would say, maybe two-thirds of our music, but the other third, [director] lets the [student leaders] and anyone that wants to, and can do a full arrangement, he lets them do them.
>
> So, since we are a group of people where each member does many different activities, we have to really plan our rehearsals accordingly and have rehearsals whenever possible. And so, some of those days it will be right after school, or an hour after school, or even at night.

> P5: The director put in his opinion, but, like he kept on saying, "This is your group, you guys should make the decision. Maybe my opinion differs, but it's up to you." He wanted his students to think for themselves and make it a real student-run group. He was kind of like, "I don't want them to live up to any choice that I make, they [group] probably know more than I do about these people." And it was very unusual compared to any other group that I participated in at that school and I think the same has to be true for the rest of the group as well. It was a very democratic process.

Participants from Ohio were members of a seven-to-eight member group that practiced twice a week after school, one rehearsal with a director and one without. In this self-described vocal band, technology played a large role as members performed on individual microphones

and often incorporated effect pedals into their performance. Unlike the other groups in this study, this group performed a large and varying repertoire (e.g. hip-hop, pop, soul, country, disco, Motown), based on the individual strengths and backgrounds of members. Utilizing custom-made arrangements, each member performed an individual part. Both participants were former members of other CAC groups their freshman years and in middle school that featured several members on each vocal line.

The participants' group enjoyed considerable exposure and was consistently hired to perform in various venues where members would often set up sound equipment, nurture relationships with possible patrons, and sell their albums. Monies received went back into the program to pay for recording new albums and purchasing arrangements and sound equipment.

P1: My favorite thing about our group is that we really strive for a vocal band sound, whereas it's one on a part always… so we really go for more of a vocal band thing and because of that gear can be very expensive… We use gig money to partially fund our CDs, and then we pay for arrangements. Once we've afforded arrangements, it's all about gear. Everything about [group] is based in the professional environment and that's what the group is structured and built for is providing a professional environment for the kids to experience within the group so our music and our style and genre reflects that to.

You can't really get the vocal band sound without microphones because you need amplification because you need to be able to make quiet sounds that can be amplified very loud…. Our bass singer uses an octave pedal, which maintains his current voice but also duplicates it and drops it down an octave so that you have audio being produced that makes everything sound very, very low. We want to create a product that is pleasing to all ears just because of the fact that it's live music and it has a lot of, you know, it can be loud and rocking and it has a lot of low end bass and that's just what people like.

P6: We had our rehearsals on Mondays and Wednesdays from 6:00 to 9:00, which is almost like having a part-time job. And at one point…we were rehearsing on Monday and Wednesday and we would have a gig on Tuesday and Thursday, which is a really great experience and it was so much fun.

We each had different duties. There were people who were the leaders of the group…We had our leadership, you know, the spokespersons of the group and then we had, during gigs, we had the people who sold CD's, we had people who did sound. We were an efficient, well run, little business. We could do everything ourselves. [Member] could do the sound, I could set it up, the girls could sell the

> CD's. When it was time during the show, I could always talk to people. One the girls could talk to the liaison or the person who hired us…you know we never really needed parents or though occasionally a chaperon. The only thing we didn't handle was money. And that's just because you can't let a bunch of kids handle dollars. So, that's what I meant by that it was a part time job.

Participants from Texas (P2 and P3) were in a group of more than twenty members that met during the school day as a curricular class. As a curricular class, two directors took a large role in many aspects of music making and creating the environment in which CAC music making could take place. Participants indicated that after a transitional period, one director provided ancillary support and the other acted as the head director. The head director wrote most of the arrangements and presided over rehearsals.

The Texas group evolved from two gender-specific groups that would combine for special occasions into a single CAC group over the course of three years of experimentation with and participation in the culture of CAC. Only P3 was present at the initiation of this change in direction and described the transition within the context of growing attention and enthusiasm for CAC in popular culture.

The group's recent history involved different modes of music making and experimentation with CAC songs. They then began a seasonal orientation toward CAC to participate in CAC competitions. As success in CAC competitions became a primary goal, the group invested more and more effort into the direction of CAC. Both participants describe an end result of a single CAC group, separate only in special occasions, as the result of this transitional period.

> P2: We never had any conversations about the lyrics of the songs we did my sophomore year, but we did a lot my junior year. And also [combined group] only did a few songs together all year long, cause usually [female group] and [male group], we usually did our own stuff. And then the past couple years we started doing ICHSA, and that's when we had the three contest songs we did every year

and other stuff for our sets as [combined group]. We really didn't have as much time for [female group] or [male group].

P3: I remember in high school, my first year in the group was when we got our first contemporary a cappella piece. It was a very simple version of Don't Stop Believin'. And it was around the time Glee was airing, and becoming really popular. And things just snowballed in a positive way from there. Just learning more about it…catching on to Glee, watching The Sing-Off and discovering that there is a whole world in college and beyond for contemporary a cappella… The Sing-Off …I first heard about that as [group] was coming together and the directors were kind of guiding us towards that contemporary a cappella style and sound. The sing-off really showed us, kind of, what the higher-level groups were making it look like and where they are taking it and what audiences respond to.

We had the girls do their pieces, the guys do their pieces and we had our Christmas-gig season, and we had a little choreographed number together. But, kind of seeing it grow from being the two separate entities with maybe one or two songs together… I guess is what I meant by saying it snowballed…just, I remember being really, really excited getting Don't Stop Believin' my sophomore year. And then the next year having Competition was just part of realizing how much the group was, or how much what I'd seen before was changing and the new direction that the group was taking. Because it went from having one song that we were all excited about to having three songs and going to a competition the next year, and closer to competition there was more rehearsal together and then this year most of our rehearsals, the majority of our rehearsals throughout the year were together.

I never would have connected [female group] and [male group] to the group itself before that, when they were more separate entities. And being able to see them and experience coming together and taking on a whole new style of music, just, seeing the way rehearsals changed and the new style of music that we were experiencing. Contemporary a cappella is becoming a focus of the group and it was really exciting…finding that group dynamic and not having accompaniment and just being us together and all the time, our voices, nothing but our voices was really cool. Looking back across the years is just so fun for me because each year has been different, each year had new stuff added to it which was really, really fun and exciting. It was one of the best experiences I've had in high school, honestly, and I feel really fortunate to have been in the group when this kind of started.

Constituent Meanings of the Essence of High School CAC Membership

Participants described membership in high school CAC as music making through production and performance. Production and performance implied each other in description of the effort, motivation, and ability to generate an optimal product. Members described meanings

in connection to the experience of making and sharing music. For these reasons, I describe *cultivation* as the main theme of meaning essential to high school CAC membership. I use the word *cultivation* to illustrate how participants described meanings within this theme as a set of processes to create music and enact in-group culture. Social, psychological, and educational meanings were expressed in relationship to these processes as conditions necessary to facilitate cultivation, responsibilities of cultivation, and rewards from cultivation.

Cultivation is a cycle of socialization and music making in which authorship over the product and ownership over the process is achieved through the interconnected processes of in-group arrangement (*workshopping*) and the socialization of self-in-group (*group maintenance*). *Group maintenance* is the processes of membership socialization delineated by *access* (the motivation to gain access and maintain high standards for membership), *adaptation* (the motivation and responsibility to act in the interest of the group through individual effort and utilization of individual skills), *social modeling* (the motivation to facilitate positive interactions to improve the group), and *finding flow and developing connections* (the motivation to facilitate shared meaning and ephemeral moments of meaningful music making).

Cultivation is the main theme essential to the meaning of high school CAC. However, *cultivation* is negotiated through spheres of intersecting cultures. I describe the process-long factor of *experiencing culture* as an essential constituent of the phenomenon, the horizon or environment that facilitates the processes of CAC music making. In the cultivation of the performance product, the socialization processes of *group maintenance* signify the predominance of a socialized in-group culture, but larger spheres of culture are implicit to all themes. These outward cultures come to the fore, through the intentional description of antecedents and outcomes of cultivation processes. In other words, within the main theme of *cultivation of the*

performance product, meanings are described as processes primarily mediated by and negotiated through exclusive, in-group culture. When participants describe the decisions that initiate these processes (such as choosing a song or writing an arrangement) or anticipated outcomes (such as audience response or CD sales), meaning is primarily mediated through popular culture.

Within *experiencing culture*, I describe *popular culture* as the horizon that permeates multiple levels of meaning attributed to the phenomenon of high school CAC. Because participants described CAC as a growing development in popular culture, I describe *ACA culture* as a level couched within the experience of popular culture. From this view of a hierarchical experience of cultures, I discuss antecedents and anticipated effects of cultivation. I utilize *song selection* to clarify the way participants conceptualized these cultures as they prepared to display the product of their efforts to the outside world. I appropriate the term *ACA* to signify a cultural connection to the outside world, distinguish it from the phenomenon of interest within this research, and to make explicit that there is no assumption that high school CAC is a sphere of influence couched within the sphere of *ACA culture*, couched within the sphere of *popular culture*.

Cultivation

The cycle of product cultivation is separated into the processes of workshopping and group maintenance. These processes involve an overarching goal of creating meaningful experiences for members and audiences. Participants often describe the performance or the group as a product, as something meant to be consumed by an audience. The attempt to impact an audience leads members to emulate sonic qualities of popular songs and augment them through creative and original in-group arrangement. The product of each member's effort and ability

gives a sense of joint authorship and ownership over the process and product and the group itself. The ability to create these performances is formed through the agency discovered and maintained through socialization. Below are quotes from each participant in the study that reveal their varied conceptualizations of CAC music making:

P1: It really sort of gave me a taste of what it's like to have to be in a group or manage a group that is for consumption by the public and not necessarily just for the experience of the entertainer. And it's not really about you anymore. It's about them. That's how I kind of felt when I was singing in [group] and I felt like for the first time in my life I was creating something that was a product. It was literally a product that other people wanted, and it felt great.

P2: I really love a cappella music, and it, to me, is really the most fun thing, just because, contemporary music, is like, already known, I guess, you get to take it to a whole new level and make it your own. Like, something that [notable CAC clinician] told us, "We aren't singing Taylor Swift's You Belong With Me, we are singing [group]'s You Belong With Me, you are singing [group]'s The Climb, [group]'s Eet." So it's something you get to make your own. You get to get creative with already know songs, do VP [vocal percussion], you get to have fun, get to sing. Like, [group soloist] wasn't trying to be Regina Spektor, [group soloist] was trying to be [herself], do the best that [she] can with the song, which is really important. There is a lot of ownership in it.

P3: Essentially, a cappella is about taking a song and making it, you know, doing a cover that sounds really, really like it but it's all voices. But there's also a sense of creativity in the freedom to change it or tweak it a little bit. I love to make music and I like to perform but I think for me it's about sharing something with people. And, I love to do it but I want them to love it, too. Being part of that something new, and, I loved being with the group, and performing one of our songs for the first time, and hearing audiences' reactions, and just doing our best and hoping that it went across well kind of thing, and had as good of a time listening as we did performing for them. I wanted it to be something that they would enjoy as well, or at least something that they could take away something new from.

You're actually rehearsing for something. You're not rehearsing just to rehearse because you're rehearsing for a performance. And, I think that it was just the past couple of years we did have the larger goal of competition but each concert was something we had to be prepared for. Each gig during the Christmas season was something we wanted to make sure we were ready for, to put on a good performance.

P4: It's given me an outlet to use my music theory training that I don't know if I would have really had, had I not been in the group. I've learned a lot from it in terms of just being part of such a close-knit group, and this year I learned about

teaching and it's just helped me so much with music theory and communicating with people and getting the sense of being part of such a closely-knit group and acting with one mind and yet at the same time having room for individual expression and interpretation of things.

Knowing that we were going to compete with some of the best high school a cappella groups in the country, working towards that, the level of effort that we put in and the work, just really helped to make us better singers, better musicians. It helped bring us closer together, spending so much time together, working so hard toward the common goal and learning to feel the music and connect with each song, working towards the competitions has really helped us become a better group. We just felt, I think for the first time, the real unity that we all were together doing something that we loved to do and making an amazing final product with it.

P5: It is that sort of style of teaching where you tell people that they have a voice and their input matters. And, some groups, it would mean that they would crash and fail, but, like, if you recognize that the people are talented, give them that sort of motivation and they'll put in as much work as, you know, they feel they need to, because, you know, it's theirs, it belongs to them. It doesn't belong to anyone else. We got a lot out of it, saw tangible results, so people put a lot of time into the group. There was a big pay-off from it, which was winning these competitions and the really enthusiastic audience approval that we would get at the end of a performance. And I think it just really encouraged us to kind of put a lot of our time and energy into it, and I realized what it can feel like to be appreciated by the people around you and see that appreciation.

I haven't thought about it in a while, but it really was, I mean, I'm saying this as a classical musician too, who's often kind of critical of more, I try to, I mean, we can all be pompous about the kind of groups that we think are valid, and the kind of musicians we think are valid, but it was this group above all of that, that was one of my most rewarding high school experiences, even though I didn't continue it after. And I don't think it would have been the same after, it just happened to be a wonderful combination of factors that resulted in who we are, and I don't know how other people feel about their sorts of experiences like that, but, it was just something that I wouldn't have expected would have such an impact on that time.

In terms of impact on my life, I can't really say, because what I'm doing is so far detached from that now, but, in terms of kind of understanding what good teamwork is, to be cliché, and that's what we were, we were an excellent team, more so than any other team I've participated in since then and probably ever will. And again, speaking about this as a very detached aspect of the past, I try to make it as accurate as possible, most of these memories are very positive, but I think that is because it was, a really positive experience.

P6: First of all, it's music. So anytime, and I'm assuming you're a musician or the people reading your paper or whatever will be musicians, too, or however this will be distributed. As a musician, you know, that's a vulnerable thing, especially

> being a singer. You're putting yourself out there when you sing in front of people. You want to be great. You want people to have a good reaction to it. You know, we didn't want to be bad, we wanted to be great. We wanted people to stand up out of their chairs, wanted people to cry and feel something. We wanted people to get chills all over themselves while we were performing.
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> Our director instilled that in us, so we took it serious. It was our group. It wasn't like, "Oh, this is [director]'s thing." You know, a big part of our whole ownership thing was him letting us decide what kind of music we were going to sing. And, a cappella, what's so cool about it is the band that you're in is completely dependent on the voices. Like, the sound of the band is dependent on the voices. You know, you can get two rock bands that sound exactly alike, but not many voices sound exactly alike. Changing just one member can dramatically change the sound of the group and that's cool and that gives it ownership in itself.

Workshopping

Participants described the main operation of rehearsal as concerted effort toward developing, heuristically testing, and evaluating the performance product in a cycle of workshopping. Workshopping can be understood as the efforts and decisions a group makes together to specifically create music for an audience. From this perspective decisions such as song selection, choreography, or even costuming would be considered part of workshopping. Such decisions are made, at least in part, within the group and intended to create a better product for an audience to see and or hear.

Written arrangements are unceremoniously adapted throughout the rehearsal process as members and directors envision the optimal performance product. Stakeholders create interventions to improve the product in creative and original ways. These changes may result from any well-thought-out or extemporaneous suggestion from members, directors, or other stakeholders. Only P5 described amending the written arrangement after these changes occurred. However, P5's description of this process is in reference to a written arrangement authored by P5. Each member takes part in the process though in-group experimentation and evaluation that may occur immediately upon suggestion (P5), at an appointed time (P3), as sole author of a part

(P1 and P2), or through improvisation (P6). Both vocal percussionists (P1 and P2) described near total control of developing their own part.

Workshopping took a different form for P1 and P6 because of the group's renown within their community. P1 and P6 described notoriety leading to consistent opportunities to engage in public performance. A need to quickly produce performance products led to workshopping by means of performance. P1 described workshopping as an effort to better approximate the sonic qualities of popular music. P6 described workshopping as improvisational and as a result of a shared intuition as members became comfortable with written arrangements and each other. P6 found that the ability to improvise in such a way was a result of spending a lot of time singing together in which members came to understand and trust each other's musical instincts.

> P1: [In our vocal band], voices doing more to imitate instruments and non-human sounds rather than using human syllables and consonants to basically provide rhythm. It would be the difference between, and I know you can't put this in writing, but if you want to write just for the sake of you actually understanding, it would be the difference between like, [rim shot onomatopoeia: ba dum tish] and [the sound of real drums]. You know, just a generally, really all-around, more effort into creating a more unique sound that does not reflect the human voice, and instead, I guess that's what it comes down to is almost all high school a cappella groups basically do their best to make human voices create a song, just by using human voices. And [group], among a few college groups, and most professional groups use human voices to imitate things that are not human voices, to make a song.
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> Rather, one person is pretending to be a bass and the other person is pretending to be a guitar, or these three people are pretending to be the chords of the guitar and this person is pretending to be a synthesizer, and then this person is pretending to be a drum set rather than just "You're on the high jig-a-jums. You're on the low jig-a-jums." The parts are more distinct and can be like, "Oh, well, there's the guitar part. Oh, there's the bass." Rather than just, "Oh, it's a lot of voices." So that distinction is something that a lot of groups have yet to do or are not interested in, but regardless, that's what we really find is interesting to us. Most groups don't do it because, I would assume, because it's a difficult thing to do, not because they are incapable, but, just because the extra work it takes is sometimes not worth the benefit. But in our case, it is. So, we choose to take the extra work and tailor our music into that genre to try our best to get a more professional sound. And, I absolutely love it. It's my favorite thing about the group.

My job is, not that it is easier or harder, but it is completely different than any other jobs of anybody in the group. I barely even use my vocal cords. I do the job of a drummer with my mouth. My job is to keep rhythm and provide a general sort of wall of sound to fill in the gaps that are behind the lines and just give the group a general, fuller sound. I would say that my part is the closest thing to ornamentation rather than actual necessity because you can have a cappella without drums but you can't have a cappella without a cappella. So, I think that a large part of my job is just ornamentation and just making it sound more full and making it kind of rock out depending on what kind of song you're doing and what kind of genres you're doing…

But if you're on a microphone, on your own, on a speaker, all you have to do is get a little bit louder to be louder than everyone else together. And just because of that it allows people, once they are really comfortable with that, to really take control of the song or take control of the stage whenever they want to. It's good because once you learn how to handle that and control that, you can do a lot more with the fact that you have so much power over the speakers…

When I really need to learn a song, even when it's not in the music, what I'll do is, I'll be the first person to go and listen to the original and find the general, what the drumbeat behind the song is, how it works, if there are any cool little things that happen in the song, like a cool little fill here, or "Oh, the drums stop right here," figure out the general things about the song and then adapt it to still sound like that while sounding still high quality and basically adapting it for my voice. That's pretty much as far as it goes in terms of learning the music. It's definitely not a too predictable thing. Once you have beat boxing down and you have vocal percussion down and you can pretty much do any beat, the second you hear it, it's not really about learning it or getting down a hard part or anything like that, it's just about figuring out how it works.

P2: It's always important to have the audience engaged and always have their attention at all times during your performance. By, with everything from the ICHSA performance, by arrangement is always having the layer just going and moving up, with the choreography like always do something different each time [within song] you get to a new chorus or something like that, and with the presentation itself, to always make sure that the transitions [between the songs in a multi-song performance] and everything is going quick and even like incorporate the next song into the transition.

With all our contest songs we always have, like, the layers within the song. Like this year, every part would have one thing going on in the first verse and then the chorus, and in the next verse in chorus there would be that and then more added on, like the sopranos would do something else, and I would do something else, and that keeps the audience more entertained, because it's thinking, "Oh, it's the same thing but there is also something new in there." It also keeps us entertained because we are learning something new, like, with, on the same song, it's not just the same thing copy and pasted over and over again…

I would listen to songs, other a cappella groups and their VPs [vocal percussionists], and watch videos of them, and like, "Oh, I should try and do

that." I would try to do what they do and stop the video. Ninety-eight percent of the time it was self-done [creating percussion part]. I guess [director] helped a little bit. I would listen to the song itself, like the actual version of it. And listen to what the drum part does and try to mimic that with my mouth. They get the music, and I get a copy of the music, but I don't look at that. I just listen to it by ear, and get it that way.

P3: The way that we worked rehearsals, with them having an executive decision but us always having input, really fostered our creativity but it kept the efficiency that we needed to cover everything that needed covered and doing justice to the music. Because you can take the basic chords of a song, add a rhythm to them, and sing the chords and the rhythm and people will recognize the song that your singing, but to really make it impressive and make it your own, taking that step further, and really making it sound like the instruments you're playing and then making it your own in the sense that do you change something in the song. Do you add a little bit? Do you take away a little bit? Do you add a rhythm section that's not present in the original?

For our group I would say that everyone had input and everyone was allowed to have input, but our directors definitely encouraged it and were willing to listen to it. And we had this system where we would write down ideas that we had but if there was a lot of, if an idea had equal weight on people for it and people against it, it would be up to the directors for efficiency sake. But yes, we were encouraged to suggest new ideas, figure out ways to make it, you know, tweak it a little bit. They would have days for us to share ideas for the songs, like physically, ideas for the music itself and for movement.

I can't remember how often we actually did it, but definitely during some rehearsals when we came to that certain section of a song that someone had an idea about, you know, they might say, "Okay, let's give this a shot, you know, we read this, let's give it a try, let's see how it works." And they would build that into the rehearsal rather than it just being a spontaneous idea that might take time away from what we were trying to work on originally.

P4: I arranged Scenic World that was on our CD, and I also arranged a Mumford and Sons song called White Blank Page and I started to arrange a song by Florence and the Machine called The Dog Days Are Over. That experience, and knowing, it's kind of getting a taste of a cappella from start to finish, and, being a part of a process of arranging music that the group wants to do and seeing the process from when it starts, from when you put the first notes on a page to when you perform the song, seeing all that is just a really interesting and rewarding experience.

P5: You have to rehearse things and repeat them over and over and over again to get it right, but a lot of it was based on affect and creating an effect the audience could see and respond to, and creating that feeling, when that's going to happen, whether it's something really dark or exciting or really meaningful in like a musical climax or something like that is so moving to actually produce… People kept on coming in with ideas, and he [director] would kind of influence those, but

he was definitely open to, like, “Hey, can we do this instead?” or someone else would be like, “Hey, I have a really great idea for how half of this song could look like,” and most of the time, we had one or two people that were especially good at this sort of thing, so they just kind of took the lead, and most of the time the director agreed with it, and maybe changed things slightly as we went along, but yeah, we were really, we were kind of encouraged about doing as many things as possible. And we did, most people would actually participate in this sort of thing. And there were some people who were trained in theory and we were responsible for warming up the group and kind of already had some experience doing that before in the other choir, and blending the pieces, and making some critiques, as to, “Hey, I think it would be good if maybe we changed this area to such and such.”

There were people that were good a designing the choreography. I would say, even in the first year we were a pretty good group, but not everyone was an amazing singer, but it was enough that they cared enough and that they were solid. They still had a really important part to play. Usually in the fine tuning process, after we’d been doing these songs for a while, and we’d try to add on some more things so, when it comes to like, maybe there’s a part where the sopranos will go with the soloist or something like that. And at first it’s ok, but the more you do it, you’re like, “Hmm, that’s weird.” So sometimes people will opt to actually make changes to the score, which more often then not, actually did happen. Which is fine, because it just sounded weird, or it wasn’t what we were looking for. And then we would add things in instead.

What we’d do is, I’d finish the music, and we would actually learn, the whole group would learn it. And then what we’d do is like take some license with. Maybe some of the fermatas and places to put like nice look, for dramatic effect and playing with the dynamics, and maybe adding a second soloist to make a sort of duet, and that sort of thing. And I actually, I used the group as the source of creativity to see what would make it sound the best, and have them listen back for the ballad. Once I’ve got the music itself, we would sing through it, and we would just keep adding to it. And then, we had choreography I suppose, but hardly, just in terms of stage movements and stuff like that, and arm gestures. So, in implementing those, we wanted to have the music complement it and actually vice versa as well. We tried to play off of that and with that. And this is where I diverge from the music the most: was putting our own musical climaxes in there by reshaping the dynamics, with the text more. And we’d put in some, like, there was this one moment where we cut out the bass, and that wasn’t originally in my score, and we’re kind of like, “That would be really cool if we could like create kind of a nice impact here and really lead us into the climax,” and so on…

Generally, choreography is not choreography so much, but is stage movement and arm gestures, especially for a ballad piece, there wasn’t really a lot. It was more so where we moved around on the stage, when we were reaching out to the audience. And I think what we did a lot of as a group, and then, when people were starting to, as we kind of started recording the motions for it, people would have some ideas: “Oh, maybe we should do this and this.” And we’d be like: “Oh, that’s a good idea, but it doesn’t match the music, well, maybe we can

change the music here. Maybe that mezzo-forte should be brought down to piano if we want this to be effective." The music does come first, but after that it become sort of a give and take between the two and then you get a product out of that. That incorporates both the movement and the music.

In an a cappella group, if you're not the soloist, you are usually on like a doo vowel and consonant or some thing like that…We didn't want to leave the bulk of the work just in the soloist, but we wanted to incorporate the whole group in it as well...So we did give people some moments to actually contribute to the melody that was being sung in some way or another,[such as] having those [harmonic textural parts] imitate the parts [of the solo] that we really wanted to emphasize with what the lyrics were at the moment.

But, sometimes, let's say, we want to add some thickness to a line [solo] that's being sung, so maybe we would have the sopranos harmonizing just for a few bars on that line and then going back their normal [syllable]. I don't know what to call that: the doo or dah [sound]. Instead of having it kind of imitate, you would have a line that is sung by the soloist and then maybe off set by a few beats in some sort of metric pattern, there would be a response, like the tenor might repeat the exact same thing or maybe it would foreshadow back to the beginning or to align at the end. That sort of thing, but it really was a collaborative effort, besides actually putting music on the page itself.

P6: A lot of times we spent so much time together, and when you spend time around anyone you kind of expect to know what they're going to do. That was what it was like for us. And we would be on stage together so much that we would be in sync, particularly with the first group that I was a part of, I don't know, it was a different type of chemistry. It was very special, unique thing. But anyway, I remember I would sing harmonies with [soloist] sometimes on some parts of a song, and she would always change it [the melody line] because that's the type of singer she is. She gets bored so she'll change something. It was a Sara Bareilles song I think, in the bridge, and she would always do something different. And I would know, I would just know. I was like, "this is what she is about to do" that she's about to do just by hearing the tension in her voice before, you know, she got to that part.

I would just know what she was about to do. Or, we would be on stage and we'd be singing a song and I would go up to [vocal percussionist] and [we] would have our thing, whether it would be like a rock together or something, and with me and [another member], we would have guitar background noises and we would always change them up. We would know what the other person was about to do and we would lock into it. I would be like, "whaa, whaa, whaa" [guitar-sounding descending pattern], and she know to put the harmony on it. And, I don't know, we were just in sync. It was just good chemistry, I guess.

I think that chemistry comes from time and a closeness together. I mean, it's just like any band even if it's not a cappella. You know, I have friends who are a drummer and a bass and when they play together it's immediately synced in just because, a, they're good friends, and, b, they play together all the time, you know? You just begin to know the other player's instrument. I don't think

anything could substitute for that other than time and having a good relationship with the other person. That's where I think that comes from…

We knew that you couldn't just stand there because people are going to be bored if you look bored. And so, we ran around in our practices and tried new things and sometimes I would even bring in a video camera. I don't think our director knew that, but I would bring in a video camera. I would be able to watch myself back and we could watch other people back and be like, "Oh, yeah, maybe we could fix this or see if this would look silly." And you know, we just knew how to fix things. We knew what the problem was if there was a problem.

That's the thing that I loved about [group] and which is why when I got to college, I didn't even want to be in any big group is because if there were four other people on my part, I could never change my part, or do anything and that's boring…The parts were written with a bunch of, not melismas, but they were like fast-moving parts. So we changed them to runs because they were fast runs for us. And we had the freedom to do that and it still sounded good, it didn't affect the sound of the group. If anything it enhanced, it added color to it…But in [group], we really didn't start adding stuff until we were really comfortable. Like, we probably would have performed a song at least four times before someone would be like, "Oh, I want to add this in here," or "Wouldn't it be great or cool if we did this?" And also, being in high school, your pocket of tricks, or whatever you want to call it, the things that you have to pick from are a lot more limited. Our director gave us ownership and permission to [do] what we were doing. Something like that wouldn't be introduced until after we were comfortable with the song. We wouldn't add it right away.

Group Maintenance

Participants described many ways individual members contribute to the maintenance of the group. Because CAC music making involves the combined effort of all members, they learn how to cultivate an environment conducive to collective creativity. This endeavor requires that members understand their place in the social order of defined, undefined, and formal roles and their unique contribution to the group's music making. Membership is cultivated as individuals come to understand the amount of power and agency they have to influence other members through their musical abilities, various roles, and group norms. As individuals come to understand their self-in-group, they become motivated to improve their musicianship, maintain a

positive environment conducive to CAC music making, and bolster the symbolic value of membership.

Access

Participants described high school CAC membership as exclusive. Barriers to membership included previous and simultaneous participation in traditional choirs, ineligibility during the freshman year, and entre via audition. Such barriers reinforce the exclusive status and value of membership affecting social status and motivation to perform. Functionally, barriers to membership set the expectation and conditions that allow initial rehearsal of new songs to progress quickly so more time can be spent in workshopping arrangements. For four participants in the study (P1, P4, P5, and P6), once membership in a CAC group was attained, membership was generally guaranteed throughout the remainder of their time in school. Members, from a high school where CAC was a curricular offering (P2 and P3), had to audition yearly.

> P1: In the a cappella group at my school, freshman are ineligible to audition so, generally just the culture of how music was learned was different. I would have to go home and learn the music on my own. You do not learn the music in the classroom. If you tried to learn the music in the classroom, people would be looking at you with a funny face. You would get asked, "Are you really serious about being in this group?" No, in [group], you learn the music on your own. You typically… the group typically doesn't want to waste their time with teaching you notes. They know that I'm capable and everyone else is capable of learning notes on their own and we use time in rehearsal to review artistry and technicality and things that you can't do at home on your own. One hundred percent of note learning is outside of rehearsal with [group].
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> P2: I joined [group] because, first off, it's the top group in [high school] choirs so I wanted to see if I could be a part of that. [Group] has always been for the most talented singers at [high school]. So when we… at the audition [directors] always pick the most talented members from [school] choir to be in the group. Every year, even if we were in it the year before, we audition.
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> A couple of them I knew before [group], but there are like some that I have met and enjoyed and such, just from being in the group. I guess I just got to know them more. I don't base friendship off of musical ability, that's bad, but

like, I got comfortable with them and started hanging out more, practicing more, getting to know them more. Even when we didn't know each other, like, all of [group] would hang out, so we would get to know each other that way.

P3: At the beginning of the year the girls have a tradition of having a sleep over before the beginning of the year, once the new group is announced. And, taking time for getting to know each other and asking questions, and talking about life in general. I think there was always an amount of bonding going on, just through people doing what they love together, but I guess I mean bonding through discussion as opposed to working with each other on the music itself

P4: That year, with the combination of arranging a few songs and helping the group during rehearsals and having new basses that were just in their first year and really helping them, teaching them parts and helping them to really be confident and feel good about how they were singing. Once I was in my second year, I wasn't a new person so we as the veterans every year, help the new group be comfortable and love singing in the group as much as we do.

And, so teaching mainly with our new basses, helping teach parts, and them be confident and sing alongside us but also arranging and helping the group in general was really, I think, has been beneficial in terms of personally connecting with people and helping them learn about music and being confident about singing…He [new member] is a great guy and he just didn't have as much experience, I think with music, as other people in the group and so during the audition process, some people were iffy about taking him over other people and things like that. And, he has just been, once he gets a part down, he is great, he just takes a little longer to learn things than some other people in the group, which is very understandable.

And so, working with him throughout the year, and being friends with him, it's just been a really, I think, beneficial experience, very often having to help him with parts and communicate with him, help learn how to tell him that he's doing something a different way than other people and how to make what he's doing mesh with the rest of the group and when it all works out and the criticism works and I feel comfortable talking to him and telling him what he still needs to improve on, it's just a really good feeling when you learn how to tell someone that in a way that they'll accept it without feeling weird about it, and improve and do something the right way and mesh with the group and sound as good as they can be and I think working with him has really been my most personal experience with that kind of teaching and communication skills building.

P5: I remember the audition process as being intense- relative to what a high school should be doing. We did so well our first year that we got really popular and a lot of people auditioned- and out of maybe the 40 people we heard, maybe less than that, but we heard a lot of people and we only took three or four cause that's all we had room for. But we were shocked and we really had to judge people harshly. And personally, being one of those people who had a stronger theoretical background, I did have an important role in the group. But, there are definitely

some better pop singers out there than I am and if it was just based on that, I wouldn't have gotten in, I don't think. I was just lucky to audition in the first year that they had it and I got in. But after that, it was really rough. Some people were really, not devastated, but really hurt by the results of it. And we really didn't have anything else to say but "we're sorry, but there's nothing we can do".

So we had a pretty intense process at the end of the school year, because we did some rehearsing in the summer, having chosen the new members of the group by then. So the whole thing was we all sat in on the audition, and people would come in, and we would listen to them sing, and we'd do some ear training stuff, to see how good they were in that sense. And, we would sing one of our pieces and we would put that person, who is auditioning for a certain voice part, in next to someone of their voice part and their goal would be to learn, or to imitate, the person next to them and see how well they could pick up what that line was. So, we did various stuff. But it was always a tough call-most of the time, in terms of deciding whether we want them for their solo ability, or are they just a really good, stable background person, which can, surprisingly, be hard to come by. It was that sort of thing and it really was a very competitive process.

It was a collective group effort. So it would be the director and the 16 of us. And I think the most that I did was, I was the person at the piano and would play a few notes and say, "hey, could you sing this back?" just to get a sense of their sense of pitch. And we all discussed the auditionees equally, and everyone would put in their opinion, and we would decide as a group. We did it based on the popular vote.

P6: So, being in [group], you were required to be in at least one of the other choirs. The expectation for [group] was that you were in one of those choirs just to be in [group] because we were amongst the most talented kids. You'd want to be in the [top traditional choir], and that was a very challenging choir as well because our director wasn't only interested in a cappella. We were also required to be in the musical. Just because.

Being young kids, it's hard because there's kids coming in and they're supposed to take [members'] place, and you're like, "What if they're not as good as [members]?" Then there's that whole thing, "Oh my gosh, they're so much better than [members]." And someone's always offend by it. It's always a challenge. And [group] is so small, too, that every little thing, every little difference, is noticed from year to year, and losses and gains are felt dramatically. If you go from having a second soprano who can belt high F to having a second soprano who sings in mostly head voice, that's a big difference you're going to notice. You're going to have to change the way the arrangements are. You can't carry over a lot of music from the last year, and it's a lot for high school kids.

The expectation was high and it was there and there was a lot of pressure. When you go in to [group] as a new member, there was a lot of pressure on you for you to be great and you had to figure out how you were going to do it. For some kids, it might take them a week to learn a chart or it might take them two weeks to learn a chart. And when you get the chart on Wednesday and you're expected to know it by the next rehearsal, or you get it Monday and you're

> expected to know it by Wednesday, you better figure something out if you're a slow learner. So, whenever new members would come in, they would always have that challenge. Also, it's no secret that not every kid has the same amount of talent, and so that wasn't ever hidden. The key was figuring out whatever your talent was and how you could contribute it to the group. For instance, when I got into [group], I was the first black kid ever in the group, and they had been around for like ten or eleven years before I got in, and as far as picking songs for me, I was like, "[group] doesn't sing Motown, or blah blah blah, or Usher, or whatever else I sang." And the assistant choir director, who was also my voice teacher, was just like, "It doesn't matter. You'll learn something different through [group]."

Adaptation

Members described the individual responsibilities involved with CAC performance to improve the overall group. This pressure stemmed from the individualized responsibilities of CAC music making. Groups that had multiple members on the same part utilized student leaders (often appointed positions) to initiate realization and memorization of the written voice part through section-based rehearsal. There was an expectation that the process should take relatively little time in the overall progression of rehearsal. In cases where CAC was an official class within the school day (P2 and P3), directors took a larger role in devising rehearsals and creating learning experiences, but most note learning took place in sectional rehearsals with student leadership. According to P1 and P6, virtually all note learning happened individually, outside of group rehearsals.

> P1: I would say, typically, it [music] is given to us in rehearsal and we don't look at it in that rehearsal, instead we work on other music and then go home after that rehearsal and work on it on our own and come back to our next rehearsal pretty much learned. Our general rule of thumb is that first rehearsal (we have two rehearsals a week)…The first rehearsal after getting music, you need to have it learned. The second rehearsal, you have it memorized, and that's pretty much it.
>
> For me, and most of the members in [group], just sitting down at the piano is good enough, because you're reading skills are enough to plunk out notes slowly and figure things out. If it's really a problem with you, if there's really an issue with that, then there are things called learning tracks, which are basically midi files of the music, transferred into a midi file and it's just your part that's being played through the speaker. That's pretty easy. You use those less and less.

Or, if you really need to learn something extremely quickly, then, they're an easy thing to use. But mostly, just piano and music is good enough. Learning music is not that hard. It seems like a grueling task but the more you do it, the easier it is. And most people who have any capability of reading music at all can read pretty complex things if they take enough time and just sit there and spell it out, just like reading.

You feel like you have a higher degree of independence and thus, the pressure is definitely higher because of how hard you have to work to make yourself to not stand out, how hard you have to work to make yourself fit into everybody else when there's less people on a part and the voices are more pronounced. Matching with your other vocalists are extremely important and for me, making sure that I stay in rhythm and don't do anything to falter from what it's supposed to be or what sounds right or what sounds good to the listener- there's a degree of trust among the other members that like, "Oh, she's not going to mess up; she knows what she's doing." Because at any point in time every single person is capable of messing up everything all at once, by doing very little, actually. You have much more of an opportunity to influence for the better or for the worse. So, it's up to you. You're just very vulnerable.

P2: It's pretty awesome, like just being able, to me and my best friend [member supplying the bass line with previous vocal percussion experience] are the rhythm section: the bass and percussion, and like, always being the back-beat, and driving everything along. It's a little bit of added pressure to be, like, [in conversation with himself], "Ok, now, don't mess up, don't mess up, don't mess up". So I have to make sure I'm on key with tempo and everything and make sure I don't get off-track, and that we are focused and prepared and improving in our rehearsals so we can get better every day as we get closer to contest. It's nice knowing that, you pretty much have control over what you're doing, and you know when you messed up, you know what you could do better. Just like everyone else, we just try to make sure we are on our game for rehearsals, and always just improving and stuff like that. I didn't feel like I was in control until this year [senior]. My junior year, it was my first time doing it [vocal percussion] so I was really reserved, making sure that if I was doing something, I was doing it right, and that if, my friend, who was the [vocal percussionist] before I was, or [member supplying the bass line with previous vocal percussion experience] or [director] would correct me if I did something wrong. Like tell me how to improve and stuff like that.

P3: Having the motivation for yourself as well can kind of help keep up the motivation of the group when everyone is personally invested in it. My experience is that I have motivation for something. I have that goal at the very beginning and then you start rehearsing and no matter how well a rehearsal goes everyone can have their on-days and their off-days. And, sometimes the motivation is never really gone when it's something that you really want. But, sometimes, in an off day, it gets pushed to the back of your mind. You're not

feeling as inspired as when you have an on-day. It's being able to realize you're having an off-day but remember why you're doing it and there's a reason for it.

Having something to work for, having a goal, is important, whether it's a big over-arching one for everyone or everyone has their personal things they want to accomplish. Because, as a group, we want to do well and put on a good performance but that's also made up of everyone wanting to personally improve. Like, I want to get better at this dance step or I'm having trouble with this part or everyone having that little thing that they can work on and try out to make the group performance the best it can be and meet a bigger goal. I think personal goals are really important for motivation. We would learn the music and pretty much every one that we got, when we learned the music, I would have a lot of fun going back, listening to the original and picking out the part I was learning. You know, "where is this in the grand scheme of the song? What exactly am I doing?"

I think just especially when you have a goal there's always things you're going to want to improve on and so you want to have as much time as possible to cover as much as you can and cover the basics, learning it quickly but in a way that you're not moving too fast, like moving quickly but making sure everyone understands it before moving on. That way you have more time to kind of tweak it and mold the sounds and polish, like put the polish on.

We would get the music and then they sent us off, each section, so we would split so we had space to ourselves and a piano so we could pick through parts and hear ourselves sing and lock it together. It was getting the music the first time and being sent off, like, you know, "Sopranos go work," or "Everyone, make sure you work on pages one through five." And then they would let the sections go off and work together, learning that, like, from getting the physical piece of music to being able to put it together with the rest of the group. Everyone got the music at the same time, so, rather than really being a…rather than the [student] leader being the teacher of the part, we were really just facilitating rehearsals and, or, facilitating those times with our sections. We were learning it together, we were moving forward together, and a section leader's job was really just to make sure that we stayed moving and that we didn't get stalled, or if we did, we got through it and went over that part a few times, whatever was stumping us and, you know, just keeping things going. Our section picked up parts pretty fast.

P4: So, last year, my junior year in [group], I was new to the group and I have never been the only person on bass. There's another bass who's in the same year as me that was in [group] the first year it was there and so I learned from him, sang alongside him, and I didn't really have a position of responsibility in the group aside from, basically I think everyone in the group has kind of a position of responsibility, since it's kind of a small group and since it is an a cappella group. But, at the end of my junior year, when the seniors of that year graduated, [director] asked [another student] and I if we wanted to be the [student directors] of the group. So that means we would be the people that blow the pitches at the start of the songs, help the group during rehearsals, hold rehearsals if [director] couldn't make it, and we'd also be the people that arranged the music because [director] is big on letting the students arrange the music they want to sing.

So, we were learning that song which [member] arranged and when we learn songs we have a few different ways of doing it. We either split up, everyone to their individual parts, so all the tenors go in one practice room, all the basses go in another, all the sopranos, altos, second altos, things like that, whatever the arrangement calls for, everyone splits off into those parts and just goes into a room and sits down with a piano, learns the part. Some of the older members of each part will plunk out on the piano the parts, and repeat things and try to learn them. Sometimes we have all the girls stay in one room, all the guy go in another and try to work in bigger sections, so half the group learn their parts here, and half the group learn their parts there, just because splitting off, we find, makes it a lot easier to learn because there's less down time. Like, all your time is being used learning your part. You don't have to wait while other parts learn their parts.

Just like most of the time, we went into the rehearsal and I went through the motions of teaching the bass part, and then we got together with the tenors and sang our two parts while we waited for the altos and sopranos to finish. And then, later in the day, [director] hadn't gotten there at that point I think, but he did get there for after the teaching part ended and once the group came back together… that was when we first came together and did it. I think every part got good at their notes.

So much emphasis is placed on every individual knowing what they're going to do. It's really hard to cheat at your part in a cappella because there's no music to fall back on. And so, I think in that way, every person has a great deal of responsibility in terms of what they're singing and it's a really awesome thing, to have sixteen people all doing what they need to do correctly and just doing something awesome.

After you get to that first point of just knowing your part, your only job is to start learning other people's parts as well. So you have the score in front of you, you usually go really slowly through it, or you can do sections at a time. Eventually you just do it and it sounds crappy, and it takes a while, so you do it over and over again to be able to really feel your place [contribution] in the song. But eventually when you know your part like the back of your hand, and you know everyone else's part like the back of your hand is where everything does finally fall into place. It's really hard to cognate that sort of thing with the human voice, and then see the voice fragmented in all these different ways, so it is a process getting there, it involves a lot of building up to it. but, in terms of how it clicks, I'm not really sure. I think it's just a lot of repetition until you finally get there.

Like I said, once you learn your own part, good, great, but, it wouldn't fit in to it, well, you learn how to listen to other parts and see where they come in and you also kind of learn in the original song, what is occurring in the background parts, and understanding that original instrumentation and how it's flushed out in this particular piece of music for voices. Knowing the solo is really important. Knowing the bass is usually important. And most of all, it's knowing the bare bones of what everyone else is doing and sum of the parts' collaboration aspect. Knowing how to respond to one another, like, the feeling of knowing what to expect from a person musically. Knowing that, you can get a better result,

because it's not 16 people trying to sound like 16 people, it's 16 people trying to sound like one song, or entity, and blending in together in that sense.

P5: I was actually one of the student directors my senior year. I think the group had been there for three years. It was established my sophomore year of high school. Except for the first year, the two years I was in it, I'm sure that it's the case now, that he chose students to lead the group. And sometimes he couldn't be there. So often times, we would lead the rehearsals. And I knew exercises, I had my pitch pipe, or other people would do it, and we did these exercises, some of them were sound circles. And these didn't have a lot to do with like warming up, just sort of playing off one another.

We would sit in a circle, or stand, and someone would start like a very simple note pattern and rhythm, maybe like: three beats and like, do re mi, or something like that. And then people would come up with their own simple motif and add to it gradually, so one person would respond with their own, then another person would respond, and we'd build this kind of, like, song. Like, simple but very complex at the same time. And it got us to like learn how to respond to one another as singers and kind of improvise and the other part of it would be learning how to stop together. So when we felt right for it to stop we would kind of end together. And more often then not it actually worked. We would all just kind of stop at the same time. So it was about like being in tune with each other, so, even besides doing regular vocal warm-ups, it was about practicing and how to fine-tune these more difficult skills.

The barebones of the music, teaching people parts was kind of a pain. There were some people who were maybe not as musically strong as some others, so getting them to finally get their part in their ear, and getting them off of music, that was always a challenge. There were people who were excellent soloists, who had wonderful range, capacity, or just had a really nice tone to their voice. And they were used for solos often. Obviously, many of us had many of these talents, but there were some people who were really good singers, but they didn't have the kind of voice you would use for a soloist but they had a really good musical ear that would allow them to blend in well and to really have a nice background component, which is most of what you need to be honest, but we wouldn't care, it was still a blast.

Mainly, my responsibility was to blow the pitches at the beginning of each song, count us in, warm-up the group from time to time, do the arrangements. Then another part of it was the more social and morale aspect, so, it was kind of a leadership position- in a sense that you give pep-talks to the group before the performance, and you try to manage people a little bit, where it's like, "Hey, I would appreciate it if your attitude was a little different in rehearsals," not that that ever really happened because we were all into it, but it was that sort of thing. It was having a leadership position and teaching some of the music, that was another aspect, or sitting down at piano and teaching people their individual parts. But the other part of it was being a bridge between the director of the group and everyone else in the group. And I tried to maintain a participant kind of vibe as much as possible, and give input, and not necessarily demand or command people

in that sort of way. And that actually didn't really infringe that much, and the things I was required to do were quite fun, so I would hardly call that something that was telling on behalf of being a good leader but it was more so just trying to get everyone involved as much as possible, I suppose.

P6: I think the best thing anyone who's a teacher, or just anyone in your life, is to give you permission. And, in [group], it was so small, and there was so much to do, and so much work, that we had ownership in what we were doing. And just like, if you're running a business, and you don't want your employees to be lazy, what do you do? Give them ownership in it. Give them a percentage of the company so they have some incentive for the company to do better. And it was that same sort of situation. Everyone in [group] knew that this is the [best], and it's got to stay the [best]. And if you want to be the [best], you got to do [grueling] work. You've got to put the work in. I don't know how he did it, thinking back on it. It's insane. He got these kids, we would stay up, you know, all night stressed about it. It was just crazy. I don't know. It was all because of his direction because he was passionate about it and he was smart enough to build a culture where kids wanted to do it and they wanted to do it well. And we did.

You know, we had responsibilities and besides the time that we put in together, the expectation was that we would get the music from our arrangers and by the next practice was that you would have the music learned. But you know for a high school kid, with no theory training or anything, that could be difficult, you know? So we would put the time in, outside of rehearsal, and try to learn the music. And if some of us had to get together to practice it, then we'd get together, then, when we got in rehearsal, then we'd work out the kinks.

Social modeling

Because membership is an investment of time and effort, members feel responsible for ensuring positive experiences in rehearsals and affinity with other members. Members build trust and model appropriate interactions to maintain such an environment. In this environment, new members learn how to interact with the group, how to give and accept criticism, and how their efforts affect the group.

P2: Nobody really taught me anything or gave me that much, just little criticisms sometimes, but that was rare. [Member supplying the bass line with previous vocal percussion experience] would say, "Hey, instead of doing this, try adding this on to it or maybe try putting the microphone a little bit farther away or closer." If they knew what they were talking about, I would be ok with it and I would fix it. If it sounded better than what I had before.

P3: When we were in practice rooms if I heard a wrong note, sometimes I would stop right then or I would wait until we got to a breaking point, like in a certain section of a song where we went from verse to chorus and then I would stop and go back and address it. But there was always freedom in the group for pretty much anyone to do that. We would sing a verse or sing a section of the song, verse or chorus, and then I would just ask, "Did you hear anything wrong, is there anything you're not understanding?" And at any point during rehearsal, anyone was free to, whether we were in our section or the whole group anyone could stop and be like, "You know, I don't understand this. Can we go over it again?"

I wouldn't say that it was about the person, it was just, if I heard a wrong note, I would just say that that note, it sounds like this and go over it a few times. So it was more about the sound. Everyone in the group, I think, was aware that it was about the music, understanding the music, and letting it be about that and never going after a person. Well, I wasn't, if it was one person, I would stop and be like, "I noticed that this sounded off. Can we go over that section again?" But in general I just kind of, we would go over a section and play out the parts in general just to make sure everyone understood it.

P4: I think one of those prime situations that I think at some point, everyone in their life experiences, it's just very common in a cappella, is giving and taking criticism. In music, and especially in a cappella, so much depends on every person have their own responsibility of their parts, and working with the group and getting their energy to the same level as the group's, and technically doing as much as they can correctly. In an a cappella group, I think more than many other groups, you come into the situation where you're faced with criticizing and getting criticism from people you see as friends and so that situation can always be kind of weird, whether you're taking or giving criticism, there's always the chance that someone might take a criticism more personally than it's intended or might be offended at a criticism.

It's being in such a constant situation of having to think about how to correctly word something or how to give constructive criticism and just how to help make your friends and yourself better, it's just an interesting experience to be in, to have, where you talk so much with people about things that you could all do better, and how to make the group better, and constantly facing the potential of something being interpreted, a criticism being interpreted the wrong way or someone taking something personally.

I think everyone in the group, at some point or other, either in front of the group or individually, has given and received criticism. That happens plenty of times. I think somebody's singing and how they sing and the quality and skill of somebody's voice is a lot more personal of a thing. And I think it's a lot more personal of an area to talk about with someone because I think, yeah, because it's more personal, yeah, than just having someone tell you how to move. Singing is something that you go around your whole life with, that if somebody else talks with you about how you sing, then a natural instinct is to feel like the person is

touching on a very sensitive and personal area. I think that constant feeling makes everyone learn how to communicate better and how to communicate with certain people in their own different ways and just, it helps everyone get to know each other a lot better and to know how to talk to each other as individuals in everyone's one individual way.

I think that's why everyone doesn't sing. I think at some point in everyone's life, and I think everyone probably sings to themselves at some point during their lives, whether they do music or not. And I think, because everyone's voice is different in their own way, because of that it's a very personal matter. And I think that's why not everyone does chorus or chamber choir or a cappella, just because every voice is different in its own way. And so, people, plenty of people, it's very common to feel embarrassed or something like that…

P5: We would be doing something and someone would say, "I think my section needs to bring their part out a little more here", or "I think this rhythmic pass-off between these two parts sounds a little messy right now, would you mind if just isolate ourselves and did that a few times to get it in our ears"- it was that sort of things. It was always constructive, no one really actually criticized people, but we did offer up our input on how other people were doing, and what things we thought we needed to fix. We would just stop, or like, raise our hand. It depended on what point in the learning of the song that we were at. So these things often happened a lot later in the process of learning the piece. But, it was a really informal environment that we had in particular, so I think that sort of thing, was, you know, "Don't interrupt other people, but just be like, 'Hey, I have something to offer,'" and usually it would go fine.

We would never stop what we were doing for someone to say something. If we were running a whole song, we'd run a whole song. Or sometimes we would just do a section, like, the bridge, or the second verse, but no one would ever stop to make their comment. We would wait until the end of what we'd designated, and then people would be open for comments. And then somebody would give their input. But no one would ever be like, "Hey, stop everything, we need to fix this." We were very respectful about it in that sense, and I guess a lot of it was the same people who were actively making comments, and it was never to criticize anyone, it was just trying to be helpful, and offer some suggestions as to, maybe ,"Oh, this would sound cool here," or, "I think this part is lacking a little bit, and I think it's because we don't know our part enough." It would be that sort of thing. Usually it would have to do with what the section was struggling with themselves, sometimes it would be people, and this really didn't happen, I mean, no one would ever be like, "Hey, basses, you sound kind of weak here! Maybe you should work on that!"

P6: We did lots of different performances around [state] and around the area that we lived in. And, I don't know, that group just had a couple of very strange trials and tribulations together that I won't go into detail about, but those things brought us close together and we're all also sort of religious, which you know, at the public high school that wasn't a thing that you always get, but because we are religious I

> think we kind of bonded through our praying before every concert. And I don't know, sometime around maybe like after mid-year, probably by January or February, there was just something about it, like, we would get into a fight with each other, or someone would be having a bad day or something would happen and we would get together and all of a sudden it was better, you know, and we have this very electric feeling…
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> I think, one thing about people who sing, a lot of times they're very emotional people, we're just full of it, and we just want to connect with people. I believe that every person in the world just wants to be loved, at the end of the day. That's the basic thing. All you want is to have some sort of connection with someone else, you know?...We learned a lot about teamwork and things of that nature and learned to integrate new members and just figuring that stuff out.

Finding flow and connections

Flow can be characterized as meaningful moments of music making, shared experiences of heightened emotion, and reification of membership. I utilized the word *flow*, not to align with any theory, but as a better descriptor than *groove* or similar words to emphasize meaning related to moments when music sounds right and good. Participants described ephemeral moments that could happen at any time from the first attempt to practice a song with the full group to the ultimate performance for an audience. Flow is described as *found* because participants spoke of attaining flow in both active and passive ways, signifying both social and musical practices. Members facilitated flow as they came to understand how their musicianship added to the group. These moments renewed enthusiasm to rehearse and perform, facilitated a heightened sense of reified membership, or signaled the possibility for a positive result at an impending performance.

To encourage rousing performances, groups cultivated a shared connection to the song and with each other. Participants described the belief that group affinity and performance outcomes could be augmented through personal/emotional/shared connections to songs. Strategies were implemented in belief that internalizing and sharing personal meaning garnered from lyrics could facilitate social bonds, emotional connections to the music, and better

rehearsals. Participants described the belief that building and sharing connections transferred into performance to create a more meaningful product for an audience.

P2: Like one of our songs was *The Climb* by Miley Cyrus. It was used as a jumping-off point, well, I don't want to say jumping-off point. But we all, some of us told our climbs, like our struggles we had to overcome, like, to gain a sense of unity with each other. It was a way for us all to say, "Hey! We are here for each other, we can trust each other to tell these experiences, and so we can trust each other and so on stage we can share these experiences with the audience and really, together." Sharing the experience together is performing not only for the audience but for everyone else in the group, I don't know it's really hard to explain that perspective of it, the audience though, there's a saying that [notable CAC clinician] told us about sharing, I think it was something like, "amateurs feed off the audience, but professionals feed the audience," and that's something [group] has done for the past few years, like we bring the energy and give it to the audience.

P3: We would have days where we talked about the meaning of the song and what we wanted to communicate with audiences during that song and we had days dedicated to talking to foster bonding and good discussion and stuff. We had days where, they were kind of like group bonding, where they would start out with one of the songs and they would say, "here's and what we are doing," and we would figure out what we were trying to portray, and everyone would go around and share. We would share our issues. We would have days where we shared our problems, shared our issues in order to understand one another better and really get a sense of what everyone was going through and be able to use that, to use those experiences they wanted us to share and to give emotion to a song. I know for Eet, we took it in the direction of losing someone that you never expected to lose, and we would have a discussion about that. You know, everyone shared times in their life when that had happened and it was kind of team-building, group-bonding days, that kind of helped our group come together and have a clear idea and plan for how we would communicate that to an audience through the music that we made to really bring us together as a group, and know that the group is a family, and to make us aware that we are all there for each other aside from anything that might go wrong. We are there for each other and we are going to help each other out, and create that family bond, and knowing that even if there are days when you had an off-day, you might not like someone, someone might annoy you, but you're always going to love them and have that bond through music and knowing that everyone goes through stuff.

P4: Some people wanted to do this other song, which personally, I voted for that when it eventually came down to a vote as to which song we wanted to do. Still with some people still not fully supporting the song, just seeing it as another song. They weren't really connecting to it yet. But when we first sang it as a group, I

think everyone's opinion of that started to change. In terms of the group, and our feelings about how quickly we've evolved as a group and how close we are, I think the words of the song and just how awesome the arrangement was and how awesome it sounded, I think personally that's, the first time we sang it was when I understood why so many people supported the song and voted for it and really wanted to do it.

It was just because the words of "leaving our mark" and "being here" was just something that everyone in [group]…then at that point, I think it clicked on, and everyone felt that that was the message that we wanted to send. That's how "We Were Here" as a group, that had evolved so quickly and just wanted to, to quote the song, "leave our mark" on a cappella and show everyone that we were who we were, and that we were a group, and that we were tight-knit and loved each other and just loved performing with each other. And so, I think that one rehearsal, when we first fit it together was when I first realized how awesome of a group I found myself in, a year and a half after I joined it.

There's something about whenever we come back together for the first time after learning a song and really singing it through the first time. There's something awesome about that because you're just hearing the whole, final product. Even though, it's the first time you're hearing it, and it will still have a long way to go. The first time you connect every individual part, you just get amazed by what these simple melody lines, or even harmony lines that don't really sound like that much individually, but once you put them together, something about the four, five or even six different musical lines syncing up, it's just everything sticking, and you hear chords and harmonies and everything just sounds great.

P5: We found that the best times we performed were in times where we were really in touch with the music and really in touch with one another as a group, so, a lot of it was about talking about what is being said in the music, and trying to convey how we were going to evoke that for the people who were watching this sort of thing. So when it came to the more serious pieces, we tried to get ourselves in the mindset for what it was going to say. I guess there's just some sort of atmosphere you can create, it's not, I don't have words to describe exactly what it is, but it's when you create something that's powerful or moving and not only do you feel it, but other people can feel it, that was always the goal, this kind of wordless substance that everyone could feed into.

I guess, the morale was getting people into doing, getting our people invested enough in that moment to create that kind of feeling, and sometimes we were successful, sometimes we weren't, but the time that *were*, involved, collectively as a group, kind of sitting down and really thinking about what we were about to do and what we were about to produce. I think we all sat down and were like, "What does this piece mean to you?" and, "Really think about that right now" and, "Hold on to that feeling, we're going on stage right now, but hold on to that feeling for when we get there."… And I remember, like, the whole audience stood up, like, screaming in their seats right in the middle of the piece, and this is a pretty sizable audience because it was a national competition, and people just,

like, were cheering in the middle of it. Like, "Wow, that's never happened before," but, it was because we worked together to get that feeling, and it worked for the audience, they felt it too. So, it was definitely a success and I still believe that that was an important factor to creating the whole performance, was working on our group morale.

P6: We got to know each other so well, as far as on stage and singing together and stuff and we were able to predict each other's moves. I would be singing harmony with someone and I would know if they were about to do a run or if they were going to go up or if they were going to hit a note or even, there are videos of us, from our high school a cappella festival that year where we were performing, and we didn't really choreograph anything back then, we didn't have sense enough to, but a lot of things that we were doing, we would end up all doing at the same time together. And we watched a video of that, I remember watching the video back afterwards, and we were like, "What? I didn't know we were all doing that!" It was like, you know, small stuff like we would all move the same way at the same time. It was just very much instinct, you know, we were very in sync with each other and those people, to this day, are still some of my best friends…

We sat down and got What Hurts the Most by Rascal Flats, I think, and we all sat down and we talked together about what the song meant to us, like, what we could each get from the song. And you know dramatic high school kids, we all sat around and cried about, "Oh, this really hurt that time in my life, you know [mimics crying sounds]." But anyway, it was a great lesson for us because we learned about the audience…

And then, [member], that same year, sang I'm Like a Bird, in that same performance, I think it was after mine, Nothing Ever Hurt Like You, and she stood in one spot. And she sang the song, and she was honest. That song was very real for her. The Nelly Furtado song, I'm Like a Bird basically says, like, "Hey, like, I'm in a relationship with someone and I really love them but I'm not really in a committed path. I'm probably going to leave you because it's probably not going to work out. And, I feel bad about it but…" And she just stood there and that's something she could relate to and so she stood there and she just sang the song.

And I remember all the time, whenever [member] would sing the song, like a little fifteen year old girl or whoever was in the audience, would just run out crying, like, "Me and my boyfriend just broke up and that song just got to me [mimics crying sounds]." I learned so much from that because it was like, as a performer, if you want people to feel something, you tell them by showing them. You don't tell them by like, running around and acting dramatic. You just be honest and people will get it, you know. People will know you're sad if you look sad or if you actually feel sad. People will know that you're overjoyed if you actually feel overjoyed and people can tell, people aren't stupid. And that was a great lesson for us and the relationship to the audience. So when we practiced things we were like, "What is this song about? What does this song mean? What

> does this song do for me and how do I just let that show without forcing it?" And then, people enjoy it.

Experiencing Culture

In participant descriptions, an understanding popular and CAC culture were repeatedly utilized to facilitate high school CAC. The detail that knowledge from these cultures influenced music making did not explain the unique experience of high school CAC, but, many of the meanings signified by participant's speech would be negated if not for mediation through the horizons of culture. These horizons of culture were more than a backdrop; as participants considered different aspects of their experiences, the representations of these cultures shifted in meaning and importance, denoting a complex understanding of, and relationship to, culture that was intersubjectively observed and experienced. Participants described moments of membership in which the experience of these cultures was the direct object of consciousness, the object of intent was primarily meditated through the understanding of these cultures, and the intentional object was the anticipated understanding of these cultures by others.

Popular Culture

Participants utilized their understanding of popular culture as they chose songs and developed connections to and through songs. The norms of popular culture were considered as groups considered methods to interpret popular songs and anticipated audience response. Participants described ways that membership changed their understanding of popular culture as they became producers of popular music, instead of just consumers. The role of producer was found in and validated through the anticipated and realized relationship groups formed with audiences as reach lived-out their prescribed role. In the acknowledgement of these roles,

participants discussed the unique opportunity to experience levels of notoriety and the value of receiving observable rewards for their efforts.

P1: I'm reflecting the image of the product, and when they are talking to me, they are talking to [group]. They are talking to the product, and I need to reflect what everybody in this group wants our product to reflect. And I think that for all these reasons and more, you just start to visualize the group as a business and not as much as a school group. And, once you get there, everything changes and it really becomes something that you're interested in taking seriously not because, not for you, but for the good of the group, and for the good of the program, and it truly does feel like a business that you're growing, that you have a direct influence in and that's, a, well, [pause], [to self] there's seven of us, there's eight of us. [In reply] well, you are one seventh of how everybody on the planet views that group, no matter what.

With academics and with sports and with pretty much everything, any sort of hobbies or anything that you want to take up, it's really like the world is structured in a way where you learn and where you make mistakes. You can learn from the mistakes but it doesn't really, in the end there's no real pressure to deliver. And, professionalism is just not, you know, being professional at something is not that. Being professional is learning to be comfortable with the fact that you have to do well. You have to do what you're supposed to do and it's your job. And if you fail, things will happen as a result, that you will not get to receive.

And, just for me, that was really eye opening in the sense where, like, "We need x amount of money to record a CD," for instance. This is one of the simplest ones. This is the first one that I experienced that I thought was interesting. "We need x amount of money to record a CD, which means you need to sell x CDs so that we can record next year's CD." You try to sell a CD, you pitch a sale, every time you don't make a sale or she says, "Oh, well, maybe I'll come back," and she walks off and you know that she isn't coming back to buy a CD, you feel like you lost. You feel like, "I didn't do good enough." Like, "It was my job to make that sale and I didn't make that sale."

And you know, it's very business-like in that sense, where, if you're at a gig, you're at a corporate gig and you know that one of the biggest ways that you get other gigs is by people from the audience liking you and wanting to see you, and you don't perform as good of a show as you think you could, and all you can think of is, "What if someone in that crowd would have hired us if we would have done a little bit better?" And when you're getting into that degree of maintenance where, you need to, you need other people to like you, and want you, and demand you, for you to remain viable within the parameters that you've been functioning…

It's really important to know what image it is you're trying to portray and to make sure that you're exactly that image and that you're not letting your opinion and your expressions influence what people think of the group. Even though, obviously, you think that those opinions and expressions are correct

because they're yours, you have to understand that even though they're yours, they don't reflect that of the group and that's kind of what you're representing…

I had to accept when I was in the lime light that the fifteen minutes of fame is fun, but they call it that for a reason and that there's going to be a time when I have to resume normal life and I'm going to be a kid again and I'm going to be doing normal things again and I'm not going to be so special anymore. And for me, that grew me up a lot, just knowing that I have to accept that and be ready to do what I can to realize that that was just a stepping stone of my success and not be the apex of my success and I think that it really taught me the value of the process of life and the process of growing and getting better and really how arduous of a journey it is. The journey to success and to achieving your dream, how that at the time felt like it was the biggest thing in the world and it felt like, "This is it. This is it! This is a big deal." But, finally coming to terms with that, that was just a stepping-stone really made me appreciate the process that it takes to be the person that you want to be in life. And for me, that really grew me up, just so much and opened my eyes to a lot of things in the world and I'm super grateful for that. That's probably the biggest thing that I can say about that.

P3: I know that I, when listening to a song, because of a cappella, when I listen to music, I no longer listen to just the soloist or just the percussionist, but I'll try to listen a little deeper and try to see what different kinds of instruments are being used, what instruments a synthesizer is producing, and figuring out how to make your voice sound most like that instrument. First, identifying the different sounds in a song, being able to experiment with how to create those sounds with just a human voice. I guess, when you first hear a song, what strikes you is the full effect of everything together, and the melody, and how catchy it is or is not. Just things that you like about it. But, going beyond the obvious I guess, trying to tune out the upper… soloist voice and maybe the percussionist and listening for the different things. Kind of like, cause you recognize different songs around you all the time. Like right now you hear the cars. and the birds, and all the. just, ambient noise. But you realize that it's more than one thing making up ambient noise, and just kind of having fun guessing at what those things might be.

P4: I think competition definitely helped. Winning our first [competition] my junior year, that really was a wake-up call to the group. That told us that we were a good group and people knew us now. And that was kind of the spur that we needed. From then on, we kicked things into high gear….And so, it's really a unifying thing, and, to kind of feel like you're all doing something. A lot of us see [group] as one of the most competitive and crowd-pleasing groups in the high school music department because we're singing popular music and a lot of people really like us, and so, that kind of energy and feeling of, "Wow! We're doing something awesome as one, for these big crowds of people."

P5: I remember seeing people, whether they were other people in the music department, whether they were student or faculty, they really knew us and they liked listening to us, so we actually were, like, quite popular within my high

school. And then, when we started doing competitions, we had wonderful audience response to us, so, I felt like a minor celebrity, in our tri-high-school system. I know that doesn't really mean a lot, but it just felt really fun to be a part of. There are plenty of people who do a cappella who don't do any other kind of music, so maybe this is a little different, but for me, and for most of us, we did music like, seven, eight, nine years at that point, and everyone always clapped at the end of some concert where you're playing Holst or some weird Tchaikovsky reduction or something like that. And like, "Oh, that was pretty nice, you did a good job," and, you know, we're in high school, you can't really expect that much.

But then, the first time we went out and did our performance, and maybe did a mash-up of two really popular songs, people like, exploded. And they were so enthusiastic, and they were like screaming and cheering, and this is a high school auditorium, we are not talking that many people…It wasn't like we were known as individuals, but we were know as, "Oh, yeah, I know that group…you're in that group? Oh, that's so cool"… we were pretty well known in the region because we'd won like 3 years in a row, or something ridiculous like that, and people were like, "Oh, you're in that group? That is so cool," like, "I bought their CD," or, "I saw your video," or something like that. It was like, "Oh, wow- this is what it would feel like." We all love making music and doing music no matter what the audience reaction is, but to actually see that payback…

I mean people were always appreciative, but they don't actively follow you. So it was a nice change. I guess, part of it really did inspire me to keep doing this kind of thing, but, in the moment, it did kind of make me realize a lot about what this kind of industry is like. So, I really liked it, but it wasn't really that much of a big deal I suppose. Well, I guess I'm talking about a general performing arts industry, and you could go as big as like Katie Perry and all of them who have millions and millions of fans. I'm just talking about the sense of people who are, who actively listen to your music, and go out wanting to listen to your music and cheer you on and that sort of thing. Like, they really like the product itself, and not just because, like, "Oh, that's my friend, of course I have to appreciate it," but, these people have fan followings, and so obviously, we are like literally, like, 500,000 tiers below this, but still, I mean a lot of the, in the classical music world, for instance, it's, um, kind of obviously dying, in the United States, to put it harshly. And people still like classical music, they always say they do, but, they know the music not the musicians. And when they listen to it, they don't get that same sense of excitement. And they don't expect that same sense of excitement that they usually do. That they would for Beyoncé, for instance.

P6: It was definitely a big part of my life, much bigger than I had anticipated. Also, with that, just experience with things like, interviews, you know, we were on radio and TV and all kinds of things all around Ohio. It was an amazing experience, just being able to do that. And that was another reason why I was like, "Wow, I would love to be a musician, and go on the road all the time," and do those things. It gave me a lot of encouragement to push forward with that, which is awesome. It was just an eye-opening experience and for me, it encouraged me

> to go into the entertainment industry because I was like, "Wow! This is awesome!"
>
> From the attention that we got, I definitely learned a lot about, like I said, running a small business as a musician as a group of musicians and, "How do I book a gig?" You know, "What does a normal gig charge? What is the expectation?" Sometimes you're playing and people aren't listening. Sometimes you're playing and everyone has the attention on you. Sometimes you play at a church and you've got to change some lyrics. I mean, I guess, in that aspect of a cappella, the audience is, you know, whatever gig we're doing or church or high school a cappella festival or some plumber's convention, or something like that. And for us, for high school kids, we just want them to enjoy it and we had fun doing it and we wanted people to have fun watching us. I don't know, just as a musician, the audience is everyone else in the world.

ACA Culture

Participants described the experience of *ACA culture* as the door to experiencing popular culture. As members performed popular songs they gained an opportunity to make music they felt was connected to their lives. Members distinguished between popular and ACA culture as they examined the expertise of their intended audience. An understanding of these cultures was influential to decisions of song choice. Song choice does not belong to the theme of *Experiencing culture*, but members' experiences as consumers mediated the choices they made. Herein, choosing songs is not considered an essential meaning of the phenomenon. The attention to song choice at this point is made to explain the cultural reference members used to negotiate decisions meant to influence an audience.

Members displayed a complex understanding of popular culture and ACA culture as they considered music's mass appeal, music as a consumptive product, and as hedonic experience. High school CAC members valued the experience of trends as well as understood the nostalgia for past trends. Members utilized their understanding of popular culture and considered the novelty of songs in order to create member enthusiasm and positive audience response. Furthermore, an understanding of popular culture was utilized as participants considered the

possibility of market oversaturation of a song in popular culture and in the varied manifestations of CAC music making, and the ability to overcome such stigma through creative arrangement. When groups competed in CAC events, many of these decisions are moderated by the requirements and conventions of the competition, but audience savvy as well.

P1: [Group] has opened doors and allowed me to experience things similar to it. But, besides those things, really, you know the music world. It's really the only thing in my life that has opened me up to experiencing this. And that's what really, really got me into a cappella in general because I really feel like as an industry and as a concept and as a culture it's becoming something that people are really latching on to and it just kind of became the art that I'm really interested in because it showed me so much of what the real world is as opposed to high school, while I was still in high school.

A cappella grew me into everything, into my professional nature, 110%. Because I was involved in a cappella before I had even considered how important it is to be professional and how to look at things from a professional stand point and not look at things as if you're just a kid in it for the ride. And, a cappella and the industry opened my eyes to that.

I know that in younger crowds, in crowds that are less exposed to a cappella, the vocal percussionist gets a lot of attention and that is something that I recognize because everybody has seen singing, and yet it's interesting that seven singers are singing together and that does interest people, but often times, for people who've never seen it, what interests people is the guy making drum sounds because that's completely new. And, I usually tease the kids in my group, and it's all in good fun, they know when I say, "It's funny how you do twice as much work and I get twice as much attention," and they think that's pretty funny but all in all, it's just a joke and when you're performing for people who know the craft and the art, I'm just as important as everybody else. They heed no extra attention to the drummer besides the fact that if he is proficient within his skill range, that could be something of interest. But, they're not specifically interested in me just because I'm the drummer once they understand a cappella or have seen it several times. It's just for newer and younger crowds I get an awful lot of attention. I guess that would be the main thing that's different. Besides that, I see myself as just the same as anybody else in the group.

P2: I didn't really know much about it until I got to high school. Even when I joined I didn't know much about it. The only thing I knew about was barbershop, because of what I heard with [male group] before. Like, I didn't know about contemporary a cappella itself till the summer when my friend showed me a recording of an a cappella song, and I thought it was the greatest thing ever. And I was thinking like, "Are the drums his voice?" "What is this?" And it really was a life changing experience. And that year was really eye opening for me a cappella-wise… I just like most of the contemporary songs we do. New stuff, like stuff you would hear

on the radio, because in other choir I'm in "concert choral" its all classical/choral stuff. With choral music, I'm always really picky, I don't really like the spiritual stuff or, like, some of the new-age choral stuff.

Performing contemporary is more high-impact, high-energy, and also, more people are going to know it. And I've noticed that-if you know the song, it's going to automatically correlate with liking it more. But if you hate the song, you are not necessarily going to hate the arrangement, like, it's not like I automatically shut down if I don't know the song, like, "This is going to be terrible." I've found some songs I like, after hearing the a cappella version. It's really just a familiarity factor, like, being comfortable with the song. I'm going to be open to anything, but if I know it more, I'm going to like it more, probably.

P3: You know, us going to the competition and realizing that this whole world of a cappella existed beyond what we were just discovering. You know, realizing that people had made, were making careers and that it was becoming a really popular thing to do in college. It's really introduced me to and given me a love for contemporary a cappella. Enough so that I would definitely want to start something, either, start a group in college or look for groups, audition for a group once I'm out of college, see if I can do that, carry it beyond high school. It's something that I like enough to pursue…

They would let us suggest the songs so that we could be sure it would be something we could have fun doing. Something to almost jolt the audience a little. They get that initial thrill of recognizing a song but sometimes for people who are very experienced in the world of a cappella hear a song that maybe a lot of groups have covered and you almost start to go into that, "Okay, I've heard this before and they sound really good but," you know, that kind of sub-conscious shut down. But when they do something different, you're like, "Whoa, what just happened? This is really cool."

I think any audience can get the thrill from the recognition of something and I think a cappella is so exciting that recognizing the song and hearing everything you hear in the original song all being done by human voice and I think that's really kind of a thrill for people to watch and to do. It's very, very fun. But also, I think, making it your own is an important thing to do to distinguish yourself from the person you're covering.

P4: I think the reason that a cappella has had such a stride with pop music is because it's not music that you know because you're a musician. It's music that anyone, musical or not, could hear on the radio or on TV and it's not like you would recognize a sonata or a symphony or something. It's music that everyone may have heard in their lifetime, a different audience reaction. There's the slightest bit of uncertainty to how a group's going to interpret a chorus, or a verse, or a bridge, or an intro, or an outro, and how pleasing from person to person, from audience member to audience member a song will be. There's that sense or uncertainty. And at the same time, having the comfortability and familiarity of listening to a song that you know.

I think one of the coolest moments you can have as an audience member with a cappella is to be a person that likes a really obscure pop song and see a group do that, I think that's one of the coolest moments, thinking, "Wow! I didn't think anyone else liked that song! This is awesome!" Also, I think it's really cool when you see a group doing some of the latest songs in their set and then they have an older song, like a classic.

It's something that once you are in the heat of the song, because of how popular radio and television is, because it's part of life, more so than fifty years ago, I think it's very common for people to know popular music whether they specifically know and have listened to a song, or just because they've heard it on TV or on the radio, not really paying attention to it. And I think one of the coolest things about that is that you can have a pop song that every group that you've seen, a dozen other groups, performing that everybody knows because it's from the radio, but you still have the freedom because you're an a cappella group and you arranged music, you can still, arrangements can be so different. Every group can put their own spin on a song and how they arrange it and how they interpret it. And I think one of the coolest things to me about a cappella is that moment when you're sitting there in the audience and a group begins a song and they're doing some kind of intro and then they start the words and you realize in that moment what song they're doing, and it's that moment of, "Wow! Oh, they're doing that song! That's awesome!" I think that's one of the coolest things about pop, about doing contemporary pop songs is that you can just, every group can put their own stamp of originality onto a song and how the audience can react to that song and how it's something that everyone, a lot of people can relate to and be comfortable listening to because it's something that they know.

P5: I remember how it felt being a part of the whole a cappella movement at that time. It was kind of springing up everywhere and people were getting really into it. And because we were so invested in this idea, we all dedicated a lot of time to it, more than we would for other extra-curricular activities, because it is a really interesting mix between having talent, not only as a vocalist, but incorporating the same techniques that you would in a choir, like, knowing some theory and maybe having a good ear. All these things are incorporated into it, but then you incorporate the pop genre as well, so you have an interesting balance between what is seen as the classical world and people find to be more acceptable today.

Choosing a song would usually be by vote, so we'd all come in, he'd be like, "Hey, I want everyone to choose a song that they'd be interested in doing for the season." We'd all come in and then go down the list and discuss, "Oh, what are the strength and weaknesses of this?", "How would it fit into our intended set?", and then we would vote-from there… They [mash-ups] were usually our signature pieces. Most people do mash-ups anyways, but, people like to hear that sort of layering and hear those, like, "Oh, I recognize that, oh, wait, what is that thing in there?" And it's a crowd pleaser and they are really fun to do, it puts, we are talking about pop music here, most of the time so most of the underlying chords are going to be exactly the same from song to song, so choosing two song to put together isn't supposed to be that difficult, you just want to be creative

about it and be tasteful about the way the different gists of both songs match up, and say something, not just be this musical mess. But whenever we did, we always used them as our finales and people actually loved 'em because I think they're very accessible pieces for an audience to appreciate while adding that level of creativity in it.

P6: Depending on how long you've been in the group, you could pick your own songs, our director would approve it only so we weren't singing Touch My Body, or Drop it Like It's Hot, or some [stuff]. We would pick our songs, and he would pay for it to be arranged by people that we knew, and it was always custom arranged music, and they always knew our voices.

I was thinking, "Oh, it would be so sick if we did Turn the Beat Around," because an older [previous version of the group] had recorded it. And, here is an example of it being like a part-time job or a small business. We as kids were thinking, "How can we sell more CDs at gigs?" Cause, how it works was, [group], we had our set and we didn't record our set until the end of the year: (a) for money reasons; and (b) well, the group wasn't great until the end of the year, because, you know, you spend so much time together. So you record at the end of the year so the CDs that we were selling were always from previous years and so the thing is, like, we would place our CDs and people would say to us, "Oh, is that one song you sang on there?" And we would be like, "No…." And so, [group] had done "Turn the Beat Around" a long time ago on a CD that wasn't selling very well any more because it was like three years old. And we were like, "How can we make that CD sell more?" which is ridiculous now that I'm thinking of it. Like, what exactly made us think like that?

Anyway, so, we were like, "Let's bring that back but let's change it a lot." So we did the song in different styles, which it really didn't have to be different styles but we tried to make it like, "Okay at first it will be the first like disco-pop. And then it will go to this funky part. And then it will go on to like, dubstep," which everybody had started to do at that point in 2012. In the intro of it, I wrote just like a little [singing], "Now I came here to party, so let's get it started. Turn the music on. Duh Duna Dah. Put your hands up." [continues singing], and then "Turn it up and dance." And then the song starts. So, it's a little short intro, but I did that. And then I arranged it, but like I said before, my theory wasn't great. I mean, I knew things like thirds and fifths, and things like that but I didn't know a lot about theory. And so, I hung out with one of our arrangers, and we would co-arrange it together. And so, I would be like, "Oh, I think this would be cool right here." And he would be like, "Oh, yeah, let's put that there." I took, I think two or three weeks for us to do it. And then, the group learned it. And then the group actually arranged that dubstep part in the middle ourselves.

Summary

Descriptions of high school CAC membership yielded meanings related to distinctive qualities of music making and socialization into external and group cultures. Music making was described as an achievement of group cultivation in which members came to understand their unique contributions and roles that developed between and throughout reconstituted membership periods. Throughout development, members gained greater influence over aspects of group music making and the musical product. Students described their perceptions of a link between effort and reward; they were motivated by positive audience responses, the responsibility and ability of each member to affect the overall performance, the experience of authorship through group arrangement, and the experience of ownership through group decision-making and roles, responsibilities, and displays of membership.

Members valued and utilized both traditional musical skills and individualistic skills and talents. As members evaluated their own skills and talents and those of other members, they developed the agency to contribute to the goals and good of the group through social, instructional, and musical roles. To create meaningful performances, members were motivated to maintain positive relationships with other members, understand the role of each member's role in the overall performance of arrangements, and develop a personal/shared connection to the songs the group performed.

High school CAC membership offered students the opportunity to experience popular culture from the perspective of producer. An understanding of popular culture and music norms aided members in developing effective musical products and anticipating audience response. Members utilized the language and concepts of popular music and traditional musical skills to conceptualize and create performances.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to describe a general structure of the essential features of high school CAC membership. The intuition and structuration of essential meanings is the purpose of descriptive phenomenological analysis. Structuration does not describe the phenomenon as it is experienced in the world; instead, it makes the description more accessible to an audience through identification of essential meanings attached to the experience of the phenomenon. To make the structure accessible, a researcher must chose a field of discipline through which meanings can be languaged and conversations about the findings can be initiated. In this study, educational sociology (the study of the socialization of values and knowledge) was the lens through which meaning was delimited, languaged, and structured.

In this chapter, I discuss my findings that were intuited from participant descriptions and structured into an essential general structure of high school CAC membership. In *Articulating the general structure*, I discuss the decisions in languaging the essential meaning of the phenomenon. In *Developing a structure*, to display the rigor of my method and transferability of the result, I explain my process for intuiting and testing the structure and give concrete-negative examples of meanings rejected through phenomenological processes. To test the credibility, I give concrete examples of the differences between participants' experiences and work through these differences as they appear to uphold the general structure. Once these tasks are complete and satisfactory, I can justify the use of a single general structure as an essential structure that describes all participants' experience of the phenomenon.

Once the strength and stability of the general structure is established, I highlight some of the results that may be of most interest to readers. Because the concept of *Collective*

arrangement is prominent and unique to high school CAC, I discuss its importance. In *Examples of music learning*, I summarize the ways participants described musical skills and knowledge, broken out of the confines of socialization. In *Limitations*, *Implications*, and *Conclusions*, I examine the possible threats to credibility and transferability in my results, draw implications of this study for teachers and researchers, and summarize the value of my results and method.

Articulation of the General Structure

The ultimate goal of descriptive phenomenology is the description of the general structure of essences. I described the general structure of the phenomenon in the results section: *The essence of high school contemporary a cappella*. To give some insight into the general structure of the phenomenon, I will start at the highest levels of meaning and interrogate the first sentence:

1. *High school contemporary a cappella is the process and the products of music making in which members invoke, utilize, and adapt the sonic qualities of popular music genres to create unique performances that include the human vocal apparatus as the only conventional instrument.*

The first independent clause, "High school contemporary a cappella is the process and the products of music making," defines CAC in terms of the main theme of *music making*. This is the main theme that becomes languaged as *cultivation* outside of the general structure. According to Giorgi (2009):

> It also has to be kept in mind that the constituents to be determined may be expressed in words quite different from the words used in expressing the separate meaning units as indeed the structure usually is. The context for formulating the transformation of the meaning units is usually narrower then that employed for the structure as a whole. (p. 199)

In "the process and the products of music making," music making is supported by *process and products*. The use of *process* and *products* was chosen to accommodate the many types of

meanings found within cultivation. The word *the*, used twice, is helpful in subordinating process and products to music making. This allows us to view rehearsal, performance, and other products such as CDs, as each independently being meaningful expressions of membership in high school CAC. In explanation, *workshopping* and *group maintenance* are the languaged constituents of *cultivation*. The use of process and product do not signify one or the other category within *cultivation*. These constituents must reflect the ways participants spoke about music making in different ways, for example:

- People that experience the phenomenon do so by embodying or being membership. If they do not *make* music, they cannot *be* a musical group. In this example, *workshopping* is the process and *group maintenance* is the product.

- Socialization into membership provides members differing amounts of agency to collectively create a performance product. In this case, *Group maintenance* is the process (socialization) that creates agency (a product of socialization), and agency gives members facility to collectively arrange through *workshopping* (the process of creating a product for an audience)

At any moment within description participants would identify meanings attributable to these categories as either process or product based or both. These issues gave rise to the languaging of *cultivation* to signal a process to product orientation in participants' descriptions. Each constituent within *cultivation* was languaged in a similar fashion, indicating process, product, and process to product. Again, this focus on product and process is not researcher mentation, but was drawn from participants' data in which meanings tied to popular culture were replete with such language, showing attachment to popular culture through a consumer/producer dichotomy.

In the second independent clause: "members invoke, utilize, and adapt the sonic qualities of popular music genres to create unique performances," *popular* music is explained as the medium, but not as the environment of creating performance. In "members invoke, utilize, and

adapt the sonic qualities of popular music genres*"*, *invoke* is used to connect the interior (*creating*) to the outside authority of popular music. However, the authority is given to *sonic quality* and not songs. This is important to address the possibility that groups may create original songs that display qualities of popular music but are original contributions. Moreover, the use of "songs" did not withstand testing through free-imaginative variation. In other words, when I mentally removed popular songs from the completed structure, the essential meanings of the phenomenon were not changed.

Although participants in this study did not write original songs, should a high school CAC group choose to only perform original songs, it would not violate the general structure. Also, "sound circles", as described by P5 in the results section *Adaptation*, improvisational modes of music making were present within some groups. By focusing on sound over song, the transcendental qualities of popular music take precedence over physical examples. It is the properties of music, and not the manifestations, which are of importance and utilized in adaption. *Adapt* is used sparingly within this document to not cause confusion with the creative process of arranging. The difference here is *adapt* requires a repurposing from an original intent (e.g. a novel can be adapted as a movie, but not as another novel). This allows the meaning to remain connected to *sonic quality* so focus remains on the sound of popular music but performed with different instruments.

In, "include the human vocal apparatus as the only conventional instrument", there is the understanding that voices are the instruments but there are exceptions. That is, *vocal apparatus* allows the inclusion of vocal percussion as a regular feature and *convention* allows for exceptions (e.g. clapping, stomping, or occasional incorporation of pitched or un-pitched

instruments). This use of *conventional* also allows room for microphones, sound effects, octave pedals, and the like, precisely because they are not thought of as conventional instruments.

I believe that I have explained the attention to careful wording that is necessary herein and do not find it necessary to continue this exercise ad nauseam. I will instead, present the remainder of the general structure below to explain some wording choices.

2. *Music making in high school contemporary a cappella is facilitated by members' conceptions of popular culture and socialization into membership.*

3. *In production to performance, stakeholders conceptualize, evaluate, and modify a product to create optimal performances.*

4. *In the cultivation and display of the performance product, members utilize and adapt musical skills, build relationships among members, and experience popular culture.*

In the second sentence of the general structure, I make explicit that an understanding of popular culture aids music making and that group socialization performs the same function. These two cultures explain how the main theme of *cultivation* is modified from within (*workshopping* and *group maintenance*) and externally (*experiencing culture*).

In the third sentence, I describe the lower level of within-group meanings using *stakeholders* to not discount the influence or authority from anyone with direct access to the group such as members, directors, or clinicians. I explain that modifications are applied to a *product* to create a performance. This is important to explain that the end product of performance is the focus and not the preliminary documents that may have initiated *workshopping*. In other words, when changes are made to an arrangement, the focus is on changing performance, not changing a piece of paper. In the fourth sentence, I display each area that is essential to CAC through each essential realm. This is done to allow the reader to attempt to remove each constituent of making music, adapting musical skills and knowledge for a new purpose, being a

member, and experiencing culture to test each integral part and find them essential to the experience.

Developing a Structure

As I developed a structure, associations between meanings were interconnected to the point of frustration. In each meaning, it seemed that the aspect of the phenomenon was contained within layer upon layer of meanings. I developed multiple general structures to resolve issues related to group development and agency to contend with themes of interconnected feelings, learning, motivations, and cultures. Each structure to explain the processes described had to explain the complex interplay of how seemingly identical meanings contained within were both the symptom and cause and contained motivations directed toward the personal, collective, and outside world.

Although I might not have explained my intuition this way as it appeared in my consciousness, I took a step back from the immediate object of intentionality and discovered meanings dependent on the *other*. That is to say, by understanding descriptions as positioned in reference to spheres of influence, I intuited relevance of experienced, enacted, and embodied culture. From there, it became clear that the relationship between the participant and the group, and the relationship between the participant and outside culture were important to distinguish meanings as thematic.

Through attempts to vary these relationships it became clear that at the highest structures, participants described motivations directed toward the group and motivations directed toward an audience. To simplify: when examining what participants would *do*, the *whys* were more aligned with in-group or audience-related motivations. These *whys* allowed me to separate meanings and

intuit a defensible system of themes. It became transparent that the majority of essential meanings were an experience of group culture, but the split between the *whys* appeared at the highest thematic levels. At the secondary level, these motivations were distinguished by their alignment to product or process. In general, membership in high school CAC was motivated by and enabled through in-group culture and informed by connection to popular culture through its product.

General Structure Analogy: The Movie Titanic

I include this analogy to shed light on the motivations attached to high school CAC music making. Although members described the phenomenon in essentially the same way, it became clear that participants emphasized different motivations dependant on group affiliation. I present this analogy, first, to explain the levels of the general structure without the use of reductive visual models and, secondly, to examine how different motivations can arise from comparable experiences of the phenomenon in the section *Group differences*.

Consider the fact that the title of the 1997 movie is *Titanic* and not *The Love Story of Jack and Rose*. Though tragic, the movie is unmistakably a love story. This love story is the main theme. Would this have been another ship, we could dismiss its importance all together. Instead we have a story within a story. In the body of the story the ship becomes background material. However, in the beginning and end, the ship comes to the forefront, directly affecting the choices made.

The movie opens with historical footage of the Titanic as passengers wave to port and embark for America. We then see the Titanic as it remains today, a sunken hull, full of mystery and relics; a payday for those few treasure hunters that inform the story. Among the wreckage,

we are introduced to the image of Rose, and soon meet her relic, a 101-year-old dowager, a hull of her former self and the key to unlocking the mysteries of the deep. What is Rose's motivation for entering the narrative? She wants to tell her story. She wants to tell her and Jack's story.

In April 1912, we meet the free-spirited Jack, a vagabond and artist. Through a game of chance, he gains his next adventure. As he boards the Titanic, Jack comments on the unique opportunity he is afforded, in which people from different divisions of society and walks of life share in an exclusive journey. As the Titanic leaves port, Jack joins the other passengers in waving to port. Not because he knows anyone, but simply because that is what one does.

At this point, the love story takes over, made possible by the ship itself. However, the attention will of course turn toward the ship again. The question then becomes, what is the climax of this film? That may depend on individual predilection. I would assume that most see sinking as the climax, but the ship or Jack? There is also the possibility, to the particularly material-minded, that the sinking of a priceless necklace could be the climax of the film. These different perspectives will become important when I address analogous differences between high school CAC group motivations.

To inform the analogy, imagine high school CAC in a linear way in which the entire story in encompassed within the cultivation of a single performance. The process is then: choosing a song, procuring or developing an arrangement, learning and workshopping the arrangement, and performance. When members choose a song, as with each of these categories, meaning is attached to both in-group and external cultures. Yet, at the most basic level, members could not choose a popular song if they didn't know any songs, what they sound like, what they would consider a good song, etc.

As they move through categories, members utilize more traditional music skills to arrange, learn parts, and workshop ideas for improvement. Still, members utilize knowledge of popular culture, particularly through appropriation of its language (e.g. verse, chorus, and bridge) and conventions (e.g. dropping out the bass, use of mash-ups, and making a dubstep remix), but these understandings are background to the agency participants described and embodied through group culture and the processes described therein. The last category, performance, is the product of these processes, but it is governed by an anticipation based on audiences understanding of popular music (the sonic qualities, compositional conventions, familiarity with the songs themselves, how to respond, etc.).

In case I left any ambiguity in my analogy, when members focus on what they will or have created, attention is turned toward the product, and thereby, is reliant on an understanding of popular culture, as symbolized here by the ship, *Titanic*. As members think about or work through the process, attention is turned toward the process, and thereby, in-group culture, analogous to *The Love Story of Jack and Rose*. For the purposes of flushing out the metaphor, the *necklace* is analogous to the material products of culture (e.g. CD sales, fame, future opportunities). In-group membership is the main avenue to meaning that members take away from their experiences and popular culture is only a background. But this is an exclusive meaning, only privy to members. The whole picture of high school CAC is only understood when we look at membership as both an inward and outward expression. In sharing it with the world, they see a culmination of all their work and gain a sense of autonomy through embodied and enacted membership.

> P5: I could see the results in something like this, and therefore you put more time into it. It's kind of a cycle like that. And I guess success to most musicians is, a part of it can be how far you get, in terms of people knowing you and people listening to your music, and having greater appreciation. But to put it kind of corny, a lot of

> that success is just in being able to create what music creates. It's a sublime, kind of ethereal thing, and when you get that, when you feel like you've produced something that is beyond words, I mean, that has to be success, a personal success or even spiritual.

Discerning Seemingly Identical Meanings

Above, I referenced meanings as tied to culture and that seemingly identical meanings were differentiated through their alignment with different cultural spheres. To give an example, I will address a concept that was described time and again by participants: *efficiency*. As described in the results, participants reveal expectations that some procedures would take little time (such as note-learning in *access* and *investment and individual responsibility*) and others would take a lot of time (such as *workshopping*).

It seemed that efficiency was universally experienced with multifocal connotations, however, when I varied and examined the cultural aspect of these meanings, it became clear that these were different motivations all together. For Massachusetts participants, (P4: "splitting off, we find, makes it a lot easier to learn because there's less down time. Like, all your time is being used learning your part. You don't have to wait while other parts learn their parts."), efficiency was related to group norms without much meaning other than the feeling of engagement. When Ohio participants spoke about efficiency, (P6: "We were an efficient, well run, little business."), it referred to individualized jobs to facilitate professionalism and product sales. For Texas members, (P3: "with them having an executive decision but us always having input, really fostered our creativity but it kept the efficiency that we needed to cover everything that needed covered"), efficiency was enacted by the director, and likely tied to school culture of goals and objectives akin to CAC as a curricular offering. Through this understanding, we can see different meaning attached to efficiency with no thematic motivation. Although the transcendental idea of

efficiency can easily be described through the processes of socialization (such as *investment and individual responsibility*), and these strata could be shown as motivation to create efficiency and work efficiently, such an inclusion is a synthetic justification that could not stand up to free-imaginative variation.

Group Differences

Although the general structure provides meanings that hold true to the experience of all participants, there are considerable differences in the importance participants gave to different meanings. These disparities are largely influenced by the differences in how each group operated. As described in *Background*, there were two groups (Ohio and Massachusetts) that rehearsed after school, while the other was a curricular class; additionally, these divisions were experienced as: intermittent director supervision versus consistent supervision, permanence of membership versus yearly auditions, holistic rehearsal goals versus objective-based learning, group facilitated versus director facilitated development of group connection to song meanings, and unreserved agency in group arranging versus director initiated and adjudicated group arranging. Two groups (Massachusetts and Texas) conformed to competition models, while the Ohio group resembled a vocal band; this division affected goals of performance, intended audience, size of group, size of repertoire, shared versus individual vocal lines, in-group arrangement enacted through rehearsal versus through performance, learning parts in versus outside of rehearsal, focus on social environment versus professional environment, and a focus on group empowerment processes and meaningful music making verses embodied product and career development.

These differences do not violate the general structure but demonstrate how members act through different cultural spheres in momentary shift, highlight the variety of forms that in-group culture can take, and should stand as a reminder that popular culture is an industry, and varying levels of success will influence the degree of popular culture embodiment. Secondly, in the above explanation of differences aligned to curricular inclusion, there are, again, no violations of the general structure. Although the director takes a leading role in facilitating many processes of cultivation, cultivation happens nonetheless. In the general structure, I was careful to use the word *stakeholders* to conceptualize different models in which these structures can withstand.

The Purple Carrot

As discussed in *Methodology*, phenomenology is the study of consciousness. Consciousness is understood as intentional, or directed toward an object. Of most importance, at this point, is the logical understanding that the object must be different from other objects. This does not mean that the object of intention must be fully dissimilar from any other object, only that the understanding of an object necessitates that it is different from other objects in some way. However, this notion can play out in complicated ways. To shed light on this issue, and how it may affect the aspects of the phenomenon participants emphasized, I introduce an analogy of meanings attached to a purple carrot.

If I placed a typical carrot in front of you and asked you to describe it, I assume you would start with, “It’s a carrot.” You might speak about its conical shape, its orange color, that you eat it, and that it’s a root that grows underground. If I pressed further, you might expand your answers in many ways, such as, “They are good for your eyes, Bugs Bunny liked them, so

do horses, they make good noses for snowmen, I guess you can put them on a salad," and yes, quite possibly, "they are not always orange."

Now let us start this exercise afresh and assume I never placed an orange carrot in front of you. Instead, let us imagine instead that I said, "I have a carrot in my possession, in a few seconds I am going to place it in front of you and ask you to describe it. In this moment, you begin to image the situation about to occur, and most likely envision an orange carrot coming into your view. You might begin to think about what you will say in anticipation of our experiment.

As the carrot is placed in front of you and I ask you to describe it. I find it likely that you will begin with "It's purple." However, I find it possible that your answers will include shape, and where it grows, et cetera. But what if I press further? How likely are you to mention Bugs Bunny or a snowman?

The danger here is that the color of the carrot was not its most important attribute in the first scenario, but it is in the second. Although purple and orange carrots are more alike than not, the juxtaposition exacerbates the differences instead of highlighting commonalities. This analogy is useful in describing certain aspects of meaning participants described in this study.

In plainly examining the words, *high school contemporary a cappella*, we have two or three relevant concepts to discern; personally, I imagine two: *high school* and *contemporary a cappella*. Again, when participants speak about a phenomenon, it is an act of discerning the phenomenon as different from something else. So the question is: is it more likely that members expressed meaning in reference to natural everyday life, as different from collegiate or professional CAC, or different from their other experiences of high school? I think the answer is high school. Or, when I asked participants about the experience of high school CAC, they may

have described the phenomenon from the position of what it is not (traditional choral experience) rather than what it is. This concept may become clearer when considering the cultural spheres indicated as important extensions of the meanings participants described.

There were multiple references to in-group culture, ACA culture, and popular culture, but what about traditional choir or school culture? When participants spoke about traditional ensembles, it was repeatedly to differentiate CAC from traditional ensembles and seldom to highlight similarities. As has been presented, participant acknowledged prerequisites to membership, including previous and concurrent membership in traditional ensembles. Participants described abundant experience in traditional high school music ensembles; the aggregate of their experiences is certainly enough to develop a sense of normative operation. To apply the metaphor, I believe high school CAC might have been described as the purple carrot in relation to the typical-orange carrot of traditional high school music ensembles, in participant descriptions. At least, I believe this to be the case for groups from Massachusetts and Texas. Still, there may be an additional level to this problem in the participant descriptions from Ohio.

Participants from Ohio described their ensemble, not as CAC, but as a *Vocal Band*. Both members made efforts to define this distinction several times. On the surface, this is not a problem because, as described within the results of this study, I was able to intuit and describe meanings that at the highest levels were universally experiences that could accommodate such modality. However, the focus of our problem here is context. The context of Ohio participants' experiences in a vocal band includes previous experience in CAC groups. These research participants were both previously members of a *traditional* CAC group that forms the junior varsity to their vocal band's varsity ensemble. In fact, both participants describe membership in a CAC group from when they were in middle school as well. I find it plausible, to say the least,

that when these participants described their experiences, descriptions were in part informed by differences between their vocal band and their previous experience in typical high school CAC. To apply the metaphor, the typical carrot here is not traditional high school ensembles or choir, but high school CAC and *vocal band* is the purple carrot. From this vantage, less description focused on in-group motivations and more focus was placed on the material product. To give some perspective from a previous analogy, they might have tilted their descriptions toward the *necklace*.

Confirmation of a Single Structure

Participants described significant variation of experiences, which facilitated an intuition of invariant meanings. My choice to include dissimilar groups in this study was an effort to create a structure applicable to substantial variation. However, if participants each highlight different aspects of the phenomenon, it is possible that sublevels of essential and thematic meanings will not be uncovered. Future research can address these structures of meaning with much of the groundwork already performed herein. To be clear, *essential* is not a connotation of completeness.

In light of the *Vocal Band* distinction, the question becomes, "Is there a reason to believe participants are describing different phenomena?" The answer depends on whether the descriptions fit into the same structure, and they do. Retuning again to the *Titanic* analogy: if I were to ask people about the movie, there may be some who would highlight the importance of the ship, others that would highlight the love story, or even the necklace. These descriptions aid us in grasping the overall concept of the movie, although, at times respondents may seem to be describing different movies all together.

There are many meanings within the movie *Titanic* and, therefore, room for those who describe the movie differently. Likewise, there are many meanings attributable to high school CAC, and therefore, room for those who highlight the outward motivations (products and connections to popular culture) and those who highlight the inward motivations (processes of cultivation and in-group culture). Although I privilege in-group motivations as more important than the relationship to audience, both can be accommodated within the general structure.

I find the ability to accommodate both modes of motivation a success of the general structure. Although Ohio participants were highly motivated by socialization into a professional/business environment, their ability to focus outward is really an achievement of in-group culture:

> P1: I'm reflecting the image of the product and when they are talking to me, they are talking to [group]. They are talking to the product, and I need to reflect what everybody in this group wants our product to reflect.

In the above statement, both areas of socialization are visible, but more importantly, the outward focus is partially a function of in-group culture. We then can understand that, just as in the case of *workshopping*, in-group motivations give members the agency to act toward cultivating the product. As previously stated, workshopping for this group occurred through successive performance more than in rehearsal. What becomes clear is that *workshopping* and g*roup maintenance*, for this group, includes an outward projection beyond making music an audience would like. If we take P1 at his word, that P1 *is* the product, the above statement is then an explanation of performance. For this group *workshopping* includes learning in real-world situations: how to be professional, promote your business, network, etc. In other words, these behaviors and motivations are still *cultivation* as it is explained in the general structure.

The goals of CAC membership are related to performance, whether within competition or for another audience. This model gives members first hand experience as a producer of popular culture. The realization of performance gives meaning to group membership and collective efforts but also recognition. Recognition can take many forms such as awards, peer recognition, and recognition in achieving some resemblance of fame. Audience recognition allows students to embody popular culture as a popular music artist. Recognition stems from the audience reaction in the moment, in future encounters, and commerce.

Collective Arrangement

Participant descriptions were replete with notions of ownership. It became clear that this was a result of decision-making power members possessed in developing performances. Participants spoke about performances as unique because of who they were (group sound) and what they made (in-group arranging). Members contributed individual efforts and individualized skills to the group to attain ownership over the sound and authorship over the performance product.

I found this process to be an important aspect of high school CAC, because it focused conversation toward what the group did rather than what type of music it performed. This was important for delimiting high school CAC music making from traditional choirs' predilection for occasionally including a pop song. From this perspective, the creative process of collective arrangement became a unique meaning that gave contrast to the experience of traditional high school music making.

Although some groups recurrently improvised arrangements, collective arranging usually began with a song or an arrangement and members experienced some power over song selection.

The participants all described a capacity to influence song choice with differing levels of power. (P6) described instances of near total control over song selection with oversight from directors meant to assure the appropriateness of subject matter and availability of funds. For P1 and P6, the group paid for custom arrangements and members would occasionally arrange themselves. In the other groups (P2, P3, P4, and P5), the director chose most songs but members felt free to suggest additional selections. The director arranged most songs, and students with sufficient skills arranged additional songs, often from group or director suggestions. In some cases, groups voted to decide the next song a director or member would arrange.

As presented in the results of *Experiencing culture*, members considered the feasibility of creating an optimal performance product when choosing a song. Along with considering the appeal to an audience, members considered the personal connection or likelihood of developing an emotional/personal connection to the song. Members believed that an audience could share in the emotional connection evoked by the group. As described in the results of *Finding flow and developing connections*, members found this emotional connection provided for a better performance.

In general, CAC groups did not use commercially available CAC arrangements.

> P1: Because we gig, we're granted the benefit of only doing custom arrangements, which means that we don't use any stock arrangements, any [widely-published CAC arranger] arrangements, unless of course we commission [widely-published CAC arranger] to do an arrangement for us. But, we don't do the stock arrangements that you can just get. We have specified arrangers that arrange for us and they are familiar with our voicing and with our voice parts and they arrange specifically for us so that they can highlight our strengths from year to year, and that costs a little bit more money. That's pretty expensive but we are able to do that because we gig and all the proceeds go back into the group since it's a school-run group

Although beginning groups, experimenting with CAC sound, might chose to do so, there seemed to be a stigma attached commercially available arrangements. There are many possible reasons that this was so, for instance:

- The use of commercially available arrangements might reduce the immediacy of experiencing popular culture.
- The variety of group make-up might not mesh with what is commercially available.
- Should a song become commercially available, it might signal the fact that the will be or has been performed by many groups.
- There might be an expectation that are intended for or could be performed by more traditional choirs.
- The uses of these arrangements may not be socially or officially acceptable in competitions.
- Students might feel less ownership of the overall product.
- Commercially available arrangements cannot play to the strengths of individual members.

As described in the results of *Group maintenance*, written arrangements were dispensed with early on as the performance was workshopped through mostly full-group rehearsals to better understand, connect with, adapt, evaluate, and refine the performance product. With some exception (P5: “So sometimes people will opt to actually make changes to the score.”), participants described in-group arranging without mention of returning to the source material to keep record of such changes. Based on participant descriptions, *the arrangement* most often referred to a non-material concept that existed within the shared consciousness of the group.

The arrangement developed over the course of cultivation from inception to performance. In workshopping, which often included the addition of choreography, learning was interactive as members internalized the new components into an overall concept of the performance. When

choreography was utilized, members describe movement as a component of arranging. This helped to solidify the concept of an arrangement as a consumable product. Choreography within the context of CAC can include planned or semi-planned movement or any movements within performance that can be understood as meaningfully connected to performance. As a product that is typically seen, participants described choreography or movement as the visual component of performance, indicating the relationship between sight and sound in creation of a live performance. In workshopping, choreography became part of the arrangement process, wherein the arrangement could dictate the goals of the choreography but suggested choreography could also initiate changes to the arrangement.

Although little time was spent on learning or memorizing written parts, it cannot be said that emphasis was placed on delivery over memorization and learning. We can instead think of an arrangement, not as a thing on paper, but an ever-changing idea that exists more or less within the mind of those creating it. Members felt a responsibility to be present in workshopping because, among other reasons, they were responsible for knowing how the arrangement changed from one rehearsal to the next.

In arranging, the consumer-culture attribute of popular music (in which songs come and go into the public sphere) was of particular importance. These songs were not treated as significant, historical, or immutable art. Popular songs were simply meant to be enjoyed or consumed in whatever way one chooses, knowing that each song's appeal would probably not last long. The freedom to change these songs gave members the opportunity to be creative in a way that might not exist within traditional choirs.

To shed light on this issue, I employ what is commonly known as the "Cannons of Rhetoric" (Quintilian, n.d./1920). Cicero's "Cannons" form the classical example, taught

throughout western history, of how to create a performance to maximum effect. The *Cannons* are the five processes of *invention*, *arrangement*, *style*, *memory*, and *delivery*. Although these categories are not devoid of complexity, if taken on value, it can be seen that the first three are creative processes and the latter two are simply execution. If we envision a typical choral piece and its performance, the processes of invention, arrangement and style are all the labor of a composer. Creativity is the ability to create, to create something new; the ability to chose to create something new. The reverence ascribed to composers and their works gives traditional choir members little opportunity for creativity. As previously described, the ownership CAC members feel is, in part, derived from the creative choices they make. In CAC music making, there is opportunity to choose and agency to style a performance as members wish. In small or large ways, members take part in arrangement.

The Mandate to Arrange

To give some perspective on collective arranging, I will use an example from a recent festival I attended. One of the many events at this particular festival was a high school CAC competition in which three groups, one of which was newly formed, were invited to present to songs. One song could be anything the group wished to present, but the quirk of this particular contest was that all groups would perform the same second song that a notable CAC figure had been hired to arrange.

Before the competition began, a host came onto the stage to introduce the groups, acknowledge some sponsors, give out a *hashtag* in case the audience wanted to share on social media, and tell the crowd about the rules of the contest. When explaining the quirk of the contest,

he acknowledged the arranger to loud applause and hoots. As the competition progressed, I noticed that each group performed the supplied arrangement in a different way.

After the competition, I was talking to some other attendees and judges about the competition. I expressed that I thought the recently formed group sounded great and thought they could have won. However, the judges were quick to point out, "yeah, they sounded great, but they didn't do anything with the song. That's not a cappella." So even there, with the arranger sitting in front of them, there was an expectation for the group to take source material and make something new out of it.

The lack of reverence for popular songs seems to extend to CAC arrangements as well. One reason for this phenomenon is that CAC groups examine the individual strengths of their members when developing a performance. However, even when an arrangement is specifically created for a group, as was consistently the case for all participants in this study, in-group arrangement took place. Although novice groups might rely on commercially available arrangements and perform them without much alteration, I assume that such performance give members an incomplete experience that only imitates high school CAC. Future research may be needed to address whether the mandate to arrange is commonly experienced within the high school CAC community, how this mandate spreads to new groups, and what such a mandate implies for music education in terms of norms and the educational value students receive from such engagement.

Examples of Music Learning

Because the lens of this study is educational sociology, learning herein is describes as related to socialization. A reading of the results of this study from this perspective will inform that every theme within has a component of learning as individual and social. Members tend to

see themselves as having learned sufficient traditional music skills and knowledge to a point that they can apply skills and knowledge to new situations with little guidance:

> P5: As I mentioned it was a pretty good music school, and a lot of people did everything, like, I was in the orchestra and concert band and chamber choir and percussion ensemble and a ridiculous amount of stuff, and, the same was true for everyone. So by the standard of the time, and I'm not saying this to be cocky, but we were pretty well seasoned musicians for our age, in terms of our experience. And a lot of us were considering studying music after high school, whether it meant trying to go to a conservatory, or keeping up with it rigorously in college, or going off and really becoming a performer. Particularly with the people I led the group with, as a student director, we were also really involved in theory lessons and ear training and that sort of thing. We actually took classes like that in high school.

Members incorporate traditional and popular music skills and knowledge, as well as the terminology of both to facilitate processes of music making. In some groups, traditional music skills might be reinforced but not specifically addressed except through situation-specific peer learning. Within most groups, peer learning is also a norm:

> P6: Our choir director taught us a lot of things, like, how do thirds tune and how do fifths tune, and thing like, what vowels work better for what, and, if you can't get a part, how to lock it in, and there were little things that we needed our directors for. And by the time I was a senior, [member] and I had heard it so much from our director that we could just say what he would say verbatim, and so we would know what a problem is and say, "Oh, this is the problem you're having? This is how you fix it. That note's flat. What note is that? That's the third of the chord. Try singing it brighter; that's going to make it fixed." And, when everyone knows that, and can relate that, then you can just have it down. So we could just pick up a chart and see it and we're so locked into each other's voices, just from singing together so much, that it starts to sound good. And then, so we would know, "Alright, we get a chart. We learn it. Then we sing it together. We fix our issues. After that, we're going to go to the stage and sing it on mics. Has anything changed? It shouldn't change because you should be singing the same on mics. And then, what are we going to do to make this more entertaining for the crowd? Let's add in some choreography here. Let's change a position here. Where in our set should this go?"

The participant descriptions give ample evidence of individual and group learning of musical and non-musical skills. However, skill learning in CAC is often individualized for

specific role members take on. Individualized learning is an important feature of CAC. As members come to understand their unique contribution to the collective, they recognize their musical strengths and seek to develop their areas of weakness, for instance, as a vocal percussionist:

> P1: I was kind of under the impression at the time that if I just did it, I would get better at it and I wasn't at the point where I had fully grasped the concept that you can google anything and learn about anything and find expertise and help on any subject. So, I just kind of started doing it and started learning it and I'm grateful that I did that because I was really able to develop my own style that was unique from other drummers that chose the path of using tutorials online and figuring things out like that. And they may have developed a little bit faster than me, but I feel like in the end I gave myself a tool set that really allowed me to be capable of doing bigger and better and faster things whereas others who tailored themselves to specific tutorials and specific methods really find themselves hitting a wall when those specific methods are no longer well enough tailored for their mouth. But for me, everything that I do is unique to me. It's my perfect sound that is built just for my mouth and I didn't really learn my basic fundamentals from anybody but me. So, I'm really grateful that I was able to come up, to learn on my own rather than to seek outside help.

With the goal of creating a better product, individual members often use a heuristic approach to create an effect in performance. Individuals utilize media (original recordings and a cappella cover versions) and persons (peers, directors, clinicians) allowing the performer to better emulate the original music or enhance performance through original and creative interpretation. P3 described creating such an affect and better music reading skills from looking at written arrangements and comparing them to songs:

> P3: Recognizing what's making that sound: "Is it a guitar? Is it a stringed instrument? Is it a woodwind or is it largely synthesizer? But what is it? What's the synthesizer trying to imitate?" Recognizing that style and figuring out what sounds closest to it, how you have to work with your lips, your tongue, your whole sound box and create it…and kind of seeing how the notes actually looked written out. So once I saw that and learned to sing it by looking at it on paper, I went back and listened to it, I was able to make out the distinct rhythms and how exact [director] had to be to put that on paper. So, seeing some of the rhythms on paper helped me hear the ones that I missed, because sometimes, some of those sounds can run together, not in a bad way, just, in a way that adds to the effect of

the song. But you realize there's just very precise rhythms to it, and you're maybe not hearing each individual beat, at least, I realized that after I saw it written out. And I thought that was really cool.

Seeing it on paper brought me into trying to discern the sounds, having those first few songs that [group name] did together, was given to us on sheet music. Because I heard "Don't Stop Believin'", I'd heard "You Belong with Me", and you hear it, and once you learn it and put all these voice parts together, you recognize it as that song that you've been listening to for so long. But seeing it out on paper, you realize how many parts you need to make that whole, how many layers go into the full effect, and it's really interesting.

The descriptions in the results of *Group maintenance* cover peer/group learning well enough that I do not feel it necessary to repeat. Because not all members experienced arranging (a written document), it is not covered in the results of this study. Individual arranging is the ultimate example of applying what is learning in school and in popular culture. Three of the six members in this wrote full arrangements for their group (P2, P4, and P5).

P2: I mean there's all the different chord theory and, "what sounds good here" and it's also just the creativity of the arranger to say, "I like what goes on here," cause the arranger of the pop song has to know theory, they have to know, what inversion works the best here, stuff like that. What I did for the song was just, played it, and then used *Finale* to put parts in there, change what I didn't like and that stuff. It was just, ear stuff. I wasn't really taught by anyone how to do arranging. [Director] told me, like, some of the creative stuff to do, but didn't specifically say, "this is how you should arrange this song. He just let me do it. I learned chords from [director]. He is the one who introduced chord numbers and that's how I knew that. I didn't know anything about inversions until I took theory this year, after I wrote that arrangement. I like being able to do more advanced music, more advanced things within the music, because, it's a collection of the best members of [school] choir. And throughout the year, we learn more theory and more music ideas to implement throughout the year.

P4: Everyone else had done plenty of music, but we were some of the only people that had taken music theory class and then would know about how to arrange music and how to make things sound good when you write them out. Throughout this year I arranged two and a half songs, only one of which we've used just because of time's sake. It's definitely given me more experience with music theory, learning about part-writing and what to do and what not to do with the voices and how to write a line that's easy enough for the members of the group to sing but that's at the same time interesting and works well with the other parts. I think it's definitely helped expose me to working with music a lot more than I would have had I not been in [group].

P5: I haven't done it since then and I definitely wasn't the most active arranger, but I did, like, 2 or 3 things I recall. They're really rewarding to do, and it felt really good to finally get them done. It was a really hard process, and I got some help from our director,but I remember the process of doing it was scary. And I wouldn't necessarily say difficult but, it was a creative challenge in many ways because you don't want to just copy it, you want to add your own innovation to it and adapt it to sound good for a collection of voices, not just one voice and a bunch of instruments, so yeah, I had my own challenges. But it was fun.

My process was by listening it to about 500 dozen times, getting the sheet music, and I left the bass intact, for the most part, and that would be my first goal, to write out the entire bass. And then, write out the solo, and I would do that and then, looking kind of at the, for this particular song, it was like a combination of cello and bass, and piano, and some other weird like back-up vocal stuff...And I would try to break that down and put in the alto and tenor parts, and for the sopranos as well, try to get them to not just harmonize in thirds with the other vocal lines. So what I would do is try to divide all the music, the score, into a five-part reduction that would be soloist and soprano, alto, tenor, bass.

And then from there, and I was kind of conservative by standards of like, you know, how much creativity I put into the music itself… But I got, I think a piano reduction of the whole song, and then listened to it and identified what instrumentation was where in the piano reduction, and which, those lines that weren't the bass, and weren't the solo, and making sure that the voice leading didn't sound too thin, and not, intertwined and rich enough, probably put, just the higher parts in the alto, or in the soprano and alto, and did some soprano echoing, some soprano and tenor echoing, actually, of the solo line, and yeah, for that song I did break the solo out into a duet to just add some more texture to it, and then, we'd built from there, you know, maybe the lower piano lines and cello lines in the tenor and so on. The song itself happened to be pretty thick in rhythmic texture, if that makes any sense, and the harmonic rhythm in various instrumentation points, so I was able to use that to give more of an interesting vocal texture overall, and I just took that to my advantage. I used a piano reduction most of the time, I couldn't do the whole thing by ear.

Members recognize the importance of the skills and knowledge they acquire in traditional school music experiences. The opportunity to participate in high school CAC allows members to synthesize their learning and apply their knowledge and skills in new and creative ways.

P5: It really helped a lot. Especially for ear training, when you're just a solo group alone, tuning and balancing with one another, these are skills that people would get in a choir as it is, but it's really hard to tackle and do well, and all of us, most of us, had a decent choir background at our high school. I think most of the people were in the classical choirs- most of us, in the a cappella group were also in these classical choirs, because, I think people think of these choirs as having a very

refined sense of singing, and not so much with a cappella, but it should be both ways. I mean, classical training goes for any genre. You will never fail in music if you have classical training. It always helps, and for us, that was the case. And I think we can attribute a lot of our success to that background it gives you a sense of stability on some of the most basic things. And that's kind of what we had been educated in, alone, so having that kind of background gave us a nice advantage. So yeah, a lot of that [success] was from classical training and that goes for the majority of the group.

P6: From a classical perspective, it's like, and in every pop music school it's like this, too, it's like, "You get your classical technique and your training down and then you go worry about singing like Mariah Carey and Usher and whatever else you want to sing like." And that was a great mindset to have…And so, he [director] made sure that that was first and I applaud him for that because as far as commercial singing is concerned, and by commercial singing, I mean pop singing and what's on the radio, commercials, and what will sell, that's so important. I mean, you look at people like Sam Smith and whoever else, and John Maher is a great example, they have all these vocal issues because their technique's not great and then they're going out and basically running marathons with their voices. You know, you have to get your foundation correct before you can do anything else. That was something that was instilled in us and it made us great. When I had voice lessons, and I was learning to sing in the classical style, and then I could take what I was learning and I would apply it in [group], I'm like, "How am I going to belt this high D? Okay, well, when I sing classically and I'm singing like, [singing] 'Ahhhh,' it's in that place." It's different, you know? Our directors, I don't think they know exactly that commercial singing and classical singing are different. I mean, they know but I don't think they know that you can sing both healthily. But, you know, having the classical background, helps you figure everything out about your voice and that's why he stressed the importance of [traditional choir]. You know, that's the foundation

The Soloist

The purpose of including this section is to deal with a commonsense problem in the data that cannot be addressed within the results section. A second reason it is included is to give the reader an opportunity to think through descriptive phenomenological considerations. In the section *Developing structure*, I attempted to give explanation to the results and process used for achieving the results in this same manner, however the analysis therein was of high abstraction and the level herein is one of minutia. The strange lack of data on the subject of soloist gives us

another opportunity to shed light on processes of intuiting meanings and discuss possible reasons that participants did not speak about choosing soloists. This section is not included to give a concrete answer, but to speak openly about the limitations and possible meanings we can gain from this lack of data.

In the descriptions I received, there was no mention of choosing soloist for songs. Special consideration is given to this observation, as it is perplexing for multiple reasons. I would think that in light of descriptions of incorporating individualized skills, performing popular songs, and group-mediated decision making, choosing a soloist would appear at some point. Although there are general descriptions of being a soloist and what characteristics make for a good soloist, there is no mention of who is involved in the decision, how they are chosen, or why they are chosen for a specific song. It would be simple to contact school and find an answer to this question, but we are interested in the meanings, not in the pure act.

What I find most interesting is, in conversations with directors from many programs, I was often told that choosing a soloist is the main point of contention within CAC groups. It may be of benefit to consider this possibility along side the fact that students did not talk about the issue. Although there is little data to look through on the issue, it may be possible to pull out some tentative meanings to clarify this dilemma. For edification purposes, the following is similar to preliminary structuring of meanings. Although complicated analysis is used only when necessary, an understanding of *indexical* meaning is important to understanding this particular simulation of in-the-moment analysis. For the purpose of simplification, *indexicality* is the viewpoint from which reference is made. For instance, if I were to say, “I am here now,” intentional objects must be attached to these words or the phrase cannot make sense (i.e. the

referential context of *I*, the temporal context of *now*, and the spacial context of *here*). This issue will become of particular importance as we examine the following descriptions.

In Ohio, there were indications that all members were featured as soloists:

P1: It really, what the point of the song is, it showcases all of our solos and all of our capabilities and our bass and our huge sound system and it really kind of does our best to kind of show in one song what our group is all about.

P6: And then, [member], that same year, sang *I'm Like a Bird*, in that same performance, I think it was after mine, *Nothing Ever Hurt Like You.*

P6: I was the first black kid ever in the group, and they had been around for like ten or eleven years before I got in, and as far as picking songs for me, I was like, "[group] doesn't sing Motown, or blah blah blah, or Usher, or whatever else I sang."

I find the statements, *it showcases all of our solos*, and, *as far as picking songs for me* leads to the understanding that most members, if not all were soloists. The interesting indexicallity issues in P6's descriptions are referential changes. In *picking songs for me*, P6 uses the object *me* to suggest P6 is not the locus of control, however this may not be a permanent condition. When we look at *I was* against *they had been* there is an indexical specification of P6's new condition of membership against an established membership. Similarly *I sang*, in connection to types of songs, rather than specific songs, indicates newness (i.e. *I sang* contextually, is better understood as *In previous situations, I used to sing songs of certain genres*).

The stronger argument is the use of *me*, paired with the use of *mine* in the other quote, denotes a personal connection when P6 is singing the solo, and a disassociation when P6 does not sing the solos: *it* (and not *hers* or *his*) was after *mine*. Particularly in P6's first quote about a members song being after P6's song is an indication that each member, although possibly not the bass and vocal percussionist, sang solos. A new understanding of P6's second quote can be

understood as: *When you become a member of the group, you get a solo, but I was worried the song [unknown person or group] chose, in which I would be the soloist, would reflect the groups established sound instead of a song that was best for my singing styl*e. We can confirm this association of *my* when P6 sings the solo and disassociation of *it* when not singing the solo (although P6 is, of course, singing with the group) elsewhere in the data, but that is necessary to prove the point.

There is a similar issue in P5's description of solos. Of the participants from the Massachusetts group, P4 never mentioned soloists except in watching other groups perform or arranging a solo line. P5 did not explain the process for choosing soloist, but gave pertinent information:

> P5: There were people who were excellent soloists, who had wonderful range, capacity, or just had a really nice tone to their voice. And they were used for solos often. Obviously, many of us had many of these talents, but there were some people who were really good singers, but they didn't have the kind of voice you would use for a soloist but they had a really good musical ear that would allow them to blend in well and to really have a nice background component, which is most of what you need to be honest, but we wouldn't care, it was still a blast.

In this passage, P5 talks about soloists (*they were used for solos often*) with some permanence attached to the idea. In the second passage, P5 suggests in the phrase *stable background person* again, concrete roles attached to the right voice for solos and a different voice for the stable background singer. Furthermore, P5 attaches *talent* to the soloist and *skill* and *stability* to the other. The indexicality here can be understood as a third-person stance of *There were people*, *they were used*, etc. The interesting shift in indexicallity in *many of us had these talent, but* and *but we wouldn't care*, breaks P5's third-person stance at highly emotional moments of contemplation. In the use of *us* and *we*, P5 identifies P5 as one of the skillful, stable singers that did not have the opportunity to sing a solo. I include the conjunction *but* in *many of*

us had these talent, but and *but we wouldn't care* to understand the shifting moments in description where P5 encounters a negative emotion and quickly copes. We can then see the false dichotomy of talent versus skill as a type of long-term coping mechanism. I would describe this passage as containing many layers of meaning, but for our purposes, we still do not know who or how soloists were chosen for particular songs. We do know that part of this group's socialization was recognition of who would make for a good soloist on a semi-permanent basis. However, I feel it possible to draw some preliminary understandings in the case of Massachusetts.

Most perplexing of all is the descriptions of solos from Texas participants. Suffice it to say, P3 gave no information on solos other then tuning them out when listening to recorded music. P2 talked about solos in various ways:

> P2: Like [P3] wasn't trying to be Regina Spektor, [P3] was trying to be [P3]. Do the best that [P3] can with the song, which is really important. Like, all of our soloists were told "don't sing like Taylor Swift, don't sing like Owl City, sing like yourself. There is a lot of ownership in it.
>
> P2: Everyone else is on shared parts except the soloist.
>
> P2: I get a microphone, the soloist gets a microphone and the bass gets a microphone.
>
> P2: I had my own little drum solo in there, so that was fun.
>
> P3: Because of a cappella, when I listen to music, I no longer listen to just the soloist or just the percussionist.
>
> P3: Going beyond the obvious I guess, trying to tune out the upper, soloist, voice and maybe the percussionist and listening for the different things.

The first thing we notice it that P2 is describing P3 as a soloist. And then, P3 does not self-identify being a soloist. My immediate intuition is this: P2 sees value in being the soloist; P2 draws associations between being a soloist and P2 (both get a microphone, both on individual lines, both perform solos). P3 downplays P3's role as a soloist by not mentioning it and speaking about listening *past* solo lines. Listening past the solo and percussion could indicate an

acknowledgement that the other parts contain deep meaning, but it is still a signal of the importance of the solo and percussion. Although I can not confirm my suspicions, I think that it is very possible that P3 did not talk about being a soloist because of either negative emotional associations from contentious behavior in the group, or one of many simple or complex explanations: It did not come up, the content was too emotional for discussion at a coffee shop, P5 thought it would be showing off, etc. In any event, from the descriptions provided, I could not describe any meaning of choosing soloist for specific songs. Future research is needed to understand the skills necessary and learned when music making is delineated in such a way as well as the complex social issues involved in choosing soloists and the implications of embodying the role of the soloist in CAC performances.

Limitations

Initially, there were four geographical locations chosen for this study. Ultimately, a group from California was not included in the study because national attention on the group and subsequent demands from media sources made the group inaccessible. One of the groups in this study had similar instances of fame, but not quite to the same level. However, including participants from the California group would mean half of the participants in this study had achieved national fame in some way. Although their experience would not change what was essential to high school CAC, data were likely to reflect aspects of fame irrelevant to the typical experience of the phenomenon. Because an effort was made to include diverse perspectives of the phenomenon, I found it unnecessary to include descriptions from four participants that achieved fame through near-identical situations. Furthermore, although another group experienced such fame, the California group's achievement of fame coincided with data

collection for this study; it was possible that including these students would have violated the need for pre-reflective descriptions because members would likely have spoken at length about their experience with CAC in interviews for other media sources.

In further attempts to include groups from the west coast (California and Oregon), I contacted groups and began conversations with directors only to find one was on a television show, one in a national commercial campaign, one group's director was the focus of an in-production documentary, one group sang background for a famous singer and appeared in her video, and one was directed by the wife of a famous singer and was, to some extent, a famous singer herself. Because of the amount of time and effort that this took, my committee and I decided to not continue the search. By the time we made this decision, I felt confident that I had reached a point of saturation in the data already collected.

The difficulty of finding groups on the west coast highlights another issue all together: the current state of CAC in popular culture. On the one hand, there is clearly a need for research on this subject, more than ever; but does the enthusiasm for CAC tint the research? With this self-imposed proposition, there is a tacit belief that the CAC tide will subside. If CAC is no longer fashionable in a few years will group motivations appear in a similar way? I must admit that the very fact that popular music is the material for high school CAC, and experiencing popular culture is a large theme of this study, can be seen as a dilemma in light of current circumstances. I believe that by posing the interview question from the perspective of membership in a group, this dilemma is circumscribed.

However, members are not the only actors at play here. If there is a possibility that current trends change how members experience popular culture, (with the understanding that they are producers) there is an equally possibility that there is a change in the behavior of the

consumer. An audience might clap a little harder, or hoot a little louder, a couple more might buy a CD, but in the end, audiences respond because they like what performers did.

Although members described the experience of membership-while-CAC-was-growing-in-popular-culture, it was not thematic or univocally described nor was it relevant to the structuring of themes. In conversations across the country, I have found that directors chose to start programs because they came in contact with directors with successful CAC programs. These contacts often included proximity to the successful director's school, or participation in music conventions, or because the director is a representative of a CAC organization. In my assessment, movies and television shows are only loosely related to the current growth of CAC into high school programs and student enthusiasm.

Another potential limitation of this study was the use of gatekeepers to identify group for this study. Because of familiarity between groups, there is a possibility that groups will contain multiple similarities and decrease the generalizability of this study. However, I chose groups out of many possible groups specifically because of the differences between them (e.g. curricular versus extracurricular and competition-based model versus *vocal band*).

Another limitation the study is the director involvement in selecting participants for the study. Although I expressed my desire to examine varied experiences to these directors, it is possible that directors would chose whomever they thought would speak of the group in the most positive light. On some level this cannot be avoided. To minimize this effect, I spoke with participants previous to collecting data to build a relationship of trust, utilized and explained informed consent to assure them of anonymity, and faithfully executed my interview protocol to redirect participants through concepts they introduced and asked them to contextualize their concepts to lived experiences whenever possible.

I hoped that this investigation would have afforded the opportunity to perceive members' conceptions of copyrights. Since this enigmatic issue was not present in the descriptions of participants, the opportunity never arose within this study. Because copyright issues are more likely an issue for directors, the music education community may feel it necessary to investigate and explicate this issue through teacher-oriented publications. Over the past few years, performing rights companies have simplified the process of obtaining legal rights to arrange and perform. This may be, in part, because of the widespread growth of CAC. If high school CAC continues to expand across the country, there may exist a momentary opportunity for the music education community to set the tone for ethical use of copyrighted material. Although there is a price, the gain is a greater understanding of popular culture in navigating law, with the proper rights obtained, and creating and distributing recordings.

Although two groups of the study recorded albums, there was insufficient description of this process to include more than mentions with my results. This unique aspect of high school CAC may contain numerous learning experiences and connotations with technology and culture that are not present within this document. Future research into this phenomenon, may wish to investigate the distinctive opportunity recording affords.

Any analytical method is only as strong as a researchers understanding of it. I believe I have been diligent in my construction and exacting in my implementation of descriptive phenomenology. However, there always exist the possibility that elements of the method, large or small, might have escaped my grasp.

Implications

Should music educators choose to include CAC within their school, the current enthusiasm for CAC may facilitate high levels of student interest. Descriptions from each participant noted the value of achieving membership, partially from exclusivity, in forms of prerequisite and simultaneous enrollment in traditional choirs. The goal of attaining CAC membership may increase interest in traditional ensembles, motivate students to put more effort into traditional ensembles, and increase continual enrollment.

Participants described consistent engagement in performances within their schools and communities. Members of each group indicated that community engagement, or *giging*, was the norm and not the exception. Inclusion of CAC may facilitate increased opportunities to provide music for school functions such as pep rallies and PTA meetings. The current enthusiasm for CAC may draw positive attention to choral programs and schools and become a point of advocacy for choral programs.

For directors that wish to begin programs, I would suggest reading though the results section with attention paid to group affiliation and composition (as found in the results section *participant backgrounds*) .By reading the results of this study, while differentiating participants by group membership, directors can understand the operational differences between groups and decide which model would fit best along side their current ensembles. With an understanding of the general structure of the experience, directors may envision a different model of CAC as well and gather sufficient understanding of the phenomenon to facilitate reproduction.

The meanings participants described cluster toward themes of group and popular culture, recognizing abilities and limitations, maintaining social order, self-in-group realization, etc. Any of these may be studied with the expectation of meaningful findings. Reviewing the general structure will provide the best starting point. Of particular relevance as a unique aspect of high

school CAC is members' growth into understanding popular culture from the perspective of producer. Investigating this aspect of high school CAC may allow researchers to speak about student preferences and understanding of popular culture in action. In particular, methods of cultural anthropology might produce substantial returns.

Although the use of established theories is not necessary to explain the meaning of this study, researchers may choose to reconceptualize the contents of this study to establish fit or to contrast theory with experience. Out of many applicable theories, I would suggest Victor Turner's (1969) concept of *Liminality*, in which CAC membership would be conceptualized as a *liminal event* (period of time when social classifications and cultural codes breakdown) marked by *collective liminality* (hierarchies are replaced with a community of equals) and the experience of *communitas* (a sense of solidarity and equality). To investigate the group/producer and audience/consumer meanings in this study, the work of Walter Benjamin, in *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, could provide an interesting synthesis through concepts of: the standardized work of art and the standardized audience response, individual actions determined by audience response, the reproduction of art as only an *aura* and not art itself, and the role of technology in determining standardization (1935/2007).

Within music education, the constituent theme of *Group maintenance* may contain meaningful associations with lines of music education research. One interesting motivation I described in *Finding flow and connections* was the renewed belief that a group would be successful in a future endeavor, based on a moment of flow. On the subject, *flow* was not included because of connection with theories, but because it made better sense than *click*, or *groove*, or *in-the-pocket*, etc. These moments of flow could both renew commitment to the group and inspire confidence in the group's prospects for success. Since confidence is an important

aspect of performance, this seems like a perfect opportunity for transferability into traditional music making. Specifically, through concept of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), music educators may wish to explore the implications and transferability of *Finding flow and connections* through relevance to social psychology.

In examining *Group maintenance* on the whole, many descriptions of motivations and processes may draw associations to the work and advocacy of Australian researchers John McCormick, Gary McPherson, and James Renwick. Music educators may wish to investigate concepts described within the constituent theme *Group maintenance* as group-mentated activities related to individual activities of persistence, determination, and motivation to perform and acquire skill; cognitive strategies of self-regulated learning; self-determination theory; critical evaluation of progress and efficiency in rehearsal; effects of student-selected repertoire; and differentiation of cognitive strategies by task (cf. McCormick & McPherson, 2003; McPherson & McCormick 2006, 1999; McPherson & Renwick, 2001; Renwick & McPherson, 2002).

Of the six participants in this study, each has continued in making music past high school. Future research may wish to examine the vestiges of CAC membership in life-long music making. Participant descriptions of teamwork indicate a possibility that the social skills learned in their group could be applicable to the job environment. An important feature of high school CAC is goal-oriented social interaction and development into individualized roles. These may present excellent opportunities to gain experience relevant to 21st century jobs. Researchers may find it fruitful to investigate membership in areas of social intelligence, collaborative creativity, and motivations of individual and group effort as transferable skills valued in the workforce.

For researchers, of utmost importance is the recognition that high school CAC groups exist; they are not an experiment but a real movement in which popular music is the medium,

social development is the mode, and creativity is the meaning. I question the sanity of creating an experiment in regard to these items to determine if such enterprise could work. It is here. It does work.

Conclusions

The title of this dissertation is *High School Contemporary a Cappella: A Descriptive Phenomenology*. In both the subject and method, this document offers new paths for scholarship. I felt a grave responsibility to remain, as faithful as I was able, to the precepts of descriptive phenomenology and lived experiences of high school CAC members. The principles of descriptive phenomenology allowed me to intuit and test essential meanings directed toward the phenomenon of high school CAC and describe a general structure of the experience of membership.

An innovation of this study was the application of educational sociology to descriptive-phenomenological method. This perspective gave me the opportunity to describe the phenomenon in the way I found most appropriate to the description of the phenomenon. Particularly through the concept of *languaging*, I found freedom to describe meanings in a natural participant-oriented way. The prominence of culture in the structure I described is not simply a mechanism of socialization, but an intuition and testing of participants' descriptions. Without the freedom to language themes and constituents in words specific to the meanings, much of the meaning would be left behind.

I am convinced that the general structure is trustworthy and robust enough to handle the many modes of high school CAC music making that I have encountered. However, language is complex, and the wording of most things can be improved on. Others might take issue with

language or suggest other universal meanings that have not been covered by the structure. I welcome the critical eye of fellow researchers in articulating or helping to articulate a better structure of experience and I will make all transcripts at each step of development available to interested parties.

The development of a descriptive phenomenological method, appropriate for use within educational sociology, was a considerable undertaking. The process allowed me to find a synthesis between my personal understanding of the world and purpose for research in a methodology expressly tied to philosophy. I found this refreshing considering my belief that researchers tend to engage in methods without understanding the assumptions on which they are predicated. The fully articulated method is the process described in *Chapter three*. Upon reading, one can grasp the goals of the research and inherent precepts. I created detailed explanations within the method section for reader utility and not as an introduction to phenomenological philosophy, particularly because my use of phenomenological terminology is only invoked when necessary.

I hope that my work in this area will encourage others to investigate the strengths of descriptive phenomenology from the perspective of educational sociology. In the four years it took to fully articulate this method, I believe I have captured the unique qualities of descriptive phenomenology and applied an educational-sociological lens with as little change as necessary. In part, I performed this work in the hope that I, and other music education researchers, would not have to perform this task to the same extent in the future.

High school CAC membership gives students an opportunity that they rarely experience in school music making. Participants in this study persistently stressed individual responsibility and opportunity to make something uniquely belonging to their group. They expressed high

levels of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to improve musical skills, understand and grow in their capabilities, and purpose them for the good of the group. In performing music from popular culture, students experience authentic connection to the lived world, and, for the first time, engage with popular culture from the standpoint of producer rather than just as a consumer.

The experience of high school CAC membership holds valuable implications for music education. These experiences reveal students' abilities to synthesize what they have learned in traditional music experiences with their understanding of popular culture to produce creative and original performances. Participants placed high expectations on themselves because they saw how their efforts made a real impact on the overall effort of the group. Participants recognized that if they were to be successful, they had to learn to work together, to understand each other, and to understand themselves. However, simply performing a CAC arrangement with a traditional choir does not give students this opportunity. As explained in *The mandate to arrange*, groups are expected to create unique performances, allowing for personal expression and creativity that is unavailable in tradition contexts.

Educators may wish to consider the implications of the words *member* and *participant*. This is what real membership looks like; this is why membership has meaning. When a group succeeds, it is their success and does not belong to anyone else. Educators might consider the difference between being a member and being a participant and the long-term impact of successful participation versus membership in a successful enterprise.

In the past four years, I have had the opportunity to participate in CAC festivals, workshops, and competitions across the country and seen the enthusiasm and effort CAC music making engenders. In these years, CAC enthusiasm has intensified in popular culture with no indication of cessation. Inclusion of CAC, along side traditional ensemble experiences could

bolster enthusiasm for both. For those who worry about *the tail wagging the dog*, I have not seen this issue arise in schools. In observations of many groups and conversations with directors, never have I seen a CAC group supplant traditional choral experiences. Instead, my experience has been that the existence of a CAC group at a school is a strong indication of an excellent traditional choral program.

In all, I am encouraged by the findings of this study. What they reveal is high school CAC is an opportunity for students to finally apply what they have learned. Members find the necessity and desire to create arrangements, to improve musicality, to grow emotionally, to connect spiritually; to finally give meaning to musical skill and find a purpose for all that time spent learning. I am only discouraged by the exclusivity of membership. High school CAC may be attractive to many but is attainable by few. The music education community may wish to examine the value of this experience and determine if there is a way for more students to experience CAC without added work for directors. There is evidence in this research that members become adept at mentoring new members. I see no reason why groups could not mentor new groups in a similar way.

Throughout this document, I have used *CAC* for contemporary a cappella. In part this is to reduce the tedium of reading the same phrase again and again, but also to respect the feelings of traditionalist. The word *retronym* refers to a modification of a term that is introduced when something newer comes along: once there was only a guitar, but once the electric guitar was invented the other became acoustic. Once peanut M&Ms came along, the other was plain.

I have used *traditional* repeatedly to differentiate choral experiences, but out of necessity. In schools that have CAC programs, teachers and students use the word *traditional* to differentiate experience out of, I would assume, necessity as well. I suppose this is a better result

than *plain*. But, to the world *a cappella* has a new meaning. As much as we may wish to fight it, it stands as another signal of music education's separation from the real world of music.

Already the conversation about *a cappella* has begun in music teacher and choral journals. Unfortunately, these conversations seem to build barriers rather than bridges. Certainly, there are countless benefits to participation in traditional choirs; to name them here would be self-centered. Choral music is valuable and traditional choral participation is a worthy pursuit, but we need to recognize the opportunity in front of us. How often does choral singing resemble something truly appreciated in popular culture? Surely, we cannot change every thing we do based on the whim of popular culture, but we should always try to make music relevant and meaningful. Yet, the reason students feel personal connection to CAC music making has little to do with popular music. In CAC, the goal is to do something new, to do something unexpected; to use what is unique to you. When students sing in a traditional choir, the goal is to do what is correct, what was intended, to do it the same. Great choirs sing great music, written by great musicians. A great choir sings with one voice.

Whose?

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