ALL GOD'S CHILDREN GOT A SONG: AN EXPLORATION OF URBAN MUSIC EDUCATION

A Dissertation
Submitted to
the Temple University Graduate Board

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
OF MUSIC EDUCATION

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May 2022

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ABSTRACT

The three papers in this dissertation are conceptualized around the topic of urban music education. At the foundation of each paper lies an aim to analyze music teachers' engagement with students in urban settings. What connects these three projects is the exploration of voices and perspectives that can strengthen our understanding of music teacher education to meet the unique needs of students in urban settings and address complexities within urban contexts. First, I examine my own journey leaving a predominantly White institution (PWI) twenty years ago to enter urban settings and teach music where I found myself unequipped in musical and nonmusical ways. I describe my journey toward musical and cultural competency over many years as I worked to learn to teach and engage with music that I had not been prepared to teach, in classrooms of students with whom I did not share a cultural background. As an impetus from that journey of both musical and cultural understanding, the second paper represents a deep exploration of Black Gospel music teaching as defined by three experts. Once again, while the study's findings may offer musical insights in Black Gospel music, the greater lessons are the cultural components that inform Black music. In the last project, I study two urban school music programs that engaged community arts partners and music educators who learned musical and nonmusical lessons about the liberatory praxis of Black music.

Emerging themes across these three projects reflect a need for rigorous and vibrant music teacher education reform that resonantly and responsively meet the needs of students in urban settings. In all three projects, participants (a) cited a need for music teacher education to move beyond content and include the intersection of race and

teaching music; (b) discussed the centering of Western Art Musics (WAMs) in the academy; (c) encountered adolescent, high school age beginners in their music classes requiring a need for approachable, accessible, relevant tools to make music outside of traditional Choir, Orchestra, Band models; (d) found liberatory Black musical forms including Hip Hop, song-writing, Drumline, loop-based composition through digital audio workstations (DAWs), and Black Gospel music served beginners successfully; and (e) engaged or participated as culture bearers and/or experts on teaching unfamiliar Black musical forms and culturally competent communication across diverse groups. Given the themes across these three papers, I argue that critical reflection on the academy and music teacher preparation is necessary to enact reform that works against stagnancy and exclusion and moves toward inclusive musics and teaching for liberation available in Black music.

I interrogate the three papers through the lens of Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a theoretical framework through which I view, interpret, reflect, and find greater meaning to inform the preparation to teach music teaching and learning in urban settings. Visible across findings in all papers are examples of foundational tenets of CRT, *whiteness as property* and the *permanence of racism*, as participants felt unprepared to teach music outside of Eurocentric musical practices and cited the need for music teacher education to include the intersection of race and teaching. To make conclusions and suggest possibilities for reform in music education, I frame findings through the connection of two additional CRT tenets: *interest convergence* and *counterstorytelling*. Given the realities suggested in the first CRT tenets, I relied on the CRT theory of *interest convergence* to make recommendations for reform to music education. Theorizing that

meaningful change is impossible without including interests of the dominant group, I propose “All God's Children Got a Song” as a call for interest convergence wherein systems and actors in music education work harder to include the 80% of students who currently do not participate in music.

In naming areas for change, I suggest the use of *counterstorytelling* as a way to frame possibility for changing the narrative in music education in four areas that were common findings across papers: (a) to promote music education as approachable, age appropriate, and accessible for adolescent beginners, possible through curricula including but not limited to open, participatory, liberatory, and “family”-oriented forms of Black music including Hip Hop, song-writing, Drumline and loop-based composition using music technology, Black Gospel music, and choir; (b) to reimagine the concept of music literacy wherein students experience viewing music without navigating a written page; (c) to foster community capital whereby partnerships emerge with culture bearers who model and provide musical and cultural models of unfamiliar ways of making music alongside cultural and musical competence in communicating across diverse groups; and (d) to develop and implement comprehensive preservice education for future urban music educators that builds racial literacy skills to support content and pedagogy.

Keywords: Urban Music Education, Gospel Music, Community

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all my former students who have been my teachers, and to Matt, Reese, and Charlie, whose patience, stamina, and joy made it possible for me to do this work.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Dr. Elizabeth Parker. Your countless hours, dedication, and honesty in reading and editing my work has helped me find my voice as a researcher and writer that I never knew (or believed) I could have. To Dr. Rollo Dilworth, I am so grateful for your mentorship, brilliance, and encouragement, and for always picking up the phone.

I would like to thank my committee members from Urban Education, Dr. Lori Shorr: whose deep commitment to community engagement in city schools has furthered my passion for this work; and Dr. Will Jordan: whose brilliance in course design, readings, and dialogical approach in teaching framed my thinking around the complexities of urban schools. In addition, thank you to Dr. Eddie Fergus, my teacher and mentor in Critical Race Theory who helped me make the connections to music education and my own story.

To my external reader from Music Studies, Dr. Shana Goldin-Perschbacher: in addition to giving your time to edit my work, thank you for your honest example of feminism in academia and a classroom environment that asks questions and shares power with your students. Thank you to the Music Education department at the Boyer College of Music and Dance which first inspired me to come to Temple because of their strong partnership with The School District of Philadelphia and connecting preservice music teachers to city schools. Specifically, to Dr. Alison Reynolds: thank you for the opportunity to teach so many incredible future music educators.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the Introduction I describe the problem and provide a rationale for this three paper dissertation. I also introduce Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a conceptual lens that I use to frame the problem. I will return to CRT to interpret my three papers in the final discussion (Chapter Five). The structure of the final dissertation is indicated in Figure 1.

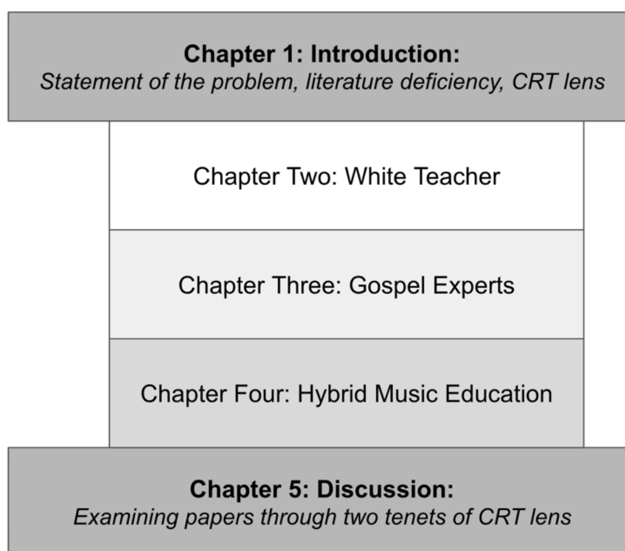

Figure 1. Covalle Dissertation Structure

While the last decade has seen an increase in research of music education in urban public schools useful to the profession (e.g., Eros, 2018; Fitzpatrick 2011, 2012; Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015; Frierson-Campbell, 2006a, 2006b; Mixon, 2005), urban music education research remains limited. Researchers have examined teacher demographics, perceptions, expectations, job satisfaction, career choice, preparation, and instructional resources (Costa-Giomi, 2008; Doyle, 2012; Eros, 2018; Fitzpatrick, 2011; Neill, 2004). Additionally, research focused on culturally reflective, responsive, (Fitzpatrick, 2011; Lind & McKoy, 2016; Shaw, 2015, 2018), and sustaining (Paris & Alim, 2017)

pedagogies have provided music educators with tools to navigate racially diverse settings, which have particular benefit in urban contexts.

In city schools, a model of music education combining efforts of school music teachers and external arts partners to musically educate students has developed steadily over the last 20 years. Various professionals appear to be engaged to musically educate children in school music settings including music teachers, classroom teachers, arts specialists, community partners, and varied professional musical experts. The reasons for engagement of outside arts partners to deliver instruction are not entirely known and research focusing on the practice and profile of arts partnerships between schools and outside providers of music instruction in urban settings remains sparse. In addition, experts' voices in the community reflect a source of knowledge of unfamiliar musics and culture. I offer three areas of further study to continue to round out the profile, circumstances, and characteristics of a successful urban music teacher.

Shared Delivery

In the urban context, a “shared” model of music education which combines efforts of varied professionals to musically educate children in urban school music settings has developed steadily in recent decades, a phenomenon more common to urban school systems than other geographic densities in the United States. The literature does not define what other shared models exist, how or why these models developed, or their impact on students and teachers. Further, the reasons for mass engagement of outside arts partners to deliver music instruction are not entirely known, though suggested reasons include a lack of trust in teachers by the community and school administrations (Bodilly et al., 2008), providing field experiences (Neill, 2004; Ward-Steinman, 2006), and

funding (Richerme et al., 2012). The neoliberal landscape of reform in urban education can be examined as further context to examine in determining reasons for shared music education. Neoliberal values for privatization combined with years of disinvestment and underfunding caused a proliferation of venture philanthropy that has engaged community partners to fulfill programming needs for students in urban schools (Farrington, 2014; Lipman, 2011).

Teaching Black Music In The Aural-Oral Tradition

While external social reforms continue to influence PreK-12 school student experiences in urban schools, Eurocentric teacher education curricula dominates preservice music educators'curricula, detaching them from students' real world experiences in urban settings. Eurocentricity and the inherent whiteness of teacher education is well documented (Aronson et al., 2020; Sleeter, 2016) and extends to music teacher education (Bradley et al., 2007, 2015; Hess, 2018; Koza, 2008) perpetuating the problem of music educators receiving limited experience, models, and value for Black musical traditions. Institutional value (and devaluing) of musics outside of Western Art Musics (WAMs) maintains unfamiliarity and fear on the part of music educators toward avoidance and less engagement with Black musical forms. Music educators need more expertise, frameworks, and tools beyond well developed and highly valued competencies in WAMs.

Music curricula positions WAMs with the highest status or "property" while excluding Black musical forms in music teacher education. Scholars acknowledge the cultural disregard for what is Black, termed "antiblackness," to be embedded within educational discourse and inform practice and policy (Dumas, 2016; Dumas & ross,

2016). Antiblackness in the academy surfaces in systemic and egregious omissions of Black music and the centering of curriculum and pedagogy that continues to reflect and affirm WAMs. Antiblackness is evident in the reasons scholars cite for the exclusion of Black music and the aural-oral tradition which include conservatory mindsets that Black music operates within an aesthetic antithetical to Eurocentric pedagogy requiring separation from the academy (Burnim, 1988), unsubstantiated misconceptions by voice faculty that singing Black Gospel music damages the voice (Walker, 2003), and systemic perceptions that Black Gospel music, as a folk tradition, lacks serious pedagogy and technique unworthy of academic standing (Johnson, 2012). The psychological toll on Black students not encouraged to bring their whole identity but asked to conform to White norms (Morris, 2016) is just one consequence of antiblackness that can be interrogated for parallels in music.

Music Teachers Interrogating Racial Identity

Racial disconnection and lack of musical understanding occurs while teaching music to students in urban settings, yet music teacher education continues to focus on content, instead of the much needed attention on the intersection of race with music teaching. This intersection is visible in the cultural background and contexts in which students live, and specifically in what teachers bring into the classroom both musically and culturally. Fears of discussing race exist in music education (Bradley et al., 2007) but given the reality that predominantly White, middle class, women represent 80% of those who teach large populations of students of color (Goldring et al., 2013), music teachers must recognize how their knowledge and interrogation of their racial identity impacts music education. Cultural barriers exist, and understanding racial identity on the part of

music teachers, especially as White music teachers, is an essential process for all educators (Emdin, 2016; Howard, 2016; Moore et al., 2018). Further, scholars have noted the intersection of race and music teaching in musicians' concerns over ownership, qualification, authenticity, and exoticization to prompt fear and avoidance, especially among those who are not of African descent. Music leaders often connect race with the ability to teach with authenticity determining their background deemed them ineffective teachers of Black music (Turner, 2009). "I can't offer you that because I'm not black" (Marti, 2012, p.165)

Understanding Urban Music Education Through A Three Paper Inquiry

The three papers in this dissertation are conceptualized around urban music education. At the foundation of each paper is an aim to explore music teachers engaging with students in urban settings. What connects the three projects is that I explore voices and perspectives that can strengthen our understanding of music teacher education and the unique needs of students in urban settings and complexities of urban contexts. First, I examine my own journey leaving a predominantly White institution (PWI) twenty years ago to teach music in urban North American settings. At the time, I was completely unequipped to teach the students in the urban schools in which I found myself. I describe my journey toward musical and cultural competency over many years as I worked to learn to teach and engage with music that I had not been prepared to teach, in classrooms of students with whom I did not share a cultural background. As an impetus from that journey of both musical and cultural understanding, the second paper represents concentrated time exploring the teaching of Black Gospel music from three experts. Once again, while the study's findings may offer musical insights, in this case in Black Gospel

music, the greater lessons are the cultural components that inform Black music. In the last project, I study two urban school music programs and the engagement of external arts partners due to how their teachers found themselves unprepared culturally and musically to teach music to students in urban schools. I explore the teachers' and arts administrators' approach to solve this "problem" through the engagement of teaching artists in community arts programs. Though these music teachers found valuable knowledge from working in community partnerships, once again the liberatory praxis of Black music was revealed to be the greater gift to both teachers and students.

Emerging themes across these three projects reflect a need for rigorous and vibrant music teacher education reform that resonantly and responsively meets the needs of students in urban settings. In all three projects, participants (a) cited a need for music teacher education to move beyond content and include the intersection of race and teaching; (b) discussed the centering of Western Art Musics (WAMs) in the academy; (c) encountered adolescent, high school age beginners in their music classes requiring a need for approachable, accessible, relevant tools to make music outside of traditional Choir, Orchestra, Band models; (d) found liberatory Black musical forms including Hip Hop, song-writing, Drumline, loop-based composition through digital audio workstations (DAWs), and Black Gospel music served beginners successfully; and (e) engaged or participated as culture bearers and/or experts on teaching unfamiliar Black musical forms and culturally competent communication across diverse groups. Given the themes across these three papers, critical reflection on the academy and music teacher preparation is necessary to enact reform that works against stagnancy and exclusion, and moves toward inclusive musics and teaching for liberation available in Black music.

Critical Race Theory

I use Critical Race Theory (CRT) to interrogate findings across the three papers. Solorzano (2013) uses the image of a camera lens to illustrate how people decipher what they see, turning the lens until things become a clear interpretation of social life. The critical lens often bringing race and racism to the center of focus in that interpretation. In education, scholars use CRT to explain, identify, and challenge the role of race and racism in education and to reject subordination in all forms.

Christian et al. (2019) argue that researchers use CRT as a tool to examine how racism and White supremacy are reproduced in society. Founded to examine the so-called "neutral" policies of the law (e.g., colloquially, "justice is blind"), Christian et al. define CRT as an "explanatory framework" to elucidate the persistence of racial inequity despite the legal changes of the civil rights movement. In their outline of CRT, the starting point is the permanence of racism at work through domination, formed through hierarchies of White supremacy, and reaffirmed in storytelling. The stories society tells allow domination to be perpetuated. Christian et al. argue that while sociologists have offered many frameworks for interrogating race relations such as foci on prejudice, assimilation, and boundaries, CRT represents a framework from which to draw hypotheses as reliable as the scientific method. From Christian et al.'s viewpoint, one would expect to find discrimination just as biologists expect to find mutation. They propose colorblind ideology shifts the focus on actors instead of systems, perpetuating White supremacy and domination. Cazenave (2015) calls for linguistic racial confrontation by encouraging individuals to name White supremacy rather than use or accept palatable language such as discrimination, inequality, and disparity. Scholars agree that whiteness is resilient and

normalized, therefore naming White supremacy through the resistance lens of CRT allows for an activist stance to work toward change (Christian et al., 2019; Harris, 1993; Lewis, 2004). Storytelling and centering life experiences and voices of communities of color make the validation of a reality that is not White, possible.

Whiteness as Property

The CRT tenet of "whiteness as property" connects racial identity with property rights for the sole purpose of domination, originating with the colonization of Black and Native peoples (Bell, 2013b; Christian et al., 2019; Harris, 1993; Lewis, 2004). Social benefits were designated to those who possessed White status and despite segregation laws being overturned, whiteness as property evolved and persisted. Harris (1993) traces the emergence of whiteness as property in systems of domination expressly intended to exclude. First expressed in American slave code where freedom was designated for White people only, Black people became objects of property and possession. The justification for possession came from the White construction of race and so called inherent natural, inferiority. Whiteness offered a physical shield for White people from slavery, while psychological reification of White as superior took place in public art forms including minstrelsy and the dehumanization of Black people. One's race (and possession of whiteness) had value and status in determining the right to vote, travel, go to school, work, and interact in society. Whiteness as property has evolved to the present day, maintaining whiteness as the natural form that "does not guarantee that all whites will win, but that they will not lose" (Harris, 1993, p. 1758).

Lewis (2004) maintains that despite the pervasive ideology of color-blindness that exists in American society today, all White people living in a racialized society have race.

However, Lewis argues studying White people as social actors is difficult because many do not "feel" they possess race, placing race on groups other than themselves. Current racial discourse is similar in discussions focused on racial minorities or "the other" instead of confronting race in White people or how they become racial actors. She calls for empirical research that avoids essentializing, confronts color-blind ideology as a reality, and situates the study of whiteness within the reality of social context.

Whether or not White people are conscious of and/or accept the nature of their racial identity is irrelevant as they still act upon and are beneficiaries of the system. Lewis makes the case to consider differences between how a person self identifies and what is ascribed to them externally, linking the symbolic and material aspects of race. What is symbolic, ideological, and virtual is deeply interrelated with the material components of race. For Lewis, the historic racialization of White people as a category originated in the struggle for resources and continues as all actors, including Whites, are racialized in a racialized society. Whites "perform race" but have the luxury as the dominant group to racialize others. Ultimately, she calls for more empirical research on the role of White people as racial actors, which is not widely understood.

Bell (2013a) argues the founding fathers accepted the compromise of subordination inherent in slavery, allowing a precedent to be set, and maintained, that associated Whiteness with property and superiority. He says property ownership is a "measure of worth" in the United States, and many White people "see their whiteness as a property right" (Bell, 1995, p. 904). As a practice, slavery perpetuated beliefs and norms of sacrificing Black rights to further White interests. He eloquently describes the sinister and webbed consequences of discrimination that exploited Black labor, denied

access to opportunities, and blamed these consequences on the purported inferiority of those acted upon. Fear and resistance to Supreme Court cases such as *Brown vs. Board of Education* came from the historical assumption, or as Harris (1993) might say the "settled expectations," that Southern Whites, for example, felt superior to Blacks. Similarly, Whites resisted affirmative action for fear that Black gains would threaten their status. Bell (2013b) argues that the outbreaks of what he calls "antiblack hostility" show that poor Whites are learning what Blacks have always known: that freedom as mere rhetoric cannot substitute for economic justice. He says perhaps capitalism does not account for economic justice for all. Bell (2013b) asks an important question as to whether White people will realize if gaining property rights through whiteness was too high a cost because of the consequence of felt superiority. Ultimately, he says the cost of whiteness as property affects all because Black people feel the burden and White people feel they must resist those gains to maintain power.

Whiteness as Property in Music Education

The tenet of whiteness as property holds that what is White is granted status, capital, and privilege at the expense what is Black through their subordination, facilitating the ability of the dominant group to exercise domination and maintain power. In music education, one can see whiteness as property visible in the privileging of WAMs, or White music, as "best" (Ewell, 2020). WAMs are seen as having the highest quality and therefore been granted status, power and privilege at the expense of Black music.

Evidence of whiteness as property in music education includes the dominant Eurocentric curricula that oppresses and suppresses Black musical forms and ways of

learning music, particularly the aural-oral tradition. Generations of actors within the academy have upheld and continue to uphold White supremacy through maintaining and reinforcing the teaching and learning of Eurocentric musical practices. In other words, individuals give White music and White ways of learning music higher status than Black music. As a result, music teachers maintain the power or supremacy of White music in re-teaching and centering it in curricula with elective courses or token pieces as musical “others” instead of a more multicentric, integrated approach. Perhaps most damaging, that which is White becomes the norm, making it difficult for music educators to see outside of this frame or view whiteness as a measuring stick to judge all other music.

Individuals privileging Western notation and the written score is another area of profit as devalued Black traditions like the aural-oral tradition are viewed as less or lacking pedagogy. As a result, limited practices have been built to introduce Black ways of learning. Many White teachers add whiteness to music from the aural-oral tradition by attempting to score it; such an attempt not only simplifies the music but also reveals how Western notation fails to capture the rhythmic and stylistic nuances of many Black musics.

Generations of reinforcement of White as normal and White as better through the societal norm of whiteness as property have perpetuated a prolonged and learned sense of superiority in White people, the consequence of which is the psychological toll on Black people. Music teachers and institutions of music education may discourage students from bringing their whole musical identity formed in the Black tradition but are taught to conform to the norms of Eurocentric music. Music education systems in and outside the academy perpetuate whiteness through audition procedures, to the reinforcement of

Eurocentric curricula and musical practices, to reification of both to gain access to music teacher education programs and certification. Just as Justice O'Connor demonstrated the court's view of colorblindness, similarly music educators choose not to see race, showing value for the Western choral canon and not "unseat" it on its throne. Many music educators, professors and departments are also unwilling to give up their chosen professions and expertise in these areas.

The task to unpack a complex system built to reinforce whiteness maintained through profit and relearned with each new generation seems daunting. Music teachers have limited power to break down what has been reified in the institutions of music and the social context. Just as Harris (1993) discusses the evolution from "old racism" in which race equaled inferiority, to "new racism" where the link between race and oppression is denied, music educators must evolve to confront race.

Possibilities for Reform through Interest Convergence

The CRT tenet of interest convergence maintains that systemic reforms have not taken place, historically, unless the interests of Whites are maintained (Bell, 1979, 2013a; Milner, 2008). White people have not acknowledged their race or their roles as oppressors in a dominant group, as evidenced in notable contexts from teacher education to Supreme Court rulings. Jurisprudence in education in *Brown* and *Bakke* and the affirmative action cases of *Ballinger* passed because White interests were maintained (Bell, 2003) and more importantly, protected. Milner (2008) contends when the binary perspective of "I lose-you win" exists, it is difficult for interests to converge. Music educators should center Black and Indigenous musics and ways of learning music knowing that it does not take away from the value of Eurocentric music. The trouble may

lie in the difficulty to educate music teachers to become experts in more than one area. Milner (2008) also says "interests in teacher education may be guarded, guided, nurtured, and protected by a permanence of fear, false racist innocence and subordination" (p. 36). There is no doubt this will make the climb steeper. Further, Milner says these interests have "currency" and therefore reproduce and protect systems of White privilege.

A dismantling of systems in music and music education may not "converge" with the interests of Whites at all. Within the loss/gain binary, there is a conception that "I don't want to lose my conceptualization of myself." There is truth in the notion that the way a White person understands oneself is in relation to how they understand "you" as the "other" through the White gaze. Perhaps the answer to this is to advocate and offer more opportunities to take part in the participatory nature of musics within the African diaspora. Participatory musical forms welcome all in, compared to the prior experience generally required to participate in WAMs. The purpose is to foster community, and to know and experience that we can all win from participation in it.

The incorporation of Black music into curricula must be seen as a "win" for Whites. In the loss/gain binary, there will be a ceiling that will limit the amount the oppressor, including systems of music education and music educators, will give. Many may just not be willing to regard Western music as the "other," even though, in many contexts, it already is in a secondary position. On the other hand, as Harris (1993) notes, Whites are not oppressed or in danger of being so, and affirmative action is based on principles of antisubordination, not Black superiority. This is an important piece of interest convergence as well. It must be clear that "acknowledging Black identity does not involve the subordination of whites" (Harris, 1993, p. 1785). Perhaps acknowledging

that Black music does not mean that Whites will be subordinated, but rather included, represents one step forward.

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CHAPTER 2

WHITE MUSIC TEACHER

Purpose

The aim of this "story of self" is to interrogate moments of struggle and discovery, both musically and culturally, over a seventeen year period of teaching music in urban settings. Main areas of analysis include: (a) reflection and interrogation of my own moments of racial awakening and recognition discovered through interactions with colleagues and students; (b) descriptions of structural parameters and limitations of the urban context that I came in conflict with while teaching in private and public urban schools, and in one urban community organization; (c) overlapping cultural and musical discoveries in learning vocal musics outside of the Western canon; and (d) tensions and awakenings that I found in contrast to what I was taught in my music teacher education experience. Professional and personal experiences combine and interconnect to form a complex web that contributed to my current philosophy of music education. I will analyze my experiences within three parts and used pseudonyms for the names of colleagues and schools.

Paradigmatic Approach

I use Marshall Ganz's social framework of public narrative and the "Story of Self" as a resonant and aligned methodological approach to tell my story (Harvard Kennedy School, 2015; Resistance School, 2018). I first explored this paradigm during a community partnerships class I took during my studies toward my urban education certificate at Temple. Rooted in social justice and organizing work, activism, and politics, Ganz positions the skill of learning to tell one's personal story as the most powerful tool

for change in an organizer's belt. One's policy beliefs are often rooted deeply within stories from their life and telling about the moment that speaks to an issue important to them is crucial. I also draw inspiration from a similar journey through teaching multiracial populations as first described by Vivian Paley (1979) in her book, *White Teacher*.

The paper is in three parts. In Part One, "My Story," I introduce the reader to where my journey began, including two pivotal and critical moments that serve as bookends to my journey. I highlight a moment of confusion midcareer where I lost my way because of my perceived inability to connect with students on account of both of our races, and my own fragility. In Part Two, "Escape," I explore a moment of confusion and the work I did to journey back to make productive discoveries about race in teaching and the role of music in that intersection. I conclude with a description of my philosophy in Part Three, "Choir is Family," as a culmination and resolution of my experience as described in the first two parts. Looking to the future, I intend to engage this philosophy to carry me forward in my pursuit to include people over content, including issues of race, in music teacher education.

Part One: My Story

In Part One I introduce the reader to where my journey began through two pivotal and critical moments that serve as bookends to my journey. I start from the end and then work back to the moment of confusion where I tackle, or perhaps fail to tackle, how to confront the influence of race in music teaching.

Specks

"We are the only specks of pepper in a sea of salt, Covalle," my female, African-American student said to me at dinner after a long day of All-State Honor Choir rehearsals. It was true: she and one of my other students were the only Black women in the 450-member chorus. For these young women to have propelled themselves to the highest choir in the state, not just All-State Choir, but All-State *Honors* Choir, was a big deal. I had warned them about such ensembles, assembled through merit based evaluations that centered music reading skills, and resulted in a population of students from well-funded, meritocratic music programs in schools with multiple music teachers, support, access, and opportunities in and outside of school. (*That same day I visited with a colleague in such a district who told me she had just reserved their band trip on a "P-card," made possible by the seventy-five thousand dollar limit)*. I was clear with them: we were making a conscious choice to engage as a way to force changes in the system. The first year I took students to audition, the entire district, serving 500,000 students, was represented in a half filled school bus. Making the choice not to engage my students in this activity, as many of my city colleagues had done, would result in more of the same: a perpetual lack of representation of students of color within these ensembles, music education remaining a privilege for some, and reinforce the incessant divide between the city and the suburbs.

No, this isn't *Dangerous Minds* nor am I Michelle Pfiefer (though that reference will certainly date me), yet I implore the reader to raise their voice if in their reading a savior narrative is uttered in its telling. What is relevant is how the Black community changed *me,* opened my world, burst my bubble, and set the course for my life's work.

After all, the sea of salt that surrounded my girls that day is a world I know well. I will always be a recovering “boujie” White girl from the suburbs who learned the hard way to do my own racial work and check myself in my daily teaching practice. Growing up in an upper middle class midwestern suburb where cul-de-sacs seemed to warrant opportunity, I was in All-State Choir (though I did not make honors) and my own participation in school music mirrored the predominantly White, female, suburban national demographic profile (Elpus & Abril, 2011). National participation in school music hovers around 20%, overrepresented by White upper middle class students, 50% of whom reside in the suburbs, 61.1% are female, with significant association between ensemble participation and race, class, and gender. Students with higher socioeconomic profiles are almost twice as likely to participate in music. I also fit the description of the 80% of White teachers who go on to teach large populations of students of color (Goldring, et al., 2013). What could go wrong?

You Can Take The Girl Out Of The Suburbs…

My first classrooms in the predominantly Black public elementary schools of an urban midwestern school district set the trajectory for a 17-year career in urban music education. I was assigned to teach general music and choir to one thousand K-5 students in three schools just a few miles from where I completed my undergraduate studies. I set up for music class and choir in shared spaces like the gym or library, rolling in the clanking steel chair rack for choir rehearsal days. As I traveled between schools my trunk was my “cart” filled with instruments, chalk, scarves, songbooks, and binders of seating charts with students' names. It was here at age 22 where I conducted my first all-Black

choir, heard my first "alright!," from parents in a concert, and first experienced not being in the majority racial group.

District music teachers shared a converted warehouse turned music office with a music library filled with decades worth of sheet music, textbook music series, Music K-8, CDs, and records overflowing in file cabinets and boxes. On Fridays we gathered in the bullpen of desks assembled in the center of the warehouse to share stories, borrow scarves, copy music, and assemble manipulatives, instruments, or keyboards for the week. We had a devoted and esteemed music secretary, Judy, who was our school liaison, scheduled our classes, coordinated hundreds of concerts across our schools (and made programs for each one), and filled the office with warmth and support whenever we had reason to swing by. Commiserating at lunch or after a department meeting where we freely shared ideas and talked through lessons, my colleagues, many of whom had been in the district for decades themselves, impressed upon me to mark their words: I would never find such a special group of colleagues, materials, and supportive infrastructure in an urban district again. They were right, it was a very special place.

It was in that office that a 30-year veteran of the district, and my first hero, Kristie, a White girl like me, taught me my first Black Gospel song. While I had always loved and connected deeply with Black Gospel music (I formed a Gospel choir in high school and my senior college recital included a passable performance of "Worthy to be Praised" by Byron Smith), this music was not part of my music teacher education. I admired choral directors and choirs like Carol Cymbala and The Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir, but my undergraduate vocal music education studies were centered in Bel Canto singing and the Western choral canon. When I entered my classrooms to serve my

predominantly Black students, I did not know their music or how to teach it. Kristie leveled with me that I needed to learn it, and quickly. Impressing on me the importance of teaching through an Afrocentric lens to connect with my students, she taught me how, and made me believe I could teach Black students their music.

My entry to Black American music began with her and my students as I soaked up any and all I could find, from Black Gospel to *Soul Train*, Jazz to Motown, Sam Cooke to *Earth Wind and Fire,* and began walking unfamiliar cultural paths from step routines to audience participation. My music education in the community had been very centered in aural-oral traditions with Suzuki and Dalcroze learning, and my college studies in Music Learning Theory, rote song procedure, creative composition, and refined ear training all built the foundation as I worked to learn these musics by ear. Still, so many gaps existed and would continue to reveal themselves in harder lessons to come.

Gaps

Urban education researcher and activist Christopher Emdin (2016) contends that the root challenge in education is the divide between schooling and the unique culture of the students. He posits that colonialism takes place in the classroom, drawing a parallel between the marginalization of Black people and indigenous groups when it comes to schooling, as students receive the message that smartness means giving up who they are. Recognizing a student's reality, which Emdin terms "reality pedagogy" aligns with critical pedagogy first posited by Paolo Freire (1970). Teachers enacting reality pedagogy meet students on their cultural and emotional turf, making their lived experiences visible, and co-constructing learning and classroom spaces together. In particular, teachers require less obedience to parameters and rules but rather incorporate curricula that propels self-expression versus compliance, and offers opportunities for creativity, movement, and expression to connect to their world.

Ladson-Billings (2009) argues the most powerful factor in teaching is the effort on the part of the instructor to work with the uniqueness of each child. She encourages rigor alongside culturally relevant material in curriculum, with cultural referents not as ways to explain dominant culture but as the curricula itself. Her definition of an "assimilationist" teacher is one who authoritatively deposits knowledge, similar to Freire's banking concept, in separation from community knowledge. Assimilationists view knowledge as static and infallible, passed from teacher to student, whereas Freire

and Ladson-Billings encourage problem posing where students can reflect critically and recreate knowledge.

In those first five years teaching predominantly African-American students, these were easily recitable elements of my philosophy that had been embedded into my practice and in my teaching bones! I even completed my master's degree through a lens of Critical Pedagogy examining what I had learned about how meaningful learning happens.

But, as we know, "Pride comes before the fall…."

"It's THIS."

My sixth year of teaching brought me home to Chicago where contrasting experiences at two schools solidified my resolve about the importance of doing work around race and music teaching. The first position was taking over for a beloved Black choir director at a predominantly Black high school, Southshore High. I was thrilled to be in an all Black community again and at a school with embedded musical tradition and pride, most notably with a nationally known "show" marching band. Elated to be the lead choral director at a high school for the first time, I went in strong. As a teacher (and in life) I am ambitious and passionate to a fault, a "force" as one of my colleagues once called me. My favorite television character, Leslie Knope, gives a speech when running for city council that I deeply resonate with: "If I seem too passionate, it's because I care. If I come on too strong, it's because I feel strongly. And if I move too fast, it's because things aren't moving fast enough" (Poehler, 2012).

I felt fairly confident that I would be able to connect to this new group of students, gaining their feedback on song requests, singing familiar repertoire, and engaging student leadership. But I received student push-back when I introduced what I viewed as basic rehearsal components like a warmup centered on Bel Canto technique, or singing the original material from Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" while we learned "Joyful, Joyful" from *Sister Act 2*. I thought I "slowly" integrated what appeared to be new

concepts alongside their strong familiarity with learning in the aural-oral tradition, where I felt less confident. But instead of naming what I did not understand, most especially their familiar, practiced ways of learning music, I authoritatively introduced "my way."

Once again I found myself not teaching music, but wrestling with cultural literacy to be able to teach music. Perhaps it was my less practiced skills of approaching students who were not afraid to share their opinions, but I began feeling cautious about introducing concepts I felt they would perceive as "White." Instead of naming my whiteness and checking my privilege in vulnerability to them, I somehow felt the authoritative, overconfident approach was the way to go. In my lack of assurance, I over compensated with confidence and went all in to introduce a "new way" of doing things. I left all of my questions, vulnerabilities, and insecurities standing there, like the elephant in the room (Stevenson, 2014). My intent was to lead them into achievable musical experiences and in the process, expand their world beyond their current cultural reference point. But intent is irrelevant because perception is reality. In my impatience to get there quickly, I failed to take the crucial time to recognize the music they were able to make without me.

I shared my confusion over the student push back in a tear-filled after school chat with my Black colleague, Clay, a well-respected pillar among the students who had built and successfully run their show band for over ten years. He told me I would have been more successful had I leaned back in my chair the first two weeks and had them show *me* what to do.

Wait…what? I was appalled. In this moment I burned with hurt, confusion, defensiveness, naivety, and fragility. Giving them control could not be the answer.

I respectfully took the advice and continued, barreling through Eurocentric warmups and Bel Canto technique, taking no time to step back and let them show me what they could do, in their own way. The younger students did not object and seemed to roll with it, but I continued to meet the older, more experienced concert choir students with heavy resistance.

Eventually, my accompanist, also Black, leveled with me.

"It's *this*, Whit." pointing to the back of his hand.

I winced.

In a shriek I can almost still hear, I said, "Race?"

I was shocked. Shock quickly turned to hurt, anger, and a little rage. Pregnant with my first child at the time, my emotional level, on a normal day higher than most normal people, boiled. I'm ashamed to say that my initial reaction was that *I* was being discriminated against. We know victimhood is a common and fragile reaction of oppressors in the position of power (DiAngelo, 2018). I was naïve to the barriers my students experienced with my skin contiguous to the authority I had asserted. I had not understood or accounted for the time required to build trust and overcome the cruelty of my complexion.

Instead of working to understand, grow, and change, I continued to stir. Members of my own White community certainly fed into my feelings of fragility and hurt, their comments prompting me to continue to foster a belief that I was the victim and that I was experiencing reverse discrimination. I found myself sitting down with my Black band colleague, Clay, once again. After what I'm sure was a long sigh at hearing cries of a

privileged White girl confronting race for the first time, something she had no experience or stamina for, he said, “Maybe you might be more comfortable in ____.”

As I heard him utter the word, the name of a familiar White suburban community not far from my hometown, my ears burned. I was crushed. I didn’t want to believe that a predominantly White space (with White music) was the only place I could belong. But could he be right? Would rejoining a familiar world be better? After all, having grown up in a similar town, I understood the traditions, the cultural norms. Maybe I would thrive better there.

White Fragility

White people experience a protected social environment where we learn and build an expectation for comfort that lessens our ability to tolerate racial stress, termed “White Fragility” (DiAngelo 2011, 2018). When encountering even minimal racial stress, White people can have difficulty enduring that stress, reacting defensively, sometimes with anger and often with avoidance. In that discouragement, they seek protection through avoidance, and perpetuate their unfamiliarity with confronting race. Feeling discouragement, they might feel the need to disengage, which emboldens fragility in avoiding issues of racism and reifies White supremacy.

Though not excused, my reaction is not that surprising given the absence of the Black experience in my childhood growing up in a segregated White community, and in my music teacher education at a predominantly white institution (PWI). DiAngelo’s purpose is not to expose how racism impacts people of color but to examine how racism impacts White people, and how we uphold White supremacy in order to interrupt it.

The fragility of White music teachers has consequences for students. Music educator and researcher Deborah Bradley (2015) describes Howard’s “culture of ignorance” wherein the dominant group, feeling they do not have to know about people different from them, simply ignore the experiences of marginalized groups. Bradley suggests music teachers might perpetuate this culture of ignorance in their own defensiveness by refusing to include music from other traditions or simply ignoring the realities and lived experiences of children of color.

Part Two: Escape

Clay’s words certainly influenced my decision to, the following year, take a job in a community like he described. I became a choir director at a public high school called Great Oak High, in a predominantly White, upper middle class suburb of Chicago, an

intimidating castle-like building at the top of the hill built by the same architect who designed the Art Institute of Chicago. The choir program had fallen into decline in the last several years, though several administrators, colleagues, and community members touted its reputation dating back to the 1950s, showcased through national and international tours, madrigal dinners, and a yearly professionally produced album. Joining what appeared to be an "exodus" of choir directors, I was the third director hired in three years to take what had become a part time (.6) position. Prior to the so-called "exodus," the two previous male choir directors, serving 30 years each, had been legendary leaders of the choral program, known throughout the district and community, a generational community in which many parents had participated as students.

Well, I Know How To Do This

As I prepared the choir room that summer, I found a choir library complete with mass choir sets (fifty plus copies) of every choral masterwork I could think of, from numerous opera choruses by Puccini to Rimsky-Korsakov, the *Requiems* of Faure, Mozart, and Verdi, and even the Bach B minor *Mass*. Adjacent closets held stacks of cassette tapes and CDs going back decades documenting every madrigal dinner and European tour, each stamped with one or the other legendary director's name. All of the hopes and dreams expressed to me in my interviews and in conversations were still alive on those shelves.

"Well, I know how to do *this*." I thought.

Despite the recent choir director attrition, the choir program maintained three curricular choirs and two extra-curricular a cappella ensembles. Excitedly, I planned repertoire from my own ample files of Western choral canon, finding particular joy

reliving my own Madrigals tradition as I went through programs and stacks of Renaissance music from high school and college. I can't say I didn't love seeing a wardrobe closet full of Tudor gowns, garland, candelabras, and a boar's head. It was familiar, and I knew what to do!

On the first day, I remember feeling comforted in not having to explain my warmups or justify building a foundation or value for Bel Canto technique. Clay was right, this must be where I belonged. Still, while I could easily and successfully plan, study, and rehearse repertoire from the Western choral canon, I hoped to bridge that familiarity with all I had subsequently learned about Black music. I was determined not to replicate the same program I had grown up with or with which the community was familiar. What I had learned in the past several years had been too transformational to let go. I continued to work for a large community youth choir in the city where I had a wealth of multicultural resources available, not just for teaching music outside the Western Choral canon, but also for bringing diverse groups together through music.

Bridging singing traditions would be fairly easy, I thought, given the similarities between Bel Canto singing and South African choral tone, both use a tall, dark tone with rich, operatic vibrato. I could not claim to be the same musician or person who had graduated with only values in WAMs and believed in the importance of expanding their musical world. I had experience now to introduce and practice music outside of my students' musical comfort zone through new ways of singing with Eastern European tone, or through the incorporation of movement with singing through Colombian and Cubano music. Above all, I would integrate a more limited use of sheet music by using the aural-oral tradition to teach Black Gospel music and South African folk songs.

Superiority of the Written Score

Shortly after teaching "Shosholoza" and "Lilizela" in the aural-oral tradition, one of my advanced students, a leader in choir, and a White male, brought me the sheet music for "Shosholoza." He asked if we could use it for teaching in rehearsal instead of the aural-oral tradition. I gently reiterated to him what I thought I had made clear in rehearsal: making the choice to learn to sing another culture's music required us to honor the tradition in which it was taught, even if it was outside of our musical comfort zone. I had used lyrics only during instruction, and addressed how the use of sheet music placed the music within a Western European frame that could not capture the rhythmic complexities and cultural nuance in the music. I thought I had communicated the wealth in gaining an opportunity to learn in the aural-oral tradition. Still, my student persisted.

I realize now that my student approaching me was a pivotal illustration of the entrenched, authoritative culture of the dominant group persistent within predominantly White communities: we have a way to do it better. For the first time I encountered White fragility from a student, a reaction familiar to many of my colleagues who taught teachers music in the aural-oral tradition and from my own time spent learning a variety of Black musics where I witnessed my choral colleagues objecting to doing the work required to learn a song by ear. Notated versions of South African songs exist for this very reason. Yet I suppose I hadn't expected it from a student. Not only was holding a musical "other" as an authority not enthusiastically received by some students, who happened to be White, but pushing them outside of their comfort within Western notation was an entirely new and different experience from them. After more time in the Great Oak community, I came to learn that a recognized local children's choir, of which many of my students

were members, had traveled to South Africa and stirred some controversy when they chose to only stay with Afrikaner families.

At the fall concert, some in the community made their reaction clear as the choirs processed down the aisles of the auditorium, linked as a freedom train and singing, “Shosholoza.” I was told at subsequent choir parent council meetings, made up of a large percentage of choral alumni, that while they appreciated the influx of “new” and multicultural music, they wanted to make sure I wasn’t jeopardizing the strong “choral tradition” that was still the backdrop of the community. Later that fall during our three person music department meeting (myself, the band and orchestra director each), we began preparing for our winter music festival that traditionally closed with a combined song. I (naively) and enthusiastically suggested Donny Hathaway’s “This Christmas,” which we had just performed as combined ensembles for the holiday concert at Southshore High. The lack of enthusiasm on the faces of both my colleagues was palpable. One of them made his response very clear.

“Well, we’re not THAT urban here.”

The Invisible Knapsack

After coming to understand her own power and privilege as a result of “unearned advantage and conferred dominance,” McIntosh (1988) introduced the concept of the invisible knapsack of privilege carried by Whites. She argued that White people are not taught about race, nor do they see themselves as having a racial identity, believing that racism does not impact them because they are not people of color. In listing over forty examples of normalcy surrounding circumstances of her daily life, from easily locating band aids in her skin color, to well-represented White images in the media, or not being asked to speak for all people within her racial group, she illustrates her life in the dominant group. She suggests that to redesign the social hierarchy, race must be acknowledged. By making the topic of race and privilege verboten, silence and denial act as a tool to protect dominance. “The obliviousness about white advantage, like obliviousness about male advantage, is kept strongly enculturated in the United States so as to maintain the myth of meritocracy, the myth that democratic choice is equally available to all” (McIntosh, 1998, p. 192).

Decades later, Margolin (2015) talks back to McIntosh's "privilege pedagogy," suspicious that unpacking one's knapsack will prompt action. Focusing only on how racism impacts Whites instead of their role within the system places too much attention on them instead of how racism impacts Black people, resulting in more complacency and comfort in Whiteness. Further, she warns Whites take on the "myth of equivalency" wherein they believe they are victims of the same kinds of oppressions through focus on privilege that moves outside of race into class, gender, religion, and sexual orientation instead working to give Black people more voice for liberation. The mistake lies in believing what matters most in liberation is what Whites have to say about themselves. Margolin (2015) states:

> *If white privilege pedagogy constitutes antiracism through deception, by falsely insisting that racism can be lessened by focusing on personal identity over institutional structure, by paying more attention to whites' experiences than to blacks', and by falsely claiming that the confession of white privileges leads to social action benefits to blacks, then whites, in participating in those depictions, are caught in the machinery just as much as people of color. (p. 7)*

In encountering reactions from my student and my colleagues, it was a bit of both. They were unwilling to hear a counterstory and "decline center stage in favor of a seat in the audience" (Margolin, 2015, p. 8).

Where Do I Belong?

I continued to prepare the choirs and produce concerts throughout the fall, working to build high quality musicianship across genres and style within each ensemble. The younger choirs were enthusiastic, performing well, and embracing the varied vocal tones and styles available through plural repertoire, with and without sheet music. One of our Ukrainian students volunteered to teach the intermediate choir a carol in his native singing style and language. For our combined choir performance at the January arts recruitment assembly, I chose a Black Gospel song. My former accompanist from Southshore even created a backup track for the song since I was not approved to hire a rhythm section. I had hoped our performance might recruit more students of color into the choir program or just to join a new "y'all come" ensemble I hoped to start, an extracurricular Gospel Choir.

As my students danced and moved successfully on beats 2 and 4, I found myself begging them to be expressive. It was definitely a new concept. I knew White kids could be expressive, in fact, my youthchoir in the city proved that weekly! The majority of them did well, but for the first time, the hesitancy and fear surrounding expression in my community was palpable, and weighed heavy on me. I reflected more and more on how I had really belonged at Southshore and questioned if I had made a mistake. I deeply missed the uninhibited expression of my students there, a freedom of expression I had only experienced in the predominantly Black communities in which I had taught.

Despite successful madrigal dinner performances, a joint Holiday concert (we agreed on a carol), a January recruitment assembly for the school population where our combined choirs rocked a performance of “Lookin’ for You” by Kirk Franklin, and a stellar performance of the Mozart *Requiem* for our combined band/orchestra/choir Masterworks concert, I still did not feel accepted or that I belonged. I experienced pushback from my students and the community. While many students and parents were open and accepting of the direction I was taking the repertoire, there was a vocal minority who made clear they were uncomfortable. My department chair discouraged me from starting a Gospel choir, couched in a plea to keep my plate from getting too full. While I was stretched quite thin, commuting back and forth to the city where I still also worked for the community youth choir downtown and managed 150 singers (and families), I persisted. We moved on with the Gospel choir and I recruited a friend and colleague to help me plan repertoire and play piano in rehearsal. While planning for the spring concert, I dealt with an objection (that I ultimately rejected) to the Gospel Choir performing because they weren’t a curricular choir. After that spring concert (where the

Gospel Choir did perform), the school board president, who was in attendance at the concert, informed me of his participation in the Great Oak High choral program and impressed upon me the importance of a European tour and producing a recorded album. He even offered to connect me with the former choir director who he could arrange to come in and do a workshop, should we desire.

In April, my principal asked to meet. When I sat down she gave me a letter offering me a full time position. I remember being floored by the salary, which included a separate, significant stipend just for extra-curricular duties. Before I could answer or respond to her offer, she explained that all new contracts required board approval, a formality that would take place later that month. I was honored at the opportunity and knew this meant that despite not feeling entirely at home, there was still support within all of the administration, and among many parents and students to have me there. It felt good to have the verbal encouragement in that moment for me to keep going.

Later that month, the morning after the board meeting, my department chair met me as I unlocked my office door. A normally jovial guy, the look on his face scared me. After I sat down, he told me quickly: my full time contract had not been accepted by the board. I couldn’t believe it. I had poured myself into the students, sacrificing and enduring so much to build a program from scratch. He informed me that the board president had vetoed what was an otherwise majority vote for a full time contract. As I sat, shocked, and tried to compose myself to teach my first class in a few minutes, he went over his plan. Over the next month we would work to lobby and garner support from varied members of administration to solidify my contract and position. It was still early and a full time job was not out of the question at Great Oak High, he assured me. So

together, we collected letters of support from all three principals and the dean to include in an appeal for a second vote to approve my position at the next board meeting.

Despite this plan, I stood very still.

While I felt deep shame, knowing that morning as I walked into rehearsal that my students certainly heard the news (after all, the board president's daughter was in my advanced choir), I did not share the news. I was too hurt and embarrassed. But my hurt was mixed with anger, too. It was hard not to see the board president's vote as another red flag, and certainly one that exercised power and entitlement. He was one of the vocal critics of my work.

Still, here I was, facing another decision to resign.

Counternarratives

McCall (2022) recently posed a question to her predominantly White colleagues regarding their willingness and ability to hear and accept counternarratives. "Think about how privileged frameworks get in the way of diminishing the distance between understanding and ignorance" (McCall, 2022, p. 212). Not surprisingly, her colleagues responded defensively, the question seen as an attack on one's moral character and legitimacy. "I believe it irritated an underlying but common theme among many neoliberals– racism" (p. 213).

Using Thelonious Monk's album, "Straight, No chaser" as a framework for illustration, she demonstrates how his playing is a living counternarrative and form of storytelling that those engaged in discussions of race might encourage. Jazz welcomes diverse viewpoints, regardless of origin, and at its heart demands listening, participation, and empathy. A musically honest expression of who he was, his playing could not be replicated. Whereas White folks might see the Blues or Jazz as a side dish or bonus alongside WAMs, Monk constructs a story that provokes and demands reflection about what music is relevant. Each person in his band was asked to express who they were and "play their own blues," and in so doing demonstrated an honest depiction that McCall says, "provide[s] a platform of truth, an inescapable pathway to confront racism, straight, no chaser" (p. 217).

The alternative in discussions of race and racism is what McCall calls "pill pocketing," the act of lacing a bitter pill with something sweet. "Not only does pill-pocketing assist in safeguarding comfort when confronted with truth, but it accommodates those who wish only to consume most or all of the framework and abandon truth" (p. 213).

I cannot claim discrimination against my personhood, but I do believe there was

legitimate resistance to the music I was introducing. Would "pill-pocketing" have been a better alternative? Or would discussions that were straight, no chaser, allowed dialogue to occur? I return to Baldwin (1961) who cautioned that the temptation to simplify the topic of race was a dangerous illusion. "A complex thing can't be made simple. You simply have to try to deal with it in all its complexity and hope to get that complexity across" (Baldwin, 1961).

Rejection

I believe my feelings of not fitting in at Great Oak, and at Southshore, were real. I also believe race and power played a real role in the objections to me by the Great Oak community, and the music I presented that rocked the status quo. Yet I take responsibility for my inability or unwillingness to show and be vulnerable with my students, in both jobs, and allow them to tell and express their individual stories, admit what I didn't know, and allow them to be experts in their ways of making music.

Perhaps it was the sound of my toddler's cries when I pulled up to daycare each day near Great Oak, after pulling her from a somber sleep much too early to endure a one hour commute from the city to the suburbs that I justified as "extended nighttime." Or maybe it was the insistence of so many of my colleagues, all White, to let go of the city and succumb to an eventual move to the suburbs where they claimed were better schools and communities. Whatever it was, I knew that I did not– and more than likely– would not fit in. So the day after the board rejected my contract I made a call to a friend to see if there were any jobs in the city.

Within a week, an opportunity arose to work downtown, with a part-time schedule just fifteen minutes from my home. The school brought together students from every zip code in Chicago, which bore out in the reality of its student population. I was recruited heavily and offered a job. Before making the decision to accept, I waited on the board vote.

At the next board meeting in late May, my department chair made the case for my position, armed with letters of support from administration for my contract. The next morning he told me the news: my full time position had been approved. Like ticker tape, the image of the spreadsheet my principal handed me the day she offered me a full time position flashed across my eyes. “It’s so much money…”

But I paused, again. The damage had been done and my path felt clear.

When the board had voted against my position previously, I told my department chair that I would be looking for other options. Though he insisted that wasn’t necessary, I felt it was. Now that my position was secure, I dreaded the next conversation, with him and my students. I told him that I was so grateful for his support but that I was offered another position that I was strongly considering. After the community had rallied to keep me there, I felt ungrateful, and I dreaded his response. He was not happy, and made it clear that if I took the position I would surely burn a bridge.

To this day I’m not sure exactly why the president vetoed my contract. He was known colloquially throughout the district as “he who shall not be named” (after the *Harry Potter* villain) for the amount of times he had vetoed either a teacher’s contract or other district referenda and statutes. I attribute at least a portion of his malice to my giving his daughter, a member of my choir, a zero for attending a basketball game instead of our last dress rehearsal for Mozart’s *Requiem*, a department policy that fell on the choir to reinforce because we were the only ensemble with students who wanted to attend this particular sporting event. I will never really know.

Transitions

Either way, I was knocked down. Beyond my hurt in experiencing rejection and then uncertainty, I knew in my heart where I belonged. I felt silly for allowing Clay's words to hold so much weight to influence my choice to leave Southshore. Still, had I not tried to teach in a place like Great Oak, I would have never really known. Today I count these experiences as a gift, but they did not feel that way at the time. I loathed the binary of music teaching. I was angry that I had learned one methodology as orthodoxy in college: one kind of singing that represented one kind of people. I was taught one way to teach music, one genre, one type of singing style, one way to learn music. When I came to enter the profession, I found one kind of music program to be well supported and upheld by institutions in music education while I worked in programs where the arts had been systematically divested. It's fair to say I rejected the oneness of both an all Black school and an all White school.

But the most painful lesson I learned was the importance of people and showing vulnerability in teaching. In both spaces, I had been there to teach content and I had one way to do it. The time I spent "honoring their world" was window dressing to get to what I wanted to do. I didn't want to share power, admit weakness, or expand worlds. To a very real extent, I wanted to achieve something. They were coming along, whether they liked it or not.

Part Three: Philosophy

I conclude this chapter by describing my philosophy of music education as a culmination of these experiences which I hope to carry me forward. While my philosophy emerged and grew through the stories I've told in this chapter, my next position at

Eastside College Prep became an arrival point to practice and an opportunity to realize the philosophy I had formed from lessons learned. I start by narrating a type of beginning, then I propose that the most impactful, close, connected, and musical choirs are a family, a philosophy that moves beyond a community and instead prioritizes three central components: connection, expression, and love.

Beginnings

Chicago and its schools are extremely segregated, divided into three major sections: the northside (predominantly White, Eastern European and Asian), the southside (predominantly Black and Irish Catholic), and the westside (predominantly Black and Latinx). Students entered ninth grade at Eastside from these diverse communities from both private and public schools creating a fascinating experiment: what happens when you combine students from the disparate environments in Chicago into one school? Students come together as freshmen and have to learn to work with people who they have rarely interacted with previously. My goal was for choir to be the place to build a family among these diverse groups.

At Eastside, I began each year with a name activity. The older students led the younger ones in our routine to welcome new members. Beginning with the choir standing together in a circle, one student begins singing a chant, "My name is (student name)! and I'm moving on." The class sings back: "Their name is ____! and they're moving on." The choir encourages the student in a rhythmic response: "show us what you got (name) hey, hey" clapping and stomping as the featured student crafts a simple four-beat movement. The class immediately mirrors their movement, a call and response exchange that affirms that persons' statement of self in that moment. The featured student takes the

first risk in expressing who they are – both in the movement they choose – and the time their voice is alone, singing. (Students are encouraged to sing or speak that small part, and very often I sang along with anyone feeling nervous). Their vulnerability and bravery is immediately validated by the choir within an atmosphere of fun as the class rowdily steps and claps, encouraging the next person to go. Most of the students have known this moment of vulnerability and fear in being featured (though no one is forced to go - and each comes in their own time), a risk immediately supported with a response of affirmation.

The tone is set for expression, shared vulnerability, and experiencing something together where each person is supported and seen. Each student shares who they are, in their own way, representing their identity as they choose to express it. Other informal activities, very often unrelated to music, showcase the diverse identities in the room. A simple game such as "would you rather" wherein students are asked to respond to a prompt with two choices such as, "beach or mountains…morning or night person" and pick a side of the room to indicate their response is an example of an informal exchange where students can view their peers through nonthreatening common interests. The essential process of building relationships with students begins here in the choir family. "A 'we-relation' is established when...they feel as if they are experiencing an occurrence together" (Greene, 2000, p. 273).

Choir is Family

My first objective was simple: choir is family, and I was never shy that we had a social mission to build community. I worked hard to facilitate a safe and brave family environment where it was okay to be vulnerable among your peers, despite their

differences, musical or otherwise. A brave space was also essential for any student, especially those without previous experience, to be open enough to sing in a public place. We have so much power in our podium to cultivate community and nurture empathy for each other simply from the starting point of common experience.

Choristers share vulnerability on the first day. “Wait, I’m supposed to sing?” Creating a space where students can be vulnerable is essential for anyone to be brave enough to use their voice and sing publicly, especially alongside an unfamiliar peer. A choir is not made up of soloists, and yet each individual certainly knows their neighbor’s voice. A microcosm of the world, a choir is made up of students from diverse races, creeds, and religions, all ages, with varied gender identities, who bring the lens of their community to the musicking experience.

Levels of participation and consumption vary, but as humans we are bound together by our common experience of feeling music. “Human beings constantly feel” (Reimer, 1989, p. 34). Music impacts all of our hearts, regardless of creed. Our innate response to music is why we are compelled to it as participants, consumers, and teachers. And, that shared feeling is the entry point for building connections among diverse groups. I propose that our responsibility as music educators is to work to build a family among our students, though Maxine Greene (2000) provides a warning: “Clearly, the creation of communities in classrooms may be one of the most difficult and yet the most essential undertakings in the schools of the future” (p. 273). As I outline what I view as the choir family, I propose a question: What if our purpose was to empower young people with skills nurtured in safe and brave families suggested here to build more meaningful and authentic connections in an isolated world?

I. Connection

John Dewey (1897) was among the first to suggest that educators begin with the child, similar to his contemporaries like Maria Montessori who based education on a child's natural desire for knowledge. Paolo Freire (1970) applied this to marginalized communities in Sao Paulo, Brazil, contending no learning is meaningful unless content is connected to the world of the student. Contrasting with "banking education" where the student, herself, is "filed away" as an empty vessel to be filled, he encouraged the teacher to connect content to who students are and their lived experiences, posing problems in such a way that brings about critical consciousness to engage with and impact their world. Education as a practice of freedom demands the teacher to recognize that students are attached to their world. In the 1990s an extension of Freire's work emerged in teacher education with the theory of culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP). Lisa Delpit (1995) warned that to deny students the opportunity to be experts on their world disempowers them, and Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) illustrated this through the examples of teachers Septima Clark and Esau Jenkins who took over and succeeded in teaching adult literacy, after a failed government attempt, by ensuring that the students learned in a way that was meaningful for them.

Music teacher educators began to recognize music as a signifier of cultural identity for music learners, realizing the importance of the musical identity that each student brings. The call to make the lives of students relevant and visible in the music classroom through CRP (Lind & McKoy, 2016; Shaw, 2020) has become a greater focus in music education, yet the work of urban education Christine Sleeter (2017) provides a warning that I view as relevant in music education. Sleeter found deficit perspectives to

persist among preservice teachers competent in CRP, suggesting that surface level implementation can become a type of "box checking" that fails to dig deeply into how to honor students' experiences. CRP without praxis in direct experiences outside of the dominant group, in the case of music, indigenous musics outside of WAMs, will only get us halfway there.

Music reflects the community. Connecting to the world of our students includes incorporating types of teaching and singing that reflect their musical world. Engaging students in learning and performing music that is relevant in their community requires us to cultivate valid experiences and find credible materials and sources. Instead of seeking a definitive or authentic version that is not possible, our job is to create a "valid representation" (Abril, 2006, p. 40) that includes immersing oneself in the music, engaging with culture bearers, and selecting music to represent a cultural group that is typical or characteristic of that culture.

> Coming to know these characteristics is like getting to know the "musical voice" of a composer like Mozart. You do not come to know his music after studying one score or listening to a movement from a piano concerto. Understanding comes from immersion in the music. (Abril, 2006, p. 40)

Popular music acts as an important bridge to our students as "...the folk music of our time; it forms the inescapable backdrop of contemporary life" (Jorgensen, 2003, p. 135). Singing in the aural-oral tradition is a democratic practice in that it allows all students, regardless of prior experience, to participate. When note reading is taken out of the equation, all are given access and allowed a point of entry, for many that is familiar culturally and validates who they are. Still, McCall (2022) reminds us that Black voices or other voices of color can never be essentialized. As a collective and connective group,

their voices are still individual and singular, using Monk's 12-bar blues as a musical example to illustrate the layered Black experience.

> ...only Black folk can articulate their stories or name their realities in a way that clearly communicates the nuances of their lived experiences. Monk's 12-bar blues, "Straight, No Chaser," is the perfect example of how the Black experience is layered and multidimensional, as not all voices and bodies are the same. (p. 217).

I worked to implement a choral music curriculum that was both rigorous and diverse. Most of my students had never had the opportunity to participate in choir before ninth grade as the schools in this district outsourced K-8 music education with community partners and teaching artists who were a cheaper option than a full-time music teacher. In schools where there were full time music teachers, the teacher's course load was often too full with teaching nine grade levels, K-8, to have an additional ensemble. Most of my students had either no "formal" (e.g., school music) ensemble music background or at most had taken a couple of years of general music. Those with formal ensemble experience like band, orchestra or choir most had done so within a community organization. In terms of prior music knowledge and formal experience, we were working at a deficit relative to most suburban programs.

Shared power. Teachers object to people rather than content being the educational starting point. "We're *music* teachers, our job is to teach *music*." Ms. Rita Pierson (TED, 2013) responds to this objection best in her TED Talk, "Every Kid Needs a Champion," recounting a similar comment from a colleague who said to her,

> "They don't pay me to like the kids. They pay me to teach a lesson. The kids should learn it. I should teach it. They should learn it. Case closed." Well, I [Ms. Pierson] said to her, "You know, kids don't learn from people they don't like."

Building connection to a student and their world takes intention, time, and trust, and requires the teacher to relinquish their seat on an authoritative throne. From the standpoint of the science of learning and development, Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond (2019) contends strong relationships are "central to the learning process," encouraging teachers to create learning environments that "allow for strong, long-term relationships for children to become attached to school and to the adults and other children in it." Physician Dr. Pamela Cantor (2019) cautions that building relationships requires more for teachers than being nice to a child but rather taking time to draw them in and build closeness, consistency, and trust. Trust and relationships begins with teachers allowing themselves to be vulnerable and share power, to join students in the learning process.

> From the outset, her efforts must coincide with those of the students to engage in critical thinking and the quest for mutual humanization. His efforts must be imbued with a profound trust in people and their creative power. To achieve this, they must be partners of the students in their relations with them.
> (Freire, 1970, p. 75)

Freire proposes liberative partnerships between teachers and students that require the teacher to be co-learner, setting aside the role of "depositor" with authoritative tactics, as in banking education. "The students- no longer docile listeners-- are now critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher" (Freire, 1970, p. 81). Dialogue and problem posing is foundational to this work as the teacher shows they are not just the "one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow" (Freire, 1970. p. 80). In Eastside Choir, students and community members became the experts when we explored music from other countries, singing styles, and languages.

II. Love

Family and love can be a complex notion among our students. While the metaphor of family is effective for some, we must acknowledge the divergent notion of family among our students and work to define the choir family as safe, brave, nurturing, inclusive, and centered in love. Idealistic in concept, it may get messy and difficult, as families do; but above all we work to continue our bonds created through music. In an (ideal) family, individuals are seen and valued, accepted, and loved. One can be vulnerable and make mistakes. Power dynamics exist in families, but one can still maintain their identity, which might differ from their parents or other family members. They may not always get along, but within complex relationships, each member will still feel safe, supported, and loved.

What makes music both essential and revolutionary? Its power to build community. Inside our choir family as we practice and model this as teachers, students can also practice this kind of love and empathy for each other by connecting to the world of their peers.

> ...active empathy, made possible largely by imagination, which draws young people together. It is not simply a passive intuition of what others are feeling but individuals moved to be there for each other in times of difficulty, confusion, suffering, making more likely a sharing...A "we-relation" is established when people communicate in such a fashion that, by means of their communication, they feel as if they are experiencing an occurrence together. (Greene, 2000, p. 273)

Caring relations begin first with an encouragement to recognize our longing for relatedness and accept it, then commit to openness that allows us to receive the other. Empathy is not just putting myself in their shoes but receiving who they are. "I do not project: I receive the other into myself, and I see and feel with the other" (Noddings,

2012, p. 30). Within an accepting, loving, and safe environment, students begin to feel brave to express more of who they are in a community built on relevance, trust, and love. As in the Black community, where I felt adopted into a family, and in the Black church where I heard the Pastor say, “hello family” to greet his congregants, one is asked and expected to come in their own way to express who they are.

Expansion. Once the family foundation is set, an important next step is expanding the musical and social world of each family member. Our role is to not to essentialize or “valorize one music as better than another but exemplif[y] a plethora of rich traditions” (Jorgensen, 2003, p. 136). No vocal tone, notation style, or language is essentialized or excluded. Other modes of teaching, such as the aural-oral tradition, are engaged alongside WAMs, all on an equal plane. The playing field for engaging in music becomes more neutralized, eliminating competition, and fostering more opportunity to bring students together and continue to bolster the strength of the family. Through experiences that honor and connect to the worlds of our students, and recognizing who they are, students begin to acknowledge and see who their peers are as well. As the world of one student is honored, they are more open to honor and even readily accept the world of a peer. As students work to include, recognize, and accept someone who may view the world from a different lens, the idea of “other” is broken down.

In practice at Eastside Choirs, every song the students learned was given equal preparation time, from WAMs to Black Gospel music, Renaissance music to Pop, and a number of folk musics from around the world. Our Spring Masterworks Concert, a collaboration with two other city high schools to prepare works such as *Carmina Burana* and *Chichester Psalms,* was given as much preparation time as our Pops Concert that

prioritized student choreography and song selection. Over time, the students in Eastside Choirs grew to the point where they could successfully compete at the district, regional, state, and national level. However, as they auditioned for and participated in various competitions, the enormous gap and disparity in who in the region and state was being served by the statewide music education organizations became clear to them. State conferences featured performances by affluent suburban choirs without representation from city schools or topics relevant to city music teachers. During one particular year in which an impending strike was threatened our district, the state music administrators were not even aware that a strike was imminent until one week prior to auditions. After our students had prepared their auditions for months, we were scolded for not knowing the rules preventing auditions during a strike (when surely during previous strikes in suburban districts those students had been warned). Still, I took Mark Twain (1878) at his word:

> Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime. (p. 650)

Travel became essential and materialized in three ways: through competition, exchanges with other choirs, and a tour. We created an ongoing collaboration with my alma mater high school for a “City to Suburb Exchange” to allow collaboration across communities. Our exchange occurred over multiple years bringing both of these groups together through music, each able to experience a new community: the suburban kids relishing riding the train and the city kids jumping in a leaf pile. We hosted our neighboring high schools and community choirs for participatory workshops simply to share and sing. The most impactful event was our “Friendship Tour” through Michigan made up of multiple

experiences to collaborate with high schools, especially those different from them, to simply sing. On tour my students saw their first TRUMP bumper sticker and formed lasting bonds with their new choir friends.

III. Expression

Lastly, as students participate in a nurtured family that honors their world and that of their peers, a space is cultivated where students are free and brave to express themselves. To move beyond safety toward bravery where student expression is the norm starts with low stakes improvisation games where students dance and sing, cultivating expression in low pressure interactions that build community. Power is shared as the teacher learns from students and allows them to lead activities. “The teacher cannot think for her students, nor can she impose her thought on them” (Freire, 1970, p. 77).

The aural-oral tradition facilitates community by leveling the playing field, allowing anyone to enter in without any prior experience to build collaboration across diverse groups. When our choir played the singing game “Little Sally Walker” the first time with a youth choir in Detroit during our Friendship Tour, our two choirs did not know each other but connected through an “informal” experience that cultivated expression. At Eastside, learning songs in the aural-oral tradition -- a way in which most of the world learns music-- helped students begin to see, “I can learn their way and learn their music.” Students uncomfortable learning aurally, or doing movement and singing, had to adjust in the same way that students who can’t read music do. And they went through it together.

Take the School Music Classroom to the Academy

My academic and professional background has been filled with pivotal and confronting moments described here that fueled my passion for urban music education and ultimately led to my decision to step away from the classroom to pursue reform on a larger scale. In the years spent developing my mission and my craft, I learned the most from my students. My hope in stepping away is to continue to reflect, extend what I've learned, gain more guidance, and deepen my understanding to better reach students and music teachers in urban settings. Practical applications about how to prepare music teachers for urban settings and, more broadly, institutional changes that can support more inclusive and participatory experiences in music for students, are needed.

What if the larger infrastructure in music education nurtured a communal, shared experience rather than a competitive one? The competitive All-State institution within music education is in place to bring students together at high levels and reward a certain kind of achievement. What message does this send about music and its approachability, its common experience, its primal impact on all of us, if these experiences are only reserved for the most experienced and well-funded? Who do we speak for and whom do we miss? Our institutions go a long way to reinforce and support already nurtured arts communities and leave behind the rich knowledge from voices who know the fundamental, innate power of music to unite.

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CHAPTER 3

THREE BLACK GOSPEL MUSIC EXPERTS ON PREPARING, TEACHING, AND "BEING" IN THE AFRICAN AMERICAN AURAL-ORAL TRADITION

Abstract

The purpose of this multiple case study was to gather musical and nonmusical perspectives from three experts on teaching Black Gospel music in the African American aural-oral tradition. Research questions included: (a) What is the process Black Gospel music experts engage in when preparing for and teaching Gospel music in the aural-oral tradition? (b) In the view of Black Gospel music experts, how does race intersect with the preparation, teaching, and performance of Gospel music? and (c) How do Black Gospel music experts advocate for incorporating Gospel music into school public school vocal music programs? Participants were purposively selected and data collection included observations, researcher singer participation, and multiple interviews. Expert agreement emerged regarding teaching processes as a nonmusical "state of being" deeply infused with cultural, community, and spiritual values. Rehearsals were uninterrupted musical experiences with limited nonverbal instruction made possible from robust aural-oral immersion preparation. While participants insisted race was not a prerequisite for engagement in Gospel music, they agreed race plays an active role, citing the prevalence of antiblackness in the academy as foremost among the barriers to rigorous preparation to teach Black Gospel music. Experts advocated for teaching Gospel music in schools to offer students the opportunity to participate in an accessible, inclusive, participatory, and communal experience.

Music represented a means of survival and preservation of cultural identity for enslaved Africans forced to become African Americans (Southern, 1997). Gospel music emerged in the Black church as a new sacred musical form and declaration of "black selfhood" (Williams-Jones, 1975) that simultaneously reflected cultural, spiritual, textual, and musical products (Wise, 2002a, p. 310). Unique to and reflective of its community, Gospel music was distinguished by its expressive practices that historically resisted the norms, principles, and aesthetics of dominant Eurocentric worship (Maultsby, 1983; Walker, 1984). From its inception during the great depression as "good music in bad times" (Heilbut, 2002), Gospel music is a synthesis of its musical predecessors both sacred and secular, urban and rural, retaining influence from slave utterances, the Spiritual, Blues, and Jazz (Burnim & Maultsby, 2006; Walker, 1979). Despite scholarship establishing foundational understandings of historical context, cultural power and influence, musical characteristics, and performance practice (Boyer, 1979; 1995; Reagon, 2001; Shelley, 2019; Strayhorn, 2011), teaching Gospel music is not well understood.

Resources that define how to teach Gospel music in the aural-oral tradition are not widely known or practiced among music educators, though their rich content help to define conducting style and gesture, the importance of listening and transcription to inform preparation, the role of accompaniment for instruction, Gospel vocal pedagogy for solo singers, and group vocal technique. Scholars are clear: preparation for teaching in the aural-oral tradition prioritizes the use of recordings as the primary source for learning a song which requires a reliance on multiple tiers of oral and aural proficiencies to memorize parts. Memorization of parts is also necessary for the instructor to embody the score while teaching. "The notes, rather than being written on paper, are written over the

entire body, behavior, and attitude of the teacher" (Barnwell, 2009, p. 13). Additionally, preparation and teaching require lead sheet literacy, a repertoire of intuitive and improvisatory conducting gestures, adaptation of vocal technique, freedom in expression, and stylistic accompaniment (Turner, 2009). Still, opportunities for students to directly engage with this pedagogical knowledge remains at the margins of the academy.

Antiblackness in the Conservatory

Historically, the inclusion of Gospel music as an academic subject in college and university curricula has required further justification to be granted standing, merit, and financial support and even when included, often remains relegated to an additive, peripheral role (Dilling, 1995; Johnson, 2012; Reagon, 2001; Young, 2005). Cultural disregard for what is Black, termed "antiblackness," is embedded within educational discourse and informs practice and policy (Dumas, 2016; Dumas & ross, 2016). Antiblackness in the music conservatory surfaces in the centering of curriculum and pedagogy that reifies Western Art Musics (WAMs) and the written score (Ewell, 2020). In granting status, capital, and privilege to what is White, what is Black becomes subordinated, despised, possessed, and subjugated (Bell, 2013; Harris, 1993). Scholars illustrate antiblackness in the reasons given for omissions of Black music, from conservatory mindsets and unsubstantiated misconceptions that singing Gospel music damages the voice, to systemic perceptions that Gospel music, as a folk tradition, lacks serious pedagogy and technique, and is unworthy of academic standing (Jackson-Brown, 1990; Johnson, 2012). Jazz studies have received greater attention, yet some argue its inclusion through a Eurocentric frame folds it into whiteness instead of through its foundational Afrocentric lens (Russonello, 2020; Sarath, 2018).

The extent of opportunities for preservice music teachers to learn music in the aural-oral tradition in a non-additive manner is unclear. Eurocentricity and the inherent whiteness of teacher education is well documented (Aronson et al., 2020; Sleeter, 2017) and extends to music teacher education (Bradley, 2015; Hess, 2018; Koza, 2008). Music education continues to foster “exclusionary paradigms” in presenting curriculum and pedagogy to students that continue to reify WAMs (Kindall-Smith et al., 2011). Preservice teachers learn to teach, or learn to sing themselves primarily through musical scores, emerging with values centered in WAMs, fearful or even rejecting more spontaneous, unfamiliar, aural-oral musical forms in which they were given minimal instructional models. As a result, Black Gospel music remains underrepresented in curricula despite standards from NASM and NA*f*ME to prompt all music educators to use, interact with, and know Black music in their pedagogy and methods classes (Sands, 1996).

Furthermore, race intersects in the teaching and learning of Gospel music as concerns over ownership, qualification, authenticity, and exoticization prompt fear and avoidance. White teachers connect race with the ability to teach Gospel music, expressing fears of inadequacy to ultimately determine their background has deemed them ineffective (Turner, 2009). “I can’t offer you that because I’m not black” (Marti, 2012, p. 165). While the psychological toll of being discouraged from bringing one’s whole musical identity is consequential for Black students in classrooms for whom these traditions hold value (Claus & Pigott, 2021; Sarath 2018), all students can benefit from immersion into Gospel music (Deckman, 2013).

The problem of music educators receiving limited experience, models, and value for Black musical traditions in the aural-oral tradition is real. Music educators need to gain musical expertise beyond highly developed competencies in WAMs alongside nonmusical understandings of how race plays a role in teaching music. A research study looking closely at the pedagogy of teaching Gospel music in the aural-oral tradition and its intersection with race is needed in music education.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this multiple case study was to gather musical and nonmusical perspectives from three experts on teaching Black Gospel music in the African American aural-oral tradition. Research questions included: (a) What is the process Gospel experts engage in when preparing for and teaching Gospel music in the aural-oral tradition? (b) In the view of Gospel experts, how does race intersect with the preparation, teaching, and performance of Gospel music? and (c) How do Gospel music experts advocate for incorporating Gospel music into public school vocal music programs? This research aims to provide understanding toward building self-efficacy in teaching Black Gospel music and expanding robust inclusion in music teacher education and more broadly, music education.

Method

I used multiple case study design to examine teaching processes in a real-life, unique setting with detail and depth over a period of time, bound through the individual perspectives and across experts to dimensionalize pedagogy and compare for commonalities (Stake, 2006; Yin, 2017). I identified three Gospel experts who represented critical case samples (Flyvbjerg, 2011) based on their expertise, reputation,

and longevity in the field. I broaden the term “expert” to include participants’ roles as teachers who use a pedagogical approach to teach Gospel music from their expertise gained through active participation as performers, conductors, singers, and players. Participants included: (a) Dr. Rollo Dilworth[1], Vice Dean and Professor of Music Education at Temple University and organist at the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas; (b) Dr. Cassandra Jones[2], Senior Directress at Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church; and (c) Dr. J. Donald Dumpson[3], Minister of Music at Arch Street Presbyterian Church and the Founder/Artistic Director of Philadelphia Heritage Chorale. Recruitment occurred through establishing connections with Dr. Dumpson and Dr. Jones and building upon a previous professional relationship with Dr. Dilworth. Sampling was purposive and represented maximum variation (Patton, 2015) to include one church director, one university professor, and one community choir director, all located in the urban center of Philadelphia, PA. All agreed to be named with the declared intention to: (a) appreciate and recognize their longevity, expertise, and credibility in the field of Gospel music; (b) illustrate the unique settings and groups of people who sing Gospel music; and (c) allow researchers and practitioners to identify experts for their own future study and practice in Gospel music. The University Institutional Review Board approved all protocols.

Data Collection

Data collection took place over a three-month period from January through March of 2020. Sources included one-on-one interviews, rehearsal participation, audio recordings, and collection of artifacts including organizational and biographical

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[1] rollodilworth.com
[2] www.nextstep-associates.com
[3] DiverseArtsSolutions.com

information. I immersed myself as a singer-participant to contextualize ongoing and gathered knowledge of Gospel pedagogy through self-experience and avoid being a distanced outsider/observer. Over the research period I sang in weekly rehearsals and varied services with each choir, totaling 100 plus hours of time in rehearsal and church services. Because I was not able to take live field notes as an active participant in rehearsal, I recorded each rehearsal and took field notes from the recording. The three parameters of the research questions framed my observation foci.

I conducted two face to face interviews at least one hour long with each expert and several informal interviews took place following rehearsal or in subsequent member checking conversations. I compiled song titles in a listening list to broaden my understanding of familiar artists, repertoire, and style that I extended into simple charts to identify form, harmonic structure, and construction of voice parts to delineate teaching sequence. The original intended period of participation included compiling video footage to capture visual components of Gospel music. At the time of the COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020, I had exceeded the number of hours planned for data collection with Drs. Dilworth and Jones, but I was unable to complete a full semester participation in choir with Dr. Dumpson or initiate the video component.

Data Analysis

I transcribed interviews and analyzed transcripts using open first-cycle coding and focused second-cycle coding (Miles et al., 2020). Phase one of data analysis included open coding to create an initial in vivo code list and use of peer coding to refine the initial code list. Phase two of data analysis included member checking, cross-case analysis, and verification of the data through secondary data sources. To establish trustworthiness, I

incorporated regular feedback from experts on my analysis and engaged in discussions with long term mentees of each expert to confirm findings for each participant (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Positionality

As a White woman, I grew up attending a predominantly White church in the Presbyterian denomination. While I have attended many Black churches throughout my career, I do not claim to be an expert or insider on Gospel music pedagogies or the cultural markers that influence it. Like many colleagues who have an affinity for Gospel music, I sought to inform myself during my seventeen years teaching choir in urban settings where knowledge of Gospel music was highly valued by my students. Upon completing an undergraduate degree in music education studies twenty years ago with no knowledge of how to teach Gospel music, I sought to build skills through my students, colleagues, and community experts. While this time provided a baseline knowledge and allowed me to gain self-efficacy, the limitations of a full-time teaching schedule constrained my capacity for deeper immersion and more prolonged time with experts. In this study my aim was to step back with humility from prior knowledge, remain open to new understandings, and bring fresh eyes to what I thought I knew.

Findings

Aligning with multiple case study, I structured the case profile and findings for each expert to foreground their unique and independent themes for research questions one and two. Common themes and findings for research question three are presented in the Cross-Case and Discussion.

Dr. Rollo Dilworth, Case Profile

The sound of the organ rises through the vast limestone sanctuary of the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas on Sunday morning as Dr. Rollo Dilworth's feet dance across the pedals of the Hammond organ. As the nation's first Black Episcopal Church founded in 1792, the significance of playing here is not lost on him. At the podium at Temple University on Tuesday night, he stands before his beloved community choir the "Singing Owls," navigating the Poulenc *Gloria*, a Japanese folksong, and a Gospel tune. On this evening, Dilworth's *Credo* enlivens souls, a haunting Gospel setting of W.E.B. Dubois words, "I believe in service, humble reverent service, from the blackening of boots to the whitening of souls." These words speak to his essence well-placed at an institution that emerged as a night school offering educational access for working people. In his role as Vice Dean and Professor of Music Education, he interacts with students pursuing degrees at every level, bringing his considerable experience from the academy and school music education. He is affectionately called, "The Black Mr. Rogers" by students in Carver Choir, a weekly university partnership with the neighborhood high school. As an advocate for the aural-oral tradition, counting Dr. Ysaÿe Barnwell among his mentors, his journey began in St. Louis with two music teachers who were "both very intentional about making sure that I experienced both worlds, if you want to call it that: the classical and the Gospel."

"A Way of Being"

Dilworth characterized the aural-oral tradition as a "way of being" woven into the fabric of life, derived from early practices by enslaved Africans who communicated and preserved culture, customs, and knowledge through telling stories and creating art. For

those enculturated into this way of being, the ear becomes acute at processing information and communication, emphasizing how teaching and learning in this way can be difficult for those not enculturated. “We think of it as a thing you do. But it is a way of living and it is who you are, and ... that's hard to quantify.” Being in the aural-oral tradition requires different skills than those traditionally associated with being musically literate. He advocated for a recalibrated definition of music literacy wherein the teacher is the score, responsible for communicating and embodying the music with their presence. For example, Dilworth teaches the first 16 bars of the song without a score, directing students to, “sing what they hear, not what they see.” When a musical score is available, it is inherently limited in capturing complexity and nuance. He emphasized the vulnerable and liberating experience for students learning music in the aural-oral tradition because one is not “confined or trapped by those dots and dashes on the page.”

When one teaches Gospel music in the aural-oral tradition, all are invited to “come in their own way,” which Dilworth illustrated through differently held perspectives on vocal blend. To “blend” in Western choral music requires conformity, order, replication, and uniformity. In Gospel music, singers are asked to bring their whole voice, emotion, and spirituality to the music. Value for each individual sound can be heard in the “special chorus” where contrapuntal lines coexist undergirded by the same chord progression. As individual stories are valued in sound, singers experience freedom, vulnerability, and connection with their neighbor, reinforced harmonically and psychologically through close, parallel, tertian harmony.

“Who Has the Right to Tell Someone Else’s Story?”

Dilworth acknowledged the limitations in how students and teachers who are not

of African descent connect to what he called "culturally specific themes" in Gospel music. In his view, the hesitation to include Gospel music stems from a lack of preparation or fear of making a mistake and causing offense. He related these concerns around qualification and racial ownership with his own experience of being questioned in his interaction with WAMs. "How dare I teach and conduct the Brahms *Requiem* ... I've actually been challenged by people ... they think I should stay in my lane." For Dilworth, the challenge of his qualification as a Black director implies that possessing European descent guarantees readiness and begs the question, "Who has a right to tell somebody else's story?" He has always been baffled by teachers who ask him if they are "allowed" to teach Gospel music. "I don't think choral directors need permission. I think what they need more than permission is encouragement." In his view, studying Gospel music is no different than exploring Mozart's *Requiem.* "I've never seen a piece of Gospel music that has a little footnote at the bottom of page that says, 'for Black people only.'" What changes, he said, is the mindset taken into the music.

Dilworth recommended that teachers devote time to rigorous preparation and guard against the common mindset that Gospel music is less serious or sophisticated and therefore requires less time. "That's where teachers get into a lot of trouble because that particular mindset is something that can unfortunately be communicated to the singers in nonverbal ways that will take credibility away from the teacher." Giving less time to preparation, where Gospel music is positioned on the program, references to it as "happy clappy music," and minimal initiative to interact with culture bearers may indicate a personal bias of a teacher. When a White teacher experiences an objection to singing Gospel music by Black students, Dilworth attributed this to a failure by the teacher to

engage deeply in the work, perhaps derived from attitudes held by many in the United States and upheld by university music schools.

> Music and the oral tradition across this country is often seen as folk, tribal, and colloquial, and that it simply lacks the sophistication of music that is connected in some way to the Western classical written form. That's an attitude that is pervasive in many of our conservatories and colleges of music. And it never has to be said, it never has to be spoken. You can tell. And so my hope is that teachers who are wanting to teach their students about choral music…that we value every choral experience equally, whether it's from the written page or not…And if they go on to become teachers, they will hopefully pass on that same attitude and that same spirit on to their students. And that's a problem because it is rather systemic, not just with African American music, but with any kind of music that's not of the Western classical canon.

Dilworth was firm that preservice music teachers are not prepared adequately in the music of the African Diaspora. Rigorous preparation for teacher-conductors (his term) begins with separating oneself from a Western classical lens to "start afresh." Overlaying one's Western classical lens on Gospel style is dangerous as each were formed in very different traditions. "The sound doesn't start with Bel Canto Western classical tone and evolves into more of a chest voice. It's the other way around." Further, applying Western classical labels to Gospel music positions Eurocentric ideology as the measuring stick or "tool by which you navigate your way through Gospel music." He shared wisdom from Dr. Ysaÿe Barnwell who first taught him that referring to music sung in the African American aural-oral tradition as "rote singing" disparages its complexity. "Rote" implies replication or mimicking, void of the nuance and subtlety contained delivery of pitch, tone color, vocal inflection, rhythm, diction, body language, expression, and emotion. And when non-Black teachers struggle to "tell the story," Dilworth suggested filling in cultural and musical gaps through immersive experiences and prolonged, engaged, and

humble relationships with culture bearers, making special note to engage students who play, direct, and conduct to share power and expertise.

Lastly, while Gospel music remains a tool for Black people to combat discrimination, oppression, and marginalization, Dilworth affirmed that all people connect with what he called “humanly universal themes” of love, joy, hope, community, unity, inspiration, and perseverance. Though students and teachers may not be able to connect on a spiritual or cultural level, Dilworth insisted the human experience is the mutual entry point for diverse communities. “A six-year old gets it.” The human resonance is ultimately, in his words, “why people do it.”

Dr. Cassandra Jones, Case Profile

Dr. Cassandra Jones’ signature grey braids shine and wave gloriously from the Kimmel Center stage as she conducts the more than 100-voice Enon Mass Choir in the annual “A Soulful Christmas.” The sound and presence of the choir envelops the room from the moment they begin, purple gowns flowing. It is clear “the Doc” is here. Senior Directress Dr. Cassandra W. Jones is in her 22nd year leading the massive music ministry at Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church, a Philadelphia institution in the Black community. Attended by 10,000 people weekly, Dr. Jones oversees the direction of nine choirs, and mentors 17 emerging conductors. “Doc” holds singers to a high standard while ensuring they feel loved. Singers are “prayed in” and before a note is sung she asks, “hearts and minds clear?” Sunday morning is no different as she walks the choir loft at 5:15 a.m. praying over every choir member’s seat. She is a native of North Philadelphia and self-proclaimed “church girl,” known to be practicing music on the treadmill or caught in a boisterous conducting gesture at a red light. Nothing compares to seeing Dr. Jones at the

front of Enon on Sunday in one of her colorful, astute robes. "I direct hard in practice but not hard like I do when I'm really in service." A mentee of Dr. Jones described her as "a builder of leaders" with a "sense" about people that reaches beyond music. As a life-long educator who spent 48 years in public schools as a physical education teacher and administrator, she is well versed in schooling and youth. She easily shifts between the language of a former Chief Academic Officer in Baltimore and Philadelphia to dancing and singing at Enon alongside eager five-year-olds who gaze adoringly up at her small stature. The love she receives is returned through her captivating presence and charisma, or what she calls "the fun gift."

A female trailblazer in her own right, Dr. Jones was among the first women invited to direct a Mass Choir in Mt. Sinai Holy Church of America at the age of 22 in a field dominated by men. When Elder Parham, a man, first asked her to conduct a song, she said to him, "*you know* they don't let females direct." When he insisted and introduced as Sister Jones, she described audible snickering from the men: "What is *she* doing? What is *this*?" Her demonstration of vigor and excellence in that moment led to a convention performance and being a leading directress in the field. "Everything else has been history."

"Technically Correct" and "They Know I Care"

Excellence must drive teacher preparation in Gospel music to focus on what she called being "technically correct," defined as building deep, thorough knowledge through hours of aural immersion and intense study:

> The feeling is very important, but you can't do this just on feeling. That's why I think people like to say, "well, I feel the spirit." That's good. But the spirit tells you to be technically correct and be excellent.

For Jones, her preparation is prayer and memorization. Twenty black, white, and green composition notebooks that she (and her colleagues) affectionately call, “her books” contain her illustrations of every song she has directed. These pages are her physical map, a score. “There’s always music … there's nothing that we can't figure out if we can hear it.” Each page is dedicated to a song, words annotated with corresponding note names to sketch melodic, textual, and dynamic nuance. The rhythm is in her head. “I don't score it like you, or a musician. But I have the notes and I have the gift of knowing the rhythm.” Her combination of aural immersion physicalized into her process of transcription allows her to internalize all voice parts and is what she considers the necessary work. “You gotta score it because you got to know it.” Jones’ aural knowledge was evident several times in rehearsal where I noted the accuracy of her ears in identifying harmonic structure. Though she describes herself as an “untrained” musician, I observed her aural fierceness surpass that of her “trained” musicians in her rhythm section one evening. “I don’t know what the chord is called, but what you played is *not* it.”

Dr. Jones’ memorization allows her to be in rehearsal hands-free, her ears and heart as the only tools to connect the choir “family.” She contrasted her choice to build relationships with other directors who focus more on the music than the people. The exchange is mutual: she gets to know them and allows herself to be known, garnering a level of trust and intimacy that allows her to push the choir to the next level. “People say, ‘how do you get all these people moving and doing all the things that you do?’ One, they know that I care ... They know I care about each individual. You can't fake that.’”

Rehearsals are a continuous musical and connected conversation, the flow of

support and love felt easily as participants nod along to her, laugh at her jokes or respond to her calls. She is not afraid to be vulnerable and proximal. “I don’t sing” she says, but I observed her comfortably belt the tenor pitch while climbing the choir loft to admonish singers with the text or a gentle nudge to participate. “Where did he bring *you* from?” Her exhortations of the text interwoven into her teaching were persistent calls to the choir to respond (and sing) their answer. When the choir faded in energy she sternly cried, “lives are depending on hearing that word.” And, “Did God just kinda go through the motions when he woke you up this morning? No. He woke you up. He didn't turn around and say, ‘Maybe I'll wake you up. Maybe I won't. *No*.”

Jones tied her intimate connection with her singers and collaborators to her freedom to be spontaneous, a fundamental element in Black worship. While she credited all spontaneity to her rhythm section who hone her arrangements each week, I observed a lightning fast, fluid shorthand of communication between all. Everyone knew each unique signal, clap, point, fist, and tiny physical movement that signaled melodic direction, repeats, cues, form, or vamp. I was struck by the speed of their response to each subtle, nonverbal gesture as the strongest evidence of their closeness.

“Your Background Does Not Disqualify You”

When asked why race matters in teaching Gospel music, Jones referenced performances that lacked preparation and technical excellence as “just hands clapping and let’s move on.” One’s personal experiences with race relations, unconscious bias, and views of “what Black people bring to the table” contribute to viewpoints of Gospel music as “less” instead of a complex, musical form, that requires seriousness in preparation and expectations for quality.

> There are a lot of teachers who really want to do it, but they don't understand it...It's certainly not taught at college. So they just figure, "Well I looked at a YouTube video. I went to that church down the street and I saw them and they were just kinda (clap clap clap) you know, and I think I can do this." If you don't understand that this is needs to be as technically correct as…anthems, hymns, classical music, well... They can't do it.

For Jones, Gospel music is too often selected, prepared, and performed in a way that displays a lack of true value for the music or the community from which it emerged. She advocated for personal examination of one's intention and view of the music especially for students who want to know their music isn't being selected as a "check mark" but because their teacher has authentic value for their community and their music. "If it's a burden, you're not going to do it well, and that's what will come across." When respect is given to preparation, Jones said Gospel music "cuts across racial barriers."

During one interview, Jones and I discussed a mistake I made early in my career when I perceived that my Black students did not trust me because I was White. "I will stress over and over again, don't think that people won't receive you." Doc pointed to Enon's reception toward me when I directed warmups at my first visit. "You came in prepared … not with a chip on your shoulder of knowing it all, you came in humble saying, 'I'm going to share what I've given, what I know, but I also want to receive from you.'" Showing your "authentic self" is most important.

> Most times people assume the kids don't trust them. That's not true. Children know if you're authentic and if you're really there for them...And so what I tell teachers…you have to be your authentic self because children, students will know, and they will call you out on it. You can't be what you think they want you to be. You can't be in there saying, "I need to be this kind of way because they're Black kids and I'm White." You've got to get rid of that...it's who you are as an individual and knowing that you value them as individuals and you value what their culture says…Don't assume that they don't trust you just because you're White. They don't trust you because they don't know you.

Jones contended race is not a prerequisite to engage with Gospel music if one has taken the time to understand it in an equivalent manner with WAMs, noting credible Gospel performances from all White choirs. Gospel music facilitates a connection between teachers and students who do not share racial or ethnic backgrounds, and she and her colleague Garland “Miche” Waller were insistent: “we've got a lot of Black people who may not excel in traditional Gospel music.” When teachers ask her how to gain “ability” to teach Gospel music, she directs them to study it as they would study Baroque music. “It's the same thing.” She was clear that a teacher’s background does not disqualify them from doing Gospel music but was firm: “You have to be willing to put in the work.”

Dr. J. Donald Dumpson, Case Profile

The city lights sparkle as stories of how Gospel music found a voice emanate from the walls of the historic Arch Street Presbyterian Church in downtown Philadelphia. As I enter rehearsal on that particular evening, singers surround Dr. Dumpson at the piano where he sits, a force guiding members of the Philadelphia Heritage Chorale (PHC) during this episode of music making. He described members of the PHC as “wonderful, down to earth people” represented in varied ages and levels of music experience. Tonight, Edwin Hawkins’ lyrics, “Ooh, child, things are gonna get easier” were soulfully shared throughout the chapel. In a moment he builds a complex arrangement by layering one voice over another with every repetition of the phrase “Someday” without lifting a hand from the piano. The people sing in this space amidst the palpable anxiety felt on the evening of March 9, 2020 (our last in-person rehearsal before the COVID-19 outbreak). Access is at the center of his work, commanding high expectations for the members of

PHC, the choir he founded sitting before him that evening to be "a conduit, an opening, a portal of access for people to have musical experiences that are often closed off to them … the Chorale offers a lift into possibilities." For these singers he seeks to build a bridge that fosters access to the journey from familiar to unfamiliar, a fusion no more clearly illustrated than through the sound of his Sunday morning piano prelude. As congregants enter, they hear a sonority and artistry that merges the sounds of Frederic Chopin and Claude Debussy with the hymns of Rev. Charles Albert Tindley, the voicing of Rev. James Cleveland, and the soulful ministry of Pastor Shirley Caesar. He established "A Soulful Christmas" to expand individuals' views of programming beyond artistic stereotypes that limit the inclusion of music borne of the African Diaspora and build access to mainstream opportunities for African American musicians at major arts and educational institutions. Each year over 900 members of local church choirs are invited to perform at The Kimmel Center, a professionally acclaimed stage and home of the Philadelphia Orchestra, where they are exposed to and perform classical works by composers of African descent. Dr. Dumpson is a native Philadelphian.

"Dual Competency"

Central in teaching for Dr. Dumpson is what he termed "elevation" or "lift," defined as expanded notions of musical belonging, ability, and possibility for both performer and audience. He aims to expand participants' view and experiences of belonging through community singing, how they see themselves, and what is possible beyond what he termed "artistic stereotypes." While Dumpson made use of and expressed value for the aural-oral tradition, he conveyed concern in its primary usage as one way of limiting the elevation he desires for singers. For Dumpson, competency in

traditional music literacy skills empower them to engage with the broad range of musical situations as he did. He described his undergraduate experiences as expansion and indoctrination with information not familiar to what he "knew as being at home with the music he shared." Crediting Professors Harvey Wedeen and Natalie Hinderas with guiding him to make connections between his "home" musical lens and new insights ("lift"), his understanding of Gospel music and Spirituals expanded when he began making connections to his study of Mozart, Brahms, and Chopin. His intent is the same: to guide his singers in a merging of techniques to build what he called "dual competencies" where all music and ways of learning music coexist and merge to create something that lives musically. To that end he engages choir members in musical competencies and practices beyond what their church music experience provides with exposure to classical composers of African descent such as Adolphus Hailstork, Hannibal Lokumbe, Undine Moore, Hale Smith, and William Grant Still, alongside arranged Spirituals. He does not view this as assimilating into whiteness but valuing and passing on music literacy that is historical, theoretical, and musical.

"It's Vulnerable."

In approaching Gospel music, Dumpson advised teachers to allow the music to "pour into and open them" toward the possibilities of vulnerability with an expansive heart and ears. Gospel music holds power for connection and the role of teacher is to be vulnerable and guide students toward the same openness. He agreed with descriptions of Gospel music as expressive but stated, "expression without vulnerability creates a very different outcome." When vulnerability is present, barriers are more likely to be broken. "Singers are not outsiders trying to get in gospel music. It can be home." Here is where

Dr. Dumpson might see the written page as a barrier toward greater connection. In every engagement with music, he guided participants into seeking an understanding of the story informing the music. For example, when working on an African American slave song, he generated conversations to bring the singers into a deeper connection with the essence and context related to where the music was borne. “Sing as if we are on the belly of the ship. Be intentional to sense time, space, pain through moans, and groans. Bring your lens down to the earth, dig your hands in the soil.” He feels that it is very important to live in the space and energy of the music being co-created and shared, characterizing the human voice as central in communicating the “sounds born out of lived experiences” common in folk music. Indeed, Dumpson made clear expressions from “despair to jubilation, deprivation to abundance live here” with repetition used as a trance or mantra, growing in momentum with each iteration.

Intersection of Race and Teaching Gospel Music

In teaching Gospel music, Dr. Dumpson advocated for one to address engrained implicit and explicit biases toward what is valued and therefore taught in the academy, what he termed the “elephant in the room.” He proposed that the academy privileges and assigns value to WAMs in curricular decisions that exclude the content of Gospel music in education. In privileging Western traditions, the academy marginalizes and excludes other musics, including those revealing the significant sounds borne in and out of the African diaspora. As a result, practices and values developed by music students result in bias against non-Western music and shortcuts in preparing music from the African diaspora that avoid the awful history of the slave trade and journey through the middle passage. Dumpson suggested that historically, the values of the academy are rooted in

fear of bold Black expression in music and the arts in general. Black Gospel music, for instance, is "borne and formed and shaped in everyday life and worship ... it just has a different aesthetic ... it makes some people uncomfortable." While religion can create discomfort or avoidance of Gospel music, Dumpson instead connected omission with fear of Blackness, projections and associations with Black as tribal, and a perception of Black as "less than." To illustrate, he compared Robert Ray's *Gospel Mass* alongside Franz Schubert's *Mass in G* and stated,

> Let's have conversations about the dualities created in American society…one statement of the Mass may be considered an extraordinary creation of sacred music while the other might be considered too churchy. They are both Mass settings. What is that evaluative conclusion based on?

He noted similar contradictions regarding acceptance for "using our ears" when framed within Edwin Gordon's Music Learning Theory or Zoltan Kodaly's methodology, rather than being valued or allowed to stand alone as the African American aural-oral tradition. Given the messaging he described, Dumpson called on educators to challenge these value judgments and stereotypes.

Dumpson encouraged self-reflection on how ability is assigned to music, contrasting assumptions made about his own competency in WAMs. One may assume that Black students should sing the African American Spiritual better because they are Black, which then leads one to conclude that if you are another race, you will not sing it as well. "Because you're White you shouldn't be doing it. Because I'm Black I should be doing it." Students of African descent may not have been exposed to singing Spirituals or Gospel music at all. In his work with directors who want to approach Black music with respect but are not of African descent he stated, "Each of us has agency to engage the musics of other cultures. We in America have the challenge of our unfortunate history of

racism to contend with. Ultimately, it is my hope that honest exchanges with the music wins."

Cross-Case Analysis and Discussion

Beyond findings around teaching, preparation, and performing Black Gospel music in the aural-oral tradition, experts illuminated common nonmusical components that inform engagement with Gospel music that I will now refer to as "Gospel Pedagogy." Gospel pedagogy includes the cultural and philosophical value system infused into every aspect of teaching Gospel music, as described by these experts. In this section, I also discuss how participants together advocated for incorporating Gospel music into public school programs, the intersections of race and fear in so doing, and pose suggestions for transformation in music teacher education.

Gospel Pedagogy

A shining example of a teacher is the Black preacher (Emdin, 2016). Cultural, community, and spiritual norms and values permeate sermon delivery as the preacher invites congregant responses that propel self-expression over compliance. Meeting parishioners on their cultural and emotional turf, a preacher co-constructs learning in a teaching approach Emdin designates as "Pentecostal Pedagogy." Similarly, experts infused cultural, community, and spiritual values into what they agreed was a "state of being" in the teaching of Gospel music in the African American aural-oral tradition. As Gospel music itself is defined as a cultural, spiritual, textual, and musical product (Wise, 2002a), participants' *teaching* also embodied cultural values where liberation is the philosophical starting point. Music rooted in what Walker (1984) calls "cries for freedom" bursts with rebellion through improvisation and expression, epitomizing the

social improvisation required historically, and reaction to Eurocentric worship style that was "imitative of the dominant society and identifies with that which has no abiding interest and support for liberation of the oppressed" (Walker, 1979, p. 26). Just as the music demands liberation, creativity, and expression from any participant, expert teaching imbued emancipatory norms as they welcomed all, regardless of their ability or prior experience, not to conform but come in their own way. Coming in their own way meant to: (a) sing free from the restrictions of the physical page; (b) transcend one's circumstances through textual themes of liberation; (c) freely release deeply felt and personal emotions within a creative, flexible, and spontaneous musical form and space; and (d) loosen the confines among neighbors with closeness built through the bare exposure of feeling pain.

Expert preparation also mirrored cultural value for the aural-oral study and transfer of art. And, because experts centered aural-oral immersion as their preparation to memorize parts and internalize musical nuance, they limited verbal instruction to "be" in an uninterrupted musical experience with their singers. Experts embodied nuance and feel through their individual presence and chosen instrument, Dr. Dumpson at the piano, Dr. Dilworth through vocal modeling with and without piano, and Dr. Jones in her physical presence and voice. All used piano accompaniment that mimicked a Gospel rhythm section either directly (Dumpson and Dilworth) or through the use of an accompanist (Jones).

Sing Gospel Music in School

Experts advocated for the incorporation of Gospel music in public school music programs. Gospel music taught in the aural-oral tradition allows Black students to "see

themselves in the curriculum" (Dilworth) through a cultural art from their community, relevant not just for Black students to *see*, but for White students to *know*. Jones and Dilworth cautioned teachers to guard against "checking the box" when choosing a Gospel song. Teachers must hold, and more importantly, show authentic value for Gospel music and the community in which it was borne. Students will sense inauthentic intentions, lack of value, and especially, inadequate preparation. Experts advocated for the incorporation of Gospel music into school music programs because of its inherent ability to (a) foster self-expression, (b) nurture connection and vulnerability within a group, (c) offer an accessible, inclusive, and participatory experience in music, and (d) normalize open dialogue about issues of race, bias, ownership, and how value is assigned to music.

Liberatory values shine through in experts' demonstration of the "participatory ethos" of Gospel music (Shelley, 2019) and cultural value for "free expression and group participation" (Maultsby, 1983). While many music education systems perpetuate meritocracy in requiring music literacy skills and prior experience to participate, Gospel pedagogy breaks free from these constraints in favor of open, participatory, accessible, and communal musical experience that invites all to enter in. Experts prioritized expression in selecting repertoire which connected to the world of their choir members and created arrangements which suited the needs of their singers. How might practitioners and students alike benefit and transform from what Dilworth described as the "inclusive, uninhibited, liberating themes and practices" of Gospel pedagogy?

Race and Fear

While experts insisted Gospel music is open to all, they agreed race plays an active role in its pursuit. Experts targeted the positioning and devaluing of Gospel music

and aural-oral traditions in society and the academy as potent barriers to rigorous engagement. Each described their personal experience with the academy and teachers perceiving “Black” (Black music, aural-oral traditions) as less, affirming the scholarship of antiblackness (Dumas, 2016; Dumas & ross, 2016). All cited evidence of antiblackness in (a) shortcuts taken by music educators with Black musics they would not take with WAMs, (b) lowered expectations for quality, and (c) the systemic treatment of Black music as peripheral.

Participants cited fear as barrier to engagement with Gospel music in the classroom. Aside from the vulnerability of teaching in what might be an unfamiliar practice of the aural-oral tradition, fears of religion and race intertwine as one contends with their connection to Blackness and religiosity. Experts did not characterize religious belief as a prerequisite for participation in Gospel music, recognizing it as both a sacred and secular form, and leaned more into its cultural value while leaving faith as a deep possibility, but not a requirement. Yet fear might prompt one to rewrite or omit “Jesus” from Gospel lyrics, applying the racially charged double standard to Black sacred music not given to WAMs that experts cautioned against. Additionally, such an omission devalues the cultural, social, and historical significance of “Jesus” as a symbol of liberation in the Black community “to overcome oppressive and unjust conditions” (Holmes, 1992, p. 334).

Transformation for Music Teacher Education

The call to make the lives of students relevant and visible in the music classroom through culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2018; Lind & McKoy, 2016) has been a response of music education to calls for diversity, equity, and inclusion, yet Sleeter

(2017) found deficit perspectives persisted among preservice teachers competent in CRP. Might a similar danger exist for preservice music teachers if CRP is not coupled with direct experiences in the complex, nuanced, and liberatory ethos of Gospel pedagogy? I offer two considerations toward transformation in music teacher education.

First, music teacher education needs to move beyond content and pedagogy to face the intersection of race in music teaching. Setting aside the work required to understand the role of race in teaching music to foreground content knowledge perpetuates more fear, antiblackness, and avoidance of Black musics. Fear of racial discourse exists in music education (Bradley, 2007) but dialogue is essential given that predominantly White, middle class, women represent 80% of those who teach large populations of students of color (Goldring, et al., 2013). Musical competency aside, an understanding, recognition of, and ownership of one's racial identity as teachers, especially as White teachers is an essential process (Emdin, 2016; Howard, 2016; Moore et al., 2018). To complicate this endeavor, many White people do not "feel" they possess race, demonstrated in colorblind racial discourse focused on "the other" instead of race in White people (Lewis, 2004). As actors within and beneficiaries of the system, whether Whites are conscious of and/or accept the nature of their racial identity does not preclude their inspection. Teaching without a score is a vulnerability that is, for many, new and unpracticed, but is also an example of White fragility that needs to be confronted and faced (DiAngelo, 2011, 2018).

Second, music education must reimagine, redefine, teach, and center new forms of music literacy to include the aural-oral tradition. Instead of preservice teachers learning to teach or sing themselves through the written page alone, what if music

teaching required the teacher to "*be"* the score, as experts demonstrated, requiring heavy reliance on the ear instead of the page? How might experiences of *being* in the aural-oral tradition allow preservice music teachers to experience and appreciate its complexities in the same way they have come to know WAMs? I propose that *being* in the aural-oral tradition, without compulsion to use Western notation or its lens, offers a path forward to address deficit perspectives and antiblackness in the academy, and holds space in music teacher education for all to benefit from an Afrocentric worldview where art acts as "a functional tool for engaging in all of the activities of daily living and for coping with the full range of human emotional and spiritual responses to life" (Barnwell, 1998, p. 8).

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CHAPTER 4

SHARED DELIVERY: TEACHING ARTISTS AND CERTIFIED MUSIC EDUCATORS AS URBAN MUSIC EDUCATION

Abstract

Music education researchers have defined teacher demographics, perceptions, expectations, job satisfaction, career choice, preparation, and instructional resources of city school music teachers (Costa-Giomi, 2008; Doyle, 2012; Eros, 2018; Fitzpatrick, 2011; Neil, 2004). Additionally, culturally responsive pedagogy has provided music educators with some tools to navigate racially diverse settings, particularly benefitting those teaching in urban contexts (Fitzpatrick, 2011; Shaw, 2015, 2018). However, research focusing on the practice and profile of arts partnerships between schools and outside providers in urban settings remains sparse. Over the last 20 years school music teachers and external arts partners together have musically educated children in city school settings, defined in this study as a shared delivery model of music education. The purpose of this study was to define how these partners experience a shared delivery model of music education to answer questions of partnership effectiveness, viability and utility. Areas of inquiry included (a) how actors defined roles of "arts partners" and "certified music teachers" within these relationships; (b) how partnerships began, and how actors and institutions were supported since inception; and (c) how a shared delivery model of music education reflects a viable, accessible, feasible, and collaborative music education in urban centers. In collaboration with an urban school district, I identified two arts partnerships that included a certified music teacher and an external arts partner. Data sources included observations, interviews, and artifacts. Common themes emerged across

all stakeholders that included (a) limited expertise of music educators to offer musical experiences to students with limited or no prior “formal” music experience; (b) tension between preparation for music teaching and the needs of students within the urban context; (c) need for age appropriate, relevant, accessible, and achievable curriculum for adolescent students; (d) inconsistence, limitations, and barriers to program access among schools including difficulty to replicate models, longevity of programs, and funding; and (e) the intersection of race and teaching music to students in urban schools. This study has implications for how students access music education in the city, possibilities for collaboration between school and community, and the effectiveness of preservice preparation of music teachers specifically for urban contexts.

Introduction

While the last decade has seen an increase in research of music education in urban public schools (Eros, 2009; Fitzpatrick 2011, 2012; Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015, Frierson-Campbell, 2006a, 2006b; Mixon, 2005), research remains limited and has only begun to complete the profile of the urban music teacher. Scholars have examined teacher demographics, motivation and career choice, perceptions, expectations, and job satisfaction about teaching in this setting, and their preparation and instructional resources for teaching music to urban students (Costa-Giomi, 2008; Doyle, 2012; Eros, 2018; Fitzpatrick, 2011; Neill, 2004). Additionally, research focused on culturally reflective, responsive (Lind & McKoy, 2016; Shaw, 2015, 2018), and sustaining (Paris & Alim, 2017) pedagogies have provided music educators with tools to navigate racially diverse settings, which have particular benefit in urban contexts.

The term "urban" is often used as a pejorative or euphemism for poor Black and brown children, yet Milner (2012) provides a framework that defines urban in the context of education, classifying schools within urban contexts into three categories that counter deficit connections and instead examine schooling through the lens of population density and sociopolitical context. First, schools classified as *urban intensive* are located within dense, large metropolitan cities of one million people or more with infrastructure needs characteristic of cities with large numbers of people. Second, *urban emergent* schools are located in cities with fewer than one million people with similar scarcity of resources but on a smaller scale. Lastly, *urban characteristic* schools are not located in large cities at all and can be rural or suburban but their populations are beginning to experience challenges similar to the prior two categories and with larger numbers of English language learners.

Because urban schools are situated within this influential sociopolitical context that impacts schooling, a brief examination of the neoliberal landscape that influences educational reform in urban schools helps to situate the discussion of community arts partners providing music instruction in schools. Urban public education has been under neoliberal attack for the last thirty years as public services shifted toward privatization, impacting children in urban schools through privatized schooling and the corporate school reform movement of the last thirty years (Baltodano, 2012; Ravitch, 2014). As schooling became corporatized, students became commodities and competition was fostered between them, a radical shift away from a concern for public welfare (Saltman, 2014). As schools entered the arena of free market competition, access to quality education in urban schools became available to those who could compete. With increased

privatization across education, foundations and nonprofits emerged to meet funding needs and reframed access to resources.

Parallels to the privatization of urban schools could be found in urban music education as systemic disinvestment and budget challenges necessitated community arts partners combining with school music teachers to provide music instruction (PMAY, 2016). In many cases, community arts partners acted as the sole provider of music education to students in urban settings with teaching artists bringing entrepreneurial and industry expertise to the context of school music (Booth, 2009). Now, a variety of professionals (school music teachers, community partners, classroom teachers, teaching artists) combine to musically educate children in urban settings, a phenomenon in this paper titled "shared delivery" that will be explained later within the school district profile. Research on the practice and profile of arts partnerships between schools and community arts partners in urban settings remains sparse, and the literature has yet to address what models of shared delivery exist, how or why these models developed, their impact on students and teachers, or why the practice is more common to urban school systems than other geographic densities in the United States. Suggested reasons for engaging community arts partners to deliver music education beyond the school music teacher include a lack of trust in teachers to provide instruction (Bodilly et al., 2008), opportunity for field experiences (Neill, 2004; Ward-Steinman, 2006), and funding (Richerme et al., 2012). Though community music schools have historically provided a portion of music education in the community (Ramsey & Ramsey, 1933), arts partners have grown to represent major providers to students in urban contexts.

The purpose of the study was to define how a shared delivery model of music education is delivered and experienced by school music teachers and teaching artists in an urban setting and answer questions of motivation, effectiveness, viability, and utility of arts partnerships through the perspectives of these actors. Areas of inquiry included: (a) how actors defined roles of "arts partners" and "certified music teachers" within these relationships; (b) how partnerships began, and how actors and institutions were supported since inception; and (c) how a shared delivery model of music education reflects a viable, accessible, feasible, and collaborative music education in urban centers. By defining how actors deliver music education in urban settings, advocates for equitable urban music education may be able to prepare, support, and advocate for music educators in the city and the children they serve. Additionally, I intend to bring awareness to the varied music education occurring in these settings and offer a point of understanding for urban districts striving to integrate arts education in the life of every student.

Method

I employed intrinsic case study as a method of inquiry to provide holistic analysis of the shared delivery model of music education and its occurrence in urban public school settings (Stake, 2005; Yin, 2017). The Office of Arts from the school district, identified for this study, assisted in identifying two partnerships that illustrated exemplary models of music education between School Music Teachers (SMT) and Teaching Artists (TAs). Additionally, one participant served dual roles working as an Itinerant Instrumental Music Teacher (IIMT) and a TA. Through email and a letter of support from the district arts administration, I recruited two SMTs, one TA, one TA/IIMT, and an administrator

for each partnership respectively. Temple University approved all IRB protocols and additionally, the school district research review committee approved the study.

I collected primary data from class observations and face to face interviews. Additionally, I conducted observations with four site visits to each school where I wrote field notes of class sessions, song writing instruction, and class activities. In each teaching session, I observed the content of music making (such as repertoire, genre, mode of participation), interaction between students, teaching strategies, and collaboration among teacher and students. I took archival photographs of song lyric charts during songwriting instruction. I conducted one in-person interview with each SMT and TA, each of which lasted two hours. Additionally, I conducted one in-person interview with administrators on each side of the partnership, both within the school district office of arts and the community arts partner. Interview questions sought to elicit responses on all aspects of collaboration between the different actors, including their varied roles, description of content, curriculum, schedule, administration, and teaching music to students in an urban context.

Secondary data sources included district-provided raw data documenting the distribution of arts partners to schools that included a current list of engaged arts partners across the school district, per school. Participants provided curricular documents and artifacts, such as school produced albums that included student song lyrics, production team members, donors, and sponsors. I collected additional artifacts of culture from websites, supplemental curricular items, archival material about community arts partners, attended a drumline performance, and observed a district event convening all 75 arts partners to discuss vision and expansion.

Interviews were transcribed and coded for emerging themes. In first cycle coding, data were analyzed through descriptive and in vivo coding (Saldaña, 2016) to identify initial categories which lead to theoretical development in subsequent data collection. During second cycle coding, I used pattern coding to further analyze and grouped themes with a peer coder (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I identified the variation and range of participant experience from member checking conversations with individual teachers, and created holistic codes from the interview transcripts for each teacher (Miles et al., 2014). As a final analysis, I created a matrix to capture the entry point of experience at which teachers encountered the adolescents in their classrooms that prompted the need for age appropriate, achievable, and relevant content made possible through the use of community arts partners.

Shared Delivery in the Urban Context: The School District Profile

Located in an urban center in the Northeast region of the United States, the school district in this study serves 130,000 students in total, where approximately 90,000-100,000 students receive arts instruction. The district office of arts shares oversight of music, dance, theatre, and visual art. Of the 230 certified music educators in the district, 70 itinerant instrumental music teachers (IIMTs) are supervised directly by the district office of arts, and 160 school music teachers (SMTs) are supervised directly by the school principal. Music instruction occurs in close to 180 of the 216 district operated schools, the majority of which are K-8 neighborhood schools. Arts instruction occurring in the additional 85 charter schools and 22 alternative education schools was outside the scope of this study. SMTs teach 100% at one school whereas IIMTs rotate to a number of schools to give instruction. The presence of an SMT is dependent on the budget at the

school level, whereas the IIMTs are overseen and hired by the office of arts. Theo, the lead music administrator said the "vision is forming" among school principals to hire more full time school music teachers, though the engagement of arts partners when there is not a full time SMT has aided in principals' vision of what is possible.

The district established an itinerant instrumental teaching staff decades prior where students in schools, across the district, received private instrumental instruction from professional TAs, employed by arts partners in the city or from the community, including the premiere professional orchestra. In addition to school music instruction, city students in fourth and fifth grade could receive private lessons on a number of instruments including organ. Eventually, this workforce of TAs unionized, became certified in K-12 Music, and compelled the district to create a certified itinerant position which today is filled by the aforementioned 70 IIMTs. Currently, the teachers' union protects these certified itinerant positions by refusing to hire uncertified TAs to fill these jobs.

At the time of the study, TAs function as they originated, to supplement and support the site-based music teacher, however the partnership has changed as TAs began taking on the primary SMT role, no longer supporting but instead, supplanting instruction. A recent equity survey conducted in the district made clear that students in every K-8 building have access to instrumental services from an IIMT, either band or strings, not both. District data showed instrumental instruction is central in the district, supported with an inventory of around 15,000 district owned instruments. K-8 vocal music and choral instruction is contained within the general music SMT, when present. Student access to school music can range from .5 day to 2 days total at one school,

without the number of students served available. Some IIMTs run an entire band program in one day a week while also being responsible for 4-5 other school music programs. The district has worked with schools to manage the expectation that students are released from classes rather than "rostering" (scheduling a course) which is more difficult due to the schedule constraints of the itinerants. Rostered classes are the exception and occur mainly with general music classes, rarely with instrumental, and there are no restrictions on when students can be pulled from classes. Theo, the district's lead music administrator's role is to oversee IIMT scheduling, supervision, and liaise with the school administration. The district goal is access and a well-rounded music education, with the primary exposure period being in the K-8 grade levels. Their hope is to hire IIMTs in non-traditional instrumental specialties, citing one possibility of mariachi bands, where that is relevant in the school community (Figure 2).

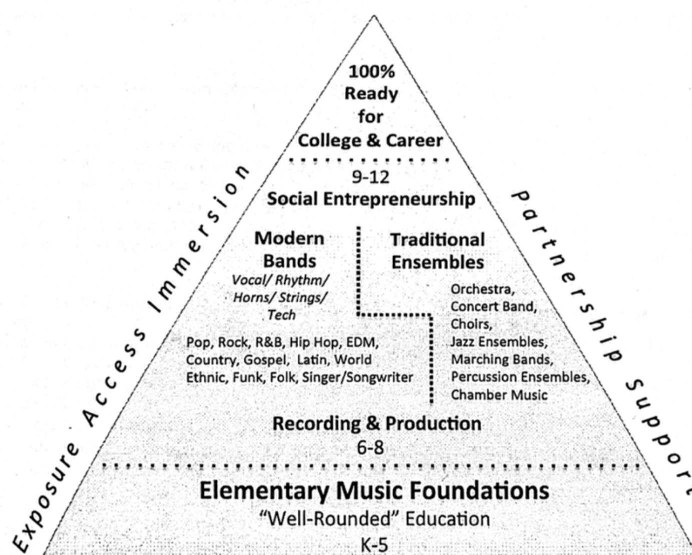

Figure 2. School District Vision for Well Rounded Music Education.

When the district faced a budget crisis in 2005, the supplanting of music education was perpetuated for 10 more years furthering tensions between SMTs and TAs.

Leadership change at the district level prompted the adoption of a supplementary model called "shared delivery" (Figure 3) based on a theoretical paper by The State Agency Directors of Arts Education (Richerme et al., 2012). Contending that one teacher in isolation cannot solely provide students with full access to rich arts instruction that is ongoing, sequential, standards-based, and given by credentialed instructors with high quality assessment, Richerme et al. (2012) defined three possible partners in arts education to share delivery: certified arts educators, certified non-arts educators and providers of supplemental arts instruction (i.e., teaching artists, among others). In addition, the district hoped to unite varied instructional actors in the arts to optimize the pool of funding to most benefit students, schools, and the district. An arts and creativity framework was developed to give community arts partners a significant role in fulfilling these goals. Together, SMTs and TAs provide music instruction, the SMT at school every day, while the TA is on site one day a week.

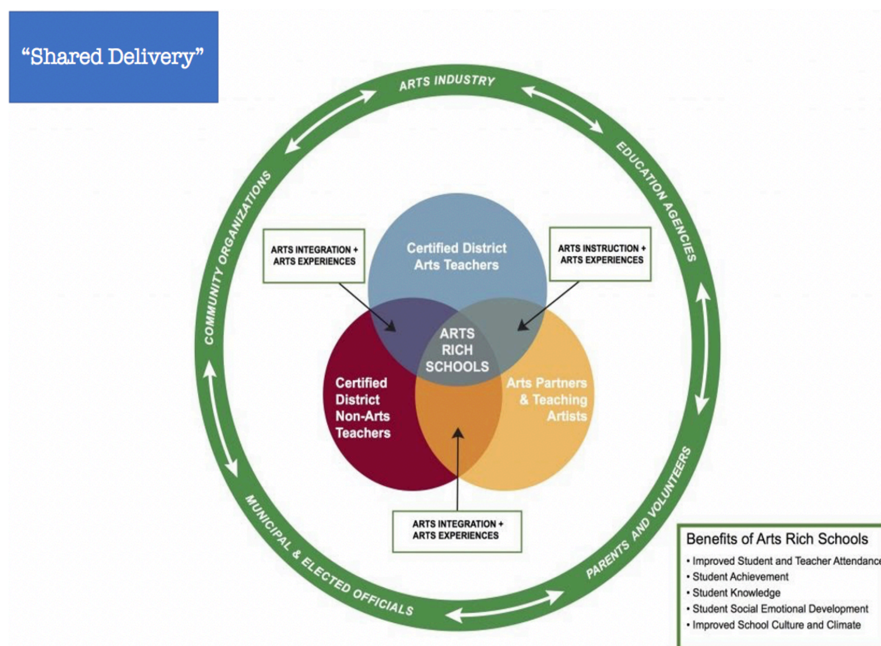

Figure 3. School District Model of Shared Delivery of Arts Education

The district office of arts initiated shared delivery to execute their vision for a well-rounded music education in nontraditional and “informal” musics alongside their existing model (Figure 2) by partnering with community arts organizations, readily available within the cultural hub of the urban environment, and who already employ TAs trained in these curricula. The intent was for the TA to bring a skillset outside the SMTs’ expertise to help students gain that well rounded exposure to music. Theo noted: “You’re always going to need additional partners. You can’t do everything. It’s not possible.” Because of the cutting edge cultural hub of a city, arts partners are readily available, which Theo contrasted to suburban and rural music education settings where he argued students’ music education is not as well rounded. “They’re getting an education that represents them...not all of humanity.”

When selecting curricula for the shared delivery framework, Theo’s boss, the lead arts administrator and former IIMT himself, initiated the implementation of retrofitting band and choir rooms into recording studios to facilitate new programming. A former IIMT in the district, he was heavily informed by his personal experience teaching music in the district where he saw an exponential increase in connection with his students through playing Hip Hop tunes. The district office of arts then worked to developed relationships with community arts partners in varied curricula in music, with specific attention to music technology, song writing, and recording. At the time of the study, the number of arts partners engaged with city schools was up to 75 organizations and growing.

At the time of this study, the district had an office devoted to community partnerships which worked with the office of arts to place partners based on the needs of

the school community. The partner must arrive with funding, often with grant parameters, all of which leverages access to resources for students in those schools. Oversaturation of programming at certain schools can occur because of the demand for working with students in highly selective schools. The means by which the student body is assembled is relevant due to the range of high school options students and families face, from neighborhood schools without admission requirements to special admission and magnet schools with stricter admittance criteria. A student body that has been admitted to high school through selective criteria may interest certain community partners, and for teachers, can predict a variety of factors that impact instruction ranging from student motivation, funding, teaching staff, climate, administration, and academic rigor.

As illustrated in Figure 4, in both schools selected for this study, music technology and song writing was taught by the site-based music teacher (SMT) at school every day in partnership with teaching artists (TAs) employed by a community arts partner on site once a week. At Caroline LeCount High School, Seth is the SMT on site daily who works with Sade (TA) and her team of teachers. At Jackson Coppin World Academy, Matthew is the SMT on site every day who also partners with Sade (TA) and her team. Additionally at Coppin, students have access to drumline instruction from an itinerant instrumental music teacher (IIMT), Casey.

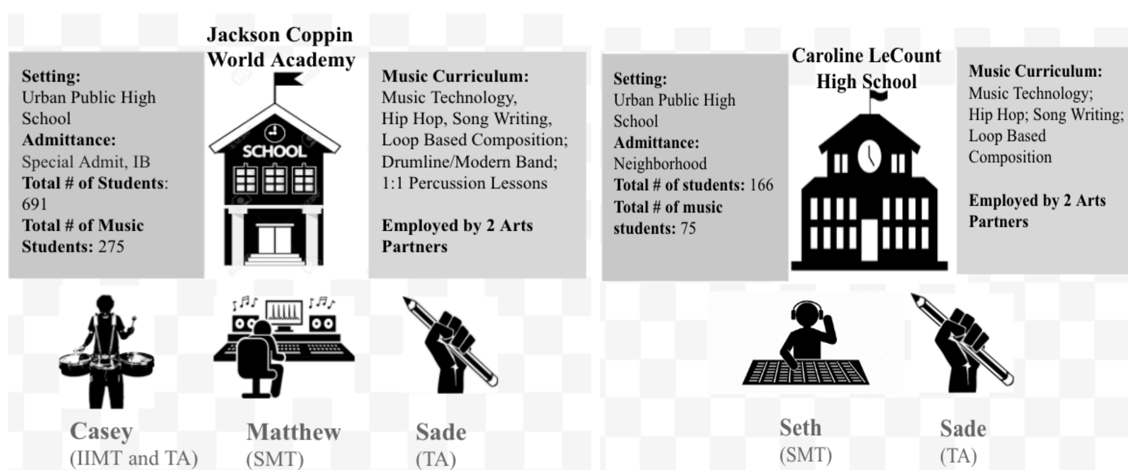

Figure 4. Shared Delivery: School Music Teacher (SMT); Itinerant Instrumental Music Teacher (IIMT); Teaching Artist (TA).

Case Profiles and Findings

Shared Delivery is represented by partnerships between SMTs and TAs at the two aforementioned schools: Caroline LeCount High School where Seth (SMT) works with Sade (TA) and her team; and Jackson Coppin World Academy where Matthew (SMT) also partners with Sade (TA) and her team. Additionally at Coppin, students have access to drumline instruction from Casey, an itinerant instrumental music teacher (IIMT). Within these case profiles, I share my holistic analysis of shared delivery by describing how each individual defined their role within the collaboration. In the discussion, I present commonalities across individuals to answer how and why partnerships began and continue, and whether shared delivery is a viable, accessible, feasible, and collaborative model of music education in the city.

Casey

As one of 70 district employed IIMTs providing curricular, private instrumental instruction to students in several assigned schools each week, Casey, who identifies as a White man, teaches percussion to students at two middle schools and five high schools.

In addition, he leads the extracurricular drumline program as an employed TA of a community arts partner that serves 15,000 students across the city. He said the combination of his two positions functions similar to an El Sistema model that combines studio lessons with ensemble time. In both roles, Casey maintains curricular and extracurricular contact with students to build interest and recruit for both programs. Extra-curricular school music participation is challenging as most of his students are limited in their capacity to stay after school due to safety concerns, family responsibilities, and work.

Adjustment

Casey grew up playing percussion in marching band, in what he described as a strict, rigid, and exclusive culture. Students were expected to “march the dot” and conform to one way of being musical or face rigorous elimination from performances. He had to set aside these cultural and musical norms when he began teaching in predominantly Black schools. “It took adjusting and figuring out how to do community because my focus was musical excellence, not including. And after a while I figured out how to make inclusion and excellence work together.” He worked to shed what he called the “seriousness of Whiteness” from his middle class upbringing in a predominantly White space.

> White people as a rule are very uptight…And you get your ass kicked and in that moment of vulnerability that you stop taking yourself seriously… that’s the turning point at which you become incredibly disenfranchised with the experience and try to get out as soon as possible because you blame everybody but yourself for why what you’re doing is not working, or you open yourself to doing things differently and more organically and more holistically with the community.

He chose to take time to gain a musical understanding that was culturally based where he learned how to “vibe with Black people...Latino people...how to make music their way.”

Crediting Christopher Emdin with articulating his experience, he worked to get to know his students by visiting their churches, going to Hip Hop concerts, and hanging out in community parks to get the "feel." When he started to understand that his teaching needed to embody a sense of family, he became more successful. "Being a family means accepting kids no matter what." As he got to know their music, he saw the same values for openness, acceptance, hang, and inclusivity.

> Their music is very jam-based, very participatory and not exclusionary, and our method of music is highly exclusionary...if you made this cut, I'll see you next week, but if you don't make this cut, well–you're not playing in the concert...where is the sense of family in that?

Evolution of Curriculum

Shocked to find no marching bands when he first began teaching in the district 20 years ago, Casey started by building a competitive marching band program that he hoped would rival suburban programs. In so doing he encountered prohibitive costs to rent a rehearsal space on Saturday and a high attrition rate among his students. He observed gaps in his students' prior musical experience that he attributed to the varied effectiveness and presence of a general music teacher in the elementary and middle schools. "There is almost no music notation reading and I'm starting kids from scratch at all levels." After being unsuccessful in what he described as "scrambling" for age appropriate repertoire for students with limited prior formal skills, he began writing his own arrangements and developing a curriculum. After observing the "innate musicianship and high aural and kinesthetic intelligences" of his stuents, he used the aural-oral tradition and pattern recognition, similar to English language learning, to teach music literacy. Because he found music to be integral to the Black and Latinx students he served, he began prioritizing their music for his arrangements.

> The kids wanted to play this song or that song– I would just write an arrangement… I remember in 2005 the kids wanted to play Michael Jackson for Black History Month. [They] wanted to play “Rock with You” and the “Rock with You” arrangements I found were too difficult for all the instruments, so I just did my own arrangement. I had a really good trumpet player and I had an awesome sax player. So I needed to have three or four voices just doing block chords and counterpoint with the Bass.

At the time of this study, he had arranged 1300 songs including those of George Clinton, Stevie Wonder, Michael Jackson, and the music of Motown. In striving to create an ensemble to play this music that was age appropriate for high school students, Casey developed a hybrid ensemble that combined the instrumentation of a drumline with a rhythm section and live vocalist. His use of Jazz lead sheets for notation facilitated high achievability within a two hour rehearsal. Students can memorize ten pages of music because the tempo and genre is familiar. Their performances consisted of a high quality mini-marching band show with loop based arrangements. Casey noted the importance of the quality and caliber of the music. “Kids have to play music that sounds good at home or they’re not going to feel any sense of pride in it.” The performances were well received by the community, with even the parents stealing the practice CDs.

Music Teachers for the City

Cognizant of the cultural and musical competence he needed to be an effective teacher in city schools, he was discerning about teacher qualification. “Most of the really, really great drumline teachers I know were not music education majors.” Asked if his preservice training prepared him to teach in the city, Casey responded, “It didn't. Not at all. Not even a little bit.” Among his reasons, he cited his training as an instrumental music educator to be limiting because upon arriving at a high school, he wasn’t prepared on: “what to do if you show up and none of the kids know how to play a wind

instrument." He also experienced a common divide between classical percussionists and Jazz musicians in the academy, with one type of percussion programming deemed valid. Lastly, the specialization of a music education degree which focuses on one instrument like snare drum or marimba, made content transferability difficult and too specialized for drum corp. Teaching drumline requires a drumline specialist, not just a percussion teacher, and that person may be highly qualified and not from a music teacher preparation program.

> I think there needs to be systems in place that allow these people to teach … If you want to figure out how to set something up that's successful you've got to look at something in the community that's already working. Right now, the church in the Black and Latino communities is far and away the strongest music education there is. There's no school music programs better than that. Any kid that knows how to play Bass, Piano, and Drum set and all three things equally well did all that in church.

He advocated for more serious preparation at the collegiate level for teaching in the city. "It needs to be flipped anew and torn up...people can't be hesitant about being radical and revolutionizing it." At the same time, he indicated the importance of developing coursework for training in cultural competency that includes community immersion. "Take kids out to sit in an inner-city park for an hour a day just to see how people hang out, and get used to the difference of pace." He said many highly skilled teachers transmit a "vibe" when they are uncomfortable or new at encountering students of varied cultures and ethnicities.

Opportunity for reform exists in what Casey described as "comfortable" itinerant positions where there is limited oversight and a curriculum that caters to exclusion. "It's impossible for one person to manage 67 teachers at 350 locations...I think it was my 11th year in the district before I was observed." Though the itinerant instrumental teaching

model originated as supplemental to the on-site music teacher, in the majority of Casey's schools, the on-site music teacher has been eliminated. Given the schedule constraints of the IIMTs, student access to instruction has been compressed to once weekly private instruction at most. "It's not okay for middle schools and high schools to not have full time instrumental music teachers." He would like to build ensemble traditions within the system that last, but finding a new model that works is challenging.

Elective models, pervasive in many suburban schools like Casey grew up in, are effective in providing widespread student access, exposure, and well distributed workload across teachers, are not easily translatable to the city where predominantly K-8 schools exist with a prohibitively small pool of students per grade. Teaching private instrumental lessons requires less urgency for teachers to learn to code switch. "You don't have to be on their level; you can stay on your level and take only the kids who know how to get along with White people."

Matthew

I met Matthew, a White man, halfway through his 19th year in the district. A former opera singer, he made a conscious decision to leave a successful regional professional singing career instead of continuing on a path that he described as "standing in the same path of privilege and music catering to those who *have*." In his time with the district he has pioneered music technology programs at three schools, all with predominantly Black student populations, and his work has been recognized by local and international organizations.

What Matters to You

Upon entry to each school, he repeatedly discovered music programs that did not

meet the needs of the community, failing in terms of management, meaning, or relevance. He worked to bring resources which he said intentionally valued and esteemed the students, their music and their needs. “You’re thirteen years old and you’re African American, what matters to you? Instead of me saying, ‘This is what matters to you.’ I’m your teacher, let me find out what matters to you.” At his previous school, a K-8 building, students were at work on their third album after Matthew put together a one hundred thousand dollar recording studio. He was recruited to join Jackson Coppin and build a music technology program based on his reputation, enticed by a passionate principal and a two million dollar grant to start the school. “I told him, ‘five thousand a seat. There are thirty-two seats’... He [the principal] paused for about five seconds and then he said, ‘I’ll do it.’” Having spent his career in urban education where he identified concentrated poverty, lack of resources, and “lots of good intentions” as among the greatest challenges, he accurately predicted what happened next. The principal approached him and asked if they could use older computers already on site, which Matthew summarily rejected. “How we treat them [matters].”

> Students sit down in front of a 27 inch IMAC as their own work stations that establishes value and it says, “we invested in this for you.” We showed them up front and I spent that money that this matters and then I came in behind it and said, “this is how we’re going to use it and we’re going to count, and what you have to say matters. You need to be heard and this workstation that you’re going to use for the next three years in my class is going to be the way you give out to the world.”

The Curriculum

Popular or “spontaneous music” as Matthew defined it, has been an effective approach to teaching music to his students who enter ninth grade with limited prior formal (e.g. school music) experience. “They come into my class and I have to help them

believe that they can be musical." Less than 50 percent of his students have had any kind of meaningful music class prior to ninth grade. Few can read music notation, understand written theory, or identify varied genres of music, which he attributed to a lack of systematic scaffolding of music education in the city. Aside from lacking prior experience, his students are unfamiliar with the "love or appreciation for the idea of having music class in school." Having come from a community where music was an embedded tradition, this was an adjustment for Matthew. Time spent on helping students answer why they have music class is part of his job. "I have to sell music to them."

Matthew chose creating music through technology as a meaningful and relevant approach for his high school students that met them at their level of experience while still providing an avenue for accomplishment. "The studio or music tech lab became sort of a creative makerspace for high school seniors using whatever level of musicianship they have." Music technology allowed students without formal musical skills to be creative and compose music through loops of sample recordings. He chose Hip Hop as the entry point, particularly for its accessibility and relevance, and because of students' minimal experience with learning a musical instrument. Crediting the African American community as the main creative, cultural, and rhythmic influence in American music, it was a clear choice for his student population. "Why shouldn't an all Black high school in [anonymous city] be leading the way in creating music that people will want to buy and actually say, 'that's really good.' I don't get why this isn't happening more."

Matthew's program is situated at an IB school focused on technology where he is a music technology teacher. All students at Coppin take Matthew's music technology course consecutively for three years, divided into three different levels as part of the

required curriculum within the IB program. Over the course of the ninth grade year they complete small music creation projects from start to finish, and in upper grades they work on the school album through Jackson Coppin Records using a project-based approach. But he repeatedly noted the uniqueness of Coppin and corresponding challenge of scaling a sequenced, leveled program funded by private donors for every school.

Engaging Partners

In the middle of producing their fourth professional album, Matthew's aim for Jackson Coppin Records is to match the industry standard of quality established by the Black community he serves, with music that the school and surrounding community will consume. Highlighting the price music educators pay for being the "jack-of-all trades and master of none," the collaboration with the community arts partner allows him to bring in professionals with expertise to help make that possible. Yet beyond content knowledge, Matthew was adamant that race plays a role in his teaching of music, and that teaching artists help bridge cultural gaps.

> To be White in an all black high school teaching music...people say, "well it doesn't matter, they're just kids, they're going to see you as a human being." And I believe that's true. But it really helps to have racial representation on the team.

He described instances of well intentioned, certified, and talented teachers faltering because the students know the content better than them. Because R&B and Hip Hop is very "close to home" for students who live with it in their ears for hours, every day, for years, teachers must come to it "sensibly."

> You can't be, as my students say, "corny." You can't be "White" or a music teacher with an opera background trying to help poor, Black kids make beats. That's the narrative and I've said that very bluntly and I know that's not a good thing, but race is a big thing and music is people. So for me being of one culture and to be predominantly of a musical tradition and be functioning with students who are of another race and culture in a different musical tradition...do I present

> myself as the classroom leader and the content expert in the area of Hip Hop? A lot of teachers try to do that and fall flat on their face.

Partnership Limitations

Several challenges impede successful replication and scaling of partnerships across more schools. While he admired the lead district arts administrators' positivity and vision for building recording programs across the city, he said, "I wish it was that simple. I really do." He described one of his students as an "all star hire" teaching the same program at another district high school. "He's under-resourced. He's got 10 laptops, he's got thirty kids coming in at a time. Already he's got a problem." Matthew's mentee taught the same curriculum at a high school with non-criteria admissions and 60% neighborhood preference and stayed for a year. When people ask him about scaling out partnerships he refers to this story. "It should have been a place where he could fly and he made it one year, and he quit teaching altogether."

Foundations are gatekeepers to partnerships, though Matthew noted support in the nonprofit arena for funding urban school arts programming. Interacting with nonprofit partners to acquire funding requires skills and language, connecting donors with expertise in music technology, and often being politically connected to school funding improves one's position, savvy Matthew possesses, recently obstaining a $150,000 grant to create professional development and infrastructure to build student directed projects.

While the students do take the lead on many responsibilities, Matthew noted the significant workload of running a record label on top of his regular responsibilities teaching 270 students. "If I were to take just one minute per student for grading that would be five hundred and forty minutes, two grades per week." A clear opportunity he sees for building support is through the IIT positions that he described as "cushy jobs."

He suggested repositioning them into TA roles to increase production. On his team alone he has “kids that are grinding” and eight TAs contributing, many of whom are working around the clock when completing the final record. With an arts educator budget of 50 million dollars, a percentage of which fund what Matthew called “ineffective” itinerants, he suggested monies be put into support for music industry, production, performance opportunities, and quality educators with expertise in these areas.

Lastly, teachers must be comfortable admitting their limitations. He described a partner lesson in which the kids were responding and “really going hard and the partner is taking all the credit...I’m thinking, I spent the whole last week doing that...But what I realize is they have something that I don’t have. They have real world credibility.”

Seth

“I appreciate you.” Seth said as he shook hands with one of his students at Caroline LeCount High School. Built in 1964 to house 3000 students, LeCount now serves just under 300, with Seth’s music classes not exceeding 11 students. A vibrant mural of African singers in colorful attire shone behind the tiered seating in his classroom, retrofitted band room that now housed his “Introduction to Music” class. The transformation of traditional ensemble rehearsal spaces was a vivid illustration of the reform of music education taking place in this district, a conscious decision to invest and support programming for students in his school as a counternarrative to the false perceptions about the school. “Oh no, it’s LeCount” to which Seth, a White man, responded fiercely, “No no no, we work hard and … we’re here to kick ass.” Heavily funded by a community arts organization and supported by the school principal and district office of arts, Seth revamped the space, turning former practice rooms into

recording studios. adding colorful standing student work stations, a drum set, and a conference room table for record label meetings. Among the remnants found during this process, Seth showed me the school's musical history in dusty choir robes, old band instruments, evidence of musical productions, and in the stories of secretaries singing alongside students in the school Gospel choir.

Student Prior Experience

Even though he was given latitude to build the music program, on Seth's first day the students made clear the previous teacher, who taught guitar, did not connect. "They were like, 'No! We can't do the guitar!'" Among his seven feeder schools, one of which is a charter, only three have general music teachers, so Seth assumed his students have limited prior formal music experience.

> There is almost zero traditional music knowledge. No one knows what a key is, not one knows what a note is. But as you can hear from the beats that they make, they know a lot more in their mind and in their music making ability than they can say.

A self-admitted "techy" with a natural understanding and interest in technology, Seth chose to use music technology as a way to provide accessibility to adolescent "beginners" that centered opportunities for accomplishment and immediate success. Without any proficiency in Logic or comparably intense music technology platforms, his background in IT helped, quickly becoming proficient in Logic through his own practice, his students, and the community partnership. "I'm learning from them what to do." While he envisioned starting a pep band and modern band in future years, those aspirations remain secondary to his primary use of music technology as the tool to connect students

with school music. “If I came in starting a band program, I would be repairing instruments, figuring out who plays what, teaching everyone to play ‘Hot Cross Buns.’” Informal music knowledge is strong among his students, and because GarageBand is preloaded on the iPhone, the use of technology allows students to “engage in music in a way that they’re familiar with...It’s not like you’re trying to make kids into music majors, right?”

Arts Partnership

Seth understood the purpose of shared delivery to merge industry professionals and their networks, individual processes, content credibility, and cultural competencies with teachers who have expertise in pedagogical considerations. Seth made clear his music teacher preparation did not prepare him for how to approach adolescents with limited prior experience or competency in music technology. “None of my classrooms ever prepared me for this.” The arts partnerships connect school and community, allowing schools to be more open places where students can access people who will support them and build networks, which he said was more significant than the music itself. He mentioned one particular student who this year alone had created over twenty beats and because of the partnership has access to networks for future jobs.

Seth’s Role

Calling himself the “ringmaster” and “facilitator” he repeatedly said, “I can’t do what they do. Part of that partnership is...me prepping the kids to take that knowledge and take that expertise.” Seth teaches music four days a week and is comfortable not being the expert on the fifth day. “I’m happy to facilitate.” The opportunity for his students to learn from Grammy nominated artists requires him to step aside. “Learn from them and

check myself if I'm starting to feel resentful in any way." Seth was grateful for the once a week presence of the TAs which allowed him to float around to students to build more informal connections with his students. The TAs teach their particular approach, and when they leave, he uses his pedagogical knowledge to put their instruction into a sequence generalizable for all learners.

His comfort level of being able to "go in the moment" facilitates collaboration, most of which takes place live in class rather than direct co-planning during the week. It occurs to me that eachers who function better within a heavily planned and rigorous schedule may not be comfortable with this kind of flexibility and improvisation. He also handles the administration of ensuring every student has a chance to be in the studio on their song, which appears significantly less daunting with a small class size.

To Seth, the quality of the TAs make the partnership successful, relating stories of many TAs who can't "hold the room" or build relationships. Finding an expert who wants to be involved and is "interested in the kids" is rare but essential. Seth described early challenges in the program with students who were not able to receive criticism. Many students were defensive and oppositional when the TA came in only one day a week to give them feedback. "They're like, 'no this is my beat, I don't want you to change it.' Or 'You can't tell me what to do, you're only here on whatever days." Seth learned that building relationships with the students came first in preparing them for engaging with TAs. He attributes his approach to learning trauma-informed practices, common knowledge to teachers serving urban students, that promotes teachers giving space for students to feel supported before they can be open to feedback. Seth said when students have learned to stand in their own sense of self and "somebody says 'you can do

this better' than you hear it differently. You're not able to take criticism in a way where you can see the value."

Race

Seth expressed appreciation for a partnership where he is "supported by two interesting professionals who are Black. I feel it's really important here, as the straight, White guy in the building. There are a few of us." Seth stressed the importance of his students "seeing people that look like them doing the professional work, and it's important that they don't think of me as the expert. I'm the teacher. I learn." He said having two Black TAs makes a difference in building his own cultural literacy for interacting with students:

> I'm not saying it could be any African American, but to me it's been really helpful for me in watching them interact with the kids and knowing how culturally I'm not in step with what the kids know. Just having an example in my room of how appropriate cultural things as an example for me, it's been really positive.

Like Casey, Seth also credited Emdin with articulating what he is slowly learning to internalize in his second year on the job. Seth said it's more than being culturally relevant, but learning to truly be respectful of who his students are. It has been his own realization to see the positivity existing in a school and a community that most have written off, just as Emden asks teachers to look at the community around a school and see what Seth has now found. "A lot of love, a lot of strength, and a lot of things that people, like White people, that they don't understand."

Sade

"I didn't look for teaching, it just found me." Sade, an African American, Grammy nominated vocal producer and solo artist with twenty five years of experience in

the music business is a TA for two different community arts partners, teaching in six different schools weekly. Her job is to "get them to tell me their life story," not an easy feat in one visit a week. Yet her warmth, openness, and care make anyone comfortable quickly, traits that serve her well in a school environment. Employed by two community arts partners, record producers in the city with a heavily supported educational arm, they fund record production at both sites and hire Sade to run the team of four to five TAs at Coppin and two TAs at LeCount. A product and alumni of one of the oldest high schools in the district, Sade has been songwriting professionally since high school where she discovered her ability, which now spans a 25 year career.

Her musical expertise does not come from a music education degree but her industry training with hit-making producers and Billboard charting artists and her time in a professional female recording group where she learned songwriting, vocal arranging, recording, song structure, and hit formulas. Her musical education came from the church and powerful female role models in her mother and grandmother, both choir directors, who taught her how to teach others to sing and create arrangements. Early on she discovered her connection to rhythm, first writing poems and raps, and then found she could write songs. Describing her journey as that of an outlier with trouble expressing herself, often the only girl in a rap cypher with all the boys, Sade found comfort in writing. She identified a similar purpose and motivation for her work as a TA where she enjoys watching her students open up, assert themselves, formulate ideas, gain self-confidence and self-awareness, all through songwriting. "We just try to use music to help them connect to the passion, to try to help connect to what you need to say."

Love First

During one observation I entered a dark retrofitted practice room / recording studio glowing with twinkle lights, a request from the students she had honored so they might feel comfortable stepping up to the mic. Her boisterous laugh filled the room as she gathered ideas from students over the booming sound of the beat they created looping in through sound system in the small space. When starting a program, Sade said her first job is to "take the temperature of the class" to determine the best way to engage students given each unique environment and community. Students can be "disenchanted, extremely distant, or just down on themselves." She said she relates to the adolescents she works with because she was also shy and insecure in her ability to sing.

> I tend to act motherly toward the children I realize because it worked for me. I try to let them know that I like them, that I love them, that I want to listen to them and that I care about them, and that I'm here, and I respect them.

Value for respect and relationships is central in Sade's work with students, making a choice to give respect up front while still making boundaries clear if she encounters disrespect. Her minimal use of sternness was another type of love toward students that garners respect because it makes students realize she cares about them and what they have to say.

She emphasized the importance of beginning with fun and building community, leading students through ice breakers first to release their stress, decompress, and get their attention. The program's goal is for students to create songs, but ultimately, Sade's intent is to guide students in expressing themselves to "find their voice." They battle rapped, using simple words or topics that encourage students to "think off the cuff" and be spontaneous. Large post-it boards are placed around the music room, illustrating her

gift in teaching students to express themselves through the written word. She told me they begin simply, writing nursery rhymes from questions such as "what rhymes with lemon?" into more complex themes in their lives. Topics and words were kept simple to maintain a low pressure environment and allow students space to open up. As students spent time working through approachable warm ups, she built on their lyrics, broke down song structure, guided students in organizing their ideas into a concept, and engaged deeper questions like, "What's really going on in your life?" She centered their feelings, insisting students "paint a picture" of what is real for them and comes from their heart.

> All that we try to do is make sure we stay relevant...whatever the kids are listening to…because if we don't meet them where they are, they won't listen to us. If I come in here and I start trying to talk about Herbie Hancock-- I love Jazz-- but if I come in here and I start trying to talk about certain things, it won't matter. If I come in here looking a certain way, they won't even listen to me. So I have to meet them where they are, get their respect, and move on.

Her students express a range of interest in the music and despite limited prior formal school musical experience, Sade was clear they leave with the ability to create a whole song. Logic is the primary tool used to help students compose and create loop based music creations which she said is most accessible for families without access or the means to pursue private instruction. For her, the possibility when working with students without prior experience is greater because students are not limited by their training. "A lot of times that's further than if I was to bring someone from a music class that's playing a cello, they still can't go in and compose a whole song yet."

Connection

Sade said most teachers don't want the TAs to come in and take over but help them get better connected with their students. She models instruction while music teachers watch, learn, and participate. Sade said learning to teach the curriculum is

simple. The challenge she sees with most music teachers is a failure to engage and connect with their students. Acknowledging the element of magic and possibility she adds from her experience, her look and dress, often a stark contrast to typical educators that students have worked with their whole lives, Sade was quick to point out that connection isn't all look. "Just because this person dresses cool...still doesn't mean you're going to connect. Clothing has nothing to do with it either, it's really just about the connection." Her first question to teachers who are struggling with connection is: "Have you met them where they are? Do you know anything that's going on in their lives or do you even know their music?" As she has watched many good instructors struggle to connect culturally, an occurrence she described as frequent, she emphasized the need for a common language between teachers and students.

> Sometimes it's a cultural thing. Sometimes you really just need somebody who understands the culture a little bit more to show you how to interact with them... it's answering the questions of how do you gain trust with somebody that you're not necessarily raised in the same world the same way or understand each other the same way?

Sade said the best music teacher partners are those who accept different realms of experience, in both the TAs and their students, as legitimate. She described experiences of music teachers flaunting credentials and being overly "proper" with students, emphasizing structure and theory over feeling and people. She did not discredit the importance of the technical and theoretical side of music theory, an area she wished for greater competency, but asserted that teachers who start with the technical side foster exclusion because students without that experience cannot participate. "The difference is I'm not starting with a technique that is intimidating or off-putting that only certain individuals will understand and appreciate." Within two sessions, Sade said most music

teachers trust her and see value for work. What is disappointing is when the music teacher is not engaged and does not maintain the program when they leave. “We never want it to feel like us and them, we’re here to empower the teachers.”

Replication Limitations

Sade stressed continuity, sufficient teaching staff, resources, class size, type of school, and communication as among the hurdles to a successful partnership with music teachers. An ideal partnership is where both actors communicate how each can prepare for the other, mutually setting the agenda. Engaging schools is easy, but Sade noted the limitations to run a program without proper funding. At the time of this study, the district had just been awarded several grants for the music technology curriculum and in her experience, the arts organization funding the program sets up and installs all equipment before she and her team arrive. Funding influences continuity and partnerships are not always renewed due to grant parameters and criteria, or oversight of the type of album and restrictions around fundable curricula (e.g., curricular or extracurricular programming). The longevity of a sequenced, multi-year, leveled program allows for greater depth and rigor, and ensures a high caliber of creativity and understanding in the end product, essential for inspiring student confidence and funding. The type of school and class size determine whether or not students write songs individually or as a group. Sade’s preference is for small class sizes, but she has incorporated solutions to allow for self-sufficiency where all TAs are present and split up the work. One teacher may take a group to do vocal lessons while another one works on music production. She advocated for a minimum of two TAs to facilitate a rotation of teaching on varied topics ranging from the recording industry, contracts, copyrighting, royalties, publishing, management,

marketing, and other music business elements. The number of schools they can serve is compressed due to the limited supply of TAs trained to teach the curriculum. Still, individually, Sade's presence at both schools is well known as students find her in the hallway and ask how they can be involved. "Once those roots get down in there that tree just keeps growing, it keeps bearing fruit."

Discussion

Having established how actors defined their roles within shared delivery from their individual perspectives, in the discussion I turn to common themes which emerged across all participants regarding the establishment, necessity, and preservation of shared delivery and interrogate its viability, feasibility, and accessibility as a collaborative music education model operating within the urban school context.

Partnership Necessity

All stakeholders agreed on varied reasons why partnerships began, including (a) limited expertise of one person, either arts partner or certified teacher, to deliver music education to students with limited or no prior formal school music experience; (b) tension between preparation for music teaching and the needs of students within the urban context; (c) the need for age appropriate, relevant, accessible, and achievable curriculum for adolescent students; and (d) the structural constraints placed on the urban school and music teacher. Kruse (2020) described a similar circumstance in which expertise in Hip Hop was requested and needed for the school music program but for which the SMT was not prepared. In response, the teacher engaged the students as experts, and in the case of this study, SMTs engaged outside arts partners. All SMTs in this case were not prepared

to teach outside traditional musical models and appreciated the expertise provided by TAs.

Aside from the demand for experience in curricula outside COB (choir/orchestra/band) models that are culturally relevant, the participants in this study did not feel equipped to respond to or facilitate music instruction for their adolescent "beginners" that was age appropriate, relevant, achievable, and approachable (e.g., Casey's question: "What do you do when you show up and no one plays a wind instrument?"). In this context, the adolescent "beginner" is defined as a student entering high school with limited prior formal school music experiences due in large part to systemic disinvestment in music education in urban schools. What is the appropriate response to Seth's dilemma? "They may not be able to do something more than play a simple melody, but you don't want them playing 'Mary Had A Little Lamb' because they're nineteen years old."

When helping preservice teachers facilitate pedagogical approaches to "beginners," music teacher educators might consider how often they incorporate teenagers' voices into these considerations. And further, how many thriving music education programs, both in schools and the academy, are built upon and value only the prior formal musical experience of their musicians, gained primarily through school music and private instruction, and traditional music reading skills.

Arts partners offered expertise in liberatory Black musical forms that prioritize including all students, regardless of prior musical experience. TAs came equipped to teach Afrocentric music curricula (drumline, songwriting, loop based composition, Hip Hop, and music technology) that was age appropriate, relevant, and achievable for

adolescent beginners, and offered a product for which they could feel proud. All participants were clear that their students, as adolescents, want to feel proud and even show off their work which the TAs helped facilitate. Positive student responses were reported from DJ gigs at district events and public spaces to feature their beats made in class. As TAs modeled this, teachers learned to connect content to the lived experiences of their students (Duncan-Andrade, 2007).

SMTs noted that TAs without preservice training in music offered greater expertise in these musics, provided representation, and modeled cultural competency. Aside from curriculum being culturally relevant, SMTs expressed a need for more fluency in nonmusical areas of culture. Specifically, SMTs spoke of the fluency in cross racial competency they gained through Sade's model of "a common language to speak." TAs helped facilitate cultural connections with students in ways in which music teachers were less familiar, especially modeling values for family, relationships, and care as important as curricula in successfully connecting with students.

Love as Pedagogy

Sade approached the students with an audacious hope (Duncan-Andrade, 2009) that prioritized love. In his studies of effective teachers in urban schools, Duncan-Andrade (2009) spoke of how teachers engaged students through their demonstration of love: "the move from like to love did not happen because of the demands they made of students. It happened because of the level of self-sacrifice, love and support that accompanied those raised expectations" (p. 188). Matias and Zemblyas (2014) theorize that professions of care, sympathy, and love can be performative by preservice teachers, especially White teachers, or worse, can mask feelings of disgust, either conscious or

unconscious. Reflection on how emotions can be racialized in urban teacher education settings to break the "cycle of sentimentalism" (Matias & Zemblyas, 2014, p. 334) is needed.

Sade provided an example of how love might be manifest in urban music classrooms that was instructive for both Matthew and Seth. As a renewed response to Hinckley's (1970, 1995) original call to face the music in urban music education, Anderson and Denson (2015) noted among the most important approaches by teachers is: "students do not care how much you know until they know how much you care" (p. 39). Sade's approach of love first reinforces what Sealey-Ruiz (2021) says about critical love, rooted in justice, as a way to show Black and Brown students that despite the messages in the media and in school, they are worthy of love. Denson (2019) noted that building relationships and providing excellent music experiences are foremost in successful music teaching in urban settings. Additionally, a show of solidarity is important for "racial healing" (Ginwright, 2009 cited in Duncan-Andrade, 2009).

> We cannot treat our students as "other people's children" (Delpit 1995)-- their pain *is* our pain. False hope would have us believe in individualized notions of success and suffering, but audacious hope demands that we reconnect to the collective by struggling alongside one another, sharing in the victories and the pain. (Duncan-Andrade, 2009, p.190)

Partnership Viability

Participants agreed that though shared delivery was beneficial in providing (a) a response to their experiences of the intersection of race and teaching music in urban settings; and (b) an age appropriate, relevant, accessible, and achievable curriculum for adolescent students modeled by TAs; clear barriers emerged in accessing shared delivery, including inconsistent distribution across schools, and difficulty with replication,

longevity, and funding. The data provided from the district revealed a proliferation of offerings in instrumental music education in contrast to minimal offerings in choral/vocal musics. Given the findings of this study related to minimal prior experience, and the need for approachable, achievable musical experiences for beginners, it seems choral music would offer a positive solution. Further, given the functioning itinerant model that already offers instrumental instruction to students (albeit with limitations as mentioned by participants), more vocal offerings are needed and would be possible, though from the district perspective vocal music is covered under K-8 general music instruction and customarily taught by one person.

Toward Liberatory Music Teacher Preparation

Anderson and Denson (2015) pose the importance of specified training to approach students in urban music classrooms because teachers often experience a culture shock from their university preparation that primarily prepared them to teach music in suburban settings. Urban settings pose unique challenges regarding funding, staffing, class size, background of students including class, race, and family values. In addition, music teacher preparation reveals the limitations of the academy in faculty who are inexperienced in teaching music that reflects students in an urban setting, and in the limited partnerships existing between school districts and colleges for field placements. Music teacher preparation should include secondary general music and music appreciation courses since “the chances of a band director teaching a general music class is very high” (Anderson & Denson, 2015, p. 38) instead of the specialized tracks of music education in traditional ensembles.

Sealy-Ruiz (2021) posit that American teacher education is stuck in "symbolic action" by creating courses with culturally responsive pedagogy but without professors or pedagogy that reflect such philosophy. Changing the status quo in education starts with teacher education where scholars suggest adding courses and mentors to help students fill the "critical need for racial literacy in urban education" and become "interrupters of inequality" (Sealey-Ruiz, 2021, p. 282). For all SMTs, Sade acted as a type of mentor, something Denson (2019) found to be important for music teachers in urban settings.

Race Matters

In studying the perspectives of Black urban band directors, Denson (2019) found each director racialized their experiences to understand their role as a music teacher in an urban setting "through the lens of Blackness" (p. 114). He said race must be addressed when discussing urban schools. "Many urban schools consist of large populations of Black and Brown students, therefore addressing the opportunity gaps and inequities in the educational system are critical to having a holistic understanding of the students, teachers, and families being served" (p. 115). Yet a majority of teachers complete graduate programs without ever having experienced conversations about race and the impact on teaching and learning (Sealey-Ruiz, 2021). The work of self-reflection acts as a cornerstone to dig deeply into one's experience of beliefs and conditioning that may impact their teaching. Sealey-Ruiz (2021) proposes developing racial literacy as a lens and framework for urban teacher education that is active and interrupts what is typically a passive approach to its investigation. Racial literacy development is defined as "a skill and practice in which students probe the existence of racism and examine the effects of

race and the social constructs and institutionalized systems that affect their lived experiences and representation in U.S. Society" (p. 291).

Music teachers are trained in colorblind approaches that fail to see and in turn acknowledge the identity of their students (DeLorenzo, 2012; Hoffman, 2011). While successful service learning approaches do exist to provide teacher candidates with field experiences in urban schools (Forrester, 2019), Kirkland (2014) poses urban teacher preparation programs for urban schools center around "learning servants" instead of service learning. He noted three preservice teachers, committed to urban schools, who upon entering a city public encountered the reaction of an eleventh grade student. "They look scared." The preservice teachers were afraid of the students and communities with whom they would work, which he attributed to setting up his course, "Teaching in the City" in a neoliberal framework in which service learning was the goal. He questioned how placements might take place that reform deficit thinking or savior mindsets, to expand and transform teacher biases and mindsets to create "real transformative teacher learning that is actualized in action (i.e., doing)" so that teachers learn to serve instead of complete service learning (Kirkland, 2014, p. 581). The research was clear that teachers may leave their practicum experiences not with less bias, but instead with their biases reinforced and solidified. In response, he created a class that was not solely focused on pedagogies but personal development of emotional intelligence that lie beyond the field's fixation on reflective practice, toward transformative practice to build empowerment for the student and the community. He suggests that even revealing biases over transforming biases is an important step in teacher education.

Interestingly, Denson (2019) found that graduates from HBCUs, who represented the overwhelming majority of his participants, felt they had stronger preparation to teach in urban schools because they had experienced strong relationships and mentoring with professors, and were given models of culturally identity, access, and specific activities and assignments related to teaching in urban settings than those who graduated from PWIs. In their conversations, all the teachers he studied referred to their students in racialized terms, referring to them as "our, us, we, our people," and I noted the similarity in how Casey, Matthew, and Seth had all racialized themselves as White. They all had learned and demonstrated how race mattered. The examination of race and class in family life is imperative as students lie in multiple worlds, shaped by race, culture, social class, and gender, all of which are difficult to navigate. Putting oneself in these racial categories can allow students (and teachers) to engage in border crossings (Giroux, 1992).

Though the literature for urban teacher education is limited, in posing questions to discover what skills that urban teachers need to be successful, Howard and Milner (2021) caution against a "one size-fits-all approach" that has not served students in urban schools. "Teachers are preparing teachers for classrooms that no longer exist" (p. 197). They suggest that in addition to content knowledge and pedagogy, teacher preparation needs to include developing racial and cultural knowledge.

Conversations about race are difficult but needed, and frameworks are available for honest, respectful, and courageous conversations (Singleton, 2015). Aronson et al. (2020) engaged preservice teachers in a critical literary workshop reading counternarratives that disrupt perceptions of school, learning, and work to guide preservice teachers away from color evasive reactions or the niceness of whiteness

instead of engaging with the "messiness of self-critique" (p. 315). Surely the work is an ongoing practice to understand race and identity in ourselves and our students that has great impact in our classrooms. Stevenson (2014) suggests the use of counterstorytelling to address the elephant in the room, a CRT tenet that values a rejection of the dominant narrative as a means to explore race and develop racial literacy among students. Frierson-Campbell et al. (2020) use the same metaphor of elephant in the room to refer to urban music education, proposing that a field not currently recognizing race cannot begin to solve the issues. Sealey-Ruiz (2021) promotes the importance of field placements in urban schools, and uncovering stereotypes preservice teacher hold about students of color, rather than avoiding these schools and therefore sending a message that these communities are a last resort.

> When preservice teachers are allowed to remain uninformed about the cultures of their future students in urban schools, and the role of race and racism is not discussed constructively in preservice courses, urban teacher education programs become complicit in producing another generation of teachers who will fail to recognize how stereotypes fuel their "understanding" of students of color. (Sealey-Ruiz, 2021, p. 284).

Sealey-Ruiz provides a framework for curriculum around racial literacy development (Figure 5) that places critical love at the foundation of transformation and centers varied layers of self-reflection that are anchored to the interruption of the status quo.

Figure 5. Six Components of Racial Literacy Development.

Note: From "The Critical Literacy of Race." Y. Sealey-Ruiz (2021, p. 287).

The Antidote: A Liberatory, Dialogical Approach

I offer an antidote to neoliberal mindsets emerging within shared delivery and the status quo in music education. In the charter school, a model of school resulting from neoliberal reform, conformity and militaristic mindsets prevail in their "clean" outside appearance with polished buildings and strictly uniformed students. One can argue that here, student identity is muted and the students themselves have become commodities. Simultaneously, the lack of value for their workers' (teachers) rights through limiting collective bargaining, creative freedom in curricula, wage transparency, and non-renewing short term contracts, all promotes fear and lack of continuity for learners.

Valuing both realms of knowledge, the community (vernacular theory), and the pedagogy emphasized in teacher education will serve students and teachers in the ways expressed in this study. Given the depth of urban education research that prioritizes community knowledge and specific urban teacher prep (UTP) that is specific to this context (Anderson & Denson, 2015; Keith, 2015; Lee et al., 2010; Martignetti et al, 2013;

Shorr et al., 2001), conversations are needed for urban music educators to interrogate contextual factors influencing urban schools, and courses should be offered in urban education that dialogue about the context of neoliberalism and field experiences. Given the needs expressed by the SMTs in this study for racial identity work alongside musical content knowledge, community experts can provide valuable models. All participants were clear that Black musics demonstrated here provided a liberatory framework that was inclusive of all students and their musical experience.

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CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

In Chapter Five I interrogate the three papers through the lens of Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a theoretical framework through which I can view, interpret, reflect, and find greater meaning to inform the preparation to teach music teaching and learning in urban settings. Visible across findings in all three papers are examples of two tenets of CRT, including *whiteness as property* and the *permanence of racism*. Findings across all three papers include connections to these two tenets in the following ways (a) participants feeling unprepared to teach music outside of Eurocentric musical practices, and (b) participants citing the need for music teacher education to include the intersection of race and teaching.

To make conclusions and suggest possibilities for reform in music education, I frame findings through the connection of two more CRT tenets: *interest convergence* and *counterstorytelling*. Given the realities suggested in the first CRT tenets, I relied on the

CRT theory of *interest convergence* to make recommendations for reform to music education. Theorizing that meaningful change is impossible without including interests of the dominant group, I propose “All God's Children Got a Song” as a call for interest convergence where music education works harder to include the 80% of students who currently do not participate in music.

In naming areas for change, I suggest the use of a final CRT tenet, *counterstory,* as a way to frame possibility for changing the narrative in music education in four areas that were common across findings in all three papers: (a) to promote music education as approachable, age appropriate, and accessible for adolescent beginners, possible through curricula including but not limited to open, participatory, liberatory, and “family”-oriented forms of music including Hip Hop, song-writing, Drumline and loop-based composition using music technology, Black Gospel music, and choir; (b) to reimagine literacy and provide experiences in which students can experience literacy outside of the written page; (c) to foster community capital whereby partnerships emerge and culture bearers model and provide both content and cultural representatives in unfamiliar musical genres and ways of making music to build cultural competence in communicating across diverse groups; and (d) to develop and implement comprehensive preservice education for future urban music educators to build racial literacy skills that can be integrated meaningfully alongside content and pedagogy (i.e., in the spirit of Music Teacher Preparation 2.0 cited in Denson, 2019).

Critical Race Theory

Founded to examine seemingly neutral policies of the law, CRT is an explanatory framework used to analyze the persistence of racial inequity, despite the legal changes of

the civil rights movement, and remains useful for conducting empirical research (Christian, et al., 2019). The theory proposes that racism is permanent, at work through domination, and reaffirmed in storytelling. Christian et al. (2019) argue that while sociologists have offered many tools for interrogating race using foci on prejudice, assimilation, and boundaries, CRT is a framework from which to draw hypotheses which can be as reliable as the scientific method. From this standpoint, one should expect to find discrimination as biologists expect to find mutation. Despite agreement in biology, genetics, anthropology, and sociology that race is a social, not scientific construction, humans have constructed hierarchical categories based on what are otherwise arbitrary genetic differences like skin color and hair texture (Ladson-Billings, 2022). However, in society, racism is viewed as an individual or even corporate belief about the inferiority of a race instead of the common occurrence experienced by people of color in the United States. Foundational to CRT is that racism is not a random, isolated or individual act, but instead the "normal order of things" (Ladson-Billings, 2022). In the 1990s, scholars moved CRT beyond its roots in critical law studies to make applications to education, with Gloria Ladson-Billings among the first to make the connection (Brown, 2014; Chapman, 2011; Sleeter, 2017).

Tenet 1: Whiteness as Property

The CRT tenet of "whiteness as property" holds that what is White is granted status, capital, and privilege at the expense of Black bodies, the subordination of which facilitates the ability of the dominant group to exercise domination and maintain power (Bell, 2013; Christian et al., 2019; Lewis, 2004). Originating with the colonization of Black and native peoples, systems of domination were established in law to expressly

exclude Blacks through slave codes and “the rule of first possession” to designate benefits to those who possessed White status (Harris, 1993). Justified by so-called “natural” laws of race, just as possession of property determined status and power in American society, racial identity actuated power and status to make Black people inferior objects of property, commodities to be transferred, assigned, inherited, and given as collateral. Possession of White status became a type of property and status that shielded one from slavery and allowed access to economic opportunity, vote, travel, education, and social circles.

The subordination and dehumanization of Black people and the reification of Whiteness as property was then upheld in court rulings *(Plessy, Brown I and II)* where lawmakers addressed inequity through segregation instead of consigning substantive inequality with White domination. Black people were further dehumanized through minstrelsy and public art, reinforcing the notion that Black was less. As mentioned in Chapter 3, in granting status, capital, and privilege to whiteness, what is Black has become a despised object and form of property to be possessed and subjugated (Bell, 2013; Harris, 1993), and guarantees the emergence of antiblackness (Dumas & ross, 2016). Bell (2013) asks whether White people will realize if gaining property rights through whiteness has “been purchased for too much” because of the consequence of felt superiority. Ultimately, he concludes the cost of whiteness as property affects all: Blacks feel the burden and Whites feel they must resist it to maintain power. Music education institutions and actors continue to reify whiteness as property in repertoire selection and ways of teaching music.

Across the three papers, findings illustrated two areas of connection to tenet of whiteness as property: (a) the superiority of the written page and Eurocentric musical practices that center WAMs including singing style while liberatory musics in the aural-traditions are subordinated; and (b) the persistence of whiteness in music teacher education. I address each one briefly here as individual categories, though they are interwoven and related.

Findings Connection: The Superiority of the Written Page

The superiority of the written page through the subordination of learning in the aural-oral tradition and Black music was present among all participants. In the Gospel study, though scholars have instructed choral music educators to build deep understandings of African American spirituals and evidence of the inclusion of Black Gospel music exists in all-state repertoire lists, choral publications, choral journal articles, recordings and performances, Black Gospel music still functions in an additive, peripheral role outside the academy and school of music entirely (Strayhorn, 2011). Gospel experts proposed that the academy and teachers view Black music and the aural-oral tradition as less sophisticated. Additionally, all participants cited evidence of antiblackness in (a) shortcuts taken by music educators with Black musics they would not take with WAMs, (b) lowered expectations for quality, and (c) the systemic treatment of Black music as peripheral. Their perspectives reflect how antiblackness emerges in the academy through music education practices which center Eurocentric music and the written page, and suppresses non-White musical forms, such as Black music, and ways of learning music, such as the aural-oral tradition.

Across all participants, music literacy had been traditionally and singularly defined as the ability to navigate five lines and four spaces. The aural-oral tradition was subordinated as “easier” rather than a complex and nuanced literacy. In the Gospel study, learning to sing in the aural-oral tradition provided an accessible opportunity to sing and connect to one's neighbor without the barrier of the written page. In the shared delivery study, Casey noted how sophisticated music literacy was contained to the written page, revealing what he called the “seriousness of whiteness.” In my own experience, I learned to see value in the aural-oral tradition as I spent more and more time with my students and experienced the complexity of learning by ear. Seth, Casey, and Matthew all made use of open and inclusive ways of teaching music that valued aural-oral learning, as modeled and taught to them by Sade. In making use of the community partnership and relationships with Sade, and in Casey’s use of drumline, students in their classes without “musical literacy skills” had opportunities to be musical.

Findings Connection: Whiteness of Music Teacher Education

As Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) first proposed, race is under-theorized in education while whiteness operates within schools and schooling, and the application of CRT to teacher education provides a lens of analysis to view the persistence of whiteness as property therein (Rousseau Anderson & Cross, 2022). Scholars agree on the inherent Eurocentricity and whiteness in teacher education (Aronson, et al., 2020; Matias & Zembylas, 2014; Sleeter, 2016), and music education researchers have begun making similar applications to the whiteness of *music* teacher education (Abramo & Bernard, 2020; Bradley & Hanson, 2007; Hess, 2018; Koza, 2008).

Participants all expressed whiteness in their music teacher education and the academy that translated into heavy preparation and valuing of Eurocentric ways of teaching and learning music that included the written score as the primary way to build literacy, doing so within WAMs, and singing/playing styles appropriate for this repertoire, subordinating the teaching and learning in the aural-oral tradition, the primary music among this style being from the African diaspora. As the tenet of whiteness as property holds, what is White is given power while what is Black is subordinated. Though music does not exist only in this binary, across the participants represented here, the parallels were stark.

Casey, Seth, Matthew, and I entered schools with limited understanding and inadequate preparation to teach in Afrocentric musical forms that were valuable to our school communities. Specifically, I experienced what Turner (2009) identified as limited priority given to singing in the aural-oral tradition of Black Gospel music. My solution was to look to the community (my students and experts) for understanding, teaching pedagogy, and performance practice. In the shared delivery study, Casey, as a specialized percussionist typical of a music education major, was trained in the rigid style of marching band culture where one way of being musical was reinforced to him as a student and a preservice teacher, prepared to teach ensembles. His question, "what to do when you show up and no one knows how to play a wind instrument?" was illustrative of the prioritization ensembles and traditional COB model in music teacher education for which he was prepared. Similarly, he used the community knowledge and capital present within his school and among experts in AfroLatinx musics to gain new practice that went beyond Eurocentric teaching. Seth and Matthew both used music technology, specifically

loop based composition and songwriting rooted in Hip Hop, as ways to approach their high school students who had no "formal" school music education. Seth's comment about asking sixteen year olds to play "Hot Cross Buns" illustrated just how unprepared Seth was to approach music in a way other than centering ensemble experience and private lessons. While one can interpret this as culturally responsive pedagogy, they also created a counter narrative of what is possible to make music class more accessible to all students, which I will discuss later.

Tenet 2: Permanence of Racism

The persistent narrative of the avoidance of race is what makes racism persist, and causes many White people to be unprepared in discovering or understanding their racial identity and how it might intersect in teaching relationships with students. In discovering race as a subtext in segregated White spaces because of their dominant status, ideology gains hegemony when one views their benefits as natural, instead of how they came at the expense of another (Lewis, 2004). Because racism persists because it goes unacknowledged, it remains a permanent state. Harris (1993) discusses the evolution from "old racism" in which race equaled inferiority, to "new racism" where the link between race and oppression is denied. She argues that Whites have "settled expectations" where that status quo and neutral baseline is White. Because as White people our expectations of whiteness are settled, we are accustomed to the world being created around us in many ways. Moving away from the center requires sacrifice because the new settled reality must include everyone. Historically, acknowledging race has been difficult for White people as the oppressor in the dominant group, as evidenced in notable contexts from teacher education to supreme court rulings on Affirmative Action. Many

Whites think race is something they do not possess, as evidenced in pervasive colorblind ideology in American society; yet all Whites living in a racialized society have race (Lewis, 2004). Studying Whites as social actors is difficult as many Whites do not "feel" they possess race, and whiteness is normalized.

Findings Connection: Avoidance of Race

Participants across all three papers cited the need for teacher education to include the intersection of race and teaching, something they were not prepared to address in their music teacher education. In the shared delivery study, Casey, Seth, and Matthew discussed the focus of their music teacher education on content and pedagogy, with minimal focus on developing cultural competence and racial literacy. They each discussed the importance of having someone like Sade who helped them understand cultural norms that made teaching more effective and relevant. Gospel experts noted the intersection of race teaching Black Gospel music as concerns over ownership, qualification, authenticity, and exoticization emerge. None of the teachers in the cases had been prepared for how music teaching would intersect with race or how it might be necessary preparation beyond musical content and pedagogy. Casey, Matthew, Seth, and I all noted racial journeys that we had to go on, which included the engagement of a variety of partnerships with students, arts partners such as Sade, and their own students and colleagues to gain racial literacy skills. While the White teachers represented in these studies went on a long journey to develop (and continue) racial literacy, each of them noted how students understand race as cited in the literature.

Recommendations & Conclusions

Given the findings and realities presented in the previous paragraphs illustrating the persistence of two CRT tenets, that of whiteness as property and permanence of racism, in the conclusion I use two additional CRT tenets as a framework for making recommendations for reform specific to education for music educators for urban settings. The findings within the previous paragraphs stimulate discussion around areas for reform in music teacher education and systems of music education. The third tenet, *interest convergence,* is helpful in framing "solutions" because recommendations are inherent in how progression toward change might be possible, or at least approached. Lastly, I use a fourth tenet of CRT, *counterstorytelling* as it is intended: to break and disrupt the dominant narrative in favor of introducing counterstories.

Tenet 3: Interest Convergence

The CRT tenet of *interest convergence* first introduced by the "Father of Critical Race Theory," Derrick Bell (1980) proposed that racial justice isn't about "altruism but alignment" (Ladson-Billings, 2022, p. 35). "The interest of Blacks in achieving racial equity will be accommodated only when it converges with the interests of Whites" (Bell, 1980, p. 95). The tenet theorizes that policies of racial equity will be supported when policies advance the interests of Whites, or minimally disrupt the status quo (Leigh, 2003). To be clear, White interests include their needs, expectations, and ideologies (Milner, 2008). As an example, in 1967, White interests converged with people of color when President Johnson amended Kennedy's executive order around affirmative action, prohibiting discrimination based on race, religion, or creed, and included gender. Since

then, White women have become the major beneficiary of affirmative action policies. In the case of *Brown*, Bell (2003) argued the court rulings were passed because interests of White people were maintained and more importantly protected, that of appearing equitable to their enemies overseas. Leigh (2003) tells the story of a school district where a predominantly African American community was unsuccessful in their pursuit of equity because their interests were “at odds with those in power” (p. 277).

These examples introduce how in working for equity, the societal function around fear of loss and gain emerges. “The binary perspectives of ‘I lose–you win’ prevent the convergence of interests” (Milner, 2008, p. 335). Using this perspective, someone, often the dominant group, feels they may lose something (status, power) and a marginalized group may gain power (Bell, 1980; DiAngelo, 2018; Donnor, 2005; Milner, 2008). Examples can be found in reactions to affirmative action policies as White students misperceive that a person of color has taken their spot at an elite school, and then claim innocence and victimization. Within the loss/gain binary, there is a conception that “I don’t want to lose my conceptualization of myself.” There is truth in the way a White person understands themselves is in relation to how I understand “you” as the “other,” through the White gaze. Within teacher education, interests are “guarded, guided, nurtured, and protected by a permanence of fear, false racist innocence and subordination” (Milner, 2008, p. 36). Interests have “currency” and therefore reproduce and protect systems of White privilege.

Many music educators, professors and departments are not willing to “give up” their chosen professions and expertise in these areas. It must be seen as a “win” for the dominant group when incorporating more liberatory musical forms into the curricula.

There are limits to the amount the oppressor will give, with many not willing to allow Western music to be the "other," while in many contexts, it already is. On the other hand, as another important piece of interest convergence, Harris (1993) notes that Whites are not oppressed or in danger of being so and policies toward equity are based on "principles of antisubordination, not Black superiority" to be clear that "acknowledging Black identity does not involve the subordination of whites" (Harris, 1993, p. 1785).

Findings Connection: All God's Children Got a Song

Bell (1995) first drew the parallel between CRT and the African American spiritual which Dixson and Rousseau Anderson (2017) further clarified due to their ethos of communication, counterstory, and resistance that combines struggle and hope. As the songwriter sang, "All God's Children Got a Song," individuals sang spirituals throughout history to declare humanity during dehumanizing times (Jones, 1993). Because the binary perspective of "I lose-you win" exists, and the reactions are historically of victimization or holding on to power, one must be strategic in working for interests to converge. The centering of Black and indigenous musics as the primary ways of learning may require a dismantling of music education systems inside and outside the academy (from audition procedures to the reification of Eurocentric curricula) that may not be possible or successful. While the "additive model" is commonly enacted by music teachers and institutions who tack on non-Western music as exotic "others," often through culturally responsive mindsets, Hess (2015, 2018) builds on anti-racism scholarship to suggest "multicentricity" as a framework for teaching music which values and teaches *all* music.

Participants across all three papers promoted musical experiences "for the 80%" (Kempfer, 2020; Shuler, 2011; Williams, 2007) of students, those not in the population of

students who make up traditional COB ensembles (Elpus & Abril, 2011). They each made use of Black musics, demonstrated as liberatory musical forms that were approachable, accessible, and age appropriate for adolescents. In each of their curricular choices, whether it be Hip Hop, Black Gospel music, or loop based composition, all included a valuing of aural-oral experience as literacy, and one that was available to all of their students, despite their prior experience. Having limited experiences in these musics, participants engaged the community capital available to bring in counterstories that disrupted the narrative that knowledge of the written page was only one way of being musical. Hess (2018) suggests multicentricity allows for multiple ways of knowing the world which are contrary to the dominant practice in music education. Instead of positioning WAMs at the center, the reality of lived experiences and backgrounds in music are validated, encouraging the integration of multiple musics into the curriculum instead of being "othered." As a suggested counterstory, music education can allow more than one way of knowing music and being musically literate. The idea of literacy being defined as one's ability to read and write is not new. "Narrow notions of literacy learning" are prevalent in schools where literacy as a socially constructed practice that occurs among urban youth is disregarded (Kirkland, 2022). As schools frame literacy within White ways of being, Souto-Manning et al. (2022) and others call for frameworks of linguistic justice that validate the literacy practices that occur where students live, that can be applied to music education. Freire (1970) defined literacy as a conscious raising activity, illustrated as young men learn about themselves and their world through Hip Hop, yet applicable to students from all backgrounds (Kirkland, 2008).

Tenet 4: Counterstories for Music Education

The CRT tenet of *counterstorytelling* holds that because whiteness is resilient and normalized, centering the life experiences within communities of color through storytelling allows a validation of a reality that is not White (Delgado, 1989: Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). Grounded in lived experience of marginalized groups, these scholars note four purposes of counterstory: (a) to build community and shared understanding, (b) to provide context of the community to challenge dominant beliefs, (c) to open possibilities for those at the margins by affirming they are not alone, and (d) combining story with reality to instruct and create a richer world that "shows us the way out of the trap of unjustified exclusion" (Delgado, 1989, p. 2415). This tenet, and CRT in general, centers the outsider and the knowledge they bring and rejects the dominant deficit narrative toward communities of color (Yosso, 2017). Freire (1970) noted the importance of this early on in his work and McClaughlin (1996) frames community knowledge as "street smarts" or vernacular theory. Yosso (2017) characterizes community cultural wealth present within families that is not often acknowledged or seen as valuable that requires assimilation into the dominant values. Framed as their possession of important literacies to navigate daily life, counterstories actively reject deficit perspectives and racialized assumptions of communities to tell their stories wherein great value and knowledge exists. While the dominant capital in schooling is White, as established in prior paragraphs, students and communities who bring vocabularies outside of this capital may not be seen as valuable in school. Cultural wealth is "an array of knowledge, skills, abilities, and contacts possessed and utilized by Communities of Color to survive and resist macro and micro-forms of oppression" (Yosso, 2017, p.121). Cultural wealth

includes six dynamic interweaving forms of capital that build upon each other: aspirational capital, navigational capital, social capital, linguistic capital, familial capital, and resistant capital.

I suggest the use of a fourth and final CRT tenet, *counterstory,* as a way to frame possibility for changing the narrative and telling another story in music education in four areas that were common across findings in all the papers: (a) to promote music education as approachable, age appropriate, and accessible for adolescent beginners, possible through curricula including but not limited to open, participatory, liberatory, and "family" oriented forms of music including Hip Hop, song-writing, Drumline and loop-based composition using music technology, Black Gospel music, and choir; (b) to reimagine literacy and provide experiences in which students can experience literacy outside of the written page; (c) to foster community capital whereby partnerships emerge and culture bearers model and provide both content and cultural representatives in unfamiliar musical genres and ways of making music to build cultural competence in communicating across diverse groups; and (d) implement preservice education for urban music educators to build racial literacy skills that can be combined alongside content and pedagogy (i.e., Music Teacher Preparation 2.0 cited in Denson, 2019).

First, music teachers and music teacher preparation can make more use of liberatory, participatory musics that nurture family oriented spaces available through Black musics. As shown across these cases, Black musics offer approachable and accessible musical forms for adolescent beginners that foster musical opportunities for the 80% nationally who are not participating in ensembles. In Black Gospel music, the "participatory ethos" described by Shelley (2019) and confirmed by experts offers a

response to the call for participatory music education in the academy and in music teacher education (Turino, 2008). Systemic value for individualism and meritocracy in music education must be set aside to make room for the liberatory, accessible, participatory, and communal musical experience the experts described. This is especially important in urban settings where prior experience in music may be less due to generations of disinvestment. While many music education systems perpetuate meritocracy, Black musics breaks free as a participatory form which invites all students, regardless of prior experience, to enter in.

Second, it is time for music education to reimagine the definition of musical "literacy" beyond the written page and center the teaching and being in these forms of music literacy. Students, music teachers, and preservice teachers can work to find the literacy and "linguistic capital" available within the aural-oral tradition and ways of learning. Opportunities to build these skills don't just exist in programming music within these traditions, but spending time *in* the musical traditions. Pre-service and in-service teachers must have the tools to study musical scores, read music, understand western theory, *and* possess skills in the aural-oral tradition. Changes in university music education curricula are needed as preservice teachers learn to teach, or learn to sing themselves, through the use of the written page, alone. Music majors must move away from heavy reliance on the use of notation toward taking time to build skills without a score.

Third, music teachers and institutions of music education, including the academy, must work to engage community capital and cultural worth through creating partnerships and relationships with culture bearers who model and provide both content and cultural

literacy in unfamiliar musical genres and ways of making music, and thereby assist music educators in building cultural competence for communicating across diverse groups. Across these studies, partnerships emerged because models of participatory, liberatory musics were already available within the community. Addressed further in the fourth point, beyond modeling content and pedagogy in unfamiliar musical genres and ways of making music, teaching artists and community experts also acted as models of cultural fluency toward building cultural competence in communicating across diverse groups. Additionally, in all cases, students were engaged to share power with teachers and act as experts in their communities as well.

Lastly, specificity is needed in music teacher education in urban settings that places attention on building racial literacy skills. Racial literacy can be combined alongside content and pedagogy, as Denson (2019) calls "Teacher Preparation 2.0.," it is time to set aside the avoidance of uncomfortable discussion of race toward an urban music teacher preparation program. Racial literacy skills can be combined alongside content and pedagogy. Preparation of preservice teachers must include working on their own racial identity, the importance of which has been presented by scholars. Models for urban education exist as outlined by Rousseau Anderson and Cross (2022) that cater to urban schools that openly challenge the structures of whiteness of property, promote the understanding of race in urban schools, and partner with urban schools. Moreover, they face race. Music teacher education must go beyond content and pedagogy to face the intersection of race in teaching. While fears of discussing race exist (Bradley, 2007), we all must grapple with our racial identity, especially as White teachers (Howard, 2016).

As the overwhelming white/female demographic of teachers, Leonardo and Boas (2022) posit that given the historical and social relationship between White women and children of color is undertheorized, a thoughtful, gendered analysis of whiteness is required. Of particular interest to acknowledge within this discussion is the role of White women as teachers and their relationship with children of color continues, and that as oppressed members of the patriarchy, their positioning plays a role in fostering and the enabling of racism in the classroom. Historically White *women,* not men, have been recruited to be the one caring from the time of enslavement to colonialism, playing a powerful role in maintaining whiteness as educators. As Catharine Beecher declared early on, White women moved from caretakers to "save," and now as White school teachers still exist as the predominant educator figure, many still state their sole purpose as to save (Leonardo & Boas, 2022). As a marginalized group within the patriarchy, White women can weaponize their power. "Although they may not call the shots, they often pull the trigger" (Leonardo & Boas, 2022, p. 155). The relationships between White women and men of color has historically been fraught with accusations of abuse dating back to Emmett Till. Sleeter (2011) encourages White women to interrogate their history and how they have perpetuated the racial army.

Special Chorus

Counterstory and CRT have always shared a kinship with Black music and art. Calmore (1992) was among the first to draw the parallel between music and CRT, using Jazz and Archie Shepp's (1965) *Fire Music* as a metaphor for the cultural "tradition of dissent" to dominant narrative and oppression. Pond Cummings (2013) claimed the same with Hip Hop who shared a parallel universe of backlash with CRT, comparing Derrick

Bell to Public Enemy and Kimberlé Crenshaw to Queen Latifah who dropped countercultural "narrative and intellectual bombs" (p. 111) through seminal works like *The Space Traders* (Bell, 1992). Using the same paradigm, McCall (2022) drew similar parallels with Black Americans' use of the Blues as rebellion against the institutions that silence them through particular illustration of Thelonius Monk's playing on *Straight, No Chaser* as a no nonsense, uninhibited, original, and deeply creative rejection of what sound was supposed to be. McCall went further to compare this to the negligence of Black voice in music education.

Alongside the Black musics already mentioned and engaged by the teachers across these studies, these forms will continue to experience rejection and backlash, as the values and dominant narrative in music education perceives they are threatened. But let us remember that Black Gospel music, a liberatory Black musical counternarrative explored in this dissertation, is one more example of resistance, but like these other forms, offers the possibility of unification across communities, despite the barriers we create.

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