ABSTRACT

Title of thesis: HIGH SCHOOL CHORAL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF CHORAL MUSIC EXPERIENCE

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The purpose of this study is to explore high school students' perceptions of their choral experiences, providing an understanding of students' ongoing perspectives of choral experience. Specifically, how have these experiences influenced the formation of their musical identities as members of a choral ensemble? The researcher collected data from the three participants during a full school year. The participants were current students in the researcher's advanced choral ensemble. Through axial coding, three themes emerged: musical interpretation, attitude, and group efficacy. The study revealed that experienced choral students have well-informed musical perspectives that influence their choral experiences. Implications for music education include using students' perspectives for creating rehearsal strategies, planning and programming performances, and fostering a nurturing learning atmosphere. Suggestions for further research include comparing experienced students to non-experienced students, comparing ensembles with student-chosen repertoire to those with director-chosen repertoire, and further examining the impact of choral experience on musical identity.

HIGH SCHOOL CHORAL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF CHORAL MUSIC EXPERIENCE

by

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Chapter I

Presentation of Study

Prologue

When I was a senior in high school, our choir sang Moses Hogan's arrangement of *The Battle of Jericho*. At the time, I was experiencing a myriad of personal challenges, from social issues at school to deaths in my family; for the three minutes or so that I sang that spiritual, however, I was at home, at peace, and thriving, singing a song that I loved. This, like so many of my other choral performance experiences, was the inspiration behind my decision to pursue choral music education. A decade later and five years into my career as a choral director, I have begun to wonder whether or not my own students have had similar experiences. Do they like, or even love, the music that they are singing? Does the music they are performing reach them emotionally? Are they having an individual aesthetic experience even though they are singing in a group setting? Are they having an engaging experience with their choral repertoire, as I did with mine?

~

Introduction

This chapter provides the background information on choral music education that was referenced for this study. The first three sections present the topics addressed in the literature review: high school choral music experience, musical experience and musical culture in the high school, and musical identity. These sections are followed by the definition of terms, the study purpose and research questions, and an overview of the document.

High School Choral Music Experience

High school choral students experience their yearly collection of musical works in many ways; for them, the performance of this repertoire is the primary focus during the school year (Elliot, 1995). Each piece is usually chosen by the choral director based on the students' ability to sing it, how it will contribute to a diverse program, and whether it lends teachable moments for the students (Brunner, 1992; Forbes, 2001; Shewan, 1966). The students' relationship with the repertoire is delicate: they may come to love performing the piece and bond with it aesthetically, or they may draw back from it altogether, culminating the experience with a disinterest in that music (Silvey, 2002). There is potential to make "the musical 'work' [arise] out of the personal experiences of the singers, who imbue it with meaning and transform it with each encounter" (Silvey, 2005, p. 103), but this transformation of music into personal meaning may not occur for every student. A choral student's experience with a piece—which could include interpreting the music and engaging in an aesthetic experience—could be superseded by performance preparation and a focus on musical accuracy (Elliot, 1995). This preparation can be hampered if choir members feel like they are "under the thumb" of the director, who may or may not loosen the traditions that they associate with the repertoire (Corbin, 1995). Whether or not students will continue their interest in music-making as adults depends on the quality of the students' perceptions of their repertoire experience (Arasi, 2006; Stamer, 1999; Turton & Durrant, 2002).

While there is a small body of research that delves into the aforementioned choral experiences (Carlow, 2006; Durrant, 2005; Stamer, 2009), there is little research that primarily explores the choral student's perspective. Quantitative research studies such as

Hylton (1981) and Rentz (1994) and qualitative studies like Silvey (2002) have provided the field with a glimpse into students' perceptions of their choral experience, but this type of exploration is not prolific in music education research. Currently, there is more insight into the instrumental ensemble experience and the general high school musical experience (Droe, 2008; Robinson, 1997).

Musical Experience & Musical Culture in the High School

High school music classrooms are a "home away from home" for many students (Adderly & Kennedy, 2003). The recognition of music classrooms as real music cultures (Morrison, 2001) has sparked inquiry into the climate of all types of high school music classrooms and what students are experiencing. Studies have been conducted to determine the level of achievement (Schmidt, 2005), effectiveness of rehearsal techniques and structure (Cox, 1989), and motivation (Gumm, 2004; Miksza, 2009; Schmidt, 2005), all of which contribute to the educational culture of the classroom. However, research into the musical culture of the classroom is limited. Musical culture in the high school setting is generally defined by: (a) the repertoire that is chosen for the students (Brunner, 1992; Elliot, 1990; Forbes, 2001); (b) what the students' learning relationship is with the repertoire; and (c) how students interact with each other while learning the repertoire. All of these aspects may be impacted by the students' perceptions of the experience. Studies such as Robinson (1997) explore these perceptions with high school band students, but similar, qualitative study into choral students' perspectives is needed. Choral students not only have a unique learning experience when compared to instrumental music students, but also potentially have identity-shaping experiences that differ greatly from that of their instrumental counterparts.

Musical Identity

A student's musical identity is formed based on a variety of interactions with music during his or her lifetime (MacDonald, Hargreaves & Miell, 2002; Roberts, 2000; Veblen, 1998). The high school music ensemble student is unique amongst his peers; unlike the general music experiences that most American students have in elementary and middle school, high school music courses are optional for students. The fine arts requirements in many states include other subjects in addition to music, such as dance, theatre and visual art (NAEA, 2011). Many students who do maintain an interest in music do not continue with advanced music-making in high school, in favor of a non-music arts course and a non-school musical activity (MacDonald, Hargreaves & Miell, 2002). While music may still be important to a student who is not enrolled in a music course (North, Hargreaves, & O'Neill, 2000), an entirely different musical identity than that of the ensemble student is being developed. A high school student shapes their musical identity through many outlets (MacDonald, Hargreaves & Miell, 2002), but it is not widely known if students are aware of how their music-making activity (as opposed to music-listening) in an ensemble is a part of this individual identity. Specifically, how would choral music students define their vocal identities based on their choral experiences? Furthermore, is the group identity that is formed in the ensemble setting more significant to students than their own individual efforts?

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this research, musical experience refers to all that high school music students encounter in a musical setting during a school year, including: (a) director-led or student-led rehearsals, (b) analysis of the repertoire and performances, (c)

formal and informal performances, (d) experiencing social challenges and interactions between group members, and (e) reflections on their work as individuals and as a group.

All references to student perceptions refer to each student's views of their choral experiences. These perceptions are as void of influence from others as possible, especially the researcher's influence. This definition is derived from the work of Silvey (2002) and Carter (2008).

Musical identity is used based on how it is defined in *Musical Identities*, by MacDonald, Hargreaves and Miell (2002). Musical identity as it relates to perception is relevant to this study:

> The concept of identity is important because it enables us to understand individuals' musical development "from the inside"…. Studying the ways in which people perceive themselves in relation to music has the potential to explain some phenomena of musical behaviour and experience that might otherwise be inaccessible. (p.18)

Need for the Study

Understanding students' musical identities enables researchers and educators alike "to understand the individual's musical [behavior] 'from the inside': to explain some of the processes and mechanisms by which individuals monitor and conceptualize their own musical development" (MacDonald, Hargreaves & Miell, 2002, p.7). Also, understanding how students view their learning and rehearsal experiences, as well as what aesthetically-based perceptions they had during performances, will provide many implications for music educators. Both present and future choral directors could shift the routines they develop if they gain a more meaningful understanding of what their students may be thinking and perceiving throughout the school year.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of three experienced high school choral students. Influenced by the work of Hargreaves (1995, 2000, 2002) concerning musical identity and Silvey (2002) on students' perceptions of choral music experiences, this study seeks to provide an understanding of students' ongoing perspectives of their choral experience during a school year. Specifically, how have these experiences influenced the formation of their musical identities as members of a choral ensemble?

Overview

The first chapter of this study provides a description of the ways in which students' perceptions of choral repertoire are relevant to musical learning experiences. The next chapter is a review of the literature that precedes this study: empirical studies of the high school choral music experience, research on musical identity and perceptions, and comparable research in instrumental music settings. Chapter three outlines the qualitative methodology used in the study. The fourth chapter presents the data and analysis in three sections: within-case analysis, cross-case analysis and group musical identity. Conclusions to the study are presented in the final sections, along with implications for music education and further research.

Chapter II

Literature Review

Introduction

The following chapter presents the research literature related to the study. These studies were collected using the following online databases: JSTOR, EBSCO (Academic Search Premier), Google Scholar, Google Books, Proquest Dissertations and Theses, and the Music Education Search System (MESS). Additional studies and textbooks were found in print at the Michelle Smith Performing Arts Library at the University of Maryland, College Park.

These research studies are divided into categories: high school students' musical experiences, students' choral music experiences, and students' perceptions and musical identities. Each section briefly presents the need for further research into the high school choral music experience.

High School Students' Musical Experiences

Over the past 20 years, research on the musical experiences and perceptions of high school music students has been conducted to inform music educators of the student perspective. The following section includes studies that have been conducted on the high school ensemble experience, musical preference and repertoire choice.

The body of research that focuses primarily on music students' perspectives is limited. Recent studies of the ensemble setting have included a focus on students' perceptions (Durrant, 2005; Monks, 2003; Rentz, 1994), but few studies (Robinson, 1997; Silvey, 2002) have been conducted solely to explore these perceptions.

The purpose of Robinson's (1997) study of students' perceptions was to examine the "changing nature of public school music instruction" (p. 5) from the student perspective. Furthermore, the students' perceptions were examined to understand whether the changes at their own school were in fact beneficial to them. In this case, the wind ensemble was going to be split according to ability level; the researcher sought to understand if the students felt this division was appropriate and necessary.

Through narratives, the researcher observed that several subthemes emerged from the students' comments, leading to a major theme of "division." The students often discussed their band experience in a divided way, comparing "good players" to "not-so-good" players (p. 19), or making complaints about favoritism over fairness in their other academic classes. As a participant observer, Robinson found that the students' perceptions were vital to the function of the program, potentially impacting much of the director's decision-making. Once the director was aware of the students' perspectives, the ensemble experience transformed into a more equitable and enjoyable learning experience.

Robinson's (1997) study was focused solely on student perceptions. The researcher acknowledged that most other investigations of student perceptions examine the relationship between student responses and director behavior (Price, 1983; Witt, 1986; Yarbrough, 1975; Yarbrough & Price, 1981; Yarbrough & Price, 1989), not students' responses to performances and other musical experiences. In this case, focusing on and responding to students' perceptions resulted in a meaningful change being made to the music program—the creation of two ensembles of different ability and social

maturity levels. Studies like Robinson (1997) of music students' perceptions are needed, including those that would explore repertoire and musical preference.

Students perceive the music that they are learning in multiple ways (Rentz, 1994). They are affected by their overall musical preferences (Hargreaves, Comber, & Colley, 1995) as well as their director's feedback (Droe, 2008). As demonstrated in Droe (2008), students were significantly affected by the director's approval or disapproval of the repertoire and how it was rehearsed. In this study, middle school band students demonstrated that receiving the "approval treatment"—positive statements about their music—led to a more responsive, on-task atmosphere in the classroom. The director's approval of the repertoire that was played during rehearsal positively affected students' perceptions of the music. This demonstrated that their perceptions can be influenced by the director's relationship with the repertoire. In a post-study questionnaire, one director reported that the repertoire approval statements led to a happier and aesthetically-focused rehearsal. Based on this study, acknowledging the importance of students' perceptions and aiming for favorable responses can alter a musical ensemble experience for the better.

High School Students' Choral Music Experiences

This section summarizes the research that has dealt with high school choral music experience. These studies include research into the following topics: (a) repertoire choice, (b) students and informed musical choice, (c) student knowledge of choral repertoire, (d) student investment in choral learning experiences, and (e) challenges in performance.

The repertoire that a choir learns and performs during a school year is the main vehicle through which choral students experience choral music (Forbes, 2001). As Forbes

(2001) describes, directors choose repertoire based on a varying set of criteria. Similarly, the repertoire will be perceived by the students in a variety of ways. The students' perception could be affected by their musical genre preferences (outside of their choral music), prior knowledge about the choral program, age, or level of experience.

The presence of "serious" musical styles (Hargreaves, Comber & Colley, 1995) in traditional choral programs may only be appealing to those students who have been dedicated choir members for multiple years. Students who have less experience with traditional choral music or any other non-popular musical styles may dislike their choral experience. Whether or not the repertoire appeals to students initially, Rentz (1994) asserts that it must be "substantive enough to maintain the interest of educators and the students" (p.16). The choice to program traditional music and standard literature reflects the director's desire to prepare students to make "informed" choices when defining their musical preferences; making informed choices expands students' knowledge of music (Droe, 2008; Rentz, 1994). For a student to make an informed musical choice, their way of thinking must be affected by the musical knowledge they have acquired (Rentz, 1994).

More research on experienced choral students could reveal the depth of their knowledge of choral repertoire. It is not apparent whether students can differentiate between music that is aesthetically appealing and challenging, or that which is appealing yet simple (Rentz, 1994). In either case, students have been shown to respond favorably to challenging repertoire. Murphy (2009) describes his experience with presenting students with challenging music, as opposed to the easier pieces they may request, as being helpful in facilitating students' connections to the repertoire. When students are given a challenge that is accompanied by "clear and achievable expectations" (p. 63),

they invest more time and energy into rehearsals. Since experienced students are able to focus on advanced aspects of musicality (Rentz, 1994), they may be able to handle musical challenges that the director did not anticipate. Allowing students to have input into the expressive elements of the piece, or even allowing them to choose the repertoire themselves, could help them become more engaged in their performance experiences.

If students are trusted to make repertoire choices based on their musical knowledge, they will become more engaged and invested in their learning (Renwick & McPherson, 2002). In Renwick & McPherson (2002), a young clarinetist was studied to examine the ways that students practice assigned music compared to self-selected repertoire. The participant was observed demonstrating a higher level of engagement in learning the repertoire that she chose: (a) use of advanced practice strategies, (b) more perseverance through difficult passages, and (c) more time spent practicing. Since the aforementioned repertoire choice-making was shown to foster instrumental students' involvement, it may also have the same impact for choral students.

Performing as an ensemble may be very familiar to experienced students, but they still may experience some level of performance anxiety (Wilson & Roland, 2002). Low-anxiety music students "rise to a challenge and perform better with a more demanding audience" (Wilson & Roland, 2002, p. 50-51), while high-anxiety students would benefit from strategies that aim to assuage that anxiety well in advance of a performance (Wilson & Roland, 2002). Again, allowing students to invest in their performances through repertoire choice could create many benefits, including more confident performances (Renwick & McPherson, 2002). Giving students the privilege of choosing music can

foster a reciprocal relationship that helps students trust the director and feel more comfortable during performances.

To perform successfully as an ensemble, students need to be able to trust their conductor (Ryan & Andrews, 2009). The style of leadership that a director conveys can either enhance or assuage performance anxiety. In Ryan & Andrews (2009), the conductor behaviors that may lead to choral singers' performance anxiety are listed:

> It appears that most choral singers attribute at least some of their performance anxiety to characteristics and/or behaviors of the conductor with whom they are working. (p. 123)
> …
> Many of the conductor behaviors that choristers noted as anxiety inducing appear not to be irreversible but, rather, could be changed easily with awareness — for example, poor preparation, disorganization, lack of attention to musical detail, and making last-minute changes (Price, 2006; VanWeelden, 2002). (p. 123)

Proper planning for a performance, according to what the students' specific needs are, could have a meaningful impact on their experiences.

While current research details the importance of directors making certain musical choices for their students, it is not clear if experienced students may be able to make some of these choices themselves. Currently, choral music education research has focused on the perspectives, preferences and experiences of middle school or beginning choral students (Abril & Flowers, 2007; Gumm, 2004[1]; Reames, 2001) more so than experienced high school choral singers.

High School Students' Perceptions and Musical Identities

The following section discusses research studies on social identity within a musical setting. Beginning with students' perceptions, studies that directly explored choral students' perceptions are cited. Research related to the foundations of musical

[1] The participants in Gumm (2004) included advanced high school choral students; however, they constituted only 25% of the participants.

identity, individual musical identity and group musical identity and the ensemble is also discussed.

Students' perceptions.

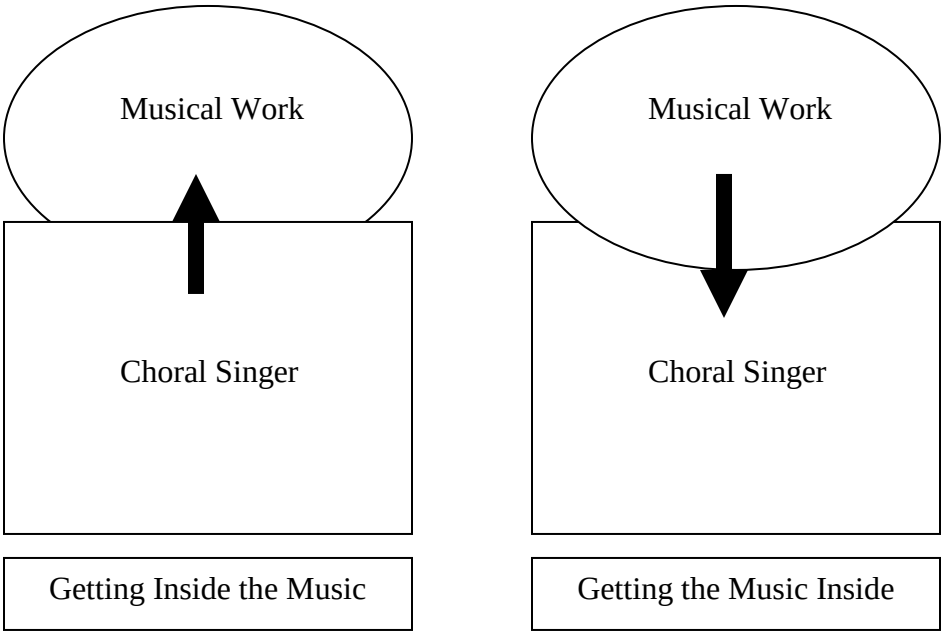
Choral students' musical perceptions are not only determined by the current musical work they are experiencing, but also by past experiences and prior musical knowledge. In Silvey (2002), this phenomenon is compared to Rosenblatt's transactional learning theory of literature (Rosenblatt, 1978); Stubley (1995) defines it as it relates to musical learning:

> The performer, like the reader, brings to the score a body of technical and musical know-how derived from personal musical and life experiences. Score notations activate this know-how and regulate the performer's music making in that the pattern or sequence of notes within the score limits the choices or possible courses of action open to the performer at any given moment. (p. 59)

> …the performer not only sees and hears the music referred to by the notes in the score: he or she also attends to the quality of the personal experience through which it is being constructed…. The performer is not merely discovering or shaping the music; he or she is also living in and through it. (p.61)

The second quote, which defines "aesthetic transaction" in musical learning, is a significant aspect of the purpose of Philip Silvey's 2002 dissertation and a subsequent article (2005). The purpose of the research was to "bring to light the individual experiences and perceptions of three high school singers as they learned to perform a choral composition" (Silvey, 2005, p. 104). The application of Rosenblatt's transactional theory to music demonstrates that music is experienced in two ways: students are "getting inside the music," as well as "getting the music inside" (Figure 1). The study aimed to examine if high school choral students experienced an extensive musical work in this way.

Figure 1: Getting Inside the Music; Getting the Music Inside. From Silvey (2002), p.8



Silvey and the students' choral director purposefully selected study participants that best represented the choir's group perceptions. Data in the case study were collected using observation, interviews, journals and "stimulated recall" over a five-month period. Silvey found that the students perceived their experience with Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb* in multiple ways (p.115-117):

- They transformed their initial impressions of the piece into personal understandings;
- They constructed a meaningful experience by experiencing the music as both performers and as listeners;
- They worked through frustrations and challenges in the learning process because they understood the end goal; and

- They formulated a deep understanding of the piece, far beyond the technical necessities and requirements to learn it for performance.

In addition to musical understanding, motivation and attentiveness in a musical setting is also understood through an examination of student perceptions (Asmus, 1986; Brendell, 1996; Durrant, 2000; Piekarz, 2006). The success of a choral rehearsal can depend heavily on what the students perceive; as described by Durrant (2000), this success is dependent on three factors: interpersonal skills, repertoire and rehearsal techniques (p. 45). Through the observation of five different choral rehearsal environments, Durrant found that students were engaged and enjoying the experience when student-friendly traits were apparent, including extroverted teaching strategies, challenging music and quick rehearsal pacing.

Based on the results of an open-ended response questionnaire administered to elementary and junior high school students, Asmus (1986) found that junior high school students were motivated by "internal" factors, such as ability and effort, more so than external reinforcement from others.

In Brendell (1996), students in several schools were observed during the first few minutes of rehearsals to observe on- and off-task behavior. Based on the trained observers' recordings, the researcher found that students were motivated to be on-task during choral rehearsals when the director began with activities that required active participation, rather than when being led through passive-participant activities, such as theory lectures. Although students did not report their perceptions in this study, it is implied by the findings that their perception of the rehearsal activities affected their behavior.

Piekarz (2006) found that an examination of choral students' perspectives revealed that students are equally affected by both musical and non-musical experiences in the choral setting. Piekarz noted that the relevance of the students' "extramusical" experiences has implications for music curriculum development, as well as arts advocacy.

Identity.

Derived from Leary and Tangney (2003), an individual's identity is defined by their self-view, as well as "the capacity for self-reflection" (Leary & Tangney, 2003, p. 3). Therefore, students' musical identities will be determined by how they define themselves musically (Borthwick & Davidson, 2002; Lamont, 2002). This definition may include how they view their own musicianship, musical preference, talent and musical experience.

Although identity is inherently defined by self-view, a high school performance ensemble student's identity will also be affected by others within the microsystem of said ensemble (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Carlow, 2006; Garnett, 2005).

It is arguable that school music experience contributes greatly to how the student will define him or herself in the present, as well as the future (Arasi, 2006). The "job description" of the average American high school student includes performing well on exams, maintaining a high grade-point average and acquiring a position through use of a résumé—all of which require individual accountability rather than group accountability (Conley, McGaughy, Kirtner, van der Valk, & Martinez-Wenzl, 2010; Lindsley, Brass & Thomas, 1995; Ryan, Ryan, Arbuthnot & Samuels, 2007). However, as members of a choral ensemble, high school students will need to be able to focus on group goals, which can alter how they perceive themselves.

While successful choral singing is the result of both individual and group effort, the social interactions between ensemble members also contribute to the ensemble's success. Socio-musical meaning (Garnett, 2005)—social meaning that emerges through musical experience—is obtained through interactions with other ensemble members, discussions about song text and other standard aspects of the choral rehearsal. Regarding the social nature of choral singing, Durrant (2000) states:

> The fact that [choral singing] is a musical and social phenomenon would suggest that there is every reason to encourage collective singing in an educational context…and that we might as well enter into its praxis to the best of our abilities and take it seriously. (p. 40)

The social setting of the choral ensemble provides students with unique and necessary learning experiences in the midst of coursework that focuses heavily on individual achievement (Ryan, Ryan, Arbuthnot & Samuels, 2007). Because of the nature of adolescent social groups, high school choral students also experience social challenges. Inclusivity, exclusion, and pressure to assimilate into the majority culture of the choral program can distract from musical experience (Carlow, 2006; Garnett, 2005).

When young people perceive music, social factors will likely affect their attempts to identify (or purposefully not identify) with it. Familiarity plays a key role in their interest level (Abril & Flowers, 2007). For students, "the home environment…plays a role in [their] self definitions and attitudes towards music at school" (Lamont, 2002, p.54). When students experience a "disconnect between school and home cultures" (Morrison, 2001, p. 215), it may be because the genres that are traditionally used for American school music are unfamiliar to them. This can affect their musical experience as both performers and listeners (Abril & Flowers, 2007; Morrison, 2001). Additionally, students' self-perceptions may differ when they are at school from when they are in other

social situations (Kinney, 1993). In all, many factors will merge to form a high school student's musical identity.

Musical identity.

Musical identity as a concept has emerged in research during the past ten years (Adderly & Kennedy, 2003; Borthwick & Davidson, 2002; Davidson, 2002; Durrant, 2005; Lamont, 2002; Macdonald, Hargreaves & Miell, 2002; Monks, 2003; Morrison, 2001; O'Neill, 2002; Silvey, 2002). Particularly, *Musical Identities*, edited by Raymond MacDonald, David Hargreaves and Dorothy Miell, offers many perspectives on the ways that music and identity intertwine for the adolescent. An adolescents' musical identity "is guided not only by individual identity needs, but also by group identity needs" (p. 146). Initially, one can infer that this concept applies to ensemble experiences, but it has been shown that adolescent musical development is more heavily influenced by non-school organized musical experiences (Lamont, 2002; Morrison, 2001).

Music is "an intensely social activity" (Hargreaves & North, 1997) that high school students are capable of controlling by making musical decisions based on their perceptions. Research that explores whether students form their musical identities through their ensemble experience—or through a social setting outside of the classroom—is needed.

As previously mentioned, social identity as it relates to music is a newer topic in music education research. In terms of the ensemble learning experience, perhaps the most relevant facet of social identity research is that which relates to group identity.

Group identity and the ensemble.

The formation of an individual musical identity through school music experiences relies on the individual's self-perception (Borthwick & Davidson, 2002). High school students' self-perceptions will affect their own musical performance within the ensemble:

> …once a young person has taken up a position within a discourse, such as 'I am not a musician,' he or she inevitably will come to experience the world and his or herself from that perspective. (Borthwick & Davidson, 2002, p. 94)

In a choral setting, each individual is contributing to the group musical identity as an ensemble member (Broomhead, 2001; Duerkson, 1968), and can influence the outcome of a performance. An ensemble's musical identity can be significantly affected by the members' desire to perform. For example, in Davidson (2002), the researcher found that different soloists have varying motivating factors for why they perform. Similarly, each member of a chorus may have different reasons for wanting to perform choral music in an ensemble. Individual identity is important, but in choral music, it may only be relevant in terms of how it informs the group identity.

Group identity can be determined by many factors: (a) how the students collectively identify with the music (Lamont, 2002), (b) the level of their group efficacy (Lindsley, Brass & Thomas, 1995), (c) their musical preferences, and (d) their perception of their level of achievement (Droe, 2008; Murphy, 2009; Rentz, 1994).

The formation of a group musical identity may become more relevant to music students than their own individual musical identities, even if they do not recognize that their focus on the ensemble's musical growth is identity-forming. Furthermore, the identity of the ensemble may be affected by each individual's belief in the group's ability to achieve, otherwise known as group efficacy (Lindsley, Brass & Thomas, 1995). The level of group efficacy may have an impact on how effectively the students learn and

demonstrate certain musical concepts, such as expression (Duerkson, 1968; Marchand, 1975).

Summary

Research studies in music education have examined the high school music experience and the high school choral music experience. However, existing research that focuses on students' perspectives of their music experiences is limited to a few studies. Research that has focused on identity formation has become more prevalent in music education in recent years, and may have implications for music educators. This study sought to explore choral students' perspectives, and how these perspectives may lead to the formation of group musical identity. The following chapter presents the methodology of the study.

Chapter III

Method

Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology of the study. First, the participants and their learning environment are described. Next, the study is defined as a case study, and an explanation of how it was conducted within the context of the advanced choral ensemble is included. The chapter concludes with descriptions of how the data were collected and analyzed.

Participants

The participants in this study were members of a select choral ensemble at a mid-Atlantic public high school. Written consent was given by each of the participants' parents. Assent was received from the students. The ensemble is directed by the researcher, who assumed a changing observational role (Creswell, 2005). The researcher adapted interactions with students, alternating between observer and director/teacher. The researcher has been a general music teacher and the choral director at the school for four years. Prior to the researcher's tenure, the program was directed by two other teachers in the school's 15-year history.

In comparison to many other high schools in the same school district, the music program offerings are large and diverse, with courses including music theory, music technology and general music, in addition to traditional ensembles—band, orchestra and choir. Each of the ensemble programs is split into two sections according to performance level. The choral program reaches the fewest number of students: the band, orchestra and choir constitute 8.6%, 6%, and 4.2% of the student body, respectively.

The school is situated in a suburban, upper-class community. The primary demographics of the school are 65.8% White, 23.7% Asian, 6.9% African American, and 3.4% Hispanic. The demographics of the choral program almost directly reflect that of the student body. During the study, 15 (53.6%) of the students in the select choir were classified as White, nine (32.1%) were Asian, three (10.7%) were African American, and one (3.6%) was Hispanic. The advanced ensemble from which the participants were chosen constitutes 47% of the total number of students involved in the choral program. To become members of this ensemble, students passed a rigorous audition in which they demonstrated sight-reading ability, knowledge of classical vocal technique and musical independence. Students in all grade levels were eligible, though the majority of the ensemble members were upperclassmen (Grades 11 and 12). Despite the rigor of the audition, most of the students in their first or second year in the choral ensembles have limited musical skills; at the school, most students with advanced musical skills were either in the instrumental ensembles or participated in non-school, private studio musical study. About 75% of the advanced choral ensemble students participated in a curricular ensemble at the school prior to being a member of the advanced group; of the students who were not in a curricular ensemble previously, their musical preparation occurred in other music courses, such as orchestra or music technology, or in extra-curricular activities, including private lessons or musical theatre experiences. The ensemble rehearsed during the school day for approximately four hours a week. An additional three hours of rehearsal a month outside of the school day was added in preparation for upcoming performances. Although the advanced ensemble performed more often than the other choral ensembles at the school, they did not rehearse more often.

Only students in the advanced ensemble were eligible for the study. Additionally, students were qualified further based on extensive experience in the advanced ensemble—at least two years—which limited the pool of participants to juniors and seniors. Finally, potential participants showed a strong emotional connection to their personal musical experiences, as demonstrated during class discussions and in required writing activities. These connections were initially observed through the students' contributions to class discussions and comments related to the rehearsal. Each participant obtained consistently high marks in the ensemble, acting as an example for others and naturally articulating thoughts about the music in both formal and casual discussions with the director. Most important to the study, the participants' ability to articulate their individual musical connections, contributions and emotions through assigned journal entries prior to the start of the study was strongly considered in their selection. From the ensemble, three of the 14 qualifying students emerged as prime candidates. Each participant was an engaged and involved student on a regular basis during rehearsals. The participants were also dedicated choral students because of their music-making activities during after-school hours, including participation in non-required performances and membership in a separate extra-curricular choral ensemble. They contributed their perceptions of their experiences from varying perspectives.

The following descriptions of the participants detail each student's background, academic and extra-curricular interests, and their performance identities as observed by the researcher prior to the study.

Student 1: "Jasmine." Junior, second year in ensemble, second year in program.

Jasmine is a Caucasian female student from the East Coast. She can be described as outspoken and outgoing, yet tentative at times. Although she is not a student who often shows emotion or gets involved in social issues between ensemble members, the way she feels about a certain situation, song or activity is constantly clear during class time. As a National Honor Society member, active participant in the theatre arts department and a singer in an extra-curricular *a cappella* group, she is a very involved student in the school community. She is one of few students in the ensemble that takes private voice lessons. Although Jasmine is a vocal leader and at times finds rehearsals to be tedious due to her higher musical skill, she demonstrates advanced musicianship by being one of few students who acknowledges and acquiesces to musical changes immediately. She sings confidently during rehearsals, but is anxious at times and has sung timidly in performance. Jasmine plans to continue singing seriously following high school, and has considered music as a course of study.

Student 2: "William." Junior, second year in ensemble, third year in program.

William is a Caucasian and Asian male from the Midwest. He can be described as very outgoing, optimistic and dedicated to academics. His upper-middle class family of four moved to the East Coast when he was in elementary school. At his middle school, he was very involved in the choral music program, and continues to visit and help the students and choral director at performances. William has been described by many as the most involved student in the school. Though his dedication to the ensemble is constantly

apparent, he exhibits the same dedication to the Future Business Leaders of America, Gay-Straight-Alliance and Best Buddies, an organization of both special needs and general education students. William is also the unofficial "school emcee," as he has hosted several awards ceremonies and performances, even for groups that he is not involved in. Despite his heavy involvement in school activities, he maintains an honor roll grade point average. His enthusiasm, optimism and friendliness are contagious; William has made friends with fellow students regardless of grade level, ethnicity or social status. Although his individual musical skill is average, he demonstrates an advanced understanding of expression and interpretation in music. William initiated the creation of a third, show-choir-based after school ensemble and worked on his own to promote it to all students. In rehearsals, it is constantly apparent that William strives for the best performance possible, both individually and with the group in mind. He is a consistently low-anxiety singer in performance.

Student 3: "Kalvin." Senior, second year in ensemble, third year in program.

Kalvin is a Korean-American student whose family immigrated to the United States during his elementary school years. Kalvin, in addition to being a singer, is also involved in the American Red Cross Club, is a consistent honors student and active in extra-curricular science-related activities. Although he is generally a very quiet and reserved student, his impact in the ensemble is significant. He is always well-prepared during rehearsals and has pursued the majority of the solo opportunities that have arisen during his years. Kalvin also participates in an extra-curricular choir, in which he is a student leader. Before becoming a part of the school music program, he was involved with worship music at his church and took private piano lessons for many years. His

musical skills have always been strong, which sets him apart from other students in the choral program. His past musical experiences have led to his quick ability to move beyond the fundamentals when interpreting a piece of music, demonstrating a knowledge of musicality and expression. Kalvin only shows anxiety during a performance when the ensemble sings a piece that is not memorized. He has been observed as singing more timidly when using the sheet music. Following graduation, Kalvin plans to attend a four-year university and maintain a serious approach to singing as an extra-curricular activity.

Case Study

This collective case was conducted in a bounded system; as defined in Creswell (1998), the system—the advanced choral ensemble—was separated for research in terms of time. The participants were studied for an academic school year, during which they experienced the traditional performances of the choral program (concerts, festivals, community performances). Each of the three participants qualified as experienced students. Inexperienced students were not considered for the study.

This "instrumental case study" (Stake, 1995), illuminates a particular issue—understanding students' musical perceptions. During an academic year, the majority of the data were collected before, during and after four major student performances, as well as four minor performances for informal, yet aesthetically critical audiences. Most of the performed repertoire was chosen by the researcher, with three of the pieces being selected by an outside party. As is the researcher's method, each piece was chosen based on whether it carried most of the following traits: potential for skill building, moderate difficulty, expressive potential, entertainment value (for both the audience and the students), and cultural diversity within the overall program of repertoire. In preparation

for the last major performance, the ensemble members were allowed to choose their warm-up piece and one of their adjudicated pieces.

The students in the ensemble reflected extensively on their experiences with each of the pieces in their repertoire (Table 1); some of the students focused on two to four of the pieces more than others. The entire repertoire was performed by memory during the study period. Five of the pieces were sung along with the non-select choir, and were not a primary focus within this ensemble's repertoire. All students, including the participants, completed their reflections on the repertoire through ongoing journal entries and small group discussions.

Title	**Composer/Arranger**	**Performance Venue/s**
O Quam Gloriosum	Tomas de Vittoria	Invitational
Sleep	Eric Whitacre	Invitational, County Festival
Hark, I Hear The Harps Eternal	Traditional, arr. Alice Parker	Invitational, Winter Concert, County Festival
Sicut Cervus	G.P. Palestrina*	Minor performances
Concord	Benjamin Britten	Minor performances
Agnus Dei	William Byrd*	Minor performances
"The Willow Song" *Three Shakespeare Songs*	Ralph Vaughan Williams	Invitational, Winter Concert
Le Baylère	Arr. Goff Richards	Winter Concert
Selections from *Ceremony of Carols*	Benjamin Britten	Winter Concert
Blow, Thou Winter Wind	Matthew Harris	Winter Concert, Masterclass
*Go Where I Send Thee**	Arr. Paul Caldwell, Sean Ivory	POPS Concert, Winter Concert
*Mi Yitneni Of**	Arr. Audrey Snyder	Winter Concert
*Son de Camaguey**	Traditional, Arr. Stephen Hatfield	Winter Concert
"In Remembrance," from *Requiem**	Eleanor Daley	County Festival
*My God is a Rock**	Arr. Ken Berg	County Festival
Mata Del Anima Sola	Antonio Estévez	Masterclass, County Festival
Ave Verum Corpus	David N. Childs	Enrichment only

Table 1: Advanced Ensemble Repertoire During Study.
*** Denotes repertoire performed with the Concert Choir.**

Once I began rehearsing the repertoire, three songs emerged as pieces that the students demonstrated strong feelings for in their journals and in weekly class discussions. *Hark I Hear the Harps Eternal* (Parker, 1967), a choral classic and standard, was a favorite of most of the students. The choral students were able to learn it quickly due to its tonic-centered harmony and repeated rhythms, but they quickly became attached to the high energy of the song. As a choir with a strong sound, not yet having achieved complete control and subtlety in their singing, this piece was simple for the students and seemed to be a joy to perform. *Sleep*, (Whitacre, 2002), seemed to be the most powerful for the students. Whitacre commissioned poet Charles Anthony Silvestri to compose the text. While the poem is quite moving, the students immediately connected to the rich, clustered harmonies, and were quickly able to express the mood of the music and text while singing on neutral vowels. Students consistently chose to rehearse *Sleep*, even after it was performed in two major concerts. Both *Sleep* and *Hark I Hear the Harps Eternal* were rehearsed and performed extensively during the study period. The third piece, *Mata Del Anima Sola* (Estevez, 1993) was the piece that the ensemble chose as a group to learn, rehearse and perform for the annual school district adjudication—their fourth major performance. The students first heard this Venezuelan piece performed by another high school early in the school year, during the first major performance of the year. This experience gave the ensemble a unique perspective in comparison to their other pieces, which they had not heard previously. Many musical elements of "*Mata*" were attractive to the students; they described enjoying the percussive nature of the vocal parts, the contrasting *adagio* middle section, and the extended, folk-like tenor solo.

Data Collection

Data were collected using naturalistic forms of inquiry (Locke, Spiriduso, & Silverman, 1993): student journal entries, individual interviews and group discussion. Each type of inquiry was conducted as a part of the ensemble course requirements, with all ensemble members participating in similar ways to the participants in the study. Each of the participant's responses was analyzed and coded throughout the study period to begin searching for themes. I began the coding process with open coding, during which I formed "initial categories of information about the phenomenon being studied by segmenting" the data (Creswell, 2005, p. 397). While creating the transcripts of the journal entries, interviews and group discussion, I began to notice the reoccurrence of certain topics. I highlighted statements in Microsoft Word as they aligned to these topics, which were later narrowed down into the major themes of the study. Music-related comments were in fuchsia; group- or ensemble-based comments in teal; individually-based comments in dark green; attitude comments in bright green; and general experiential comments in red. Statements that did not seem to lead to an idea or potential theme were left un-highlighted. At this point, I transitioned to axial coding, which Creswell (2005) defines as the moment when the researcher "selects one open-coding category, positions it at the center of the process being explored, and then relates other categories to it" (p. 398). In comparing the statements with the same color coding, I was able to create a separate list of codes as I read through the transcripts: music codes (song descriptions, technique, reflection, analysis, performer-as-listener), group codes (group image, self image as group member, other's image/comparison, interaction), individual codes (individual identity, identity, self image), attitude codes (group efficacy; execution

of: expression, movement, motivation, musicality) and general codes (experience, atmosphere). The final titles of the themes in the study were developed during within-case and cross-case analysis.

Journal entries served as the initial mode of data collection. These writings were primarily open-ended and continued over the entire study period. The participants reflected on their immediate thoughts about their experiences during and after rehearsals, as well as before and after performances. Some journal entries were guided by broad questions that sent the students in a particular direction, such as discussing thoughts on the repertoire more than rehearsal details. These questions were still fairly open-ended and would not limit the students to specific answers. This method of collection was guided by the students to produce the most candid responses possible.

Interviews were conducted to gauge the students' thought processes following major performances, and to clarify their journal entries. Questioning was carefully designed so that students' ideas emerged in a natural and authentic way. Any responses that appeared to be led by the researcher's questioning are acknowledged as such in the results. Students were interviewed during class time in a separate room, apart from the rest of the choir. Though some questions were modified based on each student's individual journal responses, the following questions were created by the researcher and asked of the participants during the individual interviews:

- How well do you think you performed individually?
- How well do you think you performed as a choir?
- What thoughts did you have as you were singing? Please include specific songs.
- What was your favorite song this year? Why?
- What outside (non-musical) factors do you think may have affected your/the choir's performance?
- How do you feel you were able to connect to [a specific song]?
- What messages or ideas do you feel that the choir conveyed to the audience?

- Do you feel that the choir conveyed the message(s) that you wanted them to?
- How do you think your experiences in choir so far might impact your involvement in choir after high school?

Following the individual interviews, small group discussion was added to observe how each student's individual perceptions aligned with his or her fellow participant's perceptions, and to add more comfort and ease than the researcher-student one-on-one interview contained. These discussions were conducted with the hope that students would continue to develop and articulate what they perceived; this type of open response could not likely be replicated in a questionnaire or other written format.

Data were analyzed using axial coding and cross-case analysis, which followed open coding of the participants' journal entries and interviews. Analysis of data from this study resulted from "relating categories of information to the central phenomenon category" (Creswell, 1998, p. 239)—in this case, students' perceptions of their choral experience. Prior to the beginning of research, the assumption was made by the researcher that all themes would emerge from the students' original thoughts.

Clarification of researcher bias.

Creswell (2005) describes reflexivity as the moment when researchers "reflect on their own biases, values, and assumptions" (p. 50). Recognizing the need for reflexivity, I acknowledge that, as the participants' choral director, some researcher bias existed during the study. Data collection during the study was affected by my perceptions of the students' experiences as their teacher, and by my perceptions as a former high school choral student. As a fifth-year teacher during the study, I had experienced the traditional performances in the participants' school district with multiple groups. As a high school

student, I experienced similar performances at a school in the same district. The data was considered through the lens of these experiences.

IRB approval.

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of Maryland, College Park approved the research conducted for this study prior to the beginning of data collection. Participants provided initial assent, and both the participants and their parents signed the approved consent document. For IRB documentation, please see the Appendix.

Chapter IV

Analysis and Implications

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of three experienced high school choral students. In this chapter, the study is summarized, followed by definitions of the three themes that emerged across the data from each participant: musical interpretation, attitude and group efficacy. The data analysis follows, split into three sections: within-case analysis, cross-case analysis, and group identity formation. Summative and concluding statements about the study are made in the final section, followed by the implications of the study.

The exploration of choral students' ongoing perspectives during a school year was conducted to determine what contributed to their musical identities within the ensemble. The students' thoughts were collected in three ways: self-guided journal entries, individual interviews and a group discussion. To track the participants' individual thoughts with the least amount of intervention, the participants completed journal entries chronicling their experiences during rehearsals and before and after performances. The journals were the first set of data collected. Students were instructed to simply reflect on their choral experiences throughout the year. Occasionally, a short prompt was given if the entry followed a specific event. Each participant chose to focus on a variety of topics, including rehearsal successes and failures, specific songs in performances, and improvements that could be made by the ensemble.

Following the first submission of the journals, several questions were created by the researcher and asked of the participants during individual interviews. Each question

was asked to more candidly understand the students' perspectives of their rehearsal and performance experiences. For each individual participant, some questions were omitted if the student previously addressed the question in a journal or earlier in the interview.

The group discussion followed a major performance during the school year. To reflect on the experience, all of the students in the ensemble participated in small group discussions about their recent musical work. The three participants conducted their group discussion with the researcher. Each discussion was guided by the following list of topics and prompts:

> *Overall*- use 2 or 3 words to describe
> *Atmosphere*- outfits; interaction with other students; interaction with Dr. "H" (clinician)
> *Performance*- overall sound: pros and criticisms; movement; formation; specific songs: good/bad moments; technique: things to improve
> *Song Interpretation*: did we "set the scene"?- *Blow Blow, Mata, Sleep*; compare to songs by other schools (can use program to discuss)

The participants summarized their discussion and shared their thoughts with the rest of the ensemble.

Emerging themes.

"Musical interpretation" was the first theme that emerged following axial coding. This theme was initiated by the researcher during open coding, following the development of several subthemes[2]. This theme is derived from the idea of "informed musical choice" (Rentz, 1994), in that the participants made comments about the music through the lens of their prior choral experience. Musical interpretation became the over-arching phrase that represented any of the participants' comments that encompassed how they perceived the musical aspects of their experiences. Each participant discussed

[2] Subthemes of musical interpretation included descriptions, technique, reflection, analysis, performer-as-listener.

specific musical passages, their impressions of pieces in performance, their critiques of other groups' performances and their musical aspirations for the ensemble.

The attitude of the ensemble members was the second theme that emerged. While attitude is a generally abstract concept (Cutietta, 1992), it can be defined as follows:

> An attitude is a firmly held mental network of beliefs, feelings, and values that is organized through an individual's experience, and that exerts a directive and dynamic influence on the individual's perception and response to all objects and situations with which it is related. (Cutietta, 1992, p. 296)

Through the participants' accounts, it became apparent that attitude, a non-musical factor, had a major effect on the ensemble's musical identity, despite the fact that learning and performing choral music was the primary focus of the ensemble. The students' attitude toward the ensemble experience had an effect on several musical attributes: expression and musicality, movement while singing, and ongoing demonstration of musical skill. The execution of these attributes, as affected by the students' attitudes, is what formed their group musical identity.

Group efficacy refers to the students' perceptions of the ensemble's belief in their abilities. It is derived from Lindsley, Brass & Thomas (1995), in which group efficacy, also known as "collective" efficacy, is "the group's collective belief that it can successfully perform a specific task" (p. 648). This theme first emerged when students were asked to discuss their individual performance, but instead discussed the performance through the lens of the ensemble. In this study, self-efficacy emerged as less important to the students; the ensemble's group beliefs in their abilities were more significant to each of the participants.

Within-case Analysis

The following section presents an analysis of each participant's data. The data were divided according to theme. Each set of quotes was drawn from the journal, interview and group discussion transcripts for each participant.

Jasmine.

Musical interpretation.

Early in the study, Jasmine emerged as the participant with the best ability to express and apply her musical knowledge. During the group discussion about their festival performance, she gave her impressions of another group's musical issues, including repertoire choice:

> Jasmine: Yeah, [and] *Esto Les Digo*, that one was so quiet, even though they were loud on their other songs.
> …
> Kalvin: This one school had all 3 of their songs as Renaissance pieces…
> Jasmine: Yeah, they all kind of sound the same when they're from that period, and they also seem like they're not as difficult. Like the one that was about the person that died, it was funny… that one was like really easy, when you listen to the actual parts, it split really easily and it was really short. Then you look at *Sleep*, and that was really hard.

She expressed her dedication to singing and the choir by talking about what aspects went well, what did not go well and what her aspirations were for the ensemble in the near future. For example:

> Today was the first day that we did the flashmob thing before school. I liked the idea, but we didn't seem to really get that much positive feedback. People asked me later in the day why they were bombarded with loud angel music when they walked into school (probably referring to *Hark*). They suggested that we sing a more well-known and preferably quieter song. I personally think that we should sing *Hallelujah* because it fits both of these requests. I also think that we should do a flashmob in the media center because a lot of people congregate there in the mornings.

Jasmine reflected on her enthusiasm for new music, as well as how much she enjoyed seeing the group express this excitement:

> Yesterday we had auditions for the girl's songs solos and everyone did really really well! It's cool to see how excited everyone is about it and I think a song with just the girls will be fun ☺

Regarding the performance of the same piece:

> I thought the winter concert went really well! I know everyone was a little worried about how the girls' song(s) were going to go since we hadn't been practicing that much, but I thought they went really awesome!

In addition to her involvement in the advanced ensemble, Jasmine was also a member of the extra-curricular *a cappella* ensemble. These experiences contributed to her musical identity as well:

> …I also felt that this performance by "LL" was a lot more comfortable than we usually are on stage- which is great. I also liked that we coordinated our outfits well☺. It made us look more like a unified whole and weirdly made me feel closer as a group.
> …
> The Night of A Cappella was interesting. It was really cool being able to sing with "WL" but they were also a lot better than us which made me kind of uncomfortable, hehe. They were nice overall but we didn't really talk to them that much. Also there was a lot of talking going on during the performance (not saying that I'm not guilty of that), and that wasn't really good. Overall, I thought we did really well in our performance(s) though. It was also a <u>ton</u> of fun! We should definitely continue doing it each year.

In her interview, Jasmine was very open with how she felt about the ensemble's performance of the year's repertoire. Her stronger feelings were about *Hark I Hear the Harps Eternal*, *My God is a Rock* and *Sleep*.

Hark I Hear the Harps Eternal was her favorite piece:

> Jasmine: I liked…well I liked *Mata*, we haven't really done that yet; I also liked *Hark I Hear the Harps Eternal*… At first I didn't really like it, I just thought it was kinda lame—sorry—but then when we went to the [Invitational] and [the director] said things about it, it was fun to sing with the big choir and it got more fun to sing because people got more comfortable with it and sang louder…

She also enjoyed her experience with Benjamin Britten's *Ceremony of Carols*, even though it was a very small part of the repertoire:

> *AH*[3]*: What was your favorite song that we worked on so far?*
> Jasmine: I liked the girls' song, you know the one? [*Ceremony of Carols*] I wish we would have done those for longer, I guess they're like Christmas songs or whatever, but I liked those a lot. And I felt like we didn't get enough time to dive into them. But I guess… I'm trying to think if I connected to a song…I guess I did, because whenever I get to choir, it's never like "aww I have to sing this song."
> *AH: Do you feel like there are times when there are songs like that?*
> Yeah, I don't like some of them…I don't like *My God is a Rock*, personally, but I like most of them. I just like to sing, so it's not really an issue.

In addition to her ability to perceive her musical experience in the present, Jasmine was easily able to forecast what her future experiences with singing would be, which she based on her musical experience prior to high school.

> *AH: How do you think your experiences in choir so far might impact your involvement in choir after high school?*
> Jasmine: I mean, I think I'll always continue in choir, or at least solo work…I don't know what else to [add]… I've been singing my entire life, my mom's a singer too so it's always been a thing in my family, my sister too…I just always knew that I was gonna continue with it.

Attitude.

Through her comments about the ensemble's outlook and level of success, Jasmine initiated "attitude" as a theme in the data:

> Jasmine: I always thought we were really good, and then finding out this year that we're better this year, I think that we're not as good this year because people were more enthusiastic about it last year. They would be like "I'm so excited," like "C" and "J" were always so excited to sing, so it made me feel like we were better even if we actually weren't, and people this year are like "we're so bad."
> William: It's more pessimistic this year.
> Jasmine: Yeah, it makes me feel like we're really bad, then other people tell me that we're better and it's like, wait…what? Are you joking? I guess it's just attitude.

Jasmine' feelings about the group's attitude were synonymous with her own individual attitude. When she felt enthusiastic about a piece, such as the *Ceremony of Carols*, she noticed that enthusiasm within the ensemble ("it's cool to see how excited

[3] The researcher is listed as "AH."

everyone is about it"). Similarly, when Jasmine felt apprehension, she observed it in the ensemble as well:

> *AH: What thoughts did you have as you were singing? You can talk about specific songs, things that went through your head, or specific performances too.*
> Jasmine: Well, always during *Sleep* I get really apprehensive before that high part, before it soars or whatever because sometimes it comes out ok and sometimes I feel like it doesn't. And then there'd be other times when…I can't think of a specific example but we had worked on dynamics for so long and gotten them perfectly, but then I felt like in performance everyone was so nervous that they forgot all about it and either sang really, really quietly or too loud. You know, they were really nervous and sang loud, or just wanted to get through it and sang really loud the whole time.

Despite the tendency for the ensemble members to allow non-musical elements such as seasonal illnesses or social discord to affect their singing, Jasmine felt able to avoid those types of distractions:

> Jasmine: I mean, I guess just like…I know I was sick a lot in the winter and I know people were getting sick a lot of the time, and also winter's my hardest time to focus because there's a lot going on, so I think that affected it. I don't think there was any drama, if that's what you're asking, at least that I know of, I wasn't involved in any.

Even when the performance schedule was strenuous, she could still perform to the best of her ability:

> *AH: When you look back [over the past few months]…how well do you think you performed individually?*
> Jasmine: Um…well I thought I did a really good job, but it was also like really hectic and crazy at the same time, because I felt a lot of stress, because it wasn't just all that, it was getting ready for midterms, and the show was starting and stuff like that… but I felt like I did a good job.

Group efficacy.

Jasmine was able to perceive what may have occurred that caused the ensemble to perform either successfully or unsuccessfully. She was able to articulate her hope that the ensemble would sing more consciously.

> *AH: What messages or ideas do you feel that the choir conveyed to the audience?*
> Jasmine: [None, really]… I feel like we need to work on that. Sometimes we just sing straight through, not trying to convey the message of the song, if that makes sense.
> *AH: Do you feel that the choir conveyed the message(s) that you wanted them to?*

> Jasmine: Not really…I don't think people think about it as much, that it's not just singing the notes, there's more to it. People forget about that part of it, especially when the notes are harder, so you're just focusing on trying to get the rhythms and the notes right. It's harder to focus on other things.

Jasmine expressed frustration with the ensemble's tendency to sing without being fully engaged. She felt that they did not try their best in rehearsals, but suddenly seemed to in performance:

> Jasmine: It was better than I expected. Honestly, like…why was it suddenly so much better on the day of, because every practice we did before that was bad.
> William: The adrenaline was pumping!
> Jasmine: I guess- people were just like, 'ok time to actually try.'
> …
> Jasmine: Honestly I feel like everything [the adjudicator] said, we've heard before, like trillions and millions of times and [we] never actually make a change, we need to apply it.

Despite her concerns, Jasmine also believed in the group's ability to improve. Regarding the group's progress from her perspective:

> Jasmine: I mean…we performed better as a group than we did first quarter because we were getting to know our sound better, but I still think we have a lot of growing to do.

Summary.

Jasmine seems to have the strongest individual musical identity of the participants. She spoke about her individual progress and performance most easily, probably due to her solo vocal experience, which was much more than the other participants. Jasmine's musical identity is the driving force behind her participation in choir, and her desire for the ensemble to achieve. Jasmine has confidence in her ability to improve. She acknowledged her ability to sing music in genres other than classical. However, she still shows trepidation when discussing her ability to acquire roles or solos, saying she's not sure if she's "good enough" to sing certain things. She has always loved singing, and attributes that love to her family traditions. Even though she's had many

experiences in choir, both positive and negative, she will continue singing because of the foundation of a love for it that she already possessed. Although the group overall seems concerned with what others' perception of them is, she is not worried about negative comments. Jasmine spoke about her frustration with the ensemble's inconsistency and unconscious singing on more than one occasion ("we had worked on dynamics for so long and gotten them perfectly, but then I felt like in performance everyone was so nervous that they forgot all about it"; "I feel like everything [the adjudicator] said, we've heard before…[we] never actually make a change"). She did, however, believe that these issues were amendable and that the ensemble could eventually make the changes.

William

Musical interpretation.

When prompted to discuss specific songs or musical passages, William was very descriptive, connecting his emotion to his musical analysis:

> *Le Baylère*- this song has always been fun for me to sing and I look forward to it. I think that we have made it far and we are almost done. We just need to solidify the text and some harmonies. I think that we will definitely have it done by the Winter Concert.
> *Sleep*- it is so intense and beautiful. We have done well so far at swiftly progressing through the beginning in learning it. We still need to get the end down pat. I believe that after the invitational, the song will be <u>'almost'</u> ready.
> *Hark! I Hear the Harp's Eternal*- it is such a great song with lots of power and ferocity…
> …
> AH: Did you have a favorite song this semester?
> William: Blow, Blow Winter Wind.
> AH: Why was that your favorite?
> William: Because it's so cool, it was like the winter wind all around us!

William summarized his impressions, or "likeness," of the repertoire and his confidence in performing it using a simple chart (a scale of one to ten, with ten being the greatest):

Song	Likeness	Confidence
Mata	9	7
Sleep	7	7

Despite his dedication to the musical experience, he does not plan to study music after high school or to sing in a comparable ensemble:

> *AH: Do you think you might keep singing after high school?*
> Maybe, I don't know! But it wouldn't be serious, it would be very recreational.

Attitude.

William reflected on the group's attitude at length in his journal entries. He approached them like a diary, chronicling his daily experiences in class and during performances. He was able to effectively articulate the status of both his individual work and the ensemble's work. Particularly, he reflected on the ensemble's issues with socializing:

> This year in Madrigals has been productive and interesting. The group of people this year is [a] very unique crowd. I feel that we have been working diligently, except for the talking. That has been a problem that we have all been plagued by this year. I feel that we are almost ready for the invitational, we just need something…

William's attitude toward rehearsal was consistently positive and light-hearted, even when he was overextended by other school activities:

> I am so tired!!! Last night, I got home at 11:30pm from inductions, but I was looking forward to Madrigals all day! We had sectionals to prepare for our concert on Thursday. The Basses and I worked on the solo in "Hark." I believe that we are getting much better at this part, but we are having a tough time memorizing it. Altos were hanging up posters advertising the concert, tenors were working on misc music, and sopranos were working on *Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind*. Soloists for the beginning of the "This Little Babe" trio were working with AH on their parts. I am nervous about the concert, but I have a feeling that we have the ability to rock the house down!
> Quote of the day: "No worries for the rest of your days." – Lion King

In performance, William maintained his positive attitude, even when it seemed that the group was not performing well:

> *AH: What thoughts did you have as you were singing, like during specific songs, did certain thoughts go through your head during the concert?*
> William: I felt pretty good, I had good thoughts going through my head, we did things good…some parts of *Le Baylere* at the winter concert were a little sketchy, but I feel like

> by the end, even if the beginning started out "bad" (I don't wanna say bad, but like scary) we would wrestle our way through.

William noticed the non-musical factors that affected the ensemble's performances, even when they were not applicable to him:

> William: Well…I feel that we have a lot of seniors in the choir, and senioritis has been pretty intense this year compared to previous years.
> *AH: So you think it's kind of affecting how well we do things sometimes?*
> Yeah, and how stretched everyone is these days, on this "race to nowhere."

Group efficacy.

Whether or not William would be a part of a performance, his sense of group efficacy was strong, always believing that the ensemble would work through any issues and perform well:

> [Regarding *Hark! I Hear the Harps Eternal*] I believe that we could do this (with Concert Choir) and be amazing at the Concert.
>
> Performance goals
> - Invitational and Pops- I am not going to be present at these events and wish you all the best!
> - Winter Concerts- I am very psyched for this performance and I know that we will do great!
>
> Quarter 2 was an exciting one for the River Hill Madrigals. It was made up of the winter months meaning holiday festivities are everywhere. We performed at numerous holiday activities … These events make me happy because we are spreading winter cheer throughout the [area]. The winter activities were all fun. My favorite song that we sang was *Blow, Blow thou winter wind*. It was such a cool song and I was enthralled with it when we sang it. Near the end of the quarter we started to work on "Mata." This song is tough, but I feel that the challenges are forcing us to grow as a team.

In terms of musical criticism, William gave the most positive feedback about the group's performance, especially when the group was apprehensive and expected to perform poorly:

> William: I remember the first time we sang [Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind] … we were all really scared, because we didn't think that we could do it, but we did it with only two boys. We did it, it was good.

Any negative feedback that William contributed was constructive, and usually dealt with his individual musical ability. His confidence as an individual was not as high as it was as a group member, which he expressed through journal entries:

> I knew most of the songs but "Sleep" and "This Little Babe" gave me the most trouble. Missing the invitational was terrible for my memorization and overall progress in Sleep.
>
> Today we continued the rhythm exercises on "Mata." It was interesting. Later in the class we added the notes to the song. I became extremely confused. It was moving way too fast for me. But, I ended up getting a grasp on the Bass part.

In discussion, William occasionally discussed his own progress, but preferred to focus on the group:

> *AH: …how well do you think you performed individually in all of the performances you did?*
> William: I think I performed pretty well, but I feel like it's the group when they come together that's important.

William expressed that his involvement in the ensemble has taught him extra-musical social lessons:

> *AH: How do you think your experiences in choir so far might impact your involvement in choir after high school?*
> William: … The connections that you make with people in Madrigals because you're in such an intimate setting and you've got to work together and get things done so that people like it… the people you meet and the bonds that you build…

Summary.

William's responses during the interview were consistently optimistic; of the three participants, his perception of the group's efficacy was the most positive. He enjoyed *Le Baylère,* even though it seemed that the group as a whole did not perform this song well and did not enjoy it. He also thoroughly enjoyed *Blow, Blow Thou Winter Wind* and felt that the ensemble did well singing it expressively. Although William does not plan to sing at an advanced level after high school, he still demonstrated the same level of

dedication as his peers who do plan to continue singing in an ensemble. It was clear that his focus was on the group learning and developing as an ensemble.

William's musical identity seems to be affected by the music he consumes rather than what he performs. He reflects on what the ensemble does with a positive outlook. He is most descriptive and excited about what he has observed others performing. William is aware that he has trouble recalling certain musical details in performance, but his contribution to the success of the group is strong in other areas, especially attitude and motivation.

Kalvin.

Musical Interpretation.

With three years in the choral program, Kalvin acquired a musical knowledge base that already included skills that were taught throughout the school year. For instance, elements of expression that were difficult for his peers to grasp had become "second nature" for him:

> Kalvin: As far as being in choirs for over 2 years, it's help a lot in terms of being able to read quickly, being able to read the music, and instead of dragging that out for a long time we can go directly into dynamics and other aspects of the piece.
> …
> Kalvin: Well…most of the songs, … just naturally came out for me, like I didn't feel like I needed to change anything.

In addition to his awareness of how the ensemble functioned and experienced their repertoire, Kalvin also made informed observations about other ensembles:

> Kalvin: This one school had all 3 of their songs as Renaissance pieces, so I was like, ok…they all sounded the same, pretty much. At first I could listen to it, but I couldn't really get into the second or third songs.

Kalvin began his journal by discussing *Sleep.* He described his initial impressions of the piece and that the ensemble would be challenged by the difficulty of expression:

> *Sleep* by far is one of my most favorite concert pieces this year. I was completely in awe when I first listened to the piece. The most difficult part in Sleep was primarily the dynamics and blending; I feel very confident on the rhythm and tone.

He continues by voicing his concern that the ensemble is not fully committing to performing the piece as he felt it should be done, and his aspiration for the group to improve prior to the next performance:

> A big problem is that we have little or no energy, possibly even lacking any emotion. By the time of our upcoming performance, I hope to hear a more unified voice.

Of the three participants, Kalvin mentioned the audience most; he was very focused on creating meaningful musical experiences for both the ensemble and the audience, which he further demonstrates in his interviews.

> I enjoy the pieces that we have [been] performing, especially our new one *Mata*. However, I hope to perform an audience catching piece such as *Kalinda, My God is a Rock* in the upcoming concert.

By choosing a daily format in writing his journals, Kalvin was able to offer his perspective prior to and immediately after a performance. These daily accounts offered insight into what the participants experienced beyond the researcher's perspective. In the following entries, he discusses the progress of the ensembles prior to two major concerts:

> (Winter Concert #1)
> 1 more day until the concert. We had our combined rehearsal with the other choir. Overall, the rehearsal went well but talking was a major issue throughout. On a different note, "TT" are finally ready for the performance!! We were able to finish Circle of Life so that it could be performed at the concert.
>
> (Winter Concert #2)
> We had our winter concert tonight. Overall, I think we did pretty well and there was a good audience turnout. As far as the performance, there were a few mistakes here and there but each piece was ready to be performed. For "TT", I'm glad that we were able to hit that key change without messing up.
>
> (Night of A Cappella #1)
> There's only 1 day left until the a cappella concert. Frankly, I'm not sure whether or not we will be able to perform all three songs. Circle and Loch are fine, but the most I am

> worried about is the Christmas song. We fixed most of the dynamics and pronunciation; all we have to work on is getting the right tempo.
>
> (Night of A Cappella #2)
> A Cappella concert tonight!! Other groups from Wilde Lake will be performing there too. The Madrigals will also perform a piece along with the Leading Ladies. Hopefully, we'll have a good performance. Again, the only worry I have again is the Christmas song. We finished the whole piece but it still feels kind of rushed.

In his final entry in this series, he makes a rare comment about himself as an individual singer, referring to a musical mistake he made during the concert.

> (Night of A Cappella #3)
> We had so many mistakes at the a cappella concert. We started off key in Loch Lomond (my fault) and we were off tune on the Christmas song. However, the bright side was that we were able to adapt quickly to the situation and minimize the damages.

Throughout the study, Kalvin was polite but honest in his responses, speaking directly to what elements of the ensemble needed adjusting. During an interview, he discussed his initial experiences with *Sleep* as a listener, and then a performer:

> *AH: When we sang, do you feel like the choir was able to convey a certain message or idea that you wanted them to (especially with Mads and the pieces that you mentioned)? Like through Sleep- did we do Sleep the way that you wanted it to be? Did we make the audience feel like you wanted them to feel?*
> Kalvin: Well like… I'm kind of biased towards how we first listen [or] hear a song and then hear a different recording of it we think "oh, that doesn't sound right," but I went on Youtube for the first time listening to *Sleep* and I heard many different kinds of recordings, including the one that Eric Whitacre did with his choir. Personally I think we did a good job portraying our own version, but it also modeled his, too. As for dynamics, tempo and other aspects, we spent a good amount of time working on it, so I think we expressed what we could have…I mean obviously we could work on it more to perfect it, but at that concert I think we performed the best we could have. At some points during the [invitational], I was kind of unhappy… it was kind of different from how we practiced it with our choir, and I guess I could understand because it's a whole different type of setting where it's a larger group of people, so you need to have a different type of approach to it.

Throughout the study, it was clear that Kalvin truly enjoyed singing expressive and challenging music. In addition to enjoying these pieces himself, he enjoyed creating a great experience for the audience:

> *AH: What was your favorite song this year? Why?*

> Kalvin: It would be *Sleep* and *Willow Song*…. usually the ones that are my favorites are those big pieces that have a reaction, that the audience has like a big reaction towards, like in past years we've done *Kalinda* and *My God is a Rock*, so those two were my favorites those years. As for *Willow Song*, it was difficult in terms of dynamics, but at the same time it was fun to learn, and I feel like we don't do as many of those kind of pieces, so it's a good opportunity.

Attitude.

For many of the students, including non-participants in this study, performance anxiety seemed to impact the students' attitude toward singing in the ensemble. Kalvin, who is now confident and comfortable in performance, described his challenges with performance anxiety. His choral experience changed him as a person, and became something that he would continue with beyond high school:

> *AH: Do you feel that there are things that you've done in the past three years that you'll never forget about?*
> Kalvin: I'm trying to think back to sophomore year, because sophomore year I took singing just because I liked to do it, it was just fun, I never really thought about the other aspects, like you actually need to have a certain way [to sing], or develop techniques in order to make the best sound possible, and also performing…stage presence… I've gotten over my fear of stage fright. In the beginning of sophomore year I could barely perform onstage even if I didn't have a solo, if I was singing with the choir I would still have stage fright, so that's definitely improved over the three years.
> *AH: So do you think you'll keep singing after this?*
> Definitely.

He elaborates on what he has learned through the choral experience, describing its uniqueness within the school setting:

> Kalvin: I've learned so much because this class is one of the classes that is completely different compared to other core classes such as English, Math… it's more interactive in the sense that you're not stuck with a pencil and paper, you're more involved with your body, your voice, you interact with other people more.

Kalvin also describes the ways that his choral singing experience informed his ability to work with others. He felt that being familiar with his ensemble members allowed for more expressive music-making:

> So, then you can understand, as you interact with other people, that you actually kind of need that to understand the piece better. As you get along with them, it's much easier to

> perform together, express yourself the way you want to… I feel like that's also helpful later in life when you want to do something together, like group projects or whatever, you can use those lessons that you've learned.

Non-musical factors that affected the ensemble members did not tend to affect Kalvin, but he did notice some of the issues that impacted the group:

> Kalvin: Well for me, I'm also involved in other programs that involve singing, like Barbershop, so I had to dedicate a good amount of time for that also… As for the choir itself, we've had combined rehearsals, but there's usually only one mandatory rehearsal that people usually go to, and that's right before the actual concert, so not many people usually go to the other optional combined rehearsals that I think are kind of necessary for trying to improve vocally with the whole choir. Most of the time it's because of conflicts, like some people have sports and all.

Kalvin was a consistently dedicated singer that attended optional activities for the good of the group; his ability to observe others' inability to prioritize and commit to the choir demonstrates the level of his experience and understanding of what makes the ensemble successful.

Group Efficacy.

Generally, Kalvin felt that the ensemble performed well, even if they were under stress:

> Kalvin: … I think we performed quite well, but it was also kind of hard like along with the busy schedule and all…

Kalvin was consistently focused on the progress and achievement of both ensembles with which he performed. He only spoke about his individual musical work when critiquing the aspects of his singing that he needs to improve:

> Overall, I feel that Madrigals has accomplished many goals throughout the course of a couple of months. We attended the UMD Invitational and performed *Sleep, Hark, O Quam Gloriosum.* Additionally we performed alongside with the Orchestra in the Winter Concert. As for my own personal goals, I have improved tremendously on my breathing techniques, such as holding notes and staggering (when to breathe). In terms of blending, I believe that the tenor section has done a good job matching each other to produce one unified sound. We still need to improve on dynamics, we're singing louder than we should be on higher notes due to the high pitch. Ever since the beginning of the school

> year, my voice range on the higher notes has strengthened immensely. It's become much easier to hit higher notes with my chest voice rather than switching to falsetto.

Summary.

When asked directly about his individual performance, Kalvin was more inclined to respond in the context of the ensemble. In his journals, he either discussed the progress of the advanced ensemble or his extra-curricular group, rather than his own individual contributions. He expressed compassion for the ensemble's success, as well as how the audience would respond to a performance. To him, it was most important that the performance was meaningful for the group and the audience, which would in turn make it meaningful for him. His comments regarding participation in a musical ensemble demonstrate what many music educators hope all of their students will understand: learning is about more than individual accomplishments, and that working effectively with others is vital to success after high school. Kalvin enjoyed repertoire that was meaningful for both the ensemble and the audience, citing *Willow Song*, *My God is a Rock* and *Kalinda* from the previous year. He was able to recognize the ensemble's shortcomings, such as issues with focus and dedication, but did express that these problems could be fixed. He mentioned that the group needed to interact with each other well to better understand and perform a piece. As a former "high anxiety" singer (Wilson & Roland, 2002), he recognized that the ensemble needed to sing pieces from memory and have additional rehearsals outside of regular class time to create more comfortable and successful performances. Additionally, he mentioned that this interactive and interpersonal learning environment was unique to the rest of his high school experiences.

Cross-case Analysis

Introduction.

The participants expressed similar sentiments throughout the study, particularly when discussing topics that were directly related to their repertoire and performance. They differed from each other, however, in terms of how they expressed their individual musical identities and contributions to the ensemble. The following section presents cross-case analyses, divided according to theme.

Musical interpretation.

Kalvin and Jasmine were both in extra-curricular ensembles at the school, which seemed to offer them a wider perspective on performance technique. Their critiques were usually more objective and technical than William's:

> Kalvin: For Blow, we kind of messed up the ending, we didn't time it well together, I think. Because I remember the tenor and bass sections, we were completely off.
> …
> Jasmine: I thought it was fine until the [extended] 'sleep' part where you come down and come together and it gets really quiet, I thought that was pretty bad, but before that and after that I thought it was pretty good.
> …
> William: Well, 'G' was good. They always give us a show.

William was able to speak more comfortably about the subjective and emotive aspects of the performances:

> *Sleep*- it is so intense and beautiful…
> *Hark! I Hear the Harp's Eternal*- it is such a great song with lots of power and ferocity…

When Jasmine completed journal entries about her musical experience, she centered them around various performances. She did not discuss her rehearsal experiences as much as the other participants. Her journals were good outlines of her thoughts, but she was better able to communicate her opinions and ideas in conversation.

Both William and Kalvin wrote extensively about their perceptions in their journals; William focused more on repertoire while Kalvin focused on performance and rehearsal feedback.

The participants were asked if they were able to sing with the desired expression at the festival. William felt that his favorite piece, *Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind*, was sung without expression or emotion, while Jasmine felt that the entire set was sung well:

> *AH: Do you guys think we just sang the song or did you actually impress upon people that this is a song about winter, it's winter right now…*
> William: I think we just sang the song.
> Jasmine: Really? I thought we did pretty well, Dr. Holmes told us we did a good job interpreting the text, at least on Sleep, he actually made a point to mention that, because I know that was one of the things that we were trying to work on.

All three participants aspired to be descriptive and detail-oriented both in performance and when discussing an experience. William used several adjectives ("it is such a great song with lots of power and ferocity") and was aware of when he missed certain markings in performance ("I forgot about the s's").

When the ensemble was given an opportunity to choose their repertoire, they responded optimistically both when learning it and when reflecting on their performance of it. The students voted and chose to add *Mata Del Anima Sola* to their repertoire, which they enjoyed both when they saw it performed and when they started learning it. It was performed consistently well. Students did not choose *Blow, Blow Thou Winter Wind* or *Sleep*. As shown in Renwick & McPherson (2002), the students seemed more critical of their performances of those pieces:

> Kalvin: … we didn't do that well with *Blow*. Did he mention *Blow* at all?
> William: I thought we did… it was better than I thought it was gonna be.
> Jasmine: It was better than I expected. Honestly, like…why was it suddenly so much better on the day of, because every practice we did before that was bad.

William: The adrenaline was pumping!
Jasmine: I guess- people were just like, 'ok time to actually try.'
William: And then *Mata* was good.
Jasmine: *Mata's* always been pretty good, actually…

As found in their journals and individual interviews, the participants maintained strong opinions about their repertoire, including that of years past. These perceptions of their current repertoire were impacted by their level of experience (Forbes, 2001), specifically, their ability to compare new repertoire to old (Silvey, 2002). Without being prompted, the students began discussing the impact that different pieces had on them during the previous year:

Jasmine: …I've also heard from people that we were better than last year.
AH: That's good…we should be…
William: Danny Boy! Last year, was like "pwnage"
Jasmine: Except for not! It was pwnage until we got to the girl's section, and then it was like "womp womp womp" crash and burn.
William: What did we sing last year?
Jasmine**:** I only remember Danny Boy. (laughs)
William: Danny Boy, Concord…
AH: Oh yeah, Concord was your warm up.
William: *Psallite*!
Kalvin: That was my favorite.
Jasmine: I hated Psallite!

While each participant expressed how they felt about a piece, Jasmine was the most expressive with negative or critical feedback.

Beyond solely liking or disliking the music, the participants discussed their interpretations of the various performances during the year, at which they were both performers and audience members. Most recently, the students had performed in a district festival, at which they also listened to groups from the other area high schools. When discussing the other groups' repertoire, the participants conversed in an aesthetically transactional manner (Silvey, 2002) by relating previously performed pieces to both prior

and current experiences. Through this, their perception of the group's musical identity began to emerge:

> Kalvin: It just feels weird, though listening to someone else's interpretation of a song that we've done.
> Jasmine: Like *Loch Lomond,* that was so weird.
> Kalvin: Yeah, I just could not…
> William: listen to it?
> Jasmine: Yeah, [and] *Esto Les Digo,* that one was so quiet, even though they were loud on their other songs.
> AH: Yeah. It is really weird to hear someone else's interpretation of a piece, especially when there's something that we were really adamant about but they weren't, [it makes you twitch]. It's different.
> Kalvin: Yeah, the pronunciation and everything was so different, if they sang "take" we sang "teck" and things like that.
> AH: … When we did *Voce* that one year, "G" did it as it was in the octavo, we did it as my friend "T" told us how to do it.
> William: Yeah, and they made fun of us. I was like…whoa.

Although Jasmine and Kalvin felt that their ensemble sang pieces more expressively or "correctly" compared to other groups, the self-conscious nature of the group became apparent through William's comment about the other school making fun of them in the past.

As experienced students, the participants seemed to have acquired the ability to differentiate between "appealing and simple" and "appealing and challenging." As in Rentz (1994), the participants' experience in the ensemble allowed them to compare and contrast aspects of the choral repertoire they came in contact with. Discussing the festival:

> Kalvin: I think our song choices made a difference, too.
> Jasmine: Yeah, they're less "madrigal-y"
> Kalvin: This one school had all 3 of their songs as Renaissance pieces, so I was like, ok…they all sounded the same, pretty much. At first I could listen to it, but I couldn't really get into the second or third songs.
> Jasmine: Yeah, they all kind of sound the same when they're from that period, and they also seem like they're not as difficult. Like the one that was about the person that died, it

> was funny… that one was like really easy, when you listen to the actual parts, it split really easily and it was really short. Then you look at *Sleep*, and that was really hard.
> William: Well, [they were] good. They always give us a show.

The students discussed noticing that the audience was pleased with and excited by the piece that Jasmine described, despite its simplicity. All three participants noted that they prefer pieces that are more challenging (Murphy, 2009) to those that are seemingly performed just for entertainment value. Jasmine and Kalvin especially appreciated serious styles (Hargreaves, Comber & Colley, 1995). William was the only participant that mentioned entertainment value ("they always give us a show") in reference to the festival. Based on the data from all of the participants, their experiences with repertoire have contributed to their ability to make informed musical choices (Rentz, 1994).

Attitude.

Each of the participants noted that they performed at a higher skill level in all musical categories when the group cared about singing and performing well with each other. As aforementioned, Jasmine initiated "attitude" as a theme:

> Jasmine: I always thought we were really good, and then finding out this year that we're better this year, I think that we're not as good this year because people were more enthusiastic about it last year. They would be like "I'm so excited," like "C" and "J" were always so excited to sing, so it made me feel like we were better even if we actually weren't, and people this year are like "we're so bad."
> William: It's more pessimistic this year.
> Jasmine: Yeah, it makes me feel like we're really bad, then other people tell me that we're better and it's like, wait…what? Are you joking? I guess it's just attitude.

Moments in which the ensemble's attitude affected their performance preceded the development of their group efficacy.

Group efficacy.

All three participants seemed to have a well-defined musical identity prior to the study. However, it became apparent that each participant's individual musical identity

was ancillary to their group musical identity. Jasmine's comments about liking to sing despite not liking a song, William's optimism about the group's potential and Kalvin's desire to create meaningful performances for everyone involved all synthesize and contribute to the ensemble's identity.

The participants' group efficacy as experienced students was far more optimistic than what they felt the entire group believed. The participants made comments about the overall group accountability, in that it did not exist. This was a result of the school atmosphere of a high focus on individual academic achievement and accountability (Conley, McGaughy, Kirtner, van der Valk, & Martinez-Wenzl, 2010; Lindsley, Brass & Thomas, 1995; Ryan, Ryan, Arbuthnot & Samuels, 2007).), which only Kalvin recognized and acknowledged ("this class…it's more interactive").

During the study, the ensembles' group efficacy was poor. Despite their high musical ability, the participants reported feeling as though the ensemble was "not as good." They expressed their frustration that despite the musical potential of the ensemble, they remained insecure and consistently performed below their potential.

> Kalvin: I liked our performance
> Jas: I thought we did better than I thought we were going to.
> Kalvin: A lot of people, you could tell, were kinda nervous up there but I think we actually pulled it off.
> AH: Yeah.
> William: We weren't the worst people there.
> …
> William: I thought we did… it was better than I thought it was gonna be.
> Jasmine: Honestly I feel like everything [the adjudicator] said, we've heard before, like trillions and millions of times and [we] never actually make a change, we need to apply it. And sometimes I feel like we correct mistakes, and then the next day we revert back to the old, and it's not corrected anymore.

Additionally, the participants reflected upon the self-conscious nature of the ensemble, which was seen in both musical and co-musical situations. Some of what they mentioned dealt with ancillary details that may have affected their performances.

> All: Everyone [else] wore mads costumes[4].
> Jasmine: Yeah you told us that other groups weren't gonna have them, and that's why I…they all had them, so that's why I want them.
> William: It was [awkward].

Despite these frustrations, the participants were less concerned with their group image than their less experienced classmates. They described not being affected by comments from other groups:

> Me: Do you guys really care about what other students say about what we do?
> Jas: No.
> Kalvin: No.
> William: Kind of… I feel like it can be an esteem-booster for the group.
> Jas: Mmm…
> Kalvin: If it's not just demoralizing.
> William: Yeah, the good things.
> Kalvin: So many people… I don't know, since we've taken 3 years of choir we've heard so much crap about us.
> Jas: Also if they care so much about it that they have to put other groups down then fine. If you care about it that much that you have to go to that level, then just go for it.

When the participants rejoined the ensemble, a large group discussion began as a culmination of the small group discussions. Based on notes taken by the researcher, the participants and other students agreed that the group would probably continue growing musically, even though only one major performance remained. Both William and Kalvin agreed that the ensemble could improve musically through new repertoire, especially a rhythmic and intricate piece like *Mata del Anima Sola*, the piece that the students chose to learn. Jasmine mentioned that the group had learned this piece so quickly because it was their own choice, taking ownership over it. Kalvin added that hearing a live performance of a piece that the ensemble would later learn creates motivation, making the students excited to achieve learning and performing the piece.

[4] "Mads costumes" refer to the traditional Renaissance Madrigal costumes that are worn by many advanced choral ensembles in the participants' school district.

The participants' peers also echoed Jasmine's comments about attitude. They agreed that it affects performance, especially in terms of movement while singing. A non-participant noted, "moving and flowing with the music is really important. It's not awkward if everyone does it." One student concluded the discussion simply: "We won't get better if we don't care."

The participants did not mention many solutions to the group's poor efficacy, but William and Kalvin both felt that the ensemble could use more time together:

> Kalvin: …not many people usually go to the other optional combined rehearsals that I think are kind of necessary for trying to improve vocally with the whole choir.
>
> William: I wish we would have had maybe more time before the day before the concert to do a run through of all the songs, because we ran through Sleep and one other, but we didn't do *Le Baylere*, and that was bad.

Summary.

Jasmine feels that the ensemble has the potential to sing with the musical skill and expression that is rehearsed, but because they are nervous in performances, their concentration lacks, and the skill and expression that they have the potential to demonstrate do not come through. They often forget about singing more than just the notes, "especially when the notes are harder." Like Kalvin, Jasmine had high expectations for the group; however, the expectations that she had for herself were higher compared to the other participants. Her experience has made her aware of several things that could improve the ensemble, including times when more rehearsal is needed. Along with William, Kalvin's group efficacy was high, and he was more able to speak about the ensemble's achievements more than his own. When Kalvin did discuss his own progress, it was clear that he felt that being a part of the ensemble is what helped him achieve his

musical goals ("being in choirs for over 2 years [has] help a lot in terms of being able to read quickly") and overcome his issues with performance anxiety ("In the beginning…I could barely perform onstage even if I didn't have a solo"). Although all three participants focused on the ensemble's potential to perform at a high aesthetic level, William expressed the highest level of group efficacy. Even when he was anxious before a performance, he believed that the ensemble had the potential to do well. His reflections on the emotional and aesthetic aspect of his musical experience were the most descriptive amongst the participants.

Group Musical Identity

The identity of the ensemble, as defined by the accounts of the participants, includes the following traits: (a) a preference for and performance of challenging, diverse, post-Renaissance music (as seen in Kalvin and Jasmine's comments about the festival); (b) an understanding of musical technique and post-performance analysis in theory but not in practice (as seen in Jasmine's "attitude" comments); (c) a tendency towards high-anxiety in performance (as seen in William's and Jasmine's "group efficacy" comments); (d) poor group efficacy (as seen in all three participants' "attitude" and "group efficacy" comments); (e) less consistent enthusiasm for singing together compared to previous years, which affects the group's performances (as seen in Jasmine's "attitude" comments); and (f) concern about the ensemble's similarities and differences in comparison to similar groups at other area schools (as seen in William's and Kalvin's festival comments).

The three major themes—musical interpretation, attitude and group efficacy—combined to define the ensemble's group musical identity as outlined above. The following section presents conclusions drawn from the data analysis.

Group identity formation.

The formation of musical identity during the study was addressed by the second research question: how have the students' choral experiences influenced the formation of their musical identities as members of a choral ensemble? The participants' perceptions imply that their experiences led to the development of a group musical identity more so than their individual musical identities.

The ongoing formation of the ensemble's musical identity, in terms of repertoire, performance style and ability, was strongly influenced by the students' attitude. The ensemble attitude created a climate in which musicality, expression and skill were affected regularly. As previously described, the students' overall experience in the ensemble and their individual musical identities informed the three major themes that emerged: musical interpretation, attitude and group efficacy.

In terms of musical interpretation, the participants were able to use their experience to critique their own repertoire and performances. This gave them the ability to strive for the best performance possible. As in Murphy (2009), the participants and their ensemble members preferred challenging pieces such as *Sleep* to those that are easy-but-entertaining. The participants demonstrated their acquisition of the ability to make informed musical choices (Rentz, 1994) due to their experiences during the study as both performers and consumers of choral music. This was demonstrated in the ensemble's choice to learn and perform *Mata del Anima Sola*, which was a challenging piece for

them. The participants described that the ensemble worked harder and performed the piece with more energy than they approached other repertoire. They sought and took ownership over the challenge (Renwick & McPherson, 2002; Silvey, 2002), being able to meet the challenge because of their prior experience.

The students brought up their past experiences in the ensemble, which the researcher anticipated; however, it was surprising that they brought up the topic of attitude on their own. The degree of their insight into why the ensemble functioned as it did was unexpected. All of the students, including the participants, often anticipated the ensemble not doing well in an upcoming performance. Additionally, the participants were pleasantly surprised by their success, as were some of their peers from other schools. Their image—in the eyes of their peers—seemed important to less experienced members of the ensemble, but not to the participants. Instead, the participants were focused inward, which seemed to be a result of their experience in the choir. They preferred the smaller, close-knit group of the previous year, in which there was a culture of enthusiasm about singing and camaraderie amongst the members. Overall, the individual attitudes of the ensemble members merged to create a group attitude, which in turn had a meaningful effect on their musical identity.

Since the students performed in a chamber style, the researcher anticipated that the students would have discussed what the performance experience was like without the "safety" of a conductor, and that their performance anxiety may have been caused in part by being student-led. However, they did not mention this in any of the data collection. As Kalvin and Jasmine mentioned, the situations that usually led to anxiety included not

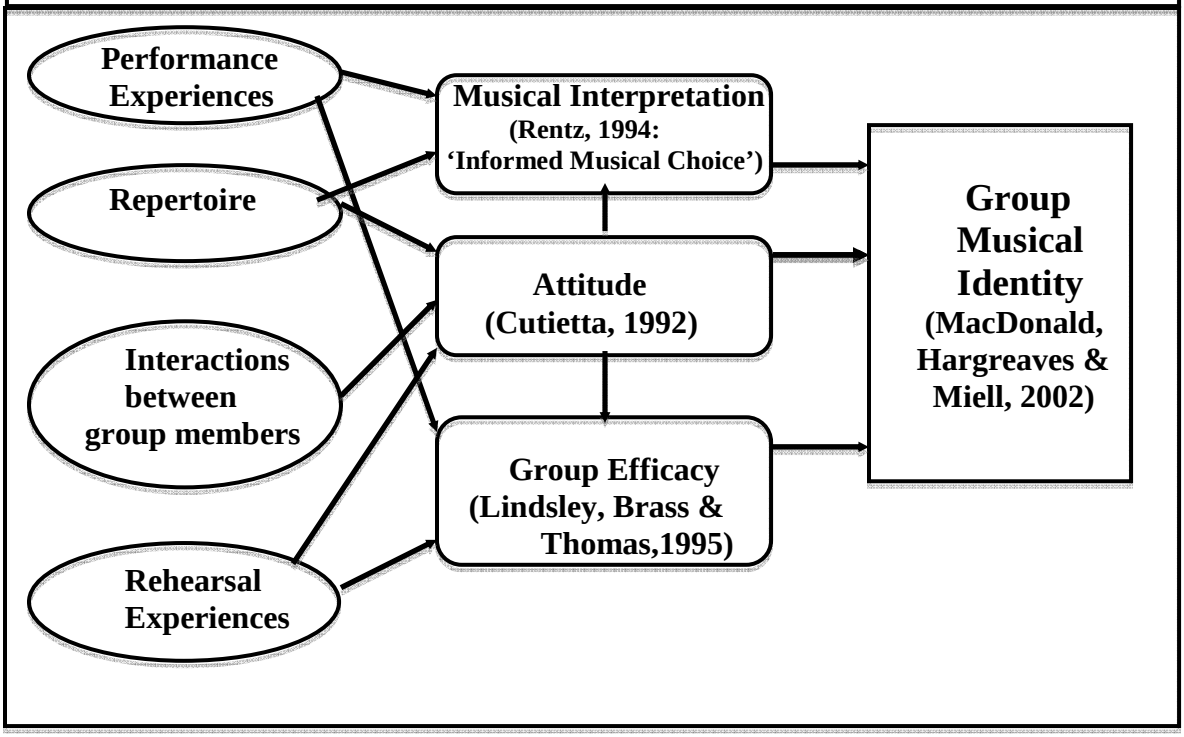
having the music memorized, not enough time with a piece, or attitude interfering with the ensemble's concentration and focus.

Closely related to the group's attitude, group efficacy was often low as a result of performance anxiety. As described by the students, "nerves" had a major effect on most of the ensemble's performances. The effect would either be that a performance that was better than expected, or worse than rehearsed, being consistently different than what was done in rehearsal. The ensemble's group efficacy, similar to their attitude, affected their musical identity more so than their musical skills and knowledge.

Summary of the Study

The participants in the study were three experienced members of the advanced choral ensemble at the researcher's school. The ensemble was part of a large music department in an upper class, suburban high school. The participants expressed their unique perspectives of their choral experience through journal entries, interviews and a group discussion with researcher. The researcher collected the participants' detailed perspectives on repertoire, performance experiences and the ensemble group dynamic. Data collection was followed by axial coding, which led to the development of three major themes: musical experience, attitude and group efficacy. These themes led to the development of group musical identity formation in the ensemble (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Model of Group Musical Identity Formation



Conclusions.

Through within-case and cross-case analysis, it is apparent that understanding choral students' ongoing perspectives during a school year is vital to the musical success of the ensemble. Furthermore, gaining an understanding of the ensemble's group musical identity can be accomplished by continually exploring students' choral experiences. In this study, learning that the ensemble's musical identity was defined more so by the students' attitude and group efficacy than their musical ability provided the researcher with information that would be used to influence the experiences of future ensembles.

Implications for music education.

Why is the student perspective and musical knowledge important to music educators? What do they know that we, as experienced educators do not remember or

notice? The participants' perspectives in this study offer much insight into the high school ensemble experience in ways that educators could not understand on their own.

To foster the students' ability to interpret and critique music, rehearsal time should be allotted for extended discussion and critique of performances, whether recordings or live performances are used. Although it is easier and more efficient for this process to be conducted through journal or essay writing, the interaction that students will have with the director and with each other could expand their knowledge more effectively. Giving the students a chance to reflect orally on whether or not they have achieved certain milestones in their musical achievement can lead to more immediate change in their choral singing.

Directors can use several strategies to impact students' attitude and improve group efficacy: (a) fostering a close-knit ensemble environment from the beginning through group trust activities and student input in rehearsals; (b) choosing challenging music that requires the group to work together to achieve it outside of director influence; (c) providing a variety of performance experiences that range from small, informal performances to high-stakes festival-grade performances; or (d) striking a balance between discussion and rehearsal time, attempting to create a balance between the two. Experienced students possess valuable insight based on what they have done in past years. This insight is a great resource for directors; the student perspective can expand the director's view of the ensemble, reminding the director of the techniques and needs of the current students. It can help to break tired routines, and to curb assumptions. Students can give informed feedback on new pieces, concert programs and even rehearsal plans. Experienced students should be allowed to be leaders in the ensemble, using their

experience to voice necessary changes and lead by example. Demonstrating that their perceptions are significant will build their esteem and efficacy as individuals, in both a musical and personal sense.

Implications for future research.

In future qualitative studies of choral students, it could be useful to compare the perceptions of experienced students with that of non-experienced students. This could allow educators to more fully understand the unique perspectives of students who have been in a choral ensemble for an extended period of time, and how to encourage non-experienced students to reach that level. Additionally, understanding exactly how the privilege of choosing repertoire affects their experiences is necessary. A quantitative study that compares experienced students to non-experienced students using a questionnaire could provide a clear comparison between those groups' experiences. Finally, a further understanding of the significance of individual musical identity in the choral setting is needed. This study only began to discover whether students are forming their musical identities through their ensemble experience, or if they come to the experience with these identities already established.

~

Epilogue

Understanding the perceptions of my own students will inform my teaching for years to come. Through my experiences in this study, I have changed my approach to choral teaching. I have found ways to share my passion for choral teaching with my students while still being able to be detail-oriented and focused on creating successful performances. Listening to my students' voices—beyond their singing voices—was enjoyable, rewarding and enlightening. I hope that through my awareness of their choral experiences, I can facilitate a love of choral music for each of my students, and that their experience will be meaningful beyond their high school years.

Appendix: IRB Documentation

Principal Investigator/ Project Faculty Advisor *(NOT a student or fellow)*	Dr. Janet Montgomery	**Email Address**	janetm@umd.edu
		Telephone Number	**301-405-5503**

Co-Investigator		**Email Address**	
		Telephone Number	

Student Investigator	Amy T. Hairston	**Email Address**	Amyhairston10@gmail.com
		Telephone Number	**443-474-1231**

Project Title	High School Students' Perceptions of Choral Repertoire

Department/ Unit Administering the Project	School of Music, Music Education Division
Where to send Approval Documents	**Amy Hairston, 8967 Footed Ridge, Columbia, MD 21045**
Check if this is	Student master's thesis ☒ OR Dissertation research project ☐

Funding Agency(s)	*N/A*
ORAA Proposal ID Number	

Target Population: The study population will include (Check all that apply):

☐ pregnant women ☐ neonates ☐ individuals with mental disabilities
☐ minors/children ☐ prisoners ☐ individuals with physical disabilities
☐ human fetuses ☒ students

Exempt (Optional): You may suggest this protocol meets the requirements for Exempt Review by checking the box below and listing the Exempt category(s) that may apply. Please refer to the Exempt Category document for additional information.

☐ **Exemption Category(s):**
Rationale:

Date **Signature of Principal Investigator [REQUIRED]**

Date **Signature of Co-Principal Investigator**

Date **Signature of Student Investigator**

Signature of IRB Liaison/Department Chair [REQUIRED]

Date **Print Name _____**
Title_____
(Please print name of IRB Liaison/Department Chair)

1. Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to explore high school students' perceptions of repertoire choice. Influenced by the work of Hargreaves, Silvey and Forbes on musical experience, choral experience and repertoire selection, respectively, this study seeks to explore the ways that repertoire selection impacts students' musical experience. Furthermore, the ways in which this experience may impact their involvement in music beyond high school will be explored. In this case study, the participants will be three advanced choral students who attend an upper class, public Mid-Atlantic high school. Data collection will consist of interview transcripts, guided and open-ended journal entries and other reflections by the students.

2. Subject Selection:

a.

(Modified) Recruitment: I plan to study my own choral students. Students will be chosen based on their ability to articulate their opinions, ideas, emotions and strong connections to the music they are performing. This will be demonstrated through written assignments and class discussions prior to the start of the study. Additionally, experience in the choral ensemble will be considered; for this research, it is preferred that the students have been in the course for at least 2 full years.
The most articulate and experienced students will be chosen.

b.

Eligibility: Students must have two or three years' experience in the advanced choral ensemble to be eligible.

c.

Rationale: Experienced and articulate students will be able to provide and represent the deepest perspective on their repertoire, as well as what they personally experience along with their classmates.

d.

Enrollment: Three students chosen from 14 possible subjects.

3. Procedures:

(Modified) Participants will be asked to sit for three interviews following three major performances. They will also be asked to complete ongoing journal entries, describing their thoughts during rehearsals, general opinions about their repertoire, and speculation as to how their experience will impact their future plans as they relate to musical participation.
Students will receive some guidance on journal entries orally at the beginning of the study, such as the general topic on which to write, but they will purposefully not be given explicit detail so that information will emerge organically.
*Supporting document- List of Questions for Interviews

4. Risks:

There are no known risks in this study.

5. Benefits:

To participants: Students will be able to understand their own learning, the degree of importance music has to them, and what paths they may lead musically following their high school experience.

6. Confidentiality:

Students will be given pseudonyms in the published document. They will also be identified by these pseudonyms on recorded interviews and on journal entry pages. Data, which will include uploaded interview recordings, journal entry pages and class worksheets, will be stored at the home of the researcher. It will be collected over a period of two months at the students' school, with access limited to the researcher. Data will be shredded and/or deleted upon completion of the study.

7. Consent Process:

Students will be asked to give oral consent to participate in the study. All participation will occur during the students' normal school day, and will not involve any other times or locations.
*Supporting Document- Oral Script: initial consent request to participate in study.
Written informed assent will not be initially requested because the researcher feels comfortable receiving verbal assent from the students during class time. A strong rapport has been developed between the students and the researcher in the time they have been taught by the researcher; therefore, verbal assent can be trusted. However, when the Letter of Consent will be forwarded to parents, students will have the opportunity to provide their signature, giving additional assent.

8. Conflict of Interest:

No conflict of interest.

9. HIPAA Compliance:

Not applicable.

10. Research Outside of the United States:

Not applicable.

11. Research Involving Prisoners:

Not applicable.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Each copy of the application must include the IRB application cover sheet, the information required in items 1-11 above, and all relevant supporting documents including: consent forms, letters sent to recruit participants, questionnaires completed by participants, and any other material that will be presented, viewed or read to human subject participants.

For funded research, a copy of the Awarded Grant Application (minus the budgetary information) must be included. If the Grant has not been awarded at the time of submission of this Initial Application, a statement must be added to the Abstract Section stating that an Addendum will be submitted to include the Grant Application once it has been awarded.

NUMBER OF COPIES

Please send 1 original application including the signed cover sheet to:

IRB Office
0101 Lee Building
College Park, MD 20742-5125

Supporting Document: List of Questions for Interviews

- What is your overall reaction to the performance?
- How well do you think you performed as a choir?
- How well do you think you performed individually?
- What thoughts did you have as you were singing? Please include specific songs.
- What was your favorite song at this performance? Why?
- What outside (non-musical) factors do you think may have affected your/the choir's performance?
- How do you feel you were able to connect to [a specific song]?
- What messages do you feel like the choir conveyed to the audience?
- Do you feel like the choir conveyed the message(s) that you wanted them to?
- How as [a specific song] transformed now that it has been performed for an audience?
- If you changed anything about the performance, what would it be?
- How do you think this performance will impact your involvement in choir after high school?
- How do you think your overall experience so far this year will impact your involvement in choir after high school?

Supporting Document: Oral Script for Initial Consent Request to Participate in Study

Researcher: “Hi [student name]. I am conducting a study for my Masters Thesis on students’ experiences in choir, specifically how they feel about the songs they are singing. Since you have such great journal entries and you always participate in class discussions, would you like to participate in the study?

If “Yes”
Researcher: “Thank you. I will let you know when we will have interviews during class and journal entries due.”

If “No”
Researcher: “No problem. Great job so far this year.”

Supporting Document: Consent Cover Letter; Consent Form

January__, 2011

To: Parents of Kalvin M
From: Amy Hairston, Choral Director
Re: Study on Choral Music

To Whom It May Concern:

Kalvin has been identified as a student who could contribute greatly to a study on high school choral music. The study will be conducted by me, occurring mostly during class time. Students participating in the study will write journal entries on their opinions, feelings and perceptions during rehearsals, and before and after performances. These journals will replace their normal journal grades in class. Students will also be interviewed two or three times as a follow-up to their journal entries.

Each student will be identified in the study by a pseudonym, and will not need to do any follow-up at the conclusion of the study. The study will begin_____ and conclude_____.

Thank you for your consideration. Please complete the attached consent form and return by _____.

Regards,

Amy T. Hairston
Choral Director

Consent Form (text- distributed document will include headers and footers as found on Consent Form Template)

Project Title	High School Students' Perceptions of Choral Repertoire
Purpose of the Study	*This research is being conducted by **Amy T. Hairston** at the University of Maryland, College Park. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you fit the criteria for the study as an experienced choir member. The purpose of this research project is to understand high school student's perceptions of their choral repertoire and experiences.*
Procedures	*The procedures involve completing journal entries comparable to those done as a part of your choir class. Some of these journal entries will be followed by a few short interviews during class time, which will be in reference to your responses.*
Potential Risks and Discomforts	*There are no known risks from participating in this research study.*
Potential Benefits	*The benefits to you include potentially gaining a further understanding what your choir experience means to you, and additional opportunities to reflect on your own work. This skill is not often addressed in other high school courses or experiences. We hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of high school students' perceptions of their experiences and how they could impact the decisions that high school choir directors make.*
Confidentiality	*Any potential loss of confidentiality will be minimized by storing your data in a secure location; in this case, at the home of the researcher. Following the study, the data will be destroyed.* *A master's theses detailing this research project will be published; your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Your information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.*
Medical Treatment	*The University of Maryland does not provide any medical, hospitalization or other insurance for participants in this research study, nor will the University of Maryland provide any medical treatment or compensation for any injury sustained as a result of participation in this research study, except as required by law.*
Right to Withdraw and Questions	*Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.*

	If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the investigator, Amy T. Hairston, at: amy_hairston@hcpss.org, or at River Hill High School: 12101 Clarksville Pike, Clarksville, MD 21029, (410) 313-6927.	
Participant Rights	*If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact:* **University of Maryland College Park** **Institutional Review Board Office** **0101 Lee Building** **College Park, Maryland, 20742** **E-mail: irb@umd.edu** **Telephone: 301-405-0678** *This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.*	
Statement of Consent	*Your signature indicates that you, the parent/legal guardian of the subject, have read this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. You will receive a copy of this signed consent form.* *If you agree to participate, please sign your name below.*	
Signature and Date	**NAME OF SUBJECT** **[Please Print]**	
	SIGNATURE OF PARENT	
	SIGNATURE OF SUBJECT **DATE**	

IRB Approval Stamp

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, COLLEGE PARK
Institutional Review Board
Initial Application for Research Involving Human Subjects

Last Rev 06/8/2010

	concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the investigator, Amy T. Hairston, at: amy_hairston@hcpss.org, or at River Hill High School: 12101 Clarksville Pike, Clarksville, MD 21029, (410) 313-6927.	
Participant Rights	*If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact:* **University of Maryland College Park** **Institutional Review Board Office** **0101 Lee Building** **College Park, Maryland, 20742** **E-mail: irb@umd.edu** **Telephone: 301-405-0678** *This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.*	
Statement of Consent	*Your signature indicates that you, the parent/legal guardian of the subject, have read this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. You will receive a copy of this signed consent form.* *If you and your child agree to participate, please sign your names below.*	
Signature and Date	**NAME OF CHILD [Please Print]**	
	SIGNATURE OF PARENT	
	SIGNATURE OF CHILD	
	DATE	

IRB APPROVED
EXPIRES ON

APR 1 1 2014

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
COLLEGE PARK

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