

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: PRISMS AND POLYPHONY:
THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF HIGH
SCHOOL BAND STUDENTS AND
THEIR DIRECTOR AS THEY PREPARE
FOR AN ADJUDICATED
PERFORMANCE

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This hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry is called by the question:

What are the lived experiences of high school band students and their director as they prepare for an adjudicated performance? While there are many lenses through which the phenomenon of music preparation and music making has been explored, a relatively untapped aspect of this phenomenon is the experience as lived by the students themselves. The experiences and behaviors of the band director are so inexorably intertwined with the student experience that this essential contextual element is also explored as a means to understand the phenomenon more fully.

Two metaphorical constructs – one visual, one musical – provide a framework upon which this exploration is built. As a prism refracts a single color of light into a wide spectrum of hues, views from within illumine a variety of unique perspectives and uncover both divergent and convergent aspects of this experience. Polyphony (multiple contrasting voices working independently, yet

harmoniously, toward a unified musical product) enables understandings of the multiplicity of experiences inherent in ensemble performance.

Conversations with student participants and their director, notes from my observations, and journal offerings provide the text for phenomenological reflection and interpretation. The methodology underpinning this human science inquiry is identified by Max van Manen (2003) as one that “involves description, interpretation, and self-reflective or critical analysis” (p. 4). I have reflected on the counterpoint of the student experience, and both purposefully and inadvertently, viewed this counterpoint through the various windows O’Donohue (2004) suggests await our gaze in the inner tower of the mind (p. 127).

The student experience showed itself through the ensemble culture, the repertoire studied, the rehearsal process, and the adjudicated performance itself. Student conversations and reflections indicate that they experienced both discovery and transformation as they interacted with the music, each other, and their director throughout this process. The fresh prismatic and polyphonic understandings that emerged may offer the possibility for others to consider more deeply the context of how students experience who they are within an ensemble and how that experience shapes their musical understandings and personal growth.

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PERFORMANCE**

By

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DEDICATION

Anna Mae Haynes and Evelyn Miles

Mother and sister, both gone but who still inspire, motivate and live on within me

Barbara

My wife, whose patience, love, and support is immeasurable

Stacey and Stephanie

My daughters, who share part of this back-story and who, every day, make me
happy and proud to be a father

Geoff and Jesse and Alex

Sons-in-law and grandson, the men who share their lives with my daughters and
consequently, with me

Pippin, Lily, and Keebler

My household friends, who have exhibited enormous patience as I spent countless
hours with books or on the computer and not with them

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Advisor and mentor, for immense patience and inspiration and who is responsible for connecting me to the power of hermeneutic phenomenology to touch the soul of human experience

The students and their director

Willing participants in a journey of self discovery and transformation and an inspiration throughout the process and beyond

Heather

Colleague and confidant whose relentless encouragement and stories about her father's doctoral journey was an inspiration

Jim and Rachel

Respected colleagues who allowed me to engage with their students in the preliminary work that set the stage for this inquiry

My committee – Dr. Hewitt, Dr. Montgomery, Dr. Valli, and Dr. Votta
All of whom I have known in some way prior to this inquiry and for whom I have the most profound respect and admiration – I am deeply indebted to each of you for your intellectual and practical guidance throughout this process

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CHAPTER ONE:

TURNING TO THE PHENOMENON: PRISMS AND POLYPHONY

When we listened to ourselves, like when we listened to our tapes from adjudication, I was thinking, wow! This is what we sound like?! When we're playing we don't, or maybe we can't really listen, because we're concentrating on playing our own part and working hard to play it well and do what we need to do as individuals. But when we listen to the whole group, it gives us an entirely new perspective on what is really happening and it gives us an idea of what we need to change about what we are doing to make us really sound like an ensemble. (High school flute player)

If we were to learn other parts, other than our own, then we could see where we need to be more quiet or where we need to bring out a certain passage, and to understand that everything in the music is relative; the dynamics, the articulations, all of it. It all has to happen as part of the group. It isn't all about us as individuals. It's about the group and the overall effect of the music. We have to understand how it all fits together for it to make sense, to us and to whoever is listening. (High school clarinet player)

I think it would have helped to know maybe a little more history of the piece, and the composer's intentions. Then we could try to meet their expectations, their purpose, and it makes it easier, in my opinion, to play it right. Even a little bit of history, since we don't have a lot of time in band, maybe a brief discussion about the composer, this is kind of what was happening and this is why they wrote it. We need to understand what they were thinking so we can play it like it was meant to sound. (High school bassoon player)

These opening quotes, taken from conversations with band members in a suburban Baltimore high school as a preliminary exploration prior to this study, open up the possibility of exploring a fresh perspective on how the preparation of music for performance is experienced - from the viewpoint of the student. While there are many lenses through which this phenomenon of music preparation and music making has been explored, a relatively untapped aspect of this phenomenon is the experience as lived by the students themselves. While the major focus in

this inquiry is the student experience, the experiences and behaviors of the band director are so inexorably intertwined with the student experience that this essential contextual element is also explored as a means to understand the phenomenon more fully.

Two metaphorical constructs -- one based in the visual realm, the other emanating from the musical world -- provide a divergent, yet surprisingly inclusive and complimentary, structure around which we can build a fresh exploration of the experiences of band students as they prepare for an adjudicated performance. Thinking from a visually influenced paradigm, just as a prism refracts a single color of light into a wide spectrum of hues, views from within this experience can illumine a wide variety of uniquely colorful and vibrant perspectives and uncover both divergent and convergent aspects of a uniquely personal multi- sensory experience. Examined from an auditory paradigm, the concept of polyphony (multiple contrasting voices working independently yet harmoniously toward a unified musical product) has enormous potential for enabling understandings of the multiplicity of experiences inherent in large ensemble performance.

The metaphor of the prism as a unifying thematic undergirding this inquiry, while having its roots largely in the visual world, does have some not too distant connections with musical experience. The prism, a cut-glass object, especially one that can separate white light into a spectrum of colors, can be viewed as a means to split an experience into its component elements, or to see something in a new light with many heretofore unseen or unperceived aspects or

“colors” newly present to perception. Within the realm of musical experience all musical tones have unique colors, and the same pitch can manifest itself in a nearly infinitely diverse spectrum of tone colors from pure and simple (flute, for instance) to highly complex and unique configurations of partials (overtones) occurring over a given fundamental (oboe, for example).

From a musical standpoint, “prism” concerts have become popularized specifically at institutions of higher education where various aspects or components (ensembles) within an institution’s music program are showcased in a single performance event as a way to represent the many opportunities that are available within the program. It is a way not only to split the relatively monochromatic view that one might have of a music department based on a single, limited perspective (the band program by itself, perhaps) into a more richly hued portrait of the myriad possibilities that exist therein. Thus, it becomes a way to illuminate these possibilities so that they are freshly available for perceiving by others. In this way, I hope to mimic the action of a prism and shed new light and open new modes of access to the full rainbow of possible perspectives that high school band students and their director experience as they prepare music for an adjudicated performance.

What do students in band experience as they prepare music for performance? How do they engage with the music, the other students and with their director? What do they feel as they are confronted with the performance pressures and the complexities of preparing their music, and then working to successfully meld those parts together with the contributions of their peers into a

cohesive and meaningful aesthetic experience? These experiences are no doubt fraught with complex and potentially contradictory thoughts, feelings and emotions since all of these students bring their own personalities to the phenomenon, and they live it from within different physical and metaphorical places. Profound insights may be gained by exploring this relatively untapped reservoir of personal, intellectual and aesthetic being as actualized in the experiences of high school band members and their director as they prepare music for an adjudicated performance. These questions and the possibilities that they open are what draw me into the phenomenon.

Starting from My Experience

To get at the phenomenon of preparing for an adjudicated performance, I start with my own experiences from the multiple perspectives of supervisor, adjudicator, teacher and student. As I turn to this phenomenon, I draw upon those experiences for illumination and questioning.

Through the Eyes and Ears of a Supervisor

Preparing bands for performance in an adjudicated festival has been a significant part of my entire thirty year career in music education. The experience was directly participatory for the fourteen years I taught high school band, and indirectly participatory (by supervising others who were themselves directly experiencing the phenomenon) for the sixteen years I have been a supervisor. During my years in administration I have tried to stay as directly involved with conducting and teaching as my supervisory responsibilities would allow, and in many ways, those have, and continue to be, immensely rewarding and instructive

endeavors. I have conducted preparatory rehearsals of our Baltimore Symphony Side by Side orchestra, organized and conducted an annual spring concert by a group of teacher musicians, and regularly have traded places with my teachers to do clinics and demonstration lessons within their classrooms. Each of these forays back onto the podium generates a small amount of anticipatory anxiety, but an enormous amount of satisfaction, and keeps me connected to the fundamental reasons I continue doing what I do: the music and the students. However, nearly all of these experiences have looked at the phenomenon of preparing music for performance from the perspective of the adult practitioner, not the perspective of the student performer.

I have often wished that I could go back in time and make a career as a conductor and put to use the many insights I have gained over the past three decades. Some of these insights have been gained through observation of skilled and successful directors I know and respect, from attendance at conferences and participation in workshops, and from reflection and self-analysis. A particularly eye-opening revelation came during a graduate conducting course at Catholic University that involved videotaping and analyzing the recording based on a predetermined set of criteria developed by the conducting teacher, Dr. Robert Garofalo. I was confounded by his methodology – he wouldn't tell me how he rated the video until I had rated it first. I soon figured out that he wanted me to think independently and analytically without the predispositions or potential prejudices that knowing his assessment might bring to mine. I would just recently correlate this approach with Husserl's concept of the need to "bracket" (Moran,

2000, p. 149) or leave behind one's own predispositions in order to see a thing in its true essence, a fundamental precept of the phenomenological approach to studying lived experience.

It turned out that I was actually harder on myself than was my professor, but what really struck me about the experience was the altogether new perspective I had on my conducting by virtue of watching this videotape. O'Donohue (1997, p. 127) suggests "visualizing the mind as a tower of windows."

Sadly, many people remain trapped at the one window, looking out every day at the same scene in the same way. Real growth is experienced when you draw back from that one window, turn, and walk around the inner tower of the soul and see all the different windows that await your gaze. Through these different windows, you can see new vistas of possibility, presence, and creativity. So much depends on the frame of vision – the window through which you look. (O'Donohue, 1997, p. 127)

What I learned by looking through a different window into this particular phenomenon made me wonder about what might be gained by looking at the music preparation process from the perspective of the student performers. What would I see if I could see through *their* frame of vision, looking through a window onto the phenomenon through *their* eyes, out of *their* tower of windows, and not simply from my perspective as a director or a director's supervisor? What facets of the spectrum of human experience might become visible if I placed a prism in front of the light that emanates from this phenomenon? What possibilities might be opened up through this prismatic view into this phenomenon? What understandings might teachers gain if they open the door to this avenue of potential insight and enlightenment into the experiences of their students?

Many profound insights that I have gained over the years have come from working with teachers who have spanned the continuum of success in their efforts to bring about a successful band festival performance with their students. Albeit, some of the most profound insights I have gained over the years of working with teachers have not been because of what I have seen or heard, but from what has *not* been seen or heard, or by what are, for me, clearly head-scratching moments of bewilderment as I try to understand the rationale that drives certain director behaviors. What causes a teacher to choose *not* to hold his or her students accountable for actually doing what they are instructed to do? What factors motivate a teacher to count off two audible measures when a clear pick-up gesture and mutual eye contact with all the players would result in a much more satisfying entrance? What was the director thinking when he or she picked music that was clearly too difficult for their ensemble? Does this teacher have any idea what their students are thinking while they go through the process of preparing the music? Are they simply driving forward with a fixed plan that has no relationship to the actual needs of this particular group of students? Many of these teachers, it seems, only approach this task from their own perspective as the director, with little or no recognition or consideration of the experience from the students' perspective. What do the students experience in relation to the decisions and behaviors of their band director? How might engagement with the students, finding out what *their* experience is like, affect the behaviors of the teacher? In what ways might these insights change how a director approaches the music preparation process?

Through the Eyes and Ears of an Adjudicator

Some of the most enjoyable, inspiring, enlightening, and yet paradoxically disheartening experiences I have had in my career have been those associated with serving as an adjudicator at various band and orchestra festivals. I have heard middle school and high school ensembles perform with levels of technical expertise and expressive maturity that would make collegiate and adult ensembles envious. There have also been many performances where, as an adjudicator, tasked with making both critical and constructive commentary, I have had to search in vain for positive things to say and have had to focus entirely on highlighting fundamental concepts and skills that should have been taught but were clearly not in evidence within a particular performance.

Often, when I hear a band or orchestra from the perspective of the adjudicator's chair, I try to imagine what it must have been like in that rehearsal room as the group and their director prepared the music. It's easy for an adjudicator to make assumptions such as - "this band plays in tune – these students have been taught to listen and adjust" or "that technically difficult passage is pretty ragged and I hear some wrong notes – I imagine that the director has never slowed the section down or held every player accountable for playing all the correct pitches." These, however, are only assumptions based on my own personal experiences and what I intuit based on those experiences and what I see and hear at that particular moment in time. I wasn't there to see and hear if this was indeed what characterized the rehearsals that lead up to this performance. I might be right. I might be half right. Or, I might be missing a critical perspective

that would make this performance either a huge success or a major disappointment for this ensemble. Rarely does the adjudicator get the opportunity to confirm or refute these assumptions.

Adjudicators are tasked with seeing and hearing what is presented and making a judgment about that moment in time and about that particular performance. In a court of law, a judge would gather evidence and testimony from various parties to try to get a full, multidimensional perspective on a particular event that has already transpired. The adjudicator of a musical performance, however, while having the opportunity to hear the actual performance, is not generally privy to all that has gone before in the preparation for that performance. The back story is untold. The lived experience of the preparation of this musical presentation is missing from the judges' perspective. Would the knowing of some of that back-story be a detriment to a fair and unbiased adjudication of a performance? Would it prohibit the adjudicator from taking a presuppositionless perspective on the performance? Or would it uncover layers of important insight that would provide the adjudication experience with more context and potentially more pedagogical value for the director and the participants? At some adjudication festivals, judges are given some of this back story from either a festival coordinator or host director. Some participating directors have taken it upon themselves to write a note to each judge outlining their inadequate rehearsal schedule, letting the adjudicators know how many of their players are either missing from the performance today or that their star trumpet player got hit in the mouth with a baseball the night before and can't play today. Some adjudicators

look at these missives as preemptive excuses for a sub-par performance while others may consider it to be useful to set a context for a more fair and realistic assessment.

I recall one of my first adjudication experiences where having this type of context would have been very useful. The band I was adjudicating was performing Russian Christmas Music by Alfred Reed and there is a very large and important moving bass line through several sections of the piece that was entirely missing at this particular performance. I was pretty unforgiving and lowered my rating because of the missing musical material. (This perspective might have been predicated on a recent experience I had as a director where a performance under my direction was missing an important percussion part and was roundly criticized by several of the adjudicators on that particular panel.) I found out after the fact that the player responsible for that line had been in a car accident the night before and was still in the hospital during the actual performance. While the musical line was indeed critical and should have been present, this might have been an example of context that would have helped to inform my recorded comments and been useful to help couch my final rating. Would my commentary have been more useful to the director and students had I known of this situation? Or, should any important solo line have an understudy ready to perform if needed? Any time we are depending on people, students or adults, in a performance context, is it not prudent to have someone ready to step in if a situation would occur that would preclude that particular musician from performing? Or is this unreasonable to expect in a school context? How do these possibilities affect the adjudication

experience for the students and the director? Should they have chosen other music that was not as dependent on individual and potentially irreplaceable student musicians?

Through the Eyes and Ears of a Teacher

Throughout my three decades in this field I have been privileged to work with many fine and some famous teachers, conductors, performers and composers. Each of these interactions has in some way helped me to continue to grow as not only an instrumental music teacher responsible for teaching school aged students, but also as a teacher of teachers, a role which more accurately characterizes my current work. I still have the opportunity to work with school age students when I visit teachers and we switch places (I teach and they observe), when I run the occasional rehearsal of student musicians for a county honors group or the annual Side by Side orchestra that we collaboratively produce with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, or on those occasions where I am called upon to serve as a clinician with an ensemble visiting from out of the area. I also organize and conduct a concert band comprised mainly of instrumental music teachers within our county and, although the membership is comprised of highly competent adult musicians, I try to approach each rehearsal as both a teaching opportunity for the participants and as an opportunity for me to reinvigorate and rediscover the teaching experience that I so thoroughly enjoyed when I worked with students on a regular basis.

One of the most profound similarities between the teacher ensemble experience for me as the “teacher” and my experiences as the “teacher” of my

most talented high school bands is the level of my personal expectation for preparedness for rehearsals. Both experience and the literature on effective teaching support the notion that effective teachers are prepared for instruction. Effective teachers have a plan and they successfully implement this plan. I continue to be reminded in these adult ensemble rehearsals, as I was with my high school groups, that going into a rehearsal well prepared, i.e., knowing the musical score and having a concept of what you want to produce from an ensemble standpoint, is absolutely critical for success. In many subtle (and some not so subtle) ways, the members of an ensemble (student or adult) will let you know as the director if they perceive you to be unprepared for rehearsal.

As I have moved forward in my career as an educator, I have become more and more convinced that teaching is a lifelong growth activity. I suppose in some way I knew this early in my career as I would use my professional study days to go to other school systems and observe master teachers at work in the hopes of learning techniques and skills that would enhance my own practice. I still make it a habit of attending seminars, conferences, and workshops and when serving as a judge myself, engage with other judges on the various topics of rehearsal technique, literature selection and program planning and implementation. Only recently have I been struck by what in retrospect may be a valuable untapped source of insight into this phenomenon. What do the student performers themselves experience as they live through the process of preparing the music for performance? Nadia Boulanger, composition teacher of many of America's finest composers once said, "As a teacher, my whole life is based on

understanding others, not on making them understand me. What the student thinks...that is the important thing” (as cited in Lisk, 2006, p. 15). Are we basing our pedagogy on understanding others, or are we basing it on making them understand us? Do we know what the students think? If we don't, shouldn't we?

Through the Eyes and Ears of a Student

Until recently, I had not thought to investigate what goes on in the minds and bodies of the performers themselves to see how they are experiencing the phenomenon of preparing repertoire for performance. I have interacted with students superficially both as a teacher and as their teacher's supervisor in the quest for improved performance, but I have never really asked the question, “What is the essence of the lived experience of these students as they prepare music for an adjudicated band festival?” My view was considerably more monochromatic than it might have been had I engaged with students and ventured into the full spectrum of prismatic perspectives that they might have unlocked. I was largely oblivious to the polyphony of their experience.

I have cursory recollections of these experiences remembered from my own years as a high school band member, but those were over three decades ago, so the completeness of those remembrances may be in doubt. One memory that does resonate, however, has to do with serving as the trumpet section leader and, while being viscerally energized about every new piece of music, I was also frustrated that all of the students in the ensemble did not share my enthusiasm for the music or a commitment to practice their parts so they were played at an appropriately high level. I remember being upset with the members of the trumpet

section during rehearsal when notes or rhythms were incorrect or expressive markings were being ignored. Were they not as excited about this music as I was? Didn't they care as much? I certainly wasn't thinking about this particular phenomenon from their viewpoint – I was too involved in my own experience of it. What were *they* thinking? What was *their* experience? How might my interpretation of this experience have been different if I had been sitting in *their* seat, playing *their* part? My perspective at the time gave no credence to, indeed it was completely unaware of, the polyphonies of experience that existed all around me.

A Missed Opportunity

I often feel a sense of lost opportunity during the last three years I served as a high school band director since my two daughters were both in my band and could have offered perspectives that may have been enlightening and insightful. Looking back, I'm confident they did indeed offer this feedback and input, but I did not afford it the respect or attention it deserved. This may have been because I felt their perspectives might have been clouded by their personal prejudices and their allegiance to their dad, or their desire to hide certain things altogether, thinking that I might not appreciate what they had to say. Might they have shared perspectives that had been tainted by a view through "rose-colored glasses" that skewed the truth of an experience through personal and familial bias? Maybe I was inadvertently exercising some type of "bracketing" as Husserl might recommend, trying to place my interactions with my daughters outside my frame of reference when considering pedagogical issues. In retrospect, I imagine this

particular act of “bracketing” was an ill-advised action on my part, since it precluded access to a potentially highly enlightening perspective into the process of preparing music for performance as experienced through the eyes and ears and bodies of students themselves. Although there has been a period of nearly ten years since I had both of my daughters in my band, with the right questions and under the right circumstances, I might yet be able to mine this relatively untapped, yet potentially rich source of recollection and insight.

Mistakes and Missteps

Over the past decade or so, I have made numerous presentations to groups of band directors (at school system professional development sessions and at state and regional music education conferences), contributed a chapter on the subject of assessment preparation to a book on instrumental music pedagogy and served as an adjudicator and clinician countless times where I have worked with and offered advice on the subject of band performance to directors and their students. In many ways, my current professional comfort level with the experience of preparing students for adjudicated performances is based not so much on the successes of my later teaching years, but on the many mistakes, both small and profound, that I made in my early years as a teacher. These include many that I recall with a twinge of discomfort, but most that I can now laugh about, and many of which now form a large part of my repertoire of advice and anecdotes for new teachers or teachers struggling to achieve success with their groups. However, little of this body of insight was fed directly or indirectly from perspectives gained through focused and thoughtful engagement with students under my direction. What

engaging perspectives and profound insights might I have gathered if I had thought to engage the students under my direction more pointedly and in a more thoughtful and reflective manner? What were the students' experiences with the process of learning music for performance? Were they similar to mine as the director? Or were they profoundly different because of their different place in the process? What did they see, hear and feel from their physical location within the ensemble? How did the spatial qualities of rehearsing and performing the music manifest themselves in their experience?

One of the most memorable and consistent mistakes I made early in my teaching career (and one that I find manifest in many teachers today) was choosing music that was not well suited to the skills of the musicians and that, therefore, did not set up the musicians for success. As a young teacher, I always chose music of high quality for performance (as did my high school band director and as do many other ensemble conductors), but it was often music that was beyond the ability of my ensemble to perform well, even under the best of circumstances. In a reference to the concept of 'taste' (we might understand it in this context more as 'judgment'), Gadamer (1960/1989, p. 41) says that "Taste... seems to prove itself most where not only the right thing is chosen, but the right thing for the right place." Similarly, Frank Battisti (2007, p. 19) suggests, all repertoire selection falls somewhere within the following five categories that address quality of literature and suitability for a particular context: 1) excellent and appropriate, 2) excellent and inappropriate, 3) bad and appropriate, 4) bad and inappropriate, and 5) questionable yet functional. Based on my recollections,

those early choices would have fallen in the category of excellent yet inappropriate. Gadamer might have labeled the decision as the ‘right’ thing chosen for the ‘wrong’ place.

I wonder what my students felt about those repertoire choices, that might have been the right things but in the wrong place. At this point, I can only guess. What might they have told me if I had thought to ask? And where did my decisions place the students in the process? Were they set up for failure (and a negative experience and memory) from the outset because I placed an unreasonable expectation in their path? Or, did they not realize that the experience should have been any different? After all, this was *their* frame of reference. What did they have to compare it to? The question of the quality of the experience remains, despite the nature of the students’ breadth of experience or lack thereof. Can students have an aesthetic experience when they are constantly trying to navigate clearly insurmountable technical challenges? What was their experience as they grappled with some very formidable musical obstacles? Was I exercising poor taste, in the context of Gadamer’s understanding?

Those early performances, while ambitious, were plagued by ragged technique and were lacking in musicality, expression and fluency. John Knight (2007, p. 162), professor of conducting and music education at Oberlin College, suggests that “The primary purpose of a musical performance is to express, not to impress.” It is critical to “choose works of substance with technical demands that do not surpass your group’s ability to play expressively” (p. 162). In retrospect, I was most likely more focused on trying to impress others (and myself, too, I

imagine) at the expense of being able to be expressive and musical. Speaking as an adjudicator, I might say something like, “We have to make something musical happen here – it can’t just be a series of notes one after the other” or, a personal favorite, “Musicality cannot be achieved until we have crossed the threshold of technique.”

One might ask how the students experience this situation where the technical difficulty gets in the way of their efforts at being musical. Are they frustrated that they are having difficulty with technique and therefore can’t be more expressive, or is this even a factor in what their experience is of this phenomenon at this point? Do they really understand that they should be doing more to be expressive but that they are being limited by the physical, bodily, kinesthetic demand being placed on them? How would they characterize their experience with this really challenging music?

Although I eventually learned this powerful lesson - that musicality is unattainable until the threshold of technique has been crossed - I can only imagine how those early performance experiences might have been different had I asked my students for input and listened to what they had to say. However vast my collection of learnings like this is now, it does not include many actual insights from the participants themselves. I was focused on only my suppositions of what they may or may not have experienced in the process and the recollection of the abject frustration visible on the faces of some of my students as they struggled valiantly, but ultimately unsuccessfully, with my unrealistic repertoire expectations. How might things have been different if I had exercised more

presuppositionlessness to my approach to their experience? How might things have been different had I engaged them for their input? How might this have changed the experience for all of us? In hindsight, my actions, although well intentioned, did not demonstrate the “attentive awareness to the details and seemingly trivial dimensions of our everyday educational lives” called for in van Manen’s description of a critical pedagogical competence (1997, p. 8). How might the experiences of the students been changed had I found the “consequential in the inconsequential, the significant in the taken-for-granted?” (van Manen, 1997, p. 8). How might the experience have been different for the students if I had looked at it through the multi- faceted potential for exposure inherent in a prism, where a kaleidoscope of possibilities and all that they might have signified would have been accessible for perception and potential enlightenment? How might the experience have been different for the students if I had been cognizant of the polyphonic nature of their experience, each of them playing a unique and personal musical role in the collective, sometimes cacophonous, yet often harmonious, symphony of sounds that characterize the high school ensemble experience?

Shared Responsibility

In any musical endeavor, there is shared responsibility for performance success. Both the conductor and the performers share in the collaborative act of music making. My experiences have demonstrated that many directors feel that it is their job to tell the students how to play, and it is the students’ job to carry out those directions. I certainly felt that way when I began teaching. This is not to say

that the experience of directing an ensemble needs to be run like a committee with all the students having an equal say in every musical decision. (This sort of consensus-based music making often works in professional ensembles, most notably the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, but might not prove very efficacious in most public school settings.) It may be reasonable, however, to suggest that perspectives other than the director's are worth investigating and considering. Certainly teachers need to be aware of what is going on in the minds and bodies of their students, the performers. While insights gleaned from exploring the experience from the perspective of the conductor would doubtless be enlightening, insightful and valuable on many levels (there is indeed an abundance of excellent resource material of this type currently available), I sense a critical piece of the collaborative task of music making is being left out of the discussion. What is it that the performers themselves are experiencing? What are they living as they go through this phenomenon? How are they experiencing the rehearsals, the repertoire and the group dynamic of the ensemble? As Marcel (1950) might have suggested, this is a mystery in need of evocative comprehension.

The Phenomenon from a Different Perspective

I am drawn to the possibility that exploring the experience from the perspective of the students has enormous potential for pedagogical insight. What is actually going on in the minds and bodies of the student performers as they practice (individually), rehearse (collectively) and otherwise interact with the music in preparation for performance? What insights live in the polyphony of

their experiences? How might their experience parallel or run counter to (or exist independently of) the experiences as viewed through the lens of the director?

These and other questions help to frame the focus of this particular inquiry: **What are the lived experiences of band students and their director as they prepare for an adjudicated performance?** A most appropriate methodology through which to approach this question is hermeneutic phenomenology, a type of research that I have come to appreciate as a powerful tool for gaining insight into and understanding human experience.

The Calling to Phenomenology

Van Manen's (1997) descriptions of phenomenological research include allusions to "a search for what it means to be human" and "a poetizing activity ... which hearkens back to the silence from which the words emanate" (pp. 12-13). These evocative descriptors resonate with me since it is in fact a profoundly human, creative and aesthetic experience we are trying to explore. Hermeneutic phenomenology is a philosophy of the personal and the individual. I am finding it increasingly valuable and exciting to focus my thinking on gathering and reflecting on lived experiences in their full multi-dimensionality. The more I have explored the various qualitative methodologies, the more I have become drawn to what was for me a new and fascinating viewpoint – that I found within the realm of hermeneutic phenomenology.

While I sensed a growing inclination to move into a qualitative arena to be not only professionally but personally engaged with what I perceived to be the heart of what I wanted to do from a research standpoint, one particular course

experience was a defining moment along this path. For a research class I took during a summer session several years ago, we read *From Positivism to Interpretivism and Beyond* (Heshusius & Ballard, 1996). Presented therein were stories of personal and professional transformation as educators moved through the mind and body connection while engaging in educational and social research. Curt Dudley-Marling shares this insight:

A world we know with complete certainty fulfilled in pure knowing and separate from practical activity is an abstraction. The messy reality we inhabit bears only the faintest resemblance to the socially constructed reality of pure knowing. Simple solutions are to be preferred only in the rationally constructed reality of pure language, a reality that denies the complex lives of ordinary people living in the real world. (pp. 110-111)

This idea of focusing research on the complexity of the lived experience in all its glorious scruffiness was not only refreshing, but it touched the heart of what I perceived to be the reality of the musical experience for students in school bands: a deeply personal and individual experience that is profoundly unique and contextual. While it is easy to stereotype and construct boxes in which to place “subjects,” the rich complexity of human experience begs for an approach such as phenomenology that offers unique pathways into the glorious disarray of real life as experienced by real people in real situations.

Exploring the Essence of the Musical Experience

Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962, p. vii) describes phenomenology as “the study of essences.” Van Manen (1997, p. 177) describes an essence as “that which makes a thing what it is, and without which it would not be what it is.” The essence of the musical experience is at once too outwardly simple and too inwardly complex to be reduced effectively to its component parts if one is

seeking to gain access to the phenomenon from an experiential standpoint. Reimer (2003) speaks of the frustrating gap found between what language is capable of meaning and what music is capable of meaning. He posits that although language can “help us and our students get closer to the brink of the mystery... it cannot take us beyond. Only musical experience can” (p. 134). Mikel Dufrenne, in *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience* (1973), writes that “Music provides us with an example of an art that is nonrepresentational and of an essentially temporal nature” (p. 249). He continues to describe in his discussion that follows, the various component parts of a musical experience:

Music unveils a world invisible to the eye, undemonstrable to the intellect. Yet this world can be expressed only by music, for it is a world which vanishes once the music ends. It exists in the music insofar as it is perceived, and nowhere else. Anything we may say of it in another language is pitifully inadequate to express what music expresses... But this ineffable meaning still deserves to be called meaning, for it is what the musical object says. The musical object exists only by expressing this meaning. Meaning informs music, making it music rather than an incoherent succession of sounds. (Dufrenne, 1973, pp. 265-266)

A variety of theories have been proffered that try to explicate the primary essence of music, tending to fall either in the “music as product” camp or the “music as performance” camp. Composition teacher Nadia Boulanger suggests that the work product is the essence of music: “To me, the greatest objective is when the composer disappears, the performer disappears, and there remains only the work” (Kendall, 1976, p. 115). On the other hand, David J. Elliot, in *Music Matters: A New Philosophy of Music Education* (1995), asserts the primacy of the process when he suggests, “What music is, at root, is a human activity... fundamentally, music is something people do” (p. 39). Insights into this

seemingly contradictory relationship may be part of what is uncovered through the interactions and reflections of the student participants in this inquiry.

Van Manen (1997) asserts that “It is a naïve rationalism that believes that the phenomena of life (or music making, in this case) can be made intellectually crystal clear or theoretically perfectly transparent” (p. 17). He goes on to point out that phenomenology does not allow for empirical generalizations, suggesting that “Generalizations about human experiences are almost always of troublesome value” (p. 22). I find this particular notion to be especially powerful since it is with unfortunate regularity that I see adults make generalizations about student concerns, behaviors and performance peculiarities. Students are often placed by adults into restrictive and artificial pigeon holes where the essence of the individuals and their experiences are lost and the possibility for understanding and insight is obscured due to ignorance or dismissal of the unique in favor of recognition and exaltation of the generalizable. The nature of the human experience is intensely personal and contextual, and the presuppositionless perspective inherent in phenomenology is uniquely adept at getting at the true essence of the lived experience. The challenge, as reflected by Heidegger (1926/1962), is to resist the classificatory closure to fresh experiencing that representational structures can bring to new encounters.

One of the potential problems with phenomenological inquiry is not so much that researchers know too little about a particular phenomenon, but that they may know too much (van Manen, 1997). It would be all too easy for me, as a person of considerable experience with this particular phenomenon, to impose my

own presuppositions and expectations onto the process. It will be incumbent on me to do as Husserl suggests and “bracket” the phenomenon, to take hold of the phenomenon and then place it outside of my own knowledge of the phenomenon. Knowing that I cannot claim ignorance of the phenomenon, nor should I try to forget all I know of it, van Manen (1997) suggests that “It is better to make explicit our understandings, beliefs, biases, assumptions, presuppositions, and theories” (p. 47). In so doing one can hold these influences at bay and potentially even “turn this knowledge against itself” in an effort to get at the essence of the phenomenon, in this case the lived experience of band students as they prepare for an adjudicated performance. It is my goal within the scope of the first and second chapters to illuminate my own understandings, beliefs, biases, assumptions, presuppositions and theories about this phenomenon so they may be explicitly outlined and understood within the context of the inquiry to be undertaken into the nature of the experience of the students and their director as they prepare music for adjudicated performance.

From a Student’s Perspective – Personal Recollections

Nearly all band directors have had some level of personal experience as a member of a band. I remember one particular ensemble rehearsal where, as a student, I was watching the timpanist (who eventually became the class valedictorian and is now a doctor) work her way through the very active and challenging timpani solo at the end of Rimsky-Korsakov’s “Procession of the Nobles.” The trumpet section was silently cheering for her to succeed since she was still learning to handle the technique of switching drums during the sixteenth

note passages. It was clear that she understood the intellectual scope of what she was doing, but the kinesthetic challenges were still present and confounding to her, as demonstrated by her continued struggles with the physicality of the task. This experience seems to fall neatly into what van Manen might call the *corporeality* or *lived body* aspect of how we inhabit the lifeworld (1997, p. 103).

The supportive attitude we demonstrated was fostered by our director and embraced by all of us, knowing that we worked best as a mutually supportive community. I don't recall ever hoping someone would make a misstep when they played by themselves in front of the group. I sensed that this perspective was widely shared within the ensemble. Was this a sign of director success at setting expectations of civility within the ensemble, or an indication of the fundamental decency of the students in the ensemble? Or, did it have more to do with the pride the members all had in the ensemble experience and how that needed to be preserved? Was the *esprit de corps* that was manifesting in my particular remembrance of this event as much a part of the experience of the other students in the ensemble as they went through the process of preparing the music for performance? Did we want her to get it right so we could move on to something else? Or, did we simply care about each other as human beings? Might van Manen categorize this as belonging to the *relationality* or *lived other* aspect of the four *lifeworld existentials* that he suggests help to frame the inquiry into our lifeworld experiences (1997, p. 104)?

That particular musical selection also brings back performance memories for me personally because it featured numerous trumpet section fanfare lines and

a very exposed trumpet solo. The band earned a superior rating at the Apple Blossom Festival in Winchester, Virginia with that selection on our program and with William D. Revelli, the director of bands at the University of Michigan and a legend in the band field, as one of the adjudicators. The memory brings a smile to my face even now, over 30 years after it occurred. I remember being more than a bit anxious and excited to perform in that setting, an auditorium on the campus of Shenandoah Conservatory of Music (the school I would later attend to work on my bachelor's degree) and for that august group of adjudicators. The performance went quite well, both from the perspective of the full band performance, as well as from my perspective as the trumpet soloist. I was intensely proud of both the band's performance overall and of my own personal work with the solo and the various trumpet section features. The juxtaposition of the possibility of failure with the cathartic achievement of success is an intoxicating mixture of feelings that only intensifies the rush one gets when performing successfully in a setting of significant exposure and pressure. Is this a testament to the power of the music, the power of the achievement, a combination of the two, or something else entirely? The essence of the musical experience has been described as a blended and multidimensional one that is at once intensely personal and artistic in nature, but one that cannot be separated from the interpersonal dimensions of the ensemble experience that characterizes the phenomenon under study in this particular inquiry. How also does the performance aspect (performing for an audience) of the experience intensify and alter the experience as felt by the participants? What is the experience of the students who are in the midst of these

complex interactions between the musical, emotional and social dimensions of preparing music for performance?

Listening – the Aural Prismatic Perspective

I remember listening to the judge's tapes after the Apple Blossom Festival performance (on the bus back home) and swelling with pride as the experience was re-visited this time as a listener, with the judge's play by play commentary and critique overlaid on top of the recorded performance. Similar to the experience cited in the opening quotes from the high school flute and clarinet players, we had listened to recordings of our progress occasionally throughout the preparation process (as motivation and to isolate errors and performance issues), but it was a very different experience to hear the judge's comments provided as the performance was being lived out on the stage and subsequently re-experienced via the audio recording. There was a heightened sense of relevance and urgency to this listening experience, since in a way it was our performance assessment, our final exam, the culmination of the weeks of preparation and effort. In *What Is Called Thinking?* Heidegger (1968) calls upon us to practice what he calls "thinking hearing:" a thinking which listens, a listening which is thoughtful. While we were listening with a different purpose on this occasion, was it in a thoughtful way, practicing our own primitive version of thinking hearing? Levin (1989, pp. 249-250) asserts that for proper hearing, "There must also be understanding: an understanding which makes a difference in our hearing and in the way we comport ourselves as listening beings." Was this "understanding that made a difference" at work when we listened to that performance feedback? Were

we hearing the full spectrum of tone colors available, or were we flailing in a sea of grey? If we were, was it our perceptions as listeners that were standing in the way of experiencing the multi-hued aural presentation in all of its potentiality, or was it a function of the performance to which we were listening?

Surely, many students have had similar experiences to the one described above, but my engagement with students up to this point has not focused on pulling this type of experience to the fore. I often have engaged with students in the preparation of literature for performance, but most often this interaction has been with the goal of assessing their particular understanding of a specific performance expectation relating to a concept of skill such as rhythm, technique, articulation or interpretation. I have not, however, actually investigated what the experience of learning this music is like from their perspective, as the actual preparers and performers of music for adjudicated performance. Were they particularly enamored by, and therefore more motivated, to practice a particular piece because they liked it better? One of the opening student quotes cited that particular student's belief that if they had known more about a particular piece of music, they might have played it more in keeping with how the composer had intended it to be played. Another student shared that the reason the students felt one piece of their program was less well performed was that the students didn't really understand it as well as they did the other selection. Were they, therefore, more excited and engaged in the preparation and performance of one of the pieces over the other? Might this relatively lower level of engagement with this particular selection manifest itself in a higher level of apprehension about the

upcoming performance? If so, in what ways did that apprehension affect the students in their preparation and at the performance itself? How did their sense of self reflect the climate in the rehearsals? What was their experience as they coped with the technical and ensemble challenges of the music, especially on the selection where their comfort level was lower? What were the feelings they experienced immediately before they performed, or immediately afterward? These are questions that I traditionally have not asked when working with students, even though responses to these prompts might have profound pedagogical implications.

It is reasonable to propose that, had the director known of the students' lower level of engagement with, connection to and understanding of that particular selection, the director might have approached their rehearsal and preparation in a different way. The director might have connected the students more to the cultural and historical context of that piece, a piece where they could not truly exhibit a high level of understanding since "Understanding only takes place in the context of an existing tradition" (Moran, 2000, p. 251), in this case, a tradition that these students did not yet fully comprehend and internalize.

Gadamer (1960/1989) speaks to the timeless nature of aesthetic experience and the need to understand the world in which a work of art has its genesis:

If we acknowledge that the work of art is not a timeless object of aesthetic experience but belongs to a "world" that alone determines its full significance, it would seem to follow that the true significance of the work of art can be understood only in terms of its origin and genesis within that "world". Hence all the various means of historical reconstruction – re-establishing the "world" to which it belongs, re-establishing the original situation which the creative artist "had in mind" performing in the original

style, and so on – can claim to reveal the true meaning of a work of art and guard against misunderstanding and anachronistic interpretation. (p. 159)

An echo of Gadamer's words can be found in one of the conversational offerings of the student whose opening quote includes the insightful observation that the students need to know what the creative artist "had in mind" when they were writing the piece in question, "so we can play it better."

Writing Your Way into the Musical Experience

As the nature of phenomenology is such that writing is a fundamental way of bringing the essence of an experience to the fore, writing tasks for the students (and their director) may generate valuable insights into the nature of this particular lived experience. Van Manen (2003, p. 7) reminds us that "Hermeneutic phenomenological research is fundamentally a writing activity." The reflective nature of writing is characteristic of the intersubjectivity needed within the context of the human science research process. A phenomenologist might assert that only through reflective engagement with the phenomenon can one hope to come to any understanding of it. This reflection can come both in the way of oral and written communication, but Gadamer is clear in that, while writing appears a secondary phenomenon to that of the spoken word, this "capacity for being written down is based on the fact that speech itself shares in the pure ideality of the meaning that communicates itself in it. In writing, the meaning of what is spoken exists purely for itself, completely detached from all emotional elements of expression and communication" (1960/1989, p. 394). This assertion, that "the meaning of something written is fundamentally identifiable and repeatable"

(Gadamer, 1960/1989, p. 394), makes that meaning eminently (and repeat-ably) accessible to those who would reflect on it in a hermeneutic manner.

Reflective writing is not something I ever initiated as a teacher, with the notable exception of having students reflect on their performance with the specific intent of improving its technical and expressive competence. Perhaps this was due to an overarching belief (and most music educators' training) that a strong focus on developing performance technique will result in the best performance from a technical and musical standpoint.

A small but growing contingent of writers and researchers in the field of instrumental music education (Garafalo, 1976; Labuta, 1972; Norcross, 1994; Whaley, 1990) has been exploring the impact of more comprehensive approaches to teaching musicianship through performance in band. In recent years, there have been multiple resources developed for that focus on teaching more than performance technique during band rehearsals. The most extensive is the series of books and CD's titled appropriately, *Teaching Music through Performance in Band*. These and other resources provide valuable materials for teachers to use in supporting the exploration of more comprehensive student understanding of the music they are studying as a means of facilitating deeper student engagement with the repertoire. Creative and reflective writing, alas, do not play a major part in any of these particular efforts at making the band experience more comprehensive, possibly due to the gap alluded to by Reimer (2003, p. 134) between "what language is capable of meaning and what music is capable of meaning."

When I was a student in high school band, we spent all of our class time rehearsing, and none of it writing. Rehearsal time was zealously guarded and not easily relinquished for any activity that wasn't directly focused on improving performance. As with many high school band directors, much of my repertoire of teaching techniques was based on what I learned from our own high school band experience, since that experience was the turning point in inspiring me to engage in the pursuit of a career in music. I was, therefore, most inclined to follow the pedagogical lead of my high school band director, at least during my early years as a teacher, and his style included no writing or reflective activity beyond listening within the rehearsal setting. For my purposes in this inquiry, it will indeed be necessary for students and their director to engage in writing (something I would never have thought to do in my early years of teaching) to unearth the meaning hidden in the experiences that each participant may have heretofore not even known they were experiencing. Similar to what I as the researcher will need to do, the act of putting thought to paper may help to illuminate the experience in ways that dialogue alone may not. In some ways, each participant will be writing his / her own part in what will become his / her version of the ultimate manifestation of musical polyphony, a fugue.

Music, Mystery, Magic and Motivation

Ah, music ... a magic beyond all we do here! (Professor Dumbledore, as cited in Rowling, 1997, p. 128)

...the dawn brings awakening and renewal. In our mediocrity and distraction, we forget that we are privileged to live in a wondrous universe. (O'Donohue, 1997, p. 2)

...music heard so deeply

That it is not heard at all, but you are the music
While the music lasts. (T.S. Eliot, 1944, p. 33)

The musical experience for a student during the school day brings an awakening of senses not engaged through the sameness and monochromatic nature of courses that only deal with seeing and hearing – mainly seeing. In band class not only do we see the notes on the page (that is actually only the beginning), we use our bodies and our breath to produce sounds. We hear the many sonic manifestations of others as they contribute to the veritable symphony of aural stimulation – we “feel” the music in our bodies and our being – a visceral, bodily significant experience within the richly harmonious world of a performance class that engages us with nearly every sense. In our seats within the band we are *inside* the sound, surrounded by instruments of all types. The music is so close that there doesn’t “seem to be any difference between hearing with my ears and feeling the vibrations coursing through my body” (Nierenberg, 2009, p. 7).

When I was in high school, every day in band class new mysteries were revealed, new tone colors experienced, new mixtures of sounds discovered. I was awakened to the immensity, complexity and richness of the sonorous environment where we lived when we were in the band rehearsal. The sound enveloped us and became part of us, and we became part of it, an *it* that was greater than any single individual tonal contribution, an *it* that, like the colors in a kaleidoscope (or as seen through a prism), were ever changing and richly luminescent. It was, in many ways, where “magic” happened for me.

Every morning upon arriving at school I would go first to the band room where, depending on the time, I would either talk with friends or unpack my trumpet and practice a bit so I'd be warmed-up when it came time for band class. Serious practice of private lesson material and solos was saved for evenings, usually after dinner, and only on rare occasions was work needed on band literature since it was generally not of the technical difficulty of whatever solos or exercises I was working on for private lessons at that time. When band class came around, since I had already played earlier in the day, it was easier to warm-up in a very short time, since class only afforded me the time to warm-up for a few minutes before we got down to some serious rehearsal with the full band. I wanted to make sure I was ready to play my best, both for me personally, and to set the example for which I felt responsible. I didn't want to abrogate the trust I believed my director had in me by being unprepared to perform and to lead. It was a big deal to have earned this kind of trust, and I didn't take it lightly. I felt as if I would be letting not only my teacher down, but the ensemble as well. This was also in addition to the damage that it could do to my own ego and reputation which was, and still is, a strong source of personal motivation. My mother used this type of motivation often, and to great success, by reminding me that if I decided to slack off in any way, someone else would be glad to take over my first chair position and the concomitant responsibilities (and glories) associated with that leadership and performance role. Needless to say, she had me pegged pretty well.

As a high school band student, one of the things I remember most vividly was the music itself. I remember being thoroughly enthralled by the repertoire we worked on, much of which I later came to know as staples of band literature like the Holst Suites, Schuman's Chester Overture, and some more contemporary pieces like the Giovannini Overture in B Flat, a personal favorite that I still program with groups I conduct. I was even more eager than usual to get to band that first day after a concert when we would come in to the band room and find the folder filled with new music to learn. It was almost like Christmas morning, opening the folder metaphorically represented opening a present – with anxious anticipation of what was to be found within. This feeling of glorious expectation and longing for the new music, whether it was in my folder as a musician or, as is now the case, in my folder as the conductor, is one that continues to this day. Is this in line with what Heidegger (1926/1962, p. 307) describes as the “ontological priority of possibility”? Is this a way into understanding the delicious anxiety I experienced each day in band class, awaiting the impending possibilities inherent in my experience in band? Is this a way to understand why I so looked forward to every rehearsal, eagerly awaiting new musical experiences and the realm of infinite possibilities?

I recall having received notification that the teacher band (an adult band comprised mainly of instrumental music teachers in the county school system where I work as a supervisor) that I conduct had been accepted to perform at the Eastern Division Conference of NAFME, the National Association for Music Education. I immediately began brainstorming possible repertoire, and spent

hours postulating possible concert programs for that performance which came the next April. And I enjoyed every minute of that process. The anticipation reminded me of the experiences I felt as a student when we would get the new folders after a concert. There was always so much wonderful music to play, and we were given the opportunity to enter a world of rich sonic possibilities each time we came to band. What could have been better?

Although every day no longer brings the same opportunity for me personally to engage in this way with music as I once did, the joy of working with music has not abated; it simply takes a slightly different form now and the experience is from a slightly different perspective. But, it always retains its potential for generating moments of pure magic, not just at the moment of opening the present, but throughout the experience of playing with the new game, as it were, and learning about all of the possibilities for play inherent in the music learning process.

Places and People

Every performance opportunity presented to me in my experience as a high school band student brought with it a renewed sense of exhilaration and expectation, whether it was in the gym of the old high school, in the wonderful new auditorium of the new high school, or in a totally different venue off campus. The new high school auditorium (in my mind it will always be a concert hall and not simply a place to gather the full school population for assemblies and other such mundane high school activities) reminded me of a theater in the round with the stage at the bottom of a significantly sloped seating area divided into four

sections, each with vivid and contrasting color displayed by the padded seat cushions. When we performed there I felt we were in a world class concert hall, suitable for the finest professional ensemble, and at that moment, the world class ensemble was us. We were the ones making the magic that Professor Dumbledore alludes to in the opening quote. I felt that only the best performance was acceptable in such a beautiful venue.

Van Manen points out that “The space in which we find ourselves affects the way we feel” (1997, p. 102). As we entered the brand new auditorium, certainly the most attractive and formal concert hall any of us had ever entered, how did we react mentally and physically? Were we in awe? Did we know that something magical was to happen in this place? How was our attitude different, or similar, to the way we felt when we entered the band room – or the auditorium of the old high school whose confining stage our large band had outgrown long ago? When a person walks into a cathedral they are inclined to be struck by a sense of reverence and the transcendental, even if they are not particularly religious. Do we not become, in a sense, the space we are in? (van Manen, 1997, p. 102).

The physical setting of a performance need not be one of symphony hall formality to be memorable or significant, however. The “space” we enter may be significant for reasons far beyond the actual physical presentation of the venue. Two particular experiences from my high school years come immediately to mind. The first, a concert presented in a high school gymnasium at Male High School in Louisville, Kentucky, in conjunction with a trip to perform at the Kentucky Derby in 1973, was memorable for several reasons. I was a high school

freshman and still quite impressionable when it came to new experiences and new performance venues. What made this one more unique than the concerts we presented in our own high school gymnasium (typically the annual pops concerts where we expected larger audiences than the auditorium could hold), was the make-up of the audience itself. Coming from a rural and very homogenous (all white) school environment, looking out over a gymnasium filled with black students was a totally unfamiliar experience. Likewise, the response we received was also memorable. When we concluded the final selection, the Carmen Dragon setting of *America the Beautiful*, we received a spontaneous and thunderous standing ovation. The juxtaposition of the unfamiliar setting, the unique (and more than a bit intimidating for this collection of sheltered white farm kids) audience demographics, and the rousing response from total strangers, made that concert experience truly memorable on many levels. The presence of the audience and their interaction with us as performers ties to what Gadamer discusses as “the play which appears as presentation for an audience” (1960/1989, p. 109). Had we played the program for an empty gymnasium, would we have had the same visceral and memorable experience? How did what van Manen (2003, p. 102) terms the *lived space* or *spatiality* of the venue in all of its contradictions and uniqueness affect our experience?

The second performance experience, also in a gymnasium, was not with my own high school band, but as a member of the Western Maryland Regional Honor Band, a select band representing the five westernmost counties in Maryland. This experience stays with me for very different reasons, largely based

on a particular piece of music and the impression left on me by our guest conductor. The concert was held in the gym at Allegany High School in Cumberland, Maryland and the two things I remember most were the final piece on the program, *American Civil War Fantasy* by Jerry Bilik, and our guest conductor, Don Wilcox, the band director at West Virginia University. The Bilik piece is an exceptionally well-crafted and tuneful juxtaposition of many sing-able melodies that either originated in the time of the Civil War or had particular significance because of their usage during that time. I recently programmed it with my teacher ensemble, and through that rehearsal and performance experience my feelings about its value were reinforced and subsequently shared with a new generation of directors.

The other significant aspect of this experience that sticks with me was the homespun humor and rehearsal philosophy of the guest conductor, Don Wilcox. Not at all a prima donna on the podium, he was the epitome of the every-man, only with a true command of what it would take for us to make the music work at the highest level. His anecdotes, lively banter and good ol' boy style (in combination with clear but never overbearing command of the repertoire, and nearly invisible yet highly effective rehearsal techniques) kept us relaxed, but focused, and made us want to do our best for him, since he was just such a likable guy as a conductor. I recently attended a presentation he made at the Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic, the largest conference of its type for band and orchestra directors, and it was characterized by this folksy and engaging style I had experienced as a member of an ensemble under his direction. The

session was also packed to overflowing, alluding to his wide appeal and the position of respect to which he is held within his profession and by his peers. The handouts for the session were gone by the time I made it to the door, but several weeks after the conference I emailed to ask him for a copy and mentioned that concert from over 30 years ago. Either because he really did remember it, or simply because he just wanted me to think he did, he responded to my email in a very personable way that recalled more of the repertoire than I had remembered, as well as the fact that it was in the gym at that particular high school. The impressions made by the music and the person still resonate with me to this day.

These experiences, while both having occurred in a gymnasium, certainly no one's first choice of performance venue, highlight a heretofore relatively unexplored perspective about the concept of "space." Richard Deasy (2005, p. 10) cites the history of the term "third space" as describing the way, especially in the arts, that meaning exists not in the perceiver alone (the first space), or in the artwork itself (the second space), but in the interaction between the two – where the perceiver (or performer) brings his or her own experiences and imagination to bear in the interpretation of the artwork. He goes on to cite that "In collaborative art forms, members of an ensemble enter this space together to create their work of art. They take on new identities ... as they explore relationships and meanings with others in the space" (Deasy, 2005, p. 11). "This third space opened in the arts is a space to both lose and find oneself" (p. 22). While the physical space, wherein the previously alluded to experiences occurred, was a memorable facet of those

particular experiences, this “third space” may have been at the core of the essence of the power of these particular experiences.

“Put Me In, Coach”

As a music teacher and supervisor in the public schools I am often dismayed when I hear teachers and building administrators refer to what goes on in band class as “play,” as if it was not in any way a serious endeavor, but only a game of some kind. Gadamer (1960/1989) explores the idea of play as a clue to ontological explanation and the relativity of serious purposefulness. Within a musical setting it can be said that play only fulfills its purpose if the player loses himself in play. To not do so would not be to take the play seriously. When playing music, the work of art (the music) only has its true manifestation, its ‘being,’ “in the fact that it becomes an experience that changes the person who experiences it... the ‘subject’ of the experience of art, that which remains and endures, is not the subjectivity of the person who experiences it but the work itself” (Gadamer, 1960/1989, p. 103). Are the off- hand comments of third party observers saying that “play” is what is going on in the band class, missing the point because of the joyful looks and smiling faces of the students as they leave the class? I have heard an assistant principal say, “How could they (the students) have really learned anything – they were too relaxed – they looked like they were having too much fun.” My response might be, “Isn’t that the point?” “This ‘ease of play’ - which naturally does not mean that there is any real absence of effort but refers phenomenologically only to the absence of stress – is experienced subjectively as relaxation” (Gadamer, 1960/1989, p. 105). However, just because

it is joyful and might look “easy,” does that nullify the possibility that important learning could take place within the experience? As Gadamer suggests, “Every game presents the man who plays it with a task” (1960/1989, p. 109), and is it not the purposeful attentiveness to the achievement of tasks such as these, be they in “play” or in “class” or both, that defines in many ways the nature of learning?

As the trumpet section leader of my high school band, I had responsibilities for not only playing my own part, but for managing the trumpet section to make sure we contributed in a suitable way to the overall band performance. There were many times when my own individual technical challenges might have prohibited me from being the best ensemble member or section leader I could be, but I do, even now, remember listening with a critical ear to the playing of others. And if I did not offer suggestions or criticism, at least I was thinking that they needed to work on something because it just didn’t sound right. At that point I don’t think I had much patience for other band members whose skill levels or dedication were not in synch with the expectations of our director, and I developed a sense of empathy for his situation and the challenges he faced. I would often say to myself that I could never have his patience and his willingness to work with the wide variety of student interest and ability levels that characterized our very large band. I did eventually find this patience inside myself but, at that point in my life, it was still buried deep beneath my youthful self-centeredness.

Our band director was also our soccer coach, and you could see parallels in his motivational style from the “team” on the field to the “team” in the band

room. He talked a lot about pride and responsibility, about working hard and not letting the “team” down by being unprepared. There were still mysteries about what he did, however. How did he get the ensemble to function as a unified entity? Did we have a sense, as students, of how we needed to work as part of the team, or was it through the force of the director’s personality that we achieved a final product worth listening to? How did we as members of both programs experience his contrasting roles in the two organizations? Did we have a fundamentally different viewpoint of the aesthetic experience situated in the band setting and the athletic experience found with the soccer team? Since many of the boys on the soccer team were also band members, and the coach and the band director were one in the same, the lines of demarcation were inevitably more blurred than they might have been if there had been no connection in leadership personnel or group membership.

The concept and manifestation of both competitiveness and performance for a crowd (audience) as a source of motivation were indeed present in both settings. Was there also an element of what Gadamer (1960/1989, p. 109) refers to as the “intentionality of play” – the play which appears as presentation for an audience? Is this not in many ways exceedingly similar to what happens in sport during a public athletic contest of some type? Do we not raise our level of “play” when we are being observed?

A strong parallel also presented itself between teamwork as a concept and the idea that a group is only as strong as its weakest link. The fact that there is no second string – no bench, as it were - in the band setting is significant on a

number of levels. I have often used that analogy to motivate my own band members saying something like, “There is no bench here - everybody is on the field, everybody plays, everybody matters.” Certainly there are athletic teams where certain team members never get any playing time. What does that type of experience do for the motivation of the team members who don’t get to play? How is it experienced from the perspective of the individual? How does it shape one’s attitude about the experience? This difference is in many ways one of the starkest contrasts between typical athletic experiences and typical band experiences. Certainly some coaches are more egalitarian in their approach to apportioning playing time, but in the interest of winning, which characterizes the athletic experience in so many ways, often those who are less capable are not provided with the opportunity to participate at the same level in an athletic setting as they would be provided in a musical setting.

Another musical/athletic analogy I have used with my students centers around the idea that just like on an athletic team, all musicians can’t do the very same thing and expect the appropriate product to be created. Just like a football team can’t function properly if everyone is a quarterback, neither can everyone in a band be a drummer or trumpet player if the band is expected to sound like a band. Balance and the importance of each member playing an important, yet contrasting, role from their peers is critical to success in both experiences. The essence of polyphony is such that it is only present when coordinated, yet independent lines synergistically coexist within a temporal musical framework. If everyone plays the same part at the same time, polyphony is not present.

Likewise, if there is no balance and coordination within the polyphony, discordant cacophony is often the result.

These are not things I ever thought about as a student. While we all had our place and we all fulfilled a function of some type to make the “team” work, the concept of the bigger picture was not yet on my radar. When I became the leader myself, and had to find ways to motivate and engage my students, I found myself digging back into memories of my own experiences in both soccer and band to find analogies and anecdotes that I felt would help me motivate a new generation of students. What additional insights might be gained by interacting with the students who are currently experiencing this phenomenon? What hues may become visible when applying a prism to their experience? How do the students live the polyphonic experience of preparing music for adjudicated performance in relation to the band director and each other?

Prismatic and Polyphonic Possibilities

Reflecting back on my own experiences as a band student, band director and music supervisor makes me wonder what I have left uncovered about my own experience, much less what mysteries lay waiting to be discovered by engaging with the students who are currently experiencing this phenomenon. The multiplicity of possibilities inherent in this exploration cause me to turn to hermeneutic phenomenology in order to more fully explicate the nature of this experience as lived by the students most directly involved with the process.

While outsiders may view a band experience as a totality that is shared by all participants in an equal and uniform manner, my experience with the

phenomenon of preparing music for an adjudicated performance hints at far greater uniqueness and differentiation of experience for those most directly involved -- the students. Van Manen (1997, p. 7) reminds us that “Phenomenology is, in a broad sense, a philosophy or theory of the unique; it is interested in what is essentially not replaceable.” In my search for deeper insights into this particular aspect of human experience, I am drawn by what van Manen (1997, p. 9) calls “the possibility of plausible insights that bring us in more direct contact with the world.” That is one of the goals of this inquiry: to become more in touch with the realities of the experience of band students as they prepare music for an adjudicated performance.

This study will visit and re-visit the experiences of the students as they undergo the process of preparing music for performance. Van Manen (1997, p. 10) points out that “Phenomenological reflection is not introspective but retrospective” when he cites that a person cannot reflect on lived experience when actually living through it. Reflections on these experiences have to be from the recollective perspective, reflecting on experience that has already occurred. Both written and oral recollections from the students, and from significant others connected to the experience (band director, clinicians, judges) were gathered to open up prisms of insight into the phenomenon in all its polyphonic possibilities. The back and forth reflective movement inherent in the hermeneutic process is most apt as a means to engage with this phenomenon.

Ultimately, my intent is to understand the lived experiences of students as they prepare music for an adjudicated performance. And as that phenomenon is

explored, the experience of the band director in interaction with the students is at play as well. Van Manen (1997, pp. 30-31) characterizes human science research as a “dynamic interplay among six research activities.” My approach to this inquiry is characterized by these six methodological themes:

Turning to a phenomenon which seriously interest us and commits us to the world;
Investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it;
Reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon;
Describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting;
Maintaining a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon;
Balancing the research context by considering parts and whole.
(pp. 30-31)

In accordance with the precepts outlined in van Manen’s plan above, I have turned to the essence of the experience of preparing music for an adjudicated performance in Chapter One through the examination of aspects of the phenomenon as experienced personally and through interactions with various “others.” In Chapter Two I further explore the phenomenon through the writings of others in the field, etymological tracings, and other written and oral lived accounts of the experience. Chapter Three elucidates the philosophical and methodological grounding for this mode of inquiry. Chapter Four through Seven reveal the various themes that emerged from the investigation of the experiences of the students and their director connected to the experience. Chapter Eight focuses on the pedagogical insights that might inform practice for band directors responsible for guiding students through the experience of preparing students for adjudicated performances.

Through examining the polyphonic and prismatic nature of the experience of students as they prepare music for an adjudicated performance, I look for pedagogical insights that will help teachers as they move through the continuum of their careers working with students in bands of all levels. My goal is to develop a more carefully edified pedagogical competence (both in myself and in those with whom I work), one that will take into account the insights that come to light through this inquiry into the lived experience of students as they prepare music for adjudicated performances.

CHAPTER TWO: GETTING INSIDE THE PHENOMENON

The experiences of a musical performer are influenced by a wide range of factors. These may include, but are not limited to, the musician's role (soloist, section leader, section member, etc.); the relationship with the band director and his / her directing style; the purpose of the musical enterprise currently being undertaken (individual practice, small group rehearsal, large ensemble rehearsal, dress rehearsal, public performance, etc.); the venue where the phenomenon takes place (the band room, an outdoor amphitheater, the school auditorium, a gymnasium, an unfamiliar concert hall); the temporal setting (early in the morning, after a long bus ride, immediately after an emotional event of some type); or from a more socially constructed perspective (after a heated argument, knowing that another player covets his/her role as the soloist, having just been chastised by the director). The various ways that musical performers experience the phenomenon of performing are in many ways analogous to how anyone experiences one's own particular lifeworld. Van Manen (1997, p. 101) describes four lifeworld "existentials" that may help us to understand the various ways in which we experience our existence. These "existentials" are lived space (spatiality), lived body (corporeality), lived time (temporality) and lived human relation (relationality). As I begin to bring forward the nature of the phenomenon of preparing music for an adjudicated performance, these "existentials," along with a variety of other sources, both textual and experiential, help to illuminate

significant aspects of the phenomenon that serve as springboards for further inquiry and exploration.

It's All About the Music: Accounts of Student Experience

...all music is not created equal. (Byrne, as cited in Battisti, 2007, p. 17)

For a performing ensemble, the music **is** the content of the curriculum – the metaphorical textbook around which the band student experience is built. In a social studies class, the content may be the history of the United States from 1865 through the present. In a high school band class, the content of the curriculum - the textbook from which much of the instructional material is drawn and which is driven in no small part because of the nearly constant demand for public performance - is the music that students study and perform. As Byrne suggests above, not all music is created equal, and since the music that a group prepares for performance is in many ways the textbook around which the broader lived, rehearsed and performed instrumental music curriculum is structured, should not this music be of the highest quality and be appropriately suited for the performers based on their level of technical and musical maturity?

A work of art, if it is to satisfy, must be coherent enough to meet the test of unity, varied enough to satisfy the canon of complexity, and colorful enough to meet the demand of intensity. (Beardsley, 1981, p. 33)

In the quote cited above, Monroe Beardsley, American author and philosopher, was speaking of visual art in particular, but the precepts apply equally well to music. Any work selected by a teacher for study and performance by students should be of high artistic quality and should be appropriate for the musical maturity and technical skills of the players in the ensemble. Finding the

right “fit” of quality music to the skills and aptitudes of the ensemble is one of the most challenging, and yet most important, tasks for which directors of performing ensembles are responsible. These repertoire decisions determine in large part the success or failure of the pedagogical enterprise for the ensemble and its members, and in many ways, it impacts the experience that the students have within that ensemble setting.

As I listen to instrumental ensembles, whether in the role of music supervisor as I visit teachers, or when I venture around the area adjudicating band and orchestra festivals, I am struck by the often horrendously low quality of music being performed, or the clear incompatibility of the chosen repertoire for the ensemble that is doing the performing. What makes it especially regrettable is the fact that this music represents, in large part, the content of the curriculum as it is made manifest for these students. If this comprises the curriculum for these students, shouldn't they be engaging with music of the highest value, both artistically and educationally? And shouldn't it be at a level where they can achieve success while learning fundamental concepts and skills? I turn to some preliminary lived accounts of students prior to this investigation to explore what this means to them.

Challenge and Engagement

I recently engaged in a group conversation with four selected members of one of our county high school bands that had just completed a successful performance at the county band adjudication. When I asked them to describe their experiences as they prepared for this assessment performance, much of what they

shared revolved around the music itself. Words they used to describe the music included “engaging,” “varied,” and “challenging.” The flute player in the group felt that it was

like nothing we had seen before. It wasn’t just notes and fingerings that you just had to work out – it was going home and practicing the counting...we had to actually analyze things. There were so many different parts that had to work together across the group...it was a big challenge to get it all to fit together.

This clearly signaled a departure from past experiences for this student.

Up to this point, she had not needed to engage with her band music in a focused and analytical way beyond a cursory examination of notes and rhythms. With this piece, their director metaphorically “raised the bar,” both technically and musically, and the students were called upon to engage with the music at a different level in order to be successful. What might she have meant by her last statement about the music being “a big challenge to get it all to fit together?” Did she mean to imply that a higher level of ensemble acuity and sensitivity needed to be developed in order to make the component parts of the repertoire work in the full ensemble setting? How did this student experience this “challenge to get it all to fit together” from her seat in the ensemble? What might have been the experience for another student in a different location in the room? What was the experience for the students playing different instruments? This is an area that bleeds over into the second major theme to be explicated shortly.

Exposure

The bassoonist echoed this opinion of the challenges inherent in the music:

Especially for me in particular, the bassoons and bass clarinets, in Lincolnshire Posy, Movement 1, we constantly have the counter melody and not the bass line...I know these guys (points to flute and clarinet players) are always playing solos and the melody. In Lincolnshire our parts were very melodic and active...and exposed. That's never good for bassoons (laughs).

He alludes to the fact that in most of the repertoire they have played up to this point, his part, while often quite important, has largely been of the supportive and not the featured variety. He is not used to being “to the fore” and out front, in an aural way. This is a huge departure for him, and with it comes a sense of “nakedness” that is an unfamiliar and potentially anxiety producing experience for this particular student musician, who, while quite accomplished, is nevertheless, not really comfortable with being in the spotlight. What does this say about the issue of vulnerability within the ensemble experience? From the Latin *vulnerabilis*, to be vulnerable is to be “liable to injury” (Skeat, 1882, p. 550). What type of “injury” might young musicians experience in this setting? Is it a susceptibility to potential harm to their self-esteem if they perform poorly while in the spotlight? Are they nervous and fearful because of this unusual level of openness and exposure, this particular type of vulnerability? Surely students want to be heard when they play (or do they?), but when do the students step over the edge from a place of comfort to one of anxiety and nervousness and susceptibility to some type of harm, be it to their self confidence or their social standing within their ensemble? What does this do to the experience for them? How does it manifest in the way they feel and perform?

One of the hallmarks of more difficult music is that there is often more exposure of the various musical elements within the full ensemble package, and

with this comes greater highlighting of individual musicians in ways that do not necessarily coincide with student expectations or prior experiences. How do they feel when placed in this position? Are they eager to embrace the exposure, or are they silently terrified that they will make a mistake? How does this emotional state affect their overall experience with the music?

Author and musician Barry Green (2003) suggests that this level of exposure and vulnerability, linked to the particular instrument a musician plays (as our bassoonist alluded to above), may also have an effect on the relative level of preparedness of certain instrumentalists for rehearsals. Speaking about instruments of the orchestra, he suggests that some “wind players are used to exposed roles. For the most part, they are all soloists – each player is assigned a part which may not be doubled by any other musician” (p. 67). He contrasts this kind of perpetual vulnerability and exposure with the role played by instrumentalists such as those found in large sections, or those who often play subordinate parts (bassoon, tuba, baritone sax) and suggests that the motivation level is different because of the vulnerability chasm between the “soloists” and the “background” musicians. He further suggests that the level of preparedness for rehearsals is commensurate with the level of exposure and vulnerability expected by these musicians and that the ones who can and do expect higher levels of exposure are typically more prepared than their less exposed fellow musicians. Does Green’s understanding of this phenomenon ring true as part of what might have motivated our student bassoonist to earlier say that this type of exposure was “never good for bassoons?” How does this bassoonist, or any other student

musician who is required by the music itself to move beyond the generally accepted exposure norms in their ensemble experience, see himself in this situation? What does his sense of identity mean to him and to his experience and his understanding of his place within the ensemble? Does he, as Green suggests, consider himself a “background” musician and therefore one that is not typically exposed to the same level of scrutiny as others? Does he also think he is generally less well prepared for rehearsal because he does not expect a higher degree of exposure in rehearsal? What do these different levels of exposure expectation mean for the experiences of the students?

Excitement and Enjoyment

The students agreed that the music was “just so fun to play...we liked the program overall...because it was so diverse...and the majority of us were really excited about the music” (High school flute player). One of the pieces was written by a living composer and it was characterized by rhythmic and exciting parts for nearly all of the players. Each of the students admitted that this was the more exciting of the selections for them to work on and perform, and that this excitement helped them stay motivated through the process of studying and practicing the music in preparation for the upcoming performance. I recently heard another of our high school bands rehearsing this same selection, and I was also drawn in by the visceral quality of the rhythmic structure and the soaring character of the melodic lines. As an observer, I felt a vicarious sense of excitement that might parallel the feelings expressed by the students as they played this music. If Dick Clark had featured it on American Bandstand, the

guests might have responded with something analogous to “It has a good beat and it’s easy to dance to.” My foot was indeed tapping throughout the rehearsal of this piece and I can still remember the evocative melodies and captivating rhythmic motifs. Appropriately enough, the title of the piece is *Evokatah*, calling to mind the evoking of spiritual and visceral engagement with the music, both intellectually and in a bodily-kinesthetic way.

Dufrenne (1973) speaks of the need for an artistic work to “be congenial to the performer whom it solicits. Whatever charm it has is measured by the felicity with which it is performed” (p. 22). He goes on to suggest that “The happier a musician is in playing the work, the happier the result” (p. 23). This sense of enjoyment and engagement is expressed by each of the student conversants as a defining characteristic of their experience with the music they were preparing for their adjudicated performance. That particular piece was, indeed, congenial to the performers whom it was soliciting. The unique confluence of music making is part work and part play, but an experience that transcends both of these descriptors, as eloquently expressed by composer and lecturer Bruce Adolph (1996):

The fusion of work and play is a musician’s delight.
People who do not understand this think music is a frill.
They are envious and suspicious, and think that “work” is
defined by the degree to which it is without joy.

But the words “work” and “play” are both inadequate.
The serious joy of music transcends mere words.

Music can be all consuming: the self may disappear.
But where does it go?
It finds the universal, which is not one thing, but everything.
Because this is true, musicians from around the world

understand each other.

Work, play, all words fall apart
in the ecstatic truth
of universal music. (p. 69)

This quote is alive with refractions and polyphonies of possibility for interpretation and understanding. While it clearly speaks to the juxtaposition and contradictions of work and play, it also alludes to many of the subtleties and seeming incongruities of the task of music-making and its many manifestations and interpretations. In their words, the student musicians seem to echo Adolphe's understanding that the fusion of work and play is a musician's delight. Might others, who may not understand, see it as a frill or a vacuous enterprise? Do others indeed think that "work" must be something that is without joy and therefore music, since it is "with" joy, could not be "work" also? As Adolphe suggests, does not the serious joy of music transcend mere words? Do the student musicians experience music making as an all-consuming endeavor, where the self disappears? How does this universality that Adolphe alludes to manifest itself in the students' experiences? How do the student musicians *feel* when they are fully engaged in the act of music-making?

Emotional Connections

Within these student conversations, the bassoonist shared an experience he had with a piece of music that had an unusual level of connection to the members of the group. In 2005, a sophomore in the band was killed in a car accident and the band director and parent group commissioned a composer to write a piece of band music in memory of the student. For these students, most of them now

seniors in the band, the experience with that music had touched them in a unique way, not just because of the purely musical aspects of the experience, but for the power of the music to connect them to a potent memory of friends who were now gone, but, aided by the power of the music, not forgotten. Author Elise Blackwell (2010) writes about the possibility of breathing life into a composition as a way to resuscitate one who has left the corporeal world:

People often call a musical score a piece of music, but of course it is only the two-dimensional representation of a complex experience. Yet unlike a photograph or a birth certificate, it is a representation that preserves not just a moment but the full music itself, protecting it intact... making it possible at any moment, allowing it to be played centuries later. (p. 127)

Reimer (2003, pp. 98-99) suggests that human feeling, since it is not linear or logical in its organization but rather more like a whirlpool in its dynamic structure, needs a device of some type to materialize it and give it some type of permanence so it cannot be washed away. Music gives us a means of transforming an entirely inner process into an outer substance and experience that can represent the fleeting nature of the emotion that inspired it in a type of symbolic transformation that is uniquely human. Is this why these students felt so connected to that particular piece of music? Was this how the lived relationality of their past experiences with the students about whom the music was written can live on and continue to resound with them in a powerfully meaningful way?

Understanding and Context

The deep and almost visceral connection with these pieces of music was not as profoundly evident when it came to *Lincolnshire Posy*, a collection of British Folk Songs arranged for band by Percy Grainger. While firmly accepted

by directors and scholars alike as one of the pillars of band literature, and a piece highly worthy of study and performance, the students state that they had a more difficult time connecting with this piece because it was more removed from their own experiences. All of the students agreed with the bassoon player when he shares:

I think it would have helped to know maybe a little more history of the piece, and the composer's intentions. Then we could try to meet their expectations, their purpose, and it makes it easier, in my opinion, to play it right. Even a little bit of history, since we don't have a lot of time in band, maybe a brief discussion about the composer, this is kind of what was happening and this is why they wrote it. We need to understand what they were thinking so we can play it like it was meant to sound.

Moran (2000, p. 251) states that Marx, Hegel and Heidegger all supported the idea that "Understanding only takes place in the context of an existing tradition." Might this be applicable to the clarinetist's thoughts shared above? Certainly, I find reason to think that a student's level of experience with and knowledge of some type of intellectual, cultural or aesthetic tradition weighs heavily on their ability to understand and engage with an aesthetic experience that draws upon a particularly unique source. Might a British student have an easier time engaging with a piece molded from folk tunes gathered from the British Isles? Might some type of immersion, albeit brief, in the culture of the source material have enhanced the ability of these students to engage with what to them was pretty unfamiliar musical territory?

I recently announced a middle school band concert where the band was presenting the premiere of a new piece written by a local and very well-known composer of music for band. It was obvious that the kids were really excited

about playing the piece in its premiere with the composer conducting. And even though the motivation for the piece was a seafaring war story from WWII, it was real to the kids because the composer was there to explain it, and they were in the presence of the one who “made” the music. In a way, the students were there for the creation of a work of art, in the sense that this performance was the first time this particular work of art had been realized in its intended mode of expression, as a temporal aesthetic entity, existing in time at that moment, played by those students, conducted by the composer. Through their engagement with the composer, and their performance of a premiere with the composer conducting, similar in many ways to the experience described earlier in the conversation with the four high school band members, these students came a little closer to seeing inside the mysterious world of the composer as evocatively portrayed below by the dean of American composers:

...most people want to know how things are made. They frankly admit, however, that they feel completely at sea when it comes to understanding how a piece of music is made. Where a composer begins, how he manages to keep going – in fact, how and where he learns his trade – all are shrouded in impenetrable darkness. The composer, in short, is a man of mystery to most people, and the composer’s workshop an unapproachable ivory tower. (Copland, 1939, p. 17)

These students were given an opportunity to become a part of the music making process on this occasion. Many students, however, are never afforded this type of opportunity. What might the students have had to say about the process and the experience? Did it affect the way they performed the music? How did they experience working with the composer as he walked them through the music and talked about its genesis and his inspiration? Was any of the mystery of the

composer's craft illuminated for these students? While they were indeed present for a creative experience – the premiere performance of the piece of music – how did they experience this event? What did it mean to them? If we were to hold up our prism to these experiences, what might we see? What type of melodic and rhythmic motifs might present themselves in the polyphony of the student experiences with this phenomenon? What do these students understand about the creative process through this interaction with the composer? How did this contact, albeit brief, with a significant “other” (van Manen, 1997) impact the relationality aspect of the students' experience with this music?

The Harmonious Ensemble: Roles, Responsibilities and Reflections

Incumbent in any ensemble experience are the contrasting, and sometimes contradictory, issues of personal, technical, and musical facility and the need for a blending of the various elements within the ensemble to create a “harmonious” (from the 14th century French *harmonieux*, meaning to sound together with agreeable effect) concerted effort. The Oxford English Dictionary (Simpson & Weiner, 1989) defines the word “ensemble,” French in origin, as either “the united performance of all voices or instruments in a piece of concerted music,” “the manner in which it is done,” or “the musicians comprising such a concert group or orchestra,” depending on the specific context of the usage. This collection of definitions points to the idea of an “ensemble” as a group of musicians who perform together with roughly equivalent contributions made by all of the members. The word implies a collaborative venture, where no individual performer is given prominence over another.

This concept must be a difficult one for most high school students to embrace since, at that age, aren't we really focused on ourselves and not how we need to consider subordinating our own desires for the good of the group? Instead of wanting to work together for the common good, are we more likely to want a more interesting part for ourselves so we can be heard more clearly or praised more highly than other players? If this is the case, is it affected by the instrument we play or our perceived place in the ensemble based on seniority or chair position? Could my understandings of this dynamic have been based on the peculiarly egotistical perspective of a trumpet player, a character trait that we as a class of musicians are often alleged to possess just by virtue of the instrument we play? In retrospect, I hope that when I was a high school trumpet player I might have functioned successfully on both sides of that equation since there are synergistic aspects to the soloist and section leader roles. Similar to the role a principal trumpet player plays in a brass quintet or the lead trumpet player plays in a jazz band, leading by example is something that has to be a constant for any musical message to have any lasting credibility and resonance. You can't just say how it needs to sound; you have to be able to demonstrate it. You not only have to "talk the talk," you have to "walk the walk." This clearly suggests a higher degree of accountability and responsibility and with these expectations comes a burden that not all high school students may embrace with equal vigor or eagerness. It is tough to be "on" all the time.

The Players: Entering the Questions

What is it that students do in rehearsal, anyway? How do they experience the spatial, temporal, relational and corporeal nature of playing in the band? What is it like to read through a piece of music for the very first time? How do they experience their physical place in the music making process? What are they thinking and feeling when they put their instrument up in anticipation of the first note of the piece of music? How do soloists experience the seconds just before they are to play by themselves in front of the rest of their fellow musicians? What is their experience when they look at a passage that they know they are not yet ready to play but must attempt anyway? How do they hear and feel their place in the aural and kinesthetic landscape that is the band room? To enter these questions, I engage with the literature surrounding conducting in order to pose possibilities for understanding the student experience in this musical relationship, due to the fact that the student experience is so absent in the literature.

A musical rehearsal is in many ways a place where magical things happen for the members of an ensemble, but in ways that are quite different from how they might manifest themselves for an individual or solo player. As Green and Gallway (1986, pp. 190-191) write:

As an ensemble player, you must be responsive to the musicians around you in matters of pitch and rhythm, and yield yourself to the musical tastes, tempos, styles, and interpretations of the conductor. It is only natural that you feel much less control of your music than you do when you're playing by yourself.

While it is certainly true that there is less opportunity for individual expression and executive control when playing in an ensemble, one's contribution

is still important and vital to the full concerted effort. As ensemble members, “You can experience and enjoy the way that your own playing blends in with that of your section... the feeling of mixing, blending, belonging, and flowing together with them that is not possible when playing alone” (Green & Gallway, 1986, p. 191).

In many ways, the most profound benefits to be derived from the ensemble experience are that “One can learn a great deal about cooperation through playing with others... and playing in a group gives us opportunities to learn something about the magnificent literature for ensembles and to share in some of the greatest masterworks ever written” (Green & Gallway, 1986, p. 193). Considering these benefits as outlined by Green, what might our student ensemble members share as the most profound aspects of their experiences in an ensemble? Would they mention the nature of the ensemble experience as being one of cooperation and working together? The shared conversations from these four students did indeed reveal the collaborative nature of the ensemble experience and also highlighted the quality of the music they were studying.

Practice versus Rehearsal

Van Manen (1997, p. 85) writes that differences between conversation and discussion are more significant than we may initially think, since differences in intent carry different pedagogical consequences. Similarly, differences that distinguish a sectional class session (all flutes, perhaps) from a full rehearsal (the full ensemble) are profound, and yet largely ignored by many music teachers. The goals of a like-instrument class would most appropriately be centered on

fundamentals of performance such as tone production, intonation, notes, rhythms, instrument specific techniques and articulations. The goals of a full rehearsal, however, would more appropriately be focused on ensemble-specific issues such as balance, blend, ensemble precision and students learning what everyone else is playing and how best to integrate all of the disparate parts into a cohesive whole. The conversations with the student musicians draw us back to this dichotomy of purpose as well. Whereas technical skills need to be learned in a homogeneous class setting (or better yet, in home practice), the large ensemble rehearsal is where the students learn to function as an ensemble, a group of individuals working together to be part of a cohesive entity, greater than the sum of its parts and dependent in many ways on the various parts being competently contributed by the individual musicians.

On a recent judging assignment in another state, the band directors of the participating groups routinely announced to the audience (and the judges) a bit of background on the group, including how often they met and some general information about the personnel within the groups. One particular director announced that his ensemble meets only as like-instrument classes, and they only had 1 two-hour rehearsal together before the performance that was to commence momentarily. This revelation caused me to wonder what, if any, pedagogical differentiation took place between those very different instructional settings. Based on the ensemble's generally mediocre level of performance, and the more than occasional wrong notes, rhythms and articulations, I was inclined to think that a clear distinction, communication and implementation of pedagogical

(rehearsal) goals was for the most part absent from this director's plan. Based on the director's description of their rehearsal structure I expected to hear ensemble problems but not so many individual technical mistakes, the kinds of things best addressed in like instrument classes which comprised the great majority of his contact time with the students. In this case, and I imagine many others, the pedagogical implications of different class foci, be they discussion versus conversation or practice versus ensemble rehearsal, are indeed profound and effect in no small way the experience students have within the learning environment. How might the performance have been different if the director had clearly identified and differentiated his pedagogical plan to use his particular class focus and membership to the best of their abilities? What might the performance have been like had he focused on notes and rhythms and tone quality in the like-instrument setting and then focused on ensemble issues when he met with the full group? As many experienced teachers have shared with me over my long career in instrumental music, the rehearsal is not the place to learn *your* part; it is where you learn everyone *else's*. The high school clarinet player who shared her experiences as she worked toward the band's adjudicated performance mentioned similar thoughts when she shared that "If we were to learn other parts, other than our own, then we can see where we need to be more quiet, and where we need to bring out a certain passage...we have to listen to see how the best way is to play our part so it all works together" (clarinet player). It seems that she understood that one of the overarching goals of an effective full rehearsal should be to learn everyone else's part and not simply to demonstrate mastery of your own.

Concert versus Adjudication

Returning to van Manen's illustration of the differences between conversation and discussion and that differences in intent carry different pedagogical consequences (1997, p. 85), what differences exist between a concert performance and an adjudicated performance? They are certainly more similar than they are different, but what are these similarities and what are the differences, and how do they impact the student experience? While a concert performance (for this comparison I will use the preview concert that many directors – including myself – schedule in close temporal proximity to the adjudicated performance) may contain the same repertoire conducted by the same director and played by the same students, the performance dynamics are different in several ways. From a spatial standpoint, the concert is most likely occurring in a different venue (the *home* school auditorium) from where the adjudication will be held (the *host* school auditorium). From a temporal standpoint, the concert happens before the adjudicated performance so at least one or two additional rehearsals will occur before the adjudication.

While the spatial and temporal contrasts may indeed be important (differences in acoustics between the two venues, slightly improved performance proficiency due to the added rehearsals, etc.) more profound contrasts than these, however, may be the result of the differences in purpose and audience and how these affect the corporeality and relationality of the student experience. Are the students (and the director for that matter) more relaxed at the concert because the audience (usually parents, family members and friends) is less likely to be

analytical and judgmental about the performance? How do the students feel about the relative importance of the two events? Do they consider the concert to be more of a public dress rehearsal for the adjudicated performance to come? Are the students more relaxed for the concert, and if so, do they play better because they are more relaxed? Or, do they play better at the adjudicated performance because they know that they are being more formally evaluated and they are more energized about doing their best? How does the behavior of the director influence how the students experience these two similar yet contrasting performance experiences? How might director behaviors relative to these events (how they are prepared, structured and situated) be impacted by accessing and developing an understanding of the experience from the student perspective?

Teaching as Letting Learn

Heidegger regarded teaching as an exalted activity, a craft that “is more difficult than learning because what teaching calls for is this: to let learn. The real teacher, in fact, lets nothing else be learned than – learning” (1968, p. 15). This notion of “letting learn” is a difficult one for many teachers to embrace since they have been trained to exercise most of the executive control of the learning environment. This is certainly true for music teachers in most ensemble rehearsal settings where management of the multiple and constantly changing variables is in many ways critical to the accomplishment of instructional and rehearsal objectives. Heidegger says that “Teaching is even more difficult than learning because what teaching calls for is this: to let learn...he has to learn to let them learn” (1968, p.15).

Van Manen says that “Good teachers . . . know when to let go of control” (2002, p. 89), a notion that is in line with both his and Heidegger’s idea that teaching is about letting learn. Although in the context cited above, van Manen is alluding to the difference in levels of control exercised by a teacher within a discussion versus a conversation, there are implications here relating to observations made by student conversants in a recent visit to one of our high schools. Each of the four students agreed that one of the turning points in their preparation for their assessment performance was when their director brought in two guest conductors to work with the band. Does not this action demonstrate a relinquishing of control by the teacher when she invited and allowed another person to stand in front of the group and give feedback on their performance? How might the students and the teacher have experienced this if that feedback was different or entirely contradictory to the instruction that their regular teacher had been delivering to date? I see this as a clear case of a teacher stepping aside and letting learning happen without their direct intervention, a courageous step in many ways, but one that, in this case, manifested itself in a memorable experience for the students.

Directors who place themselves out of the directed teaching role in this manner are manifesting a high degree of trust and vulnerability on a personal level, as well as for the good of the group as an ensemble. Although not mentioned specifically in the musings of the student participants, did not this director place herself (in a way that is similar to that of the intimacy generated in a real conversation instead of that which is found in a discussion), in a place of

more connectedness with the students because she opened herself up for a level of critique that would never have been possible in a fully teacher-centered environment? What are the possibilities that the student experience with this type of “letting learn” would not altogether be positive? Is there a danger that the trust the students had in their teacher prior to the input of the guest would be undermined by this experience, or would it have been enhanced? How might the actions and words of the teacher before or after the guest input have a bearing on the experience as lived by the students? How does the change of perspective of the director – experiencing the rehearsal through the eyes and ears of the guest clinician - change her pedagogy and impact future student experiences within the ensemble setting? How do students experience the change of dynamic in the rehearsal with another “expert” present offering insight and feedback?

Sometimes I am the person serving as the guest clinician with the director and their students as described above. It occurs both within our school system in my role as supervisor and when I judge certain festival events where a post performance clinic is part of the experience. In many ways, this post-performance clinic is the high point of the experience for me since I get the opportunity to interact with the students and director in a more personal and direct way than simply through disembodied commentary on a digital recording and written words on an adjudication sheet. But this begs the question, what is this experience like for the students on the stage? How do they feel as I share my observations and critique with them, most of the time in front of an audience? What goes through their minds? Are they nervous? Do they feel anxiety because we are talking about

something that may be very personal to them, something that they have worked toward for quite some time? Are they listening, or are they simply exhausted from the performance and patiently waiting for me to conclude my remarks so they can get off the stage and proceed to their next scheduled activity? Are they resentful if I say something to them that contradicts what they have been told by their regular teacher?

I imagine this experience is different for a teacher and their students to whom I am known in some capacity than it is for those ensembles to whom I am one of the strangers who have just heard their performance for the first time and have rendered adjudication commentary and a rating before coming to the stage to share ideas and suggestions. Knowing that each of these directors has chosen to participate in this type of enterprise, I always start with encouragement and congratulations for things that I see and hear as positive. The learning that may unfold after this point is ripe with both supportive and remedial potential, running the continuum from things that their directors have shared daily with them to insights that are as startling as a shocking secret that has only now been revealed. What lies at the heart of the pedagogical value of this type of experience, however, is the degree to which both the teacher and the students are ready to learn and can connect their experience here with the experiences that occur on a day to day basis in their rehearsals. By participating in this type of activity, and in many ways by taking risks and being courageous, these directors, have exhibited a profound form of “letting learn” that provides their students with opportunities for learning experiences that open up a polyphony of pedagogical possibilities.

The Conductor – More Than A Significant Other

There are many perspectives on what it takes to develop a proficient ensemble, capable of playing quality literature with sensitivity and musicality. Some of the many ideas put forth revolve around the qualities that a conductor should possess in order to pull successful musical performances from an ensemble. Helen Epstein, writing in the New York Times, states that conductors have to have:

...the strength of a dancer; the facial expressiveness of an actor; the organizational acumen of an executive; the interpersonal skills of a psychologist; the inspirational capacity of a religious leader; and, of course, a musicianship so sensitive and compelling that 100 other musicians will accept his (or her) reading of a given work as their own. (1981)

These traits (which with the exception of the musicianship expectation are remarkably similar to what one might expect from a master teacher in any discipline) are manifest more naturally in some people than in others, but can be developed with focused effort and appropriate coaching and reflection. However, the ultimate test of a conductor's skill is the degree to which he or she draws from their ensemble the intended musical results. Herein lays the impetus to get inside the experiences of the ensemble members, in this case the high school band students as they prepare the music for performance. How are conductor skill sets and dispositions experienced from the perspective of the ensemble member? How do the students experience the interactions with their director that characterize so much of their lifeworld as lived in the ensemble setting?

When observing a classroom, there are essentially two perspectives that can be taken by an observer. One of these perspectives focuses on observing the

teacher for teacher behaviors, and one focuses on the students and their behaviors in response to what the teacher does. Each of these perspectives can yield profound insights into the classroom experience, but the less well explored and documented perspective is that of the student. Generally, teachers do most of the talking so it is usually easier to grasp the specifics of their behavior. It is incumbent upon an observer to be more intuitive to even begin to grasp what might be going on in the minds of the students, especially when verbal response is not present. How can we tap into what is actually occurring within the minds of the students in this setting? How are they responding, or not, as the case may be, to the actions of the teacher? How do they experience the actions of the teacher within the rehearsal setting? How does their behavior change based on teacher direction or instruction? While the audible performance of the students may give us some insight into how they are responding to the director's behaviors, what is the experience of the students and how would they describe this experience from their perspective?

In many ways, a conductor might represent a significant "other" in these students' experiences of *being-with-others* that Heidegger includes as part of the notion of *Being-in-the-world* as the fundamental structure of *Dasein*. Upon deeper reflection, however, the nearly symbiotic relationship and deeply intertwined connections that exist between student musicians and their director may require us to look at the director as more of an active participant in this phenomenon instead of simply as a significant "other." In order to better understand how students are brought into the musical experience, it is important to elucidate the behaviors and

skills needed by this person who is more than a highly significant “other” (their conductor and teacher) so we may unlock the latent potential for musical insight that lives within the students.

The Role of Trust

The skills needed by a conductor are diverse and multifaceted, much like the images we might discover if we were to look through a prism at the experience of students as they prepare music for an adjudicated performance. These skills range from score reading and analysis, to the ability to choose music wisely, to leadership and motivational skills, to technical skills on various instruments, and skills in the gestures of conducting and interpretation. One of the most profound skills needed by a conductor, however, is the ability to instill a sense of trust between the ensemble and the conductor. In the words of Stephen M.R. Covey (2006, p. 1), trust is “the one thing that changes everything.” Specifically when speaking about relationship trust, the second of what he describes as Five Waves of Trust, he cites that it is “all about behavior...consistent behavior. It’s about learning to interact with others in ways that increase trust and avoid interacting in ways that destroy it” (p. 125). In what ways do students experience each of these sides of the trust relationship? How do students experience this relationship trust that Covey speaks of above? What do students feel when this relationship of trust is *not* present or when it is damaged by behaviors that destroy this trust? Is the level of trust that students have in their director tied to behaviors as well as decisions made by their director?

Green and Gallway (1986, pp. 78-79), cite three major obstacles to trust in a performance setting: worries about your self-image, the feeling that things are out of your control, and doubts and fears about your ability to be successful. How might each of these possibilities manifest itself for a student in a band setting? In what ways might each of these be traceable by the students back to some action or decision made by their director? What do the students feel if they are clearly not capable of performing a piece well but must perform it anyway? Does this manifest itself in a reduction or elimination of trust on the part of the students?

The methods by which a conductor garners and perpetuates this trust are as divergent as the personalities of the conductors themselves. However, one of the key factors, in line with Covey's assertion above, appears to be that the conductor must make a human connection with the ensemble and its membership. They must become invested in the lived relationality of the experience of preparing the ensemble for performance. How is it that the students experience this connection?

Green and Gallway (1986) in *The Inner Game of Music*, cite several famous conductors and their unique perspectives on what it takes to develop a sense of trust in their ensembles through differing approaches and techniques. Max Rudolph was known as one of the great scholars of the podium and motivated his performers by the scope and clarity of his intellectual grasp of the music. Today this might be manifest by the director who clearly understands the complexities of the music and successfully communicates those understandings to the ensemble. A student might experience this when a director responds quickly,

accurately and consistently to specific questions generated by the students about how to play a particular passage, or when they demonstrate broad background knowledge about a particular piece or composer. Conversely, what would students think in this type of scenario when their director does *not* exhibit this type of mastery of the music? If the students do experience a commensurate reduction in trust, in what ways do they communicate this change? Does it manifest itself in their behavior and attitude? What would they say if asked to describe the experience?

Gunther Schuller, a noted French horn player, composer and conductor, believed in creating an atmosphere where it is okay to miss a note in the search for the magic in the music. Last year I observed one of our more senior and successful high school band directors and spent some time with several students after the rehearsal I observed. One of the main themes that emerged from that conversation was that they felt a sense of safety and support in this director's ensemble. They didn't feel he would "jump all over them" (their words) if they missed a note here or there if they were really trying. Deasy (2005) speaks of art forms, in this case a musical rehearsal, as a mediating zone of safety in which students can take risks, a place where students can both lose and find themselves. This teacher's rehearsal space was indeed a refuge from the otherwise very stressful and often unforgiving academic environment these students experienced every day in school. According to his students, his acceptance of their human frailties allowed them to participate in class without fear in an atmosphere of acceptance, caring and trust. Barry Green, in *The Inner Game of Music*, describes

this as “permission to fail that leads to success...when you have released yourself from the fear of failure; you are now able to focus your attention one hundred percent on making music” (1986, p. 34).

James Levine, conductor of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, is noted for conveying his trust in his musicians through his sheer love of the music, and his nearly perpetual smile during rehearsals. Leonard Bernstein was known to motivate his musicians through the force and energy of his personality, especially as expressed through his often flamboyant conducting gestures and boundless energy on the podium. Rehearsals conducted by the high school director mentioned above were observed to be characterized by a pervasively positive attitude, a nearly perpetual smile, and a regular injection of humor into the rehearsal. The students shared with me that their director always kept them engaged by his infectious enthusiasm for the music and his positive feelings for the students themselves. He demonstrated this through his boundless energy, enthusiasm and nearly relentless rehearsal pacing.

Throughout my years as a band student I played for directors that fell at all points along the continuum, from fear mongering tyrants to those where their rehearsals were characterized by constant enthusiasm and joy. In my recollection, while the musical products generated by the tyrants were occasionally of high technical precision, they were generally devoid of pleasure and enjoyment. This happened not only because there was an element of fear always present, but because these products were not created through a focus on the experience from the perspective of the students, but rather from the perspective of how can we get

this music to be as error free as possible. How does this type of approach affect the experience of those students involved in the ensemble? Is something critically important lost when one takes that heavy-handed approach to anything of an aesthetic nature?

A conductor certainly has a great influence on the quality of the product that is generated by any ensemble. This is due to a wide variety of interactions and variables that have been analyzed and categorized and continue to be the subject of scrutiny and research. The one constant in any ensemble experience is the primacy of the rehearsal and its value as the laboratory where the actual musical growth and much of the actual music making occurs. The word rehearsal, from Old French literally meaning to “rake over again,” implies a potentially mindless repetitive going over of something, in this case to improve performance. As discussed briefly in Chapter One, the productive rehearsal is not a place characterized by mindless “raking over again” of the same technical and musical challenges that have bedeviled the ensemble for countless days prior. Many of the most successful directors I know instead admonish their students that the time for repetitive practice (rooted in the early 15th century “to perform repeatedly to acquire skill” and related originally to skilled trades) is at home, and that the rehearsal is where we put the music together. Or as some directors put it, practice is when you learn *your* part; rehearsal is when you learn *everyone else’s*. This implies a collaboration and interactivity that Leonard Bernstein alludes to in *The Joy of Music* (1959/2004) in particularly poetic terms. He says of the effective

conductor (from the Latin *conductus*, - c. 1400 - meaning "to lead or bring together"):

It is not so much imposing his will on them like a dictator, it is more like projecting his feelings around him so that they reach the last man in the second violin section. And when this happens – when one hundred men share his feelings, exactly, simultaneously, responding as one to each rise and fall of music... then there is human identity of feeling that has no equal elsewhere... the conductor and his orchestra will remain knit together and function as one. (p. 150)

What might the students involved in each of the aforementioned types of rehearsals say about their experiences? How would they characterize the experience of a rehearsal where the notes and rhythms are “mindlessly raked over” and ensemble cohesion is not even on the to-do list? I have heard students say to their peers who have clearly not practiced their parts and are therefore unprepared for rehearsal, “Do you realize that you are wasting everyone’s time because you didn’t practice this like you should have. Now we all have to sit here while you learn it.” This type of occurrence also leads to a loss of rehearsal momentum and student engagement due to both boredom and frustration. On the other side of this continuum, however, how would the students describe a rehearsal experience where the conductor and the musicians remained knit together and functioned as one? Often this type of rehearsal ends well before any of the students expect or want it to end. When the bell rings, no one wants to pack up their instrument and go to the next class. They have, to paraphrase Adolphe (1996), entered a place where the fusion of work and play become these musicians’ delight. They have lost themselves in the “ecstatic truth of universal music” (p. 69).

Listening, Leading and Learning

Roger Nierenberg, in his book entitled *Maestro, A Surprising Story About Leading by Listening* (2009), delves into the leadership lessons that can be learned by placing oneself inside the phenomenon, in this case, sitting within the orchestra to see how the dynamics of a successful musical enterprise can translate into executive success. From our perspective, the idea of getting inside the process, inside the ensemble, inside the minds of the participants, is a way into insight, enlightenment and discovery as it relates to how students experience the process of preparing music for performance. Most musicians have had the experience of playing in an ensemble, but unless the experiences are unpacked in a thoughtful and reflective way, as characterizes the approach to inquiry found in hermeneutic phenomenology, can we really know what the experience has been like for those intimately involved in it?

James Jordan, in *The Musician's Walk; An Ethical Labyrinth* (2006, p. 197) reflects on a conversation he had with Weston Noble, a highly respected music educator who, in his eighties, still practices daily reflective journaling. Each day he reflects on what has transpired and records those events in his journal. His journal is an ongoing record of his daily awareness and unawareness – an objective rendering of each day's activities that provides material for thought and reflection. Jordan continues to reflect on this practice by suggesting that few musicians actually practice this type of introspection. He suggests that teachers, in particular, likely do not objectively analyze both the great occurrences and the not so great stumbles of each day, and that left unattended, the great occurrences

occur less frequently and the stumbles tend to repeat themselves. In many ways, they may know when something is right or wrong or good or bad, but over time, they stop taking the time to address the issues or make the effort to remediate performance concerns because they may or may not know how to fix them. What insights might we gain by thoughtfully engaging our students in reflective activity such as journaling or reflective conversation? What might we learn if we held a prism up to the experience from the point of view of the student? How might this type of retrospective effort (mirroring that which is found in the circularity of the hermeneutic process) help us work our way into the lived experience of students as they prepare for an adjudicated performance?

I recall a conversation with a teacher with whom I was visiting, where he pointed out to me that after I had worked with his band, he finally figured out what his students were doing wrong in a particular passage. “I knew there was something I didn’t like but I couldn’t figure it out.” Was this an example of one of those unexamined occurrences that kept coming back over and over, incorrect every time but not attended to in a sufficiently reflective way as to have yielded a satisfactory resolution? Was this an example of what Heidegger describes as a “vicious circle,” where the same endlessly futile repetitions produce no fresh insights? Only when the teacher took the opportunity to experience the phenomenon from a fresh perspective did he have the chance to gain new insights and understandings and move forward within the growth paradigm of presumption and surprise that is inherent in the “hermeneutic circle” (Moran, 2002, p. 18). While the director shared his experience of enlightenment, I wonder,

what was the students' perspective? Was this experience at their threshold of awareness? If so, what was it like for them? How would they describe it? What did it mean for them?

James Jordan, in *The Musician's Spirit: Connecting to Others through Story* (2002), pulls the various concepts generally alluded to above into a coherent and profound message that has great relevance for the beginning of a journey into the minds and bodies of students as they experience the preparation of music for performance in all of its polyphonic possibilities.

By placing one's own self in a place of awe and wonder, we revisit the place where, as children, we heard all. Children hear all. Have you noticed that? They hear every word of every conversation. Why? Because their very existence depends on their ability to hear and listen. "Musicians need to reawaken their natural sense of hearing, then connect it with their intuition, which is open, non-judgmental, and always performed in a loving place. We must view listening as a miracle; a miracle that will provide all that is necessary for us to live the music we perform. (Jordan, 2002, p. 41)

Perhaps we as music educators need to hear and listen as if *our* very existence depends on it. I believe Jordan's recommendation has relevance not only for ensemble directors and their musicians with direct reference to listening to the music that makes up their experience as a performer, but also to listening to all that surrounds one in the milieu of the band rehearsal, including listening to the students themselves. Shouldn't we be investing more listening time and effort into hearing and trying to understand what they have to say about their experiences with this music that, by the very nature of the school performing ensemble experience, we choose for them? Sometimes as I listen to groups in performance (often from the perspective of an adjudicator), I am dismayed by

what I perceive to be the case of a capable group who has had their ability to perform effectively undermined by the particular musical choices that were made for them by their director. As I listen to these types of performances I wonder, what is the experience like for the students involved? Have they lost faith and trust in their director because they have been put into a situation where they are destined to be unsuccessful? While I do not suggest that students take over the role of making what are essentially curriculum choices, as repertoire choices for performing ensembles are in many ways indeed just that, I do think it would be most enlightening and potentially pedagogically valuable to know what students are experiencing as they prepare music for performance. Are they invested in the music? Is it at the appropriate level of difficulty, from their perspective? Did they have options and input? Have they had the opportunity to express their feelings about the pieces to the director? Just as directors cannot bury their faces in the score when they conduct for fear of losing the requisite contact with their players, neither can they approach their pedagogy with deaf ears and be oblivious to the feelings and perceptions of their student musicians.

What Are We Listening For, Anyway?

...the real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes. (Proust, as cited in Kapilow, 2008, p. 7)

Music, by its very nature, is an aural phenomenon. It exists as an audible series of sounds across time that are structured in such a way as to tell a story or reflect an artistic message of some type. These groups of sounds are perceived through listening. But how do we make sense of these sounds, and why do they mean different things to different people? What do the students really hear when

they listen in an ensemble setting, and how would they describe it? In what ways might the experience manifest itself differently for students who play different instruments or sit in different places in the rehearsal room?

Planes of listening. Aaron Copland describes three separate planes on which we listen to music: 1) the sensuous plane, 2) the expressive plane, and 3) the sheerly musical plane (1957, p. 8.) While he admits that this is an artificial separation since we never actually listen on just one or the other plane, he believes it is helpful to analyze the various avenues through which listening brings us to the musical experience so that we have a clearer understanding of the phenomenon.

The simplest way of listening to music is on the sensuous plane which represents listening to music for the sheer pleasure of the musical sounds themselves. In the students' experiences as shared within our conversation, the student references to the one selection as being "just so fun to play" seem to fit well in this category. This is the plane on which we hear music without conscious thought or consideration. The music just is, and we experience it in that visceral, sensual way.

While this sensuous plane is a potent and ubiquitous aspect of music listening experience, Copland is quick to caution against overvaluing this plane of listening that he describes as "a kind of brainless but attractive state of mind...engendered by the mere sound appeal of the music" (1957, p. 9). In what ways might the extended study of music that initially appeals to the students on this sensuous plane initiate movement through other planes of listening? Do

sensuous appeal and the students' feeling about the music change over time? How might the students describe their attitude towards the music as they move through the process of preparing it for performance? Do they start to think about the music differently, and if so, how do they describe this change?

The second of Copland's planes, the expressive plane, deals with the broad and sometimes controversial question of meaning making that takes place through the listening process. Copland asserts that all music has expressive meaning but we can't say in so many words what that meaning might be, because it may be different for different listeners or it may be inexpressible through verbal means. Dufrenne (1973, pp. 265-266) suggests that "Anything we may say of (music) in another language is pitifully inadequate to express what music expresses...meaning informs music, making it music rather than an incoherent succession of sounds." This plane was manifest in a way by the student conversants who attempted to put into words what the piece of music written in memory of a student who had died in a car accident meant to them. While for each of them the meaning of this particular musical experience was different, and their efforts to verbalize the meaning may have been inadequate as Dufrenne suggests, the meaning was clearly present for each of them, in its own unique and idiosyncratic manifestation. "Nothing is so personal as what we feel, and how we personally feel music at the time we are involved with it" (Reimer, 2003, p. 74).

The third plane is the sheerly musical plane, one which might have been accessed when the students actively analyzed and studied the complexities of the piece that contained so many engaging and difficult rhythms and ensemble

challenges. Music, in addition to its pleasurable attributes and expressive potential does, indeed, exist in terms of the notes themselves and how they are manipulated to endlessly diverse aesthetic ends. Copland (1957, p. 14) suggests that

The intelligent listener must be prepared to increase his awareness of the musical material and what happens to it. He must hear melodies, the rhythms, the harmonies, the tone colors in a more conscious fashion. But above all he must, in order to follow the line of the composer's thought, know something of the principles of musical form. Listening to all of these elements is listening on the sheerly musical plane.

The degree to which any one or a mixture of these planes represents how we listen to music is in many ways determined by our previous experience with music, our relative ability to attenuate to the details inherent in the musical process, and our specific role within the context of a particular musical experience. Each of the student participants brings with them a unique perspective based on their own varied experiences, abilities, dispositions and relation to the phenomenon. Understanding that these prismatic and polyphonic possibilities are inexorably linked to the individuality of the students engaged in the phenomenon, how might each individual describe the same musical moment? Will they hear the same thing? Will there be any type of congruence in their descriptions or will they experience the same musical moment in very different ways? How will their different perspectives and the different windows through which they see and hear and feel the experience be manifest in their recollections? This diverse potentiality for musical experience is in many ways very appropriate for investigation using the lens of hermeneutic phenomenology, where we seek the unique and the essentially irreplaceable in order to uncover the essence of this particular lived experience.

New ears for listening. Rob Kapilow, in his book *All You Have to do is Listen: Music from the Inside Out* (2008), suggests that it may be helpful to engage in what he refers to as “‘listening for plot’, that is, listening for the way musical ideas are connected and strung together to create a purely musical ‘story’” (p. 7). By combining the ideas of Copland and Kapilow, we may be able to begin a process of discovery consisting, to paraphrase the opening quote from Proust, not in seeking new landscapes to which to listen, but in having new ears through which to do the listening. By engaging the students in thoughtful reflection on their listening, call it “meta-listening” or thinking about one’s own listening, might we unearth treasures of insight heretofore left untapped? What is it that the students are really hearing? How might they describe how they experience the aural nature of their rehearsal?

Jonathan Goldman, in *Healing Sounds* (2002, p. 81), asserts that “Listening is an active activity, as opposed to hearing which may be understood as a passive activity. Listening involves really using our ears as an organ of consciousness.” When we and our students use our ears as “organs of consciousness” we may indeed be more fully aware of and engaged with the aural world we inhabit. In what ways might this difference manifest itself within the student participants’ experience? What would students say if they were asked to describe the difference between active and passive listening? In what ways do they experience this more active listening consciousness?

James Jordan (2002), noted choral music educator and author, suggests that music teachers, conductors and pedagogues in general, have not done a very

good job of teaching our students to listen. We have been inclined to assume that listening is a given, since we as teachers and performers all engage in listening, at least to some extent. Jordan suggests that choirs, bands and orchestras do not sing or play in tune because their members do not listen as musicians need to listen. These students enter a rehearsal with their “life” ears, or the listening skills they use in the everyday world. These ears are conditioned to protect us from the onslaught of sounds we experience in the outside world. Jordan posits that this lack of listening intensity is clearly not adequate for the tasks that are incumbent for music-makers. How would students describe the way they listen in the course of their daily lives *outside* of the rehearsal room? What would they say about those listening experiences? Do they even register as actual listening experiences or do they exist below their level of awareness? Do they detect a difference when they move into the music rehearsal setting? How do they experience the difference when they listen in the rehearsal atmosphere? How might they describe this different listening experience?

Jordan goes on to explain that in today’s world, the sense of sight is probably viewed as the most important. This harkens back to the ancient Greeks who were “using words for knowing and the object of knowledge that linked with the act of seeing and the object of the gaze... vision and knowledge are inseparable as instruments of power” (Levin, 1989, p. 30). Certainly it is the sense that is most important for gathering information in an age of wordless communication that occurs largely over the internet. Jordan suggests that when entering a rehearsal, students should move hearing, or as he puts it “listening with

the whole being,” to the top of the sensorial hierarchy. Levin (1989, pp. 47-48), additionally asserts that

the development of hearing as an aesthetic skill both contributes to, and is in turn advanced by, the development of hearing as an organ of compassion. For the aesthetic is precisely the cultivation of sensibility, a deepening of our capacity for sensuous and affective appreciation.

Jordan asserts that we need to re-set sensual priorities and to focus on getting students to listen to *everything*. He contends that we spend too much time trying to micromanage the listening process and, therefore, handicap our students when it comes to hearing the full spectrum of the musical experience. In fact, he suggests students should focus their listening on everything *but* themselves.

In the ruminations shared by the high school band students mentioned earlier regarding their preparation for their recent band festival performance, a major recurring theme revolved around the listening process in a variety of manifestations. The clarinetist in the group recalls:

We had after school rehearsals of sections, as woodwinds and brass, and I think that helped a lot. I know it helped me because you sort of listen to the similar sounds and the similar parts, and you can remember and write in your part to listen to the clarinets around here, and then that helps you listen across and past your section. It helps intonation too, because you can hear each other better.

As suggested by Jordan earlier, here is an opportunity for students to engage in listening to everyone *but* themselves. As Jordan alludes, so few rehearsals actually focus on this level of listening, allowing the ears to work with less structure and micromanagement of focus. He suggests that this will undoubtedly require practice and may not immediately be successful since the ears we most often use are not what might be called “rehearsal” ears, the ears that

we really need to use to experience the full aural spectrum comprising the musical experience, be it in rehearsal or performance. How might the students involved describe this difference between their “everyday” ears and their “rehearsal” ears? What would they hear differently? How might this change the way they experience the rehearsal and the learning process?

Another student highlighted the fact that listening was a challenge, especially as it related to the difficulty of the music they were preparing for performance. The bassoonist says:

I think that is definitely a challenge of ours, to really listen across the band. I feel like we have really difficult music, and so you’re really just trying to get your part right and it’s really difficult to listen to the tubas here and listen to the trumpets there.

Herein lies another challenge to the application of higher level listening skills directly communicated by the students themselves; the technical demands of the music may hamper the students’ ability to engage in thoughtful and insightful listening activities.

Another valuable way (as identified by the students) where listening was facilitated was when the director had the ensemble listen to a recording of their performance. The flautist in the group thinks this was revelatory:

I think, if you listen to yourselves, like when we listened to our tapes, it helped a lot. For me, it was like, wow, this is what we sound like? When you’re playing, you don’t really, *can’t* really listen, because you’re listening to yourself and what *you* need to do. But as you listen overall, it helps you think about what you need to change, and gives you a better perspective of what needs to happen.

The bassoonist expresses the feeling that:

It would be really helpful, I don’t know if it would be possible, if we actually recorded ourselves more often, as kind of a check. This is how we

sounded here, and then we hear it and we think – oh, that was really bad, then we know what to do for better balance, what needs to be fixed. I think that would be really helpful.

How might the student listening experience be different if layers of complexity were removed from the listening process so that it could more clearly focus on specific aspects of performance? How might the students describe the listening process if changed in this way? Would they be able to hear differently? Would they be able to hear more? Relating back to what the bassoonist suggested, if students are listening to a *recording* of their performance, would they then need not be concerned with the immediate distraction of actually attending to the difficulty of the act of performance and be more attuned to the aural experience itself? Each of the students seemed to feel this was a hugely valuable exercise, such that they suggested that more opportunities to listen to recorded rehearsals or performances might yield even more insights resulting in more musical performances.

In response to this last thought, I posed a question of clarification to the group. “Do you think there would be a time before which it really wouldn’t do any good, to do that (listen to a recording of a rehearsal), because it just isn’t together enough, you know what I mean? The flute player responded:

I think you have to get to a certain point first. Initially, when everybody’s really just trying to learn the piece, and get all the fingerings, I don’t think anyone really needs to hear how (giggles all around) the piece is sounding, but I think as it kind of gets closer, maybe like every other week, it would be good as a check of progress, maybe? And maybe for some renewed inspiration!

At this point in our conversation, I shared some thoughts with the students about listening using an onion metaphor I learned from a colleague a few years

ago. “Once you peel a few layers away, like with an onion, you sometimes realize, I’ve never heard that before. Wow, that’s kind of interesting. Shouldn’t I hear that? But it’s covered up until you peel a layer away to expose what’s underneath.” I shared with the students that I had judged a couple of groups the day before, and thought, because the percussion was playing so loud, many of the musicians probably had no idea what other people were playing. Wouldn’t that have been a good thing for them to be able to do? Would it have allowed them to change dynamics and bring out some parts and subdue others so the whole musical message would get through? Often, when I work with bands as a clinician, I will stop the group and pose the question, “Who has the melody right now?” The responses I get tell me that most students, indeed, do not know who has the melody at any particular moment in the music. Might this be an appropriate question for teachers to ask their own students anytime balances are out of proportion or the melody can’t be heard? Will it cause the students to listen more attentively? The students involved in the conversation alluded to above indicated that they felt it is, indeed, a good thing to be able to hear other players so that a sense of the “big musical picture” can be achieved.

The insights shared by these students suggest that multiple prisms of perspective can be gained by engaging students in thoughtful reflective practice about their own experience with the music preparation process. The students engaged in these conversations reflected on their own experiences and had several “aha” moments where they articulated significant insights, because they’d had the experience themselves. They had heard the difference this type of active listening

can stimulate, and they had their ears opened, so to speak, to new vistas of interactive musicianship. What other insights might the students have into the experience of preparing their music for an adjudicated performance? In what other ways might their unique window into the experience unlock a polyphony of possibilities that the prism through which the director experiences the phenomenon might not provide?

Different ears for listening. The students went on to share that their director had invited two guest conductors to come in and listen to and work with the group. All the students felt that this was beneficial because these guests heard different things and brought new perspectives to the rehearsal experience. The students suggested that these guests had not been numbed to the sounds of the ensemble by the day in and day out repetition which can characterize so many rehearsals, and which might have worked against their own director's ability to stay fresh and to listen critically. This goes back to what Jordan (2002) laments as the loss of the ability to fully engage as a listener because of the tendency to listen with our "life ears" instead of our "musician ears." These guests were free of "aural baggage" and could listen in fresh and deep ways that allowed them to hear what had been hidden to others.

...a profound sense of listening can only be accessed through awe and a profound sense of wonder for the art we create. When we are in a state of awe, we hear better, more profoundly, more inwardly. We must view listening as a miracle; a miracle that will provide all that is necessary for us to live the music we perform. (Jordan, 2003, p. 41)

Is this state of "awe" diminished or even eliminated by the quotidian nature of the listening experience that so often characterizes the rehearsal setting? What might

be done to regain this understanding of the listening act as a miracle that can yield untold insight into the musical experience?

I concluded this conversation with the students with a question designed to get at a sense of how they understood their role in a rehearsal setting. “Have you ever heard someone say that rehearsal is not for you to learn your part but for you to learn everybody else’s part? What do you think that means?” Revisiting one of the quotes that open Chapter One, the clarinetist shared the following observation:

I think if we were to learn other parts, other than our own, then we can see where we need to be more quiet, and where we need to bring out a certain passage, and to understand that everything in the music is relative; the dynamics, the articulations, all of it. It all has to happen as part of the group. It isn’t all about us as individuals. It’s about the group and the music and we have to listen to see how the best way is to play our part so it all works together.

The level of listening and attentive ensemble participation that this student alludes to requires a conscious effort to see and hear beyond one’s one part and to begin to listen for and experience the multitude of aural stimuli that often simultaneously coexist in a musical setting. How can this deeper access to the full scope of aural experience be gained? Green and Gallway (1986, pp. 203-204) suggest several techniques for increasing what they term “sound awareness.” These include a variety of audiation techniques (singing pitches within one’s head) and ensemble precision exercises that focus on listening for and identifying similarities and differences between the listeners’ part and other members of the ensemble in the areas of attack, release, phrasing, articulation, dynamic contrast and blend and balance factors. Green and Gallway contend, and the student band members seemed to agree, that this sensitivity to other elements of the ensemble

can and does help players with their own interpretation and performance. This “ensemble sensitivity” can increase players’ abilities to function successfully as ensemble members and makes them more keenly attuned to the contributions of others within the group, and therefore, more likely to modify their own performance in order to achieve the most satisfying musical effect.

Notes from a Performance

Just recently I had the opportunity to hear the ensemble from which my student conversants were drawn in performance at the state band festival. As they began their performance I noticed something that none of the students had alluded to in our previous conversation, but that I believe has significant relevance for the area of listening. Their warm-up piece was a transcription of a Bach Chorale that underwent a variety of quite transparent voicings, including having only one player on a part, and eventually moving into the ensemble singing in unaccompanied four part harmony. The students were called upon to perform and listen in different ways: listening for different tone colors, different mixes of voices played by instruments with often contradictory intonation tendencies; listening while singing – actually producing the sound from within their body and not simply through the mechanical means of the instrument; requiring the students to listen with new ears, more of a musician’s ear than the everyday ears we often bring to these tasks. These students were using their ears (and their whole body, in many ways) to identify, internalize and respond to the various vibrations of tones that they were producing, or that were being produced by those around them. They were experiencing this phenomenon from the spatial, temporal, relational

and bodily lifeworld existentials that van Manen (1997, p. 101) advises we use to help organize and better understand our reflections on lived experience. These students were called upon to modify their own tone color, volume, and pitch to create a harmonious and musically satisfying ensemble product. In many ways, this teacher has indeed begun the process of getting the students to listen with their “musicians’ ears” and to act in a thoughtful and responsive musical way to this polyphony of input.

The performance of the two adjudicated pieces that followed this warm-up reflected in many ways the experiences and insights that had been shared by the students in our earlier conversation. While the performance was not note perfect, there were many moments of high energy and inspiring musicality that reflected their efforts and focus through the rehearsal and preparation process.

Music, Listening, Reflections, Moving Forward

Through their shared experiences, the students with whom I engaged in this preliminary inquiry voiced an understanding of the critical importance of the repertoire as the centerpiece of their musical efforts, both in its ability to engage and in its ability to challenge both technically and intellectually. The music itself is the core instructional material around which the pedagogical experiences for these students are structured, and it is reasonable to expect that music to be not only of high quality but to be appropriate for the student performers. It is incumbent on directors to keep in mind that indeed, “all music is not created equal” (Battisti, 2007, p. 17).

These students also have taken the first critical step to becoming more sensitive musicians by recognizing and articulating their need to look and listen beyond their own part within the ensemble experience. They demonstrated an emerging understanding and appreciation for the role that listening should play in the preparation of music for performance, whether it be listening to their own playing, the playing of others, the directions of their teacher or the insights shared by invited guest conductors who have the opportunity to listen to the group with a fresh set of ears. The key seems to be to get outside of one's regular experience and become more attuned to what we typically are not hearing. As James Jordan says so eloquently, we need to "fully engage as a listener" and "make ourselves and the clutter of our own cognitive brains less so that we hear the musical world at large more. We must listen with both the inward and outer ear, but hear all others first" (Jordan, 2002, p. 40).

The students in this preliminary inquiry shared experiences they had as they lived through the process of preparing music for an adjudicated performance. Insights gained during this abbreviated process may have great pedagogical potential and deserve to be further explored as time and circumstances permit. The present research project continues this line of inquiry on a larger scale over an extended period of time with a similar group of students. The experiences are more fully articulated so as to move beyond framing the experience from the perspective of the conductor alone, toward a more student centered approach. I believe further exploration in this area holds the promise of significant pedagogical insight and enlightened discovery and through thoughtful narrative

unpacking and interpretation, in keeping with the aims of hermeneutic phenomenology, these experiences may prove valuable to directors of a diverse array of ensemble settings.

CHAPTER THREE:
**PHILOSOPHICAL FRAMEWORK
AND PHENOMENOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

Human Science as a Call to Our Human-ness

Phenomenological research ... is the study of lived experience. (It is) the explication of phenomena as they present themselves to consciousness... the study of essences. Phenomenology attempts to explicate experiential meanings as we live them in our everyday existence, our lifeworld. Phenomenological research is a search for what it means to be human. (van Manen, 2003, pp. 9, 10, 11, 12)

Many of us have seen or heard (or participated in, for that matter) a band performance at a concert or festival at some point in our lives. These may have been concerts in the park, performances around the holidays at the local mall, concerts at the school or possibly even a band competition of some type. We as audience members appreciate the performance from a multitude of perspectives as the students make their individual contributions to the collective group presentation. This phenomenon presents itself to our consciousness as a part of our lifeworld. Likewise, the student participants bring their own experiences to the phenomenon, and create their own experiences as they exist as a part of the phenomenon as it occurs in time, making it distinctly personal and meaningful for each of them in unique ways. We see the performers on the stage, playing their instruments, looking attentively at the conductor, starting together, stopping together, and standing to acknowledge applause. While we see and hear them on whatever stage they are seated for their performance, do we *really* see and hear them? Can we know in any real way what the experience is like for them? Certainly we see and hear the music making that is made possible by the

experiences they have had in preparing the music for performance. But what are these experiences? How have they lived the experience of preparing this music for performance? What challenges did they face? What successes did they experience as they learned the music? What remains hidden to the casual listener/observer and possibly to the performers themselves? Carl Seashore (1947, p. 201) reminds us that “Everything we experience in our lives, music or anything else, comes to us through the screen of our selfness – the personal ways of being through which we construct our lived world. We experience music.” How do we gain access to and begin to understand the experience of these students as they “experience music making?”

In an effort to seek answers to these and many other questions that relate to the experience of band students as they prepare music for a performance, I have adopted a methodological approach based on hermeneutic phenomenology that focuses on uncovering the essence of a particular phenomenon through studying the lived experience of persons. This chapter begins with a description and explication of the precepts of hermeneutic phenomenology within the framework of human science research, and concludes with how this uniquely personal and experience focused methodology was utilized as the mode of inquiry for this investigation centered on gaining access to and uncovering the pedagogical and personal experiences that students live as they prepare music for performance. The goal here is not to develop abstractions and comprehensive schema for achieving successful performances, but rather, to explore the experience in a phenomenological manner – to elucidate the aspects of the experience that are not

clearly spelled out in teacher how-to articles and guides to rehearsal strategies, but that may nevertheless generate valuable pedagogical insights for both students and teachers alike.

“Human science... studies ‘persons’ or beings that have ‘consciousness’ and that ‘act purposefully’... in and on the world...” (van Manen, 2003, p. 4). This type of research is based on “a philosophy or theory of the unique; it is interested in what is essentially not replaceable” (van Manen, 2003, p. 7). Where many types of research focus on applying actions and interventions that are repeatable onto subjects that are replaceable, van Manen reminds us that “the change we aim for may have different significance for different persons” (2003, p.7). The focus is on the unique, the distinctive, the personal. “The individual case does not serve only to confirm a law from which practical predictions can be made. Its ideal is rather to understand the phenomenon itself in its unique and historical concreteness...” (Gadamer, 1960/1989, p. 4). As I work with students and teachers as they prepare music for adjudicated performances, I am reminded time after time from my observations and direct interactions with the participants that each person and each situation is unique and idiosyncratic in the most amazing and magical ways, and that there is much to be gained by listening and thoughtfully attending to these shared, yet widely divergent, experiences. Van Manen (2003, p. 8) reminds us that “the ultimate end of human science research for educators is a critical pedagogical competence: knowing how to act tactfully in pedagogic situations on the basis of a carefully edified thoughtfulness.”

Hermeneutic Phenomenology

The phenomenology of Dasein (human existence) is a hermeneutic in the primordial signification of this word, where it designates this business of interpreting. (Heidegger, 1926/1962, p. 62)

Human existence is not an entity which is simply there in the world, accessible from different points of view. Rather human existence is some specific person's existence; it has the character of "specificity" or "mineness". So too an interpretation of human existence cannot be neutral, dispassionate, theoretical contemplation, but must take into account the involvement of the enquirer him- or herself in the undertaking. ... The phenomena of existence always requires interpretation. (Moran, 2000, p. 197)

Hermeneutic phenomenology is a philosophy of the personal, the individual...it tries to understand the phenomena of education by maintaining a view of pedagogy as an expression of the whole, and a view of the experiential situation as the topos of real pedagogical acting. (van Manen, 2003, p. 7)

Van Manen's approach to human science research owes much to the theoretical concepts originally espoused by Husserl, Heidegger and Gadamer, each ground breaking thinkers in the field of phenomenology. Van Manen shares with Husserl the view that phenomenology is the study of the lifeworld – the world as it is experienced directly. While focusing on getting back to "the things themselves" through a systematic process of uncovering and describing the internal meaning structures of that lived world, the science of phenomenology provides an avenue into understanding the meaning of everyday experiences. Van Manen sees phenomenological research, as did Husserl before him, as seeking the very nature of a phenomenon, "that which makes something what it is" (2003, p. 10.)

Van Manen also demonstrates the influence of Heidegger (1926/1962), whose approach to phenomenology centered on the investigation of the question

of being, when he characterizes phenomenological research as “a ministering of thoughtfulness,” a search for what it means to be human, “a heedful, mindful wondering about the project of life, of living, of what it means to live a life” (van Manen, 2003, p. 12). The influence of Marcel (1950) is shown as well through van Manen: “Phenomenological research is unlike other research in that the link with the results cannot be broken without loss of all reality to the results” (p. 13). This stands in stark contrast to the preponderance of education research where results are regularly severed from the context and means through which they were obtained. Paraphrasing van Manen, to summarize a musical performance to reveal a result is to miss the point and to negate the result; the point is the music itself. Echoing the thoughts of Merleau-Ponty (1973), van Manen feels that “language that authentically speaks the world rather than abstractly speaking of it is a language that reverberates the world, a language that sings the world” (2003, p. 13). A valued aim of phenomenological inquiry therefore is “not to ask for a conclusion or a summary,” but to “engage language in a primal incantation or poetizing which hearkens back to the silence from which the words emanate” (van Manen, 2003, p. 13).

Hermeneutic phenomenology, by its very name, indicates a combined function as both description (phenomenology) and interpretation (hermeneutics). Van Manen explores the relationship between the two ideas (2003, p. 25) by highlighting the distinction between “phenomenology (as pure description of lived experience) and hermeneutics (as interpretation of experience via some text or via some symbolic form).” Contrasts are illuminated between Husserlian

approaches where the object of phenomenological research is fully achieved through *description* of the fundamental structures of a phenomenon, and the ideas of Heidegger and Gadamer where the direction begins to explore the various *interpretive* aspects inherent in the idea of phenomenological descriptions.

The term “hermeneutics” derives from the Greek verb *hermeneuin* which means to “interpret” (Moran, 2000, p. 271). The meaning comes from Greek mythology where Hermes, the messenger of the gods, served as a liaison between gods and humans, a being who “tells lies as well as truths, who misleads as well as leads” (Moran, 2000, p. 271). Within this potentially troubling contradictory notion of telling both lies and truths inhabits a fundamental aspect of hermeneutics that has particular relevance for interpretation within the arts. Gadamer (1960/1989, p. 309) cites that even in performative interpretation, interpretation involved in the performance of a musical work, there is a necessary “split between the cognitive and the normative function. No one can ... perform a piece of music without understanding the original meaning of the text and presenting it in his reproduction and interpretation.” Dufrenne (1973, pp. 24) goes a bit further when he posits that “Our understanding of a work is undeniably bound up with its performances, which are themselves linked to a particular historical taste.” While confirming that it is indeed appropriate to appraise the work of a performer by relating to the intent of the composer, he alludes to the possibility of multiple interpretations of a performance when he writes:

... historicity does not weaken any of that demand which is in the work and which always gives rise to new performances. Since appearance, though necessary to being, is nevertheless not identical with it, a number of different performances of the same work or, from the viewpoint of the

public, several interpretations of the same performed work, can all be valid. (Dufrenne, 1973, p. 26)

It is certainly the case that even within the world of the professional symphony orchestra, there is not only the possibility for multiple valid interpretations of an orchestral work (consider the varying interpretation of Ricardo Muti or Fritz Reiner or Leonard Bernstein as they conduct Mahler, for instance) but that this potentiality itself can become a point of interest for the musician as well as the audience members. The anticipation and subsequent experience of new twists of interpretation that a conductor and the musicians may bring to a particular performance can in itself be a rich source of fascination and engagement. Just as music critics will describe and interpret what they experienced as they were part of the performance, other audience members also bring differing interpretations of the performance to their experience with that particular phenomenon. Each of these listeners will apply their own cognitive, normative and aesthetic frameworks and perspectives when constructing their own personal interpretation of the performance. While not “lies” in the quotidian sense of the word, these varying interpretations do exist in contradiction with the interpretations of others and might be construed to be “untrue” in the broadest sense of the perspective of one with a contrary interpretation. Does this really make them false? Or is it the inner truth, the one developed and experienced by the individual within their particular framework of historicity and cultural experience, that matters?

The tensions involved in this sort of personal and aesthetic experience make this sort of inquiry even more interesting to me as I wonder what is going

on in the minds of students as they prepare their own performances. Certainly the experiences they bring to the phenomenon are not as wide ranging or as learned as those of the professional symphony musician; however, they each have degrees of insight and understanding that we may be overlooking by not engaging them in a dialogue about their experiences with this phenomenon. Is it possible that the students' particular preparation and performance experiences are characterized by a level of presuppositionlessness (and innocence) that surpasses that of the professional musician directly because of this smaller scope of experience? Might this provide uniquely insightful viewpoints into the music preparation and performance experiences as perceived by the students themselves? Might this be similar to what Levin (1989, p. 211) suggests when he cites that "The child experiences a joy that most adults have lost forever" and when he then ponders, "can we retrieve the hearing of the child of joy?"

From Brentano to Husserl

Husserl's development of phenomenology owes much to the descriptive psychology project of Franz Brentano, whose rethinking of philosophy as a rigorous science involved a focus on "illuminating the nature of self-aware acts of cognition without appealing to causal or genetic explanation" (Moran, 2000, pp. 7 - 8). Husserl employed the principle of presuppositionlessness (discarding theorizing in favor of careful description of the phenomena itself) as an overriding principle of phenomenology. This concept was explicated in Husserl's *Logical Investigations*, his breakthrough work, as the notion of going "back to the things

themselves,” and highlighted his emphasis on the importance of intuition in this philosophical process (Husserl, 1913/1983, p. 44).

Husserl also draws the notion of intentionality from Brentano, and it played a central part in Husserl’s conception of phenomenology. This doctrine of intentionality has its roots in the teaching of Aristotle and posits that every mental act is related to some object (Brentano, 1973/1995, p. 88). This notion of intentionality illustrates the “inseparable connectedness of the human being to the world...that all thinking (imagining, perceiving, remembering) is always thinking *about* something...that all human activity is always *oriented* activity, directed by that which orients it” (van Manen, 2003, pp.181-182).

Moran points out that Husserl further analyzes the intentional structure of an act, citing that it makes no difference at all to the phenomenological nature of the experience whether or not the object exists, is fictitious, or is perhaps completely absurd (2000, p.117). Therefore, even if an object doesn’t exist corporeally, consciousness can still be directed toward it as an object.

The French (Lithuanian, by birth) phenomenologist Emmanuel Levinas corroborates this view and gives Husserl credit for reawakening philosophy to the idea that human life always already involves meaningfulness. “All consciousness is consciousness of something. Consciousness is not only the lived experience of the psychism, the cogitations assured of their subjective existence: it is meaningfulness, thoughts casting themselves towards something that shows itself in them” (Levinas, 1987/1993, p. 153).

In order to emphasize the correlate parts of the structure of the mental process that is critical to Husserl's conception of the concept of intentionality, he introduces a new terminology based on ancient Greek terms. These terms, *noesis*, for the "act of thinking" and *noema*, for "what is thought" are believed by Husserl to be critical to the grounding of phenomenology (1913/1983, pp. 233-234). The *noema* or *noematic correlate* is the term given to the object as experienced, and the term *noesis* or the *noetic correlate* is given to the mode of experiencing.

I return to the band performance that I discussed briefly at the opening of the chapter as it relates to the concepts of *noema* and *noesis*. In as much as the *noema* represents the object as experienced (a musical performance in this case), the *noesis* might represent the mode of experience that the performer (or the audience member) has during the actual presentation of the performance.

Etymologically, the Oxford English Dictionary cites the word *performance* as having its roots in Anglo French (late 16th century) when it was construed as the carrying out of a command, the execution of a task, or the "performance" of a duty. The meaning later grew to encompass the concept of the action of performing a play or musical product at an appointed place and time, essentially serving as "a public exhibition or entertainment." It is primarily this public presentation aspect that characterizes and differentiates the "performance" of an ensemble from what might take place in a rehearsal setting, in a more private setting, not privy to the ears and eyes of others. How is it that the students experience their own public performance of music? How is the experience different when they are playing the music in the relative safety (no public

scrutiny) of the band room? How might this perspective change for the performers when a visitor is present during a rehearsal? Does this rehearsal then become more of a performance because there is then an audience, albeit possibly of one? How might this change of dynamic affect the experience of the students as they work through the musical task at hand?

When I think of a band performance I might see the band in front of me on a stage of some type (from my perspective as the conductor) with their eyes looking up for beat patterns, cues, musical gestures, or looks of reassurance as we navigate through the process of setting forth the performance. However, if I change my perspective to that of a player in the ensemble, I will be seeing the director from my seat in the trumpet section, hearing the percussion behind me, counting rests as I prepare for an entrance, listening to a section play a part that we will be echoing shortly so we can mirror the articulation or phrasing. Each of these perspectives could be of the exact same slice of performance but from two different noetic stances. The mode of experiencing this particular phenomenon, although it might be in fact the same slice of time, is being experienced in distinctly unique and personal ways depending on the noetic relation to the phenomenon.

On another level, as the director of the band doing the performing above, I might see in my mind's eye (or hear in my mind's ear) the many rehearsals that led up to this particular performance, and might recall a particularly stressful and anxious rehearsal moment where an excerpt of the music being performed simply would not come together where it had been quite dependably performed in

preceding rehearsals. This recollection might infuse my experience of this performance with a level of anxiety that would not have been there were it not for that one rehearsal memory of angst and uncertainty. What influence might this noetic stance have on the players? Would they remember it the same way I did? How would their playing be affected by this? Would they have forgotten the one bad rehearsal experience and instead only remember that they now can play this part that they had trouble with previously? Noetically, when I think about the band performance, I think about much more than the event as it takes place in time. Instead, I see beyond the immediacy of the moment to the contextual meaning the experience has. I see all of the rehearsals that led up to the performance with all of their struggles and successes. I remember the moments where musical magic was created by the students and try to remember how we accomplished that and how I can support their achievement of that magic once again, this time in front of an audience. Noetically, what might be the experience as viewed through the eyes of the students, or as heard through their ears, or as felt through their bodies? How do they perceive the performance? What other noetic contexts do they bring to bear when experiencing the phenomenon?

Husserl's notion that we must "return to the things themselves" has prompted me to turn to phenomenological inquiry as the mode of research through which to tap into the rehearsal and performance experience of students. For most of my professional life I have been involved with students and teachers in the preparation of band music for performance, either as a teacher or supervisor. I have had the opportunity to work with many new band directors as

they begin their work with students in this important educational endeavor.

Within the scope of those experiences, I have learned much from listening to both seasoned veterans and up and coming young band directors, but I have recently become interested in the experiences of the students themselves, in many ways the people most intimately engaged with the process itself.

I recently attended a conference presentation by two young and successful band directors who have been experimenting with rotating the seating assignments in their ensembles as a way to grow their young musicians. In the course of the presentation (Zephir & Stoetzer, 2010), it came up in discussion that the experiences of the students were characterized by unanticipated growth in both social engagement and maturity, not just the intended outcome of increased performance flexibility on the part of the musicians. By moving around within the ensemble, the students met and engaged with other students with whom they would not have engaged otherwise. One student shared, “We met and got to know people within our sections that we hadn’t gotten to know at all before...it made us more aware of how other people experienced their particular role in the ensemble, playing a different part, hearing other things because they sat in a different part of the group.” The development of a newfound sense of camaraderie and teamwork had already manifest itself in greatly improved group dynamics and a resulting strong sense of community within their current ensemble by the time the teachers made their presentation. This serendipitous experience was shared with the teacher by her students immediately after the new approach was initiated the past school year. This facet of the experience was one that had not been anticipated by

the teacher, and had it not been shared from the perspective of the students, it might have gone undiscovered by the teacher, or been misinterpreted as something other than what the students actually experienced. The potential for other insights generated from the students themselves, and the power of those insights to support or catalyze pedagogical change, is an exciting and relatively untapped source of wisdom and ideas. In order to really understand what it is like to experience this phenomenon from the student's perspective, it is necessary to go back to the *students themselves*, to tap into their accounts of their own experiences as they prepare and perform music as members of their high school band.

Heidegger's Phenomenology

Martin Heidegger, one of the great philosophical minds of the Twentieth century, was profoundly influenced by the work of Edmund Husserl. Heidegger, while attempting to continue the work of Husserl of "getting back to the things themselves" (Moran, 2000, p. 194), moved phenomenology in a new direction. Heidegger's focus is on the nature of human existence which he termed "Dasein," and which he believes can only be attained through an inquiry into the manner in which the structures of Being are revealed through the structures of human existence (Heidegger, 1926/1962, p. 32). Heidegger believes this is only possible through hermeneutic phenomenology since the interpretation of human existence is something that cannot be accomplished in a clinical and dispassionate manner, but only in a way that uses the unique backward and forward movement of hermeneutic phenomenology. "Thus the very point of departure for our

analysis requires that it be secured by the proper method, just as much as does our access to the phenomenon, or our passage through whatever is prevalently covering it up” (Heidegger, 1926/1962, p. 37). Heidegger urges us to move beyond “haphazard” and “unreflective beholding” to the idea of “grasping and explicating phenomena in a way that is original and intuitive” (p. 37). This movement toward the hermeneutic or interpretive aspect of phenomenology marks his main departure from the philosophical structures of his mentor, Husserl.

Heidegger traces his interpretation of phenomenology to the Greek roots of the term phenomenology itself. Etymologically, the word phenomenology has two components, “phenomenon” and “logos” (Heidegger, 1926/1962, p. 50). The term “phenomenon” comes from the Greek verb “*phainesthai*” which means, “that which shows itself” or “that wherein something can become manifest, visible in itself” (Heidegger, 1926/1962, p. 51). The root of “*logos*” is “discourse,” as translated by Heidegger, and his conception of discourse “lets us see something from the very thing which the discourse is about. Discursive communication, in what it says, makes manifest what it is talking about, and thus makes it accessible to the other party” (Heidegger, 1926/1962, p. 56). In this way, Heidegger’s notion of “phenomenology,” stemming from the combined roots of “phenomenon” and “logos” refers to letting “that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way it which it shows itself from itself” (p. 58).

Inherent in this understanding of phenomenology as a mode of self-manifestation is the problem that “Since things don’t always show themselves as they are, phenomenology cannot be simply description” (Moran, 2000, p. 229).

The meaning of a phenomenon may be hidden within its manifestation, thus there is a need for the interpretation of a text, and for this reason Heidegger connects phenomenology with hermeneutics. Herein lies the significance of the second of the two roots in phenomenology, “logos” wherein “discourse means...to make manifest what one is talking about in one’s discourse” (Heidegger, 1926/1962, p. 56.) Heidegger further postulates that “because the logos is a letting-something-be-seen, it can therefore be true or false” (p. 56). In a quest for truth, using the Greek word, *aletheia*, Heidegger interprets this as a sense of “dis-closing,” “un-covering,” “revealing,” in the sense that something lies hidden and must be discovered or disclosed, ostensibly through a textual manifestation of some type. In this sense, individuals can develop their own unique interpretation of what is true about a particular experience, as they uncover the hidden meanings of a particularly human experience or phenomenon.

In moving beyond the phenomenology of Husserl, Heidegger replaced the “focus of the intentional structures of consciousness with the more fundamental study of the relation between Dasein (human existence) and Being itself” (Moran, 2000, p. 194). Heidegger opens his introduction to *Being and Time* (1926/1962) by stating that although the question of “being” is clearly of import, the question relating to the actual meaning of “being” is one that today has been forgotten and needs to be explicitly restated (Heidegger, 1926/1962, p. 2). Two concepts that weave themselves into this exploration of “being” as elucidated by Dufrenne (1973, p. 242) are captured by his assertion that “The human self implies both temporality and spatiality, and the Da (“there”) of Dasein (“being-there,”

“existence”) has a meaning which is both temporal and spatial.” Heidegger found the origin of this concept in Kant, whereby time is seen as a relationship of the self with itself, of the self as “affected by itself” (1929, p. 87).

In *Being and Time* (1926/1962) Heidegger states that “Dasein always understands itself in terms of its existence – in terms of a possibility of itself: to be itself or not itself” (p. 33). He goes on to assert that “Only the particular Dasein decides its existence...the question of existence never gets straightened out except through existing itself” (p. 33). This seems to imply that the way we come to be human is simply to exist and that this (existence) is also the means through which we may find some understanding of what it is to be human. Can it then be surmised that related to this idea of *Dasein*, understanding itself in terms of its existence, that we as humans understand ourselves in terms of our own unique experiences, and that we understand ourselves through the lens of what we do and what we experience? Indeed, Moran (2000, p. 238) suggests that “Access to Dasein comes through living out a life.” Therefore, if we are a band student, we have a sense of who we are by the very fact that we exist as a band student and do things that a band student does. We practice our instrument, we rehearse in band class, we follow the conductor’s cues, we perform on stage with the rest of our band peers, and perform many other human activities peculiar to this particular existence as a band member. However, if we wanted to, like Heidegger, try to understand the Being behind the being seated in the band class, how might we begin this type of inquiry? What might be the correct mode of access that would “un-cover,” “dis-close,” or “re-veal” what lies at the heart of what it means to be a

band student? When pondering how to undertake such an inquiry, Heidegger asserts that

our method has already been assigned. The theme of our analytic is to be Being-in-the-world, and accordingly the very world itself; and these are to be considered within the horizon of average everydayness – the kind of Being which is *closest* to Dasein. We must make a study of everyday Being-in-the-world; with the phenomenal support which this gives us, something like the world must come into view. (Heidegger, 1926/1962, p. 94)

Heidegger derives three substructures from his notion of *Being-in-the-world* as the fundamental structure of Dasein. These substructures, 1) the *world* or the *worldhood-of-the-world*, 2) *being-with-others*, and 3) *being-in* as such, constitute three interconnected yet divergent perspectives through which an understanding of *Being-in-the-world* can be approached.

Worldhood-of-the-world. Heidegger (1926/1962) asserts that any exploration of the *worldhood-of-the-world* must begin with an interpretation of what Dasein finds closest to itself, its environment and the entities encountered therein. Those entities of most relevance to this particular exploration of *Dasein* are things in the world that get used, or produced, or “become accessible when we...[concern] ourselves with them” (p. 96). Heidegger calls these entities “equipment” which is translated from the German ‘*Zeug*’ which can also refer to the English terms “tool,” “implement,” or “instrument” (Heidegger, 1926/1962, p. 97).

Heidegger (1926/1962) goes on to explain that the being of equipment exists in an equipmental totality and that any piece of equipment in this totality “is essentially something *in-order-to*” (p. 97). In this structure Heidegger contends

that equipment only makes sense in the context of other equipment, and that the use of equipment makes sense because a specific activity has a purpose. He further elucidates that along with the *in-order-to* equipment exhibits a “with-which” (the item of equipment), a “where-in” (a practical context), a “toward-which” (the goal), and a “for-the-sake-of-which” (the final point or purpose). Heidegger draws from this explication that this totality of equipmental involvement inexorably leads to a “for-the-sake-of-which” that ultimately has to do with the very Being of *Dasein* (pp. 118-119).

This idea of equipment has great relevance for investigating the experience of band students as they prepare music for performance. The students’ environment in a band setting is replete with equipment, spanning the continuum from the mundane to the unique; from chairs, music stands, valve oil, cork grease, metronomes, tuners and reeds to sheet music, music folders, fingering charts, warm-up books and ultimately the instruments themselves. All of these items are available to be put to use as needed “for-the-sake-of” something.

Within the totality of involvement with equipment that Heidegger asserts is at the very Being of *Dasein*, the diverse assemblage of equipment found in the band student’s environment provides them with the tools needed to attain a “for-the-sake-of-which” experience. The musical instruments are there for the students *in-order-to* learn to play the music; the music is there for the band director *in-order-to* teach the music; the pieces of equipment are there ultimately *for-the-sake-of* developing the students’ musicianship so they can perform their music

successfully. David Elliott tells us that “What music *is*, at root, is a human activity...Fundamentally, music is something people do” (1995, p. 37).

Then the *for-the-sake-of* that Heidegger posits, in this particular instance, ‘the point’ of the various interactions alluded to above, is the performance of the music. Reimer suggests, “The product of the making, the ‘piece’ or ‘work’ they produce by their doing, is not really the point. The point, or value, or essence of music is *in the doing* of it” (2003, p. 48).

As band students engage with the practicing-rehearsing-performing aspects of their experience, they become involved with the equipment at hand. Students may use an electronic tuner to set a reference pitch that they, then, work to match with their instruments. The tuner, then, is a piece of equipment that the students use in the scope of their band student experience to establish a goal *toward-which* the students must work. Similarly, a metronome might be used by a student to establish and reinforce a fundamental pulse that defines the tempo of a particular passage, thus setting a tempo stability goal *toward-which* the students will strive. Each of these items is a piece of equipment and is part of what Heidegger views as an equipmental totality, and this “*ready-to-hand* equipment is what it is only by standing in myriad referential relations to one another” (Cerbone, 2006, pp. 46-47). The tuner, for example, is something *with-which* to analyze a pitch *in-order-to* guide the student performance *towards* a more accurate pitch center *for-the-sake-of* playing better in tune. These referential relationships are critical to Heidegger’s conception of an item or type of equipment as being “what it is only so far as it belongs to a ‘totality’ of

equipment, which in turn is informed by our activity” (Cerbone, 2006, p. 47), in this case the activity of a band student working to improve intonation.

Thinking on a larger scale, might it be appropriate to envision the band itself as a piece of equipment involved in a “totality of equipment” (Heidegger, 1926/1962, p. 97)? Is there more than the teaching of musicianship going on within the band experience? What about the various social, emotional and value-related goals that may be addressed within the band experience? Can the band itself be perceived as an instrument through which joy, teamwork, collegiality and a sense of shared responsibility and accomplishment are pursued? Is the band not also used as a means *in-order-to* create a sense of camaraderie, school spirit, or festivity relating to a particular moment or situation? Can the experience be, as students with whom I spoke recently from one of our high schools alluded, a much needed respite and “refuge” from the harsh academic realities of the rest of their school day – a necessary release where students are free to think and feel and create and recapture the joy of learning in a supportive and non-threatening atmosphere? When considering the band itself as a piece of equipment what then is the *for-the-sake-of-which*, or the final point of the experience?

Being-with-others. Heidegger maintains that a fundamental part of being-in-the-world involves *being-with-others*. For Heidegger, “The world is always the one I share with others. The world of Dasein is a *with-world*” (Heidegger, 1926/1962, p. 155), wherein we relate to others. By others, Heidegger doesn’t mean everyone; rather, he is referencing “those from whom... one does

not distinguish himself – those among whom one is too” (p. 154). Within the band experience, who are these others?

Primarily these others are a band student’s fellow students, their peers, those from whom “one does not distinguish himself” (Heidegger, 1926/1962, p. 154). But there are other “others” involved in the experience of being a band student. Their director, while largely focused on the same fundamental tasks, is certainly an “other.” A clinician or guest director brought in to listen to and or work with the students would also constitute an “other.” The audience members and judges listening to and adjudicating a performance are also manifest as others who are part of the band student’s environment, and thus, part of their experience. What of the composer, without whom there would be no music around which the student would be having the experience in the first place? Each of these “others” comprises a part of the *being-with-others* that is essential to Heidegger’s understanding of *being-in-the-world*.

Being-in as such. Heidegger’s analysis of *being-with-others* is characterized by a deeper level of interpretation than the ontic level of his analysis of the *worldhood-of-the-world*. His subsequent analysis of *being-in* as such is representative of an even more primordial interpretation of *being* – one that aims to illuminate the ontological structures upon which his meaning of *Being* is grounded. The referential relations alluded to in Heidegger’s analysis of the *worldhood-of-the-world* and *being-with-others* have a normative dimension that is beyond the ability of an individual to determine. The particular ways in which a person encounters their everyday surroundings as normatively structured is not

something that is up to them to decide (Cerbone, 2006). These anonymous norms that structure our everyday experience indicate that the world we encounter is a public world and not something inherently private or subjective.

The *in* of *being-in* is not simply one of spatial capacity (being in the band room, for instance) but rather connotes a level of familiarity or involvement as in the concept of being *in* a relationship, being *in* a group, or in this case being *in* the band. Heidegger aims for his analysis to “lay bare a fundamental structure of Dasein” (1926/1962, p. 65) that includes *being-in-the-world*, being with things and being with others. Heidegger describes a fundamental characteristic of this *being-in* as the “care-structure” or simply “care.” In Heidegger’s words, “Its (the *being-in*’s) existential meaning is care” (1926/1962, p. 65).

Heidegger’s care structure has three fundamental aspects: 1) *ahead-of-itself*; 2) *already-in* (the-world); and 3) *being-alongside* (entities encountered within-the-world). Each of these aspects of the care structure aligns with a particular temporally aligned sub context; *ahead-of-itself* aligns with the future, *already-in* aligns with the past, and *being-alongside* aligns with the present. Fundamental to Heidegger’s inquiry is the idea that Being is “made visible in its temporal character...The central problematic of all ontology is rooted in the phenomenon of time, if rightly seen and rightly explained” (1926/1962, p. 40).

The first aspect, *ahead-of-itself*, corresponds to what Heidegger labels “understanding” or “projection” and is aligned with the future. *Dasein* is always *ahead of itself* in that it is always “projecting” itself in terms of some *for-the-sake-of*, some “possibility.” Being a band director, as a *for-the-sake-of*, is a

“possibility,” and for persons to identify themselves as band directors indicates that they are projecting themselves onto that “possibility” in a future characterized by an infinite number of “possibilities.” The fact that a person understands themselves in terms of possibilities rather than a set of actualities highlights the idea that a particular person’s *being* is, as Heidegger might suggest, an issue for them. “Dasein always understands itself in terms of its own existence – in terms of a possibility of itself: to be itself or not itself” (1926/1962, p. 33).

The second aspect, *already-in* (the world) corresponds roughly to what Heidegger describes as “state-of-mind” or “mood.” The German word “*Befindlichkeit*” translates most literally to “the state in which one may be found,” and thus implies a variety of referential orientations such as mood, disposition, inclination, belief or past experience (Cerbone, 2006, pp. 54-54). These concepts of mood and “*Befindlichkeit*” are inexorably tied to the concept espoused by Heidegger that he terms “thrownness.” The prevailing and salient existential meaning of this concept here is that our *being-in-the-world* is often within a context not of our own choosing; we are “thrown” into the world; we do not, for instance, choose when we are to be born or to what particular parents or in what particular town or under what particular set of circumstances. A band student will not typically be able to choose what school they attend or who their director might be. A band director will not be able to choose the adjudicators who will assess their band’s performance at a festival. For each of us, then, how we find ourselves conditions and determines, to a degree, how we respond to the situations we find ourselves “thrown” into. However, this is not a static existence but one that is

influenced by how we project ourselves onto our myriad possibilities – how we respond to the various stimuli and pre-existing conditions that contribute to our *state-of-mind*. For instance, is a particular decision we are called upon to make (selection of music for performance, for example) because of what we at the time see as an insurmountable obstacle actually an opportunity that would not have presented itself to us under other circumstances? What we see now as an unfortunate occurrence or bad decision may later be understood as the best thing that could have happened, in retrospect. This historical perspective is something that all of us possess and which is much more than a mere collection of facts or recollections. This perspective informs our self-understandings and perspectives and shapes our dynamic understanding of our own histories.

The third aspect, *being-alongside* (entities encountered within-the-world) aligns with Heidegger's notion of "falling," or what Cerbone (2006) describes as "my current absorption in whatever it is that I am doing" (p. 55). Our everyday existence draws us into modes of experience that are characterized by complacency and the mundane, where we have "fallen into the world... an absorption in Being-with-one-another, in so far as the latter is guided by idle talk, curiosity, and ambiguity" (Heidegger, 1926/1962, p. 220). Heidegger emphasizes that this idea of "fallenness" is not to be construed as negative; rather, it "is used to signify that Dasein is proximally and for the most part alongside the world of its concern" (1926/1962, p. 220). In the case of high school band students, this would be manifest in the many tasks, assignments, appointments, and other distractions that might serve to keep the students from reflecting on who they

really are, what it is they are really doing, and what might be the deeper meaning of their unique *being* at a particular moment in time.

The essential temporality of each of these aspects of the “care structure” is important to grasp so that the interconnectedness of the aspects is fully understood. The idea of understanding implies an idea of futurity; *Befindlichkeit* references the past, and falling (our current absorption in the everyday now) is tied up with our present. Understood as a sense of possibility, *Dasein* is, then, essentially a futural construct, involving a constant projection of oneself based on the present and the past. Cerbone, (2006) suggests that “My futurity thus conditions both my past (my understanding of where I have been) and my present, and so neither my past nor my present can be properly understood apart from my futurity” (p. 56).

With these understandings of the “care structure” in place, how are the experiences of students as they prepare for an adjudicated performance caught up in the possibilities associated with their upcoming performance? How might this understanding of the students’ *ahead-of-(themselves) itself*, their *already-in*, and their *being-alongside* illuminate and help us to understand the experience of these students as they prepare music for performance? What is the nature of the students’ projection toward their potential performance? In what ways does their “state of mind” or “mood” affect their experience? Does their sense of being caught up in the everydayness of their hectic lives as students cause them to experience a sense of “fallenness”?

In so much as the being of *Dasein* is care, *Dasein* finds its meaning in understanding, state-of-mind, and falling. Since these concepts find their existential structure in future, past, and present involvements, does the essence of being a band student who is preparing music for a performance find itself within an analysis of the student's past, present, and future existence? If this care structure is indeed what defines the experience of students as they prepare music for performance, how do we get to what stays hidden within the average everyday absorption of the students as they relate to the music, their director, their peers and their numerous environmental and equipmental relations? How do we ultimately disclose, reveal and make understandable the essence of the students' experiences, beyond what we see as mere appearance or the superficiality of common understandings and assumptions? In what manner does hermeneutic phenomenology take us into the very fundamental meanings of the experience of students as they prepare music for performance in an adjudicated setting – to the mode of being which forms the fundamental structures of their experience? Heidegger (1926/1962) might respond to this question with, "The meaning of phenomenological description as a method lies in interpretation" (p. 61), and that this method "takes its departure from the hermeneutic of *Dasein*, which is an analytic of existence" (p. 62).

In so much as Heidegger posits that *Dasein* is the only Being capable of investigating and interpreting itself, is it not reasonable to extrapolate that only band students themselves are fully capable of adequately investigating and interpreting the essence of being a band student in this, or any setting? Just as

Heidegger asserts that *Dasein* understands itself in terms of its own existence, is it not also reasonable to assert that band students come to understand themselves in terms of their existence? The “mineness” of *Dasein* is something that Heidegger (1926/1962) makes clear; “We are ourselves the entities to be analyzed...That Being which is an issue for this entity in its very Being, is in each case mine” (p. 68). Is it not then reasonable to attempt to engage the students in a way that illuminates their understanding of their “mineness” to the greatest extent – to investigate what it means to be a band student as they prepare music for an adjudicated performance? Can any other source provide the perspective of “mineness” that the students themselves bring to the inquiry?

Hermeneutics: A Circular Viewpoint

The arts and life in general are full of circular and cyclical manifestations. In visual art, there is the color wheel; in music there is the circle of fifths. In education we speak of the spiral curriculum and in science the idea of ontogeny recapitulating phylogeny. Time itself is in some profound ways represented through a variety of cyclical patterns. The seasons wind their way from winter to spring to summer to autumn and then back to winter once more. The day begins with the sun rising at the horizon, moving across the sky and then setting once more on the other horizon, only to repeat the process the next day. Human breath comes in, fills the lungs, recedes as we exhale and then comes in once more to be followed by the next inhalation/exhalation cycle.

A teacher whom I greatly respect once shared that he started each rehearsal as if the students needed to be reminded of everything – as if they were

learning from scratch every time he saw them. In this way he used the cyclical nature of his rehearsal structures to reinforce those concepts he felt to be so fundamentally important that they should never be forgotten. He likened it to the science metaphor highlighted above – ontogeny recapitulating phylogeny or the development of an individual from a fertilized ovum to maturity (ontogeny), compared with the development of a group or species (phylogeny). He felt that the very fundamental skills that were characteristic of the essence of the string performance experience were so fundamental that students need essentially to review their entire experience of learning to play the instrument at the beginning of every rehearsal - starting with proper bow hold, bow stroke, bow pressure, etc., even for the most advanced students. He would essentially revisit, in the first five minutes of the rehearsal, the development of their technique to date – revisiting the entire learning life cycle, in miniature.

The rehearsal structure itself is a type of circular phenomenon, beginning with a warm-up, typically followed by some type of technical exercise, then on to a review of prior material, followed by new material and then continuing on to a synthesizing activity like a full run-through of a particular piece. As with any effective lesson, the rehearsal ends with a closing activity that recaps what has (or has not) been accomplished, and then expectations are typically shared for the following rehearsal. Structurally, this process essentially repeats itself at the next rehearsal, hopefully with a spiraling up of expectations and achievement as students gain knowledge and skills. This circularity is fundamental to the larger shape of preparing music for performance. Just as the nature of the hermeneutic

process is characterized by a balance between the general and the specific, so is a rehearsal set up to balance the specific to the general and the large ensemble to the individual or the section, within the larger context of a circularity which describes and defines the overall scope of the rehearsal process as it builds toward a culminating performance of some type.

Conductors often term the totality of preparing for a particular concert as a particular “concert cycle.” This cycle is comprised of the rehearsals leading up to a performance and then culminating in the performance itself. The performance is then followed by the first rehearsal of the new concert cycle where new music is distributed for the process to begin once again, for another concert cycle, another circular entity that lies at the heart of the performance preparation process.

From a personal bodily perspective, some musicians are able to demonstrate a skill known as circular breathing whereby they don’t have to stop producing a sound on their wind instrument to take a breath. Most wind instrumentalists need to breathe regularly to refuel their wind instrument breath reserves, itself a clear demonstration of the circularity of the process. This unique simultaneous inhalation and exhalation technique has been developed to allow for the continuation of breath-produced tone while not stopping to take a breath, but by continuing the cycle of breathing. This is a rare, but well documented, technique that flies in the face of the typical nature of the wind instrument tone production cycle, while paradoxically reinforcing the cyclical nature of the breathing process, hence the term circular breathing.

The hermeneutic circle is a term that is used to refer to the circular thinking that is part of every hermeneutic interpretation. It describes the thought process that is engaged in by those involved in the observational circle which characterizes hermeneutic interpretation. Heidegger insists that all questioning carries with it certain presumptions that influence the inquiry and in some ways even determine to an extent the scope of what can be uncovered (Moran, 2000). So in essence, we disclose whatever answer we come up with in light of what we already know. Paradoxically, how can we learn anything new if we can only understand it within the context of what we already know? Aware of this apparent circularity, Heidegger (1926/1962, p. 27) says:

Is there not, however, a manifest circularity in such an understanding? If we must first define an entity in its Being, and if we want to formulate the question of Being only on this basis, what is this but going in a circle? In working out the question, have we not “presupposed” something which only the answer can bring?

Heidegger goes on to point out that this is not a closed or “vicious” circle of endlessly repeating circular reasoning, but instead a “remarkable relatedness, backward and forward” that allows us to shed a light through our questioning in a way that casts a certain pattern or understanding on to the phenomenon. This backwards and forwards movement aligns in very general terms with the “care structure” components in their temporality. The very nature of human understanding, based on the fact that it occurs in time, is essentially hermeneutically circular.

Any phenomenon unfolds within a temporal setting of some sort. Music is an especially apt representation of the temporality inherent within the larger

context of artistic experience. The phenomenon of students preparing music for public performance shows itself over time, through rehearsals, within audio and video taped vignettes, in various lights and from multiple perspectives. In many ways it reveals itself to the others involved in the experience of the students; the director, visiting consultants, the principal who ventures in to the classroom for a visit or observation, and for their fellow students in their day to day interactions. Those who experience it do so within a framework that is informed by past experiences as well as those of the present, and in many ways, of those yet to be. As I question my own experiences from the perspective of both my remembrances of being in an ensemble like this one as a student, or from my former place on the podium as a band director, or more recently from the perspective of an adjudicator whose role it is to assess the students' performance, I am led to the idea of questioning the students to see what they are experiencing. Understanding that my own current experiences are colored by my past experiences, I might ask what has led these particular students to this place in time. Knowing that my own student band experiences form part of who I now am, I wonder what possibilities these students see through their lenses in this experience. What are they experiencing in their lives now, and how does it reflect their understanding of this experience? In what ways does their mood affect their performance in class? Do they perceive any connection between their preparation and engagement level and their performance? Does their place in the social and performance hierarchy within the ensemble (and the school at large) influence their perception of their experience? If they were to write about their experiences, what might they say? What meaning

do they ascribe to differences in their experiences from day to day, based on their particular “now”?

The phenomenon itself may seem to warp and morph as it is pulled in many directions by the various lenses that it is being viewed through, the various ears thorough which it is being heard. Using the principle of the hermeneutic circle to guide my thinking, I am able to wonder, to pontificate, to conceptualize, to re-conceptualize, to radically rethink my own thinking, to be truly metacognitive. I am able to view and review, listen and re-listen, within this circular place. I am able to investigate relatedness backwards and forwards and then backwards again, looking at and listening to this particular phenomenon in new and enlightening ways, through new eyes and new ears, informed by the insights gained along the way. Concerns about the possibility of circular reasoning in this mode of inquiry are addressed by Heidegger:

This guiding activity of taking a look at Being arises from the average understanding of Being in which we always operate... it is quite impossible for there to be any ‘circular argument’ in formulating the question about the meaning of Being; for in answering this question, the issue is not one of grounding something by such a derivation; it is rather one of laying bare the grounds for it and exhibiting them. (1926/1962, p. 8)

Just as Heidegger speaks of exhibiting what is found through the laying bare, hermeneutic research, by the nature of its inherent circularity, shows what is, in ways that enrich rather than simply repeat what one understands about a phenomenon. The meaning making of the experience is such that by being part of the circle, we begin to understand how the forwards and backwards thinking exhibited within the circle enhances our ability to make meaning of something.

This act of meaning making actually continues to alter and enrich itself, in ways that the “vicious circle” of circular reasoning could never achieve.

Metaphorically, a *successful* rehearsal functions as if part of a hermeneutic circle – enriched and enhanced in each manifestation by the diverse input received through the back and forth process. An *unsuccessful* rehearsal might more accurately illustrate the “vicious circle” or circular reasoning that Heidegger disavows when within it occurs endless futile repeats of the same mistakes, and where no new fresh insights are gained. Unlike Husserl before him, Heidegger believes that “There cannot be presuppositionless philosophizing”: rather, Heidegger endorses the view that understanding develops through a circling back and forth between presumption and surprise, “a remarkable relatedness backward and forward” (1926/1962, p. 28). Within a rehearsal we see this circling back and forth between presumption and surprise, but what separates the successful from the unsuccessful rehearsal is the developing of understanding based on growth from this circular experience.

Heidegger (1926/1962) argues that the circle is not something we need to get out of in order to understand, but one that we need to come into in the right way.

This circle of understanding is not an orbit in which any random kind of knowledge may move; it is the expression of the existential fore-structure of Dasein itself...in the circle is hidden a positive possibility of the most primordial kind of knowing. To be sure, we have understood that our first, last, and constant task is never to allow our fore-having, fore-sight, and fore-conception to be presented to us by fancies and popular conceptions, but rather to make the scientific theme secure by working out these fore-structures in terms of the things themselves. (1926/1962, p. 195)

Gadamer, (1960/1989) suggests that what Heidegger is working out here is a description of the way interpretive understanding may be achieved.

The process that Heidegger describes is that every revision of the fore-projection is capable of projecting before itself a new projection of meaning; rival projects can emerge side by side until it becomes clearer what the unity of meaning is; interpretation begins with fore-conceptions that are replaced by more suitable ones. This constant process of new projection constitutes the movement of understanding and interpretation. (1960/1989, p. 269)

Within this hermeneutic circle, dialogic questioning creates a center for the things themselves, for it is not only in our own backwards and forwards movement that meaning comes about, but where conversants gather and come to shared understandings. Gadamer cites that “To reach an understanding in a dialogue is not merely a matter of putting oneself forward and successfully asserting one’s own point of view, but being transformed into a communion in which we do not remain what we were” (1960/1989, p. 371). Starting with Covey’s (1989) idea that we should “seek first to understand, then to be understood,” we need to move forward beyond this preliminary step and exercise what Covey might also characterize as “synergy,” or the creation of a new understanding that is fundamentally greater than the component parts, or in this case, the contributions of individuals within this circle. We are then fundamentally changed within this communion that takes place within the circle and where real understanding is achieved.

Questioning our Way into the Experience

Grounded on the presumption that in everyday life meaning tends to hide and to resist full disclosure, van Manen (2003) reminds us that “Hermeneutic

phenomenology attempts to question something phenomenologically by asking what something is really like” (p. 42). Questioning, then, is at the heart of phenomenological research. What is it really like for our high school band students to live the experience of preparing music for adjudicated performance? As we pose this and other questions, we must heed the advice of Gadamer (1960/1989) who says we must remain open to all possibilities. This implies an open-ended-ness to questions, whereby, one question will lead to other questions and they will then lead to others, and at no time should we presuppose an answer to any of these questions. Gadamer highlights the Greek tradition where the importance of questioning really does lie in the reality that we do not know the answer in advance. “All questioning and desire to know presupposes a knowledge that one does not know; so much so, indeed, that a particular lack of knowledge leads to a particular question” (Gadamer, 1960/1989, pp. 359). Similar to effective questioning found within pedagogical situations (as opposed to the rhetorical or the sarcastic) where the question truly seeks to uncover the unknown (what does a student know about a particular concept, for instance), my questioning here seeks to open insights that reside within the students themselves. Many of these insights actually reside in a place below the threshold of the students’ own awareness until that point where the questioning and dialectic engagement opens the experience up for awareness and reflection.

Gadamer (1960/1989) says that there is an art to hermeneutic questioning in that it avoids the pressures of opinion and enables us to conduct what he calls “dialectic” questioning. “The art of questioning is the art of questioning even

further, i.e. the art of thinking. It is called dialectic because it is the art of conducting a real dialogue” (p. 360). It is through this questioning and the dialogical engagement with the students that I seek to begin to enter into the phenomenon from the perspective of those closest to it, the students themselves.

Writing Our Way In

Van Manen tells us that “Hermeneutic phenomenology is fundamentally a writing activity” (2003, p. 7), that seeks to explain phenomena as they present themselves to consciousness. As a writing activity, it does not simply take as its purpose the production of a final product after all research is said and done. It instead is a form of writing which takes as its object the creation of a phenomenological text *through* the process of hermeneutic investigation. To do hermeneutic phenomenology is to attempt to construct full interpretive descriptions of some aspect of the lifeworld while constantly being aware that “lived life is always more complex than any explicated meaning can reveal” (p. 18). This fundamentally reflective writing process allows for the backwards and forwards movement inherent in the circularity that characterizes the hermeneutic process, focusing on uncovering the hidden essences of the human experiences through the uncovering and the laying bare.

The place of reflective practice in the field of education is well documented and can be traced to the foundational work of John Dewey (1933). The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, which administers a program of national certification of teachers, bases much of their process of certification on documentation of reflective practice by those seeking the

designation of National Board Certified Teacher. Reflective practice, it is believed, enables enhanced levels of learning and professional development within the teaching profession. The parallels between this type of reflection and the type of reflection incumbent within the process of hermeneutic phenomenology are noteworthy.

Transformational learning practice emphasizes meaning making based on discourse and critical reflection. Such reflective learning depends on discovering and challenging one's own and other's assumptions as a step in establishing new meaning perspectives. These new perspectives can lead to more than just reframing of current ideas; they foster qualitatively more complex ways of understanding and knowing. (Kegan, as cited in Taylor, 2006, p. 79)

The ideas that are generated by reflective thought find their way to manifestation in language. At its most evocative, language is the artful rendering of our ideas in the form of text:

Nothing is so purely the trace of the mind as writing, but nothing is so dependent on the understanding mind either. In deciphering and interpreting it, a miracle takes place: the transformation of something alien and dead into total contemporaneity and familiarity. (Gadamer, 1960/1989, p. 156)

However transformative and enlightening the power of language may be, it is important for one engaging in phenomenology to have a sensitive ear to the many subtleties, ambiguities and contradictions inherent in the linguistic experience, in all of its manifestations. Despite the enormous potential for enlightenment that resides in the colorful explications of metaphor, anecdote and storying, it is important to remember that what is heard is not always what is said.

Existentials

While student performances and the unseen preparations that go into making them possible vary widely in content and quality, they all share certain fundamental commonalities that fall broadly into what van Manen calls “lifeworld existentials” (van Manen, 2003, p. 101.) The experiences of the students playing in those ensembles exist within a particular place, in a particular time, involve human participants in a physical way and involve some type of relationality. The fundamental lifeworld themes that van Manen calls “existentials” are helpful as guides for reflecting on this lived world experience. These four frames or guides for reflection in the research process are lived space (spatiality), lived body (corporeality), lived time (temporality) and lived human relation (relationality or communality) (van Manen, 2003, p. 101.) For the purposes of this study, these existentials help frame my exploration into the lived experience of high school band students as they prepare music for an adjudicated performance.

Within the scope of speaking and writing our way into this or any other particular lived experience, we produce descriptions of these lived experiences that manifest themselves as “data (oral or written reflections, conversational interviews, observations and audio or videotapes), or material on which to work” (van Manen, 2003, p. 55). One of the most important tasks to be undertaken when considering these descriptions is to attempt to uncover essential themes that show themselves from within the conversations, written reflections (journals) and observational records.

Phenomenological themes are not objects or generalizations; metaphorically speaking they are more like knots in the webs of our

experiences, around which certain lived experiences are spun and thus lived through as meaningful wholes. Themes are the stars that make up the universes of meaning we live through. By the light of these themes we can navigate and explore such universes. Themes have phenomenological power when they allow us to proceed with phenomenological descriptions. (van Manen, 2003, p. 90)

Just as a musician may experience meaning within a certain melodic or harmonic structure of carefully crafted and constellated notes and rhythms, so too, may themes coalesce and emerge from within the individual, collective and shared experiences of the participants in this inquiry. As I strive to see with new eyes and to hear with new ears, I use these “existentials” of lived space, lived body, lived time, and lived human relations to help frame these new insights and to help me to see and hear where these constellations of meaning present themselves.

“Lived space (spatiality) is felt space” (van Manen, 2003, p. 102).

Although we do not usually reflect on the space where we find ourselves, it does, however, in many ways affect the way we feel and the way experiences are manifest to us. Although a musical performance can occur in a band room, a school gymnasium, an outdoor amphitheater, or a plush concert hall, the experience is defined in many ways, both obvious and hidden, by the setting where it occurs. This lived performance space and our experience of performing in it can be impacted by a multitude of factors, including the acoustical properties of the space, any visual or other distractions that may be present, ambient noise that may be audible, the size of the listening audience and our ability to see or not see them, or what the space means with regard to the physical layout of the group. Any change in these contexts might necessitate change in our set-up and our

relative proximity to our fellow musicians. All of these factors, and countless others, may come to bear on how we experience lived space when performing as a band.

“Lived body (corporeality) refers to the fact that we are always bodily in the world” (van Manen, 2003, p. 103). Musicians often manifest their physicality in different ways when playing their instrument than when they are not actively being a musician. They may naturally adopt a different persona when playing their instrument because of the natural tendency of a confident and focused musician to lose oneself in the music when meaningfully engaged. Conversely, musicians who are not confident in themselves may manifest their lived corporeality in a way that seems awkward or uncomfortable. As one gazes on a stage full of student performers in the midst of a performance, the visible aspect of this corporeality may be seen. However, what is the experience of this corporeality from within the actual performers themselves? What does this experience “feel” like?

“Lived time (temporality) is subjective time as opposed to clock time or objective time” (van Manen, 2003, p. 104). Temporality in many ways is one of the defining attributes of the musical experience. As opposed to simply experiencing time in a rehearsal as 11:15, for instance, the student may rather see that time as four measures before their next entrance. This manifestation of lived time is one that is inexorably contextual and specific to the musical experience being lived at that moment. As the musicians are fully engaged and enjoying the experience, time seems to fly and the rehearsal is over much earlier than they

might wish it to be. Conversely, if the rehearsal is floundering because of any number of technical or musical challenges, the rehearsal may seem as if it is interminable and will never end. The music itself exists within a tapestry of time relations through which the students find themselves as they reflect on what a particular section sounded like yesterday at rehearsal, or project whether or not they will be able to master this particular passage for tomorrow's playing tests.

“Lived other (relationality) is the lived relation we maintain with others in the interpersonal space we share with them” (van Manen, 2003, p. 104). Within an ensemble rehearsal, the importance of relationality is manifest in many ways. As students enter the band room, they greet one another and gather, modify and integrate impressions of each other in ways that are unique to those who share interpersonal space, especially in such a collaborative endeavor as ensemble performance. Within the rehearsal experience, the others with whom the students are in some type of relationality may be their peers, their director or a guest who might be present in some capacity: an observer such as a principal, a parent, a consultant, or a student teacher, perhaps. Each of these possible relationships may manifest themselves in any number of ways, and may do so in such a way as to help define the nature of the lived experience for any one of the persons involved in any of these potential relation-alities.

Methodological Structure

A human science researcher is a scholar: a sensitive observer of the subtleties of everyday life, and an avid reader of relevant texts in the human science tradition of the humanities, history, philosophy, anthropology, and the social sciences as they pertain to his or her domain of interest – in our case the practical and theoretical demands of pedagogy, of living with children. (van Manen, 2003, p. 29)

Van Manen asserts that “The methodology of phenomenology is such that it posits an approach toward research that aims at being presuppositionless” (2003, p. 29). A phenomenologist, then, is skeptical of fixed procedures and techniques that might place a stranglehold on the research project. However, van Manen also cautions us that any “discussions of method and methodology are meant not to prescribe a mechanistic set of procedures, but to animate inventiveness and stimulate insight” (p. 30).

Nevertheless, there are certain elemental methodological structures that van Manen suggests work together in a dynamic interplay to guide the pursuit of human science research. These six research activities are explored in the following sections.

Turning to a Phenomenon of Interest

Phenomenological inquiry is driven by a personal quest to make sense of a certain aspect of human experience. This *turning* to a particular phenomenon is characterized by a commitment to investigating an area of concern, a topic of deep interest and import for the researcher. I turned to the question of “What is the lived experience of a band student as they prepare music for an adjudicated performance?” based on my experiences with the phenomenon as both a music supervisor and band director, and because it continues to be a compelling phenomenon of interest to me. This turning was revealed in Chapter One.

Investigating Experiences as We Live Them

Phenomenological research has as one of its core principles the renewed engagement with original experience rather than experience as we conceptualize

it. Van Manen (2003) suggests that “Practical wisdom is sought in the understanding of the nature of lived experience itself” (p. 32). Since this inquiry seeks to learn what the experience is for students as they prepare music for performance, what better source of insight is there to pursue than that generated directly from those experiencing this particular phenomena directly, the students themselves? I began that preliminary investigation in Chapter Two and continue to engage with the additional participants in my study.

Reflecting on Essential Themes

Within the scope of phenomenological research, “True reflection on lived experience is a thoughtful, reflective grasping of what it is that renders this or that particular experience its special significance” (van Manen, 2003, p. 32).

Phenomenological research asks us to draw distinctions between appearance and essence and involves bringing into the forefront what tends to be obscure or difficult to fully explicate through thoughtful reflection on the question – what is it that constitutes the nature of this lived experience? The challenge here is to move beyond the facticity of an experience and work to distill the fundamental thematic essence through a careful and reflective consideration of recurring and elemental unifying ideas that surface through the interactions with those who are directly experiencing the phenomenon. The themes of this study are revealed in Chapter Four and following chapters.

Employing the Art of Writing and Rewriting

Phenomenological inquiry is essentially a writing activity in that writing is the most common activity that brings thought to speech. Gadamer (1960/1989)

notes how the root of the contemporary meanings of thinking and speaking and rationality and language are the same: *logos*. Van Manen says that “Phenomenology is the application of *logos* (language and thoughtfulness) to a phenomenon (an aspect of lived experience), to what shows itself precisely as it shows itself” (2003, p. 33). This idea takes us back to the foundational thought of Heidegger where he cites that phenomenology is “to let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself” (1926/1962, p. 58). Most often this showing of itself from itself is accomplished through the reflective backwards and forwards act of writing and re-writing that results in a thoughtful phenomenological text that allows the meaning of what it is to be a band student as students prepare music for performance be seen from the text itself.

Maintaining a Strong Pedagogical Orientation

While it is easy, when writing on the subject of something about which we are passionate, to stray beyond our focus and to tangentialize and wander aimlessly, it is critically important to stay oriented to the task at hand, that which has motivated our passion and about which we strive to develop a deeper understanding. This orientation to the object of our focus is essential if we are to keep from drifting into shallow speculations, generalizations and narcissistic ramblings in our search for the essences of the experience. Throughout the investigation it is of paramount importance to maintain a strong orientation to the overarching and guiding question: to begin with it, to use it as a lamp to light our way into the phenomenon, and to employ it as a lighthouse to keep us from

crashing onto the rocks of misguided and ill-advised over-simplification and superficiality. It is critical to keep our eye on what Covey (1989) describes as true north, or the fundamental focus of our investigation. My focusing question is:

What are the lived experiences of students and their band director as they prepare for an adjudicated performance?

Balancing Parts and Whole

Similar to how the nature of a successful band rehearsal is structured around achieving a balance between part and whole, revisiting one after the other in a meaningful sequence of backward and forward intellectual, physical, and metacognitive activity, so too is the need for balancing the research context between the parts and the whole when undertaking a phenomenological inquiry. It was necessary throughout the process to step back from the mountain of data to make sure that I did not lose sight of my goal, so that I could still see the forest while journeying through the trees. Does each of the parts contribute to a totality of thought? Does the prevailing question remain exposed for elucidation and exploration, or is it glossed over and obscured by generalizations and misplaced applications of theoretical or folk wisdom? When doing the backwards and forwards of this essentially reflective activity, do the pieces seem to fit together, or do they exhibit an internal cognitive dissonance that begs to be resolved?

While these six research activities represent the essential parts of a dynamic and interrelated methodological structure, they do not represent a strict step by step process that must be followed in a particular order to be effective. As van Manen reminds us, “Although spelling out the various aspects of the research

process may help a reader (researcher), the critical moments of inquiry are ultimately elusive to systematic explication” (2003, p. 34). Instead, he cites the importance of “interpretive sensitivity, inventive thoughtfulness, scholarly tact, and writing talent” as being of the greatest value for the human science researcher (2003, p. 34).

Context and Participants

This hermeneutic phenomenological study centers on the experiences of students from within a suburban Baltimore high school band as they prepare music for an adjudicated performance. This particular school was selected because of the strength of the band program, its history of success with adjudicated performances and challenging repertoire, the variety of pedagogical experiences that characterize the work done by the director and because of his expressed willingness to cooperate. The school is a large comprehensive high school, populated by over 1900 students, and the instrumental music program is comprised of two orchestras and four bands, each grouped by student ability level. Student participants were drawn from the wind ensemble, a select auditioned ensemble containing the most advanced wind and percussion students in the program. Because of my supervisory position in the county system to which this school belongs, I was known to a number of the students and their director prior to the onset of this inquiry. I have visited the ensemble in the past and have served as a clinician in the weeks approaching prior year adjudicated performances, but I have not served in a direct evaluative role for this teacher or this ensemble.

All of the students in the wind ensemble class were invited to participate in the study. This invitation was delivered orally by the researcher in a rehearsal along with a brief explanation of how students would be selected and what would be involved in the study. All students who volunteered to participate were asked to complete a brief Response Form (Appendix A). The final selection of six (6) student participants was made jointly by the band director and the researcher. These decisions were based on 1) length and clarity of student written questionnaire responses, and 2) the director's assessment of a) their ability to think and write reflectively, b) their maturity as it relates to engaging in conversations, observations and journaling, c) their level of responsibility as it relates to keeping a weekly journal, and d) their rehearsal attendance record. When the final selection of six (6) student participants was made, a letter of invitation (Appendix B) was sent to each selected student along with a student consent form (Appendix C) and a parent consent form (Appendix D).

Selected students were involved in reflection, conversation and dialectic interviews so that we could begin to make our way into the phenomenon of what it is to experience the preparation of music for an adjudicated performance. Open ended questioning, dialectic conversations, student journals, and written researcher observation notes were used to gather and record textual accounts from students as they lived the experience of preparing music for performance in an adjudicated setting. The interactions and conversations took place over a period of 10 weeks, beginning on January 12, 2012 with the first rehearsal observation and

culminating in the post performance conversation with the full group of students on March 23, 2012.

During the adjudication preparation period, the group of six (6) students participated in: a) three (3) audio-recorded full group conversations, b) one (1) series of individual interviews, and c) weekly individual journal writing activities. I observed the full ensemble in rehearsal on five (5) separate occasions and audio recorded the rehearsals in addition to taking written observation notes. One post-performance conversation with the full group of six (6) students was undertaken to provide the students with the opportunity to reflect on and respond to adjudicator feedback and the adjudicated performance itself. One conversation was held with each of two significant “others” connected to the phenomenon. These conversants included the director and the sight-reading judge from the actual adjudication. The interaction with the judge from the adjudication was brief and focused entirely on the sight-reading experience. The interactions with the director were significantly more extensive and involved not only the full hour-long conversation described above but several brief discussions immediately following observed rehearsals in addition to the text drawn from his verbal instruction within the observed and recorded rehearsals.

The following textual sources were examined to uncover the lived experience of the band students as they prepared for the adjudicated performance:

- Periodic written journal responses to prompts (Ex. – Describe your band rehearsal experiences this week / describe your feelings about the literature you are working on in band.)

- Audio recorded and transcribed rehearsal observation notes.
- Four (3 pre-performance and 1 post-performance) audio recorded and transcribed conversations with student participants in the full group of six (6).
- Audio recorded and transcribed conversations with student participants in one-on-one interviews.
- Personal contributions from my own journal.
- Audio recorded and transcribed conversations with the band director. I also invited the band director to keep a reflective journal of his experiences throughout this adjudicated performance rehearsal time.

When I met with students for the individual and group conversations, I asked them to respond to prompts like the following:

Describe the experience of:

- reading the music for the first time.
- playing your part in the full ensemble.
- listening to others in the ensemble play their parts either with you or in isolation.
- playing alone or in a small group in front of your peers in rehearsal.
- sitting in the ensemble and hearing the music around you as you play.
- conducting the group in warm-up exercises.

- listening and responding to the comments and directions of your director or a guest clinician.
- playing for your director and responding to his cues, gestures and directions.

When I met with the director for the individual conversation, I asked him to tell me about the band program and this ensemble in particular, how he approaches his planning and instruction, how he feels about his students and the overall band experience, and about his own philosophical grounding and experiences as a student, teacher and musician.

When I spoke with the students I looked for them to tell me:

- how they felt about the music as they moved through the process of preparing it for the adjudicated performance.
- about their listening experiences during rehearsals. What was the listening experience like?
- about the challenges they faced in the music and how they experienced them. How did these challenges make them feel?
- about the experience of interacting with their peer musicians and their director during rehearsals.

Other dimensions of the experience unfolded and evolved as the conversations moved in the direction of the participants' experiences.

Recordings of these sessions and others were transcribed solely by the researcher and served as the text for the thematizing activities of Chapter Four and beyond. While students did not see the actual transcripts, ideas generated

within the conversations were shared with the students to foster further dialogue and exploration.

While the inquiry is focused on the experience as lived by the students, the impact of their director and his words and deeds were extensively and inextricably intertwined with the student experiences. This reality compelled me to include many of his words (often as shared by the students) since they were critically important contributions to the phenomenon. Indeed, both his words and actions served as a critical source upon which the student experience was predicated and which therefore needs to be revealed and explored in order to better understand the contributions and experiences of the students themselves.

Throughout the conversations I was alert for hidden insights and unanticipated revelations. In watching and listening for the lived experiences of the students to be revealed, I looked for the overlooked, listened for the unheard and tried to put a voice to the unspoken. These sessions illuminated and informed my study and helped to identify the pedagogical significance of what came to light, and what became audible, through the shared experiences of these band students as they prepared music for an adjudicated performance.

Van Manen (2003) reminds us that “Meaning is multi-dimensional and multi-layered” (p. 78). Uncovering the meaning behind the experiences of the students and their director is an act of interrogation and reflection, and ultimately a discovery that occurs through the task of writing about the recollections and offerings generated by the participants and gathered through observation and dialogue. During this interactive engagement with the textual product, units of

meaning or themes begin to emerge, revealing themselves to me in ways that help to illuminate the essence of the experience as lived by the participants. These themes find their way into this narrative beginning in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR:

THE EXPERIENCE: SETTING THE STAGE

The conversations I had with the six students and band director who participated in this study produced a wide array of ideas about preparing for an adjudicated performance based on their lived experiences and from their unique perspectives. As I read through the notes from these conversations, from my observations of their rehearsals and the performance, and from my conversations with their director, I am inspired by the fresh insights and perceptions of the students and am also intrigued by the re-emergence of ideas, thoughts and schemata that are at once familiar to me but resonate as if being heard anew. I selectively move through a veil of familiarity behind which these experiences have been hidden like capricious children playing hide and seek. Similar to how composer Gordon Jacob captivantly re-imagined several venerable British folk tunes and aptly entitled them *Old Wine in New Bottles*, many of these themes are familiar but they appear in ways that are fresh and new; they are known to us but are wrapped in new packaging that opens a door to a world of possible interpretations and understandings. As music teachers, we daily live these experiences with our students, but so much of what goes on in the minds and bodies of our students remains overlooked or unexamined. The experiences of the students are often so complex and polymorphous in their character and manifestation that they are as wondrous and varied as the kaleidoscope of colors we experience when light is refracted through a prism, and as intricately intertwined as the melodies found in the polyphony of J.S. Bach. By engaging in

what Ihde (p. 18, 2007) describes as “the deconstruction of taken-for-granted beliefs and the reconstruction of a new language and perspective” I begin to see the experience through their eyes and hear it through their ears, and in the process, gain a better sense of the essence of this experience from their compelling, yet often overlooked and unheard, perspectives.

Music, in nearly all of its manifestations, with the possible exception of its existence on the printed page itself, is a temporal phenomenon. It occurs in time and sometimes in a fairly linear fashion, especially as manifest in performance itself. But it also presents in a cyclical way, as in the circularity of the rehearsal, where carefully calibrated re-visitations of the musical material result in refinement and enhancement of both performance and understanding. The following chapters represent a hybrid approach to exploring the phenomenon of preparing music for an adjudicated performance. This approach involves the exposition of background information, movement through the temporal linearity evident in a single rehearsal or over the full rehearsal cycle, and the circularity and back and forth thoughtful re-visitation of experience characteristic of the hermeneutic circle itself.

When I am in my seat in wind ensemble, it’s like I’m a character in a story. The story doesn’t start until the music starts. The plot itself is the music being played out. I’m just one of the many characters in the cast. (Kristy, 11th grade clarinet player)

Inspired by Kristy’s analogy of playing in the band like being a character in a play, in this chapter I begin the “deconstruction” of the experience by setting the stage with the introduction of the characters (the student participants and their director), and by providing a deeper look into the setting (the ensemble). In

Chapter Five I explore the plot or story as it is manifested in the music that provides the core material around which all of their experiences revolve. Chapter Six focuses on the rehearsal process itself as the laboratory for student learning and engagement with the music, with one another and with significant others connected to the process. Chapter Seven explores the performance experience itself and the many factors that influence the student experience of this culminating public presentation. Chapter Eight revisits the gestalt of the experience and explores emergent pedagogical insights that may be of consequence to others in their efforts to understand better the student experience of preparing music for an adjudicated performance.

The Students

Since lived experience is that with which we start and end when engaging in phenomenological inquiry, the lived experiences of the six student band members constitute the beginning point, the rising of the curtain, or as their director so eloquently describes the ictus or downbeat of his conducting pattern, “the nexus of our universe,” a place from which everything else emanates. As I begin to explore the experiences, it is important to know a bit about each participant (pseudonyms), their backgrounds and the various roles they play within the ensemble. This will allow for the development of a better sense of “their reality” in all of its complexity and polyphony.

Claire is a sophomore flute player, whose experience playing in the county honor orchestra gave her a new perspective on the visual aspects of sitting in a different place in the ensemble.

For people like me who usually sit to the side of the director where you can't see expressions as much and where all downbeats kind of look the same, sitting in the middle of the orchestra gave me an entirely different view of the conductor. I saw so much more of the whole visual thing; gestures, patterns, expressions. It really did make a difference.

A very accomplished player for her age, and a very analytical thinker, she tends to find structures where others see chaos. She is very articulate and always seems to have something interesting and insightful to say about what is happening in band. She sometimes plays piccolo in the wind ensemble as well as in the marching band and is a big fan of all things band related. She is also the only one of the six student participants who has in any way been taught by me (I ran a sectional rehearsal of the county honor orchestra winds and percussion section, of which she was a member that year.)

Rob is a senior trumpet player who has this past year risen to the role of trumpet section leader. He has worked his way up in the section over his four years in high school and overcame a very challenging physical obstacle to his playing several years ago. He has also participated in the county honor ensembles and has a tendency to look at his section with a mixture of frustration and duty, always wishing that they would take things a little more seriously than they do.

I enjoy sight reading as an individual, but when it comes to the large ensemble, it can be pretty frustrating. I know everyone won't play it perfectly but the first time we played Incantation and Dance, I felt like people were making lots of careless mistakes. There were many missed entrances and wrong notes, and since this is a high level ensemble, these things just should not be happening.

Jefferson is a senior percussionist who is planning to pursue a career in music while in college but has yet to land on the specifics of that career, vacillating between composition and sound engineering. He is most adept at

mallet percussion but has grown into a more complete percussionist due in part to the laws of supply and demand and the focus of his directors on the development of percussionists who can play more than one instrument competently. He has a tendency to think of things in compositional terms, especially as they relate to how the pieces they are playing for adjudication are put together. He readily admits to having over 100 plays on his iTunes account for one of the adjudication pieces.

I had kind of an epiphany the other day in rehearsal – about the way Incantation and Dance was put together. The beginning of the fast part has pretty involved percussion parts but really simplistic wind parts – not fully involved – just little snippets, kind of. It’s like the winds have this foreshadowing of things to come while the percussion does the heavy lifting. I know I saw it before but it just hit me the other day that this is pretty cool how the composer did this. Not only is the melody being exchanged between the winds and percussion – but it’s that alternation between simplicity and complexity, too. Very cool.

Rosie is a sophomore clarinet player who presents as somewhat quiet initially but who has much to say when she starts to open up. She is a very solid player but one who has never had private lessons and who admits to having to work pretty hard to get this band music learned.

I don’t think I have ever played a piece where clarinets have so many upbeats like that. So I had to sit (where I practice at home) and count it out and clap it out and finger through the part because I didn’t know how to play it at first. Then I added a metronome and worked on playing it with that. All of those things together helped me get those rhythms down eventually, but it wasn’t easy.

She is extremely dedicated to the band and looks forward with great anticipation to every rehearsal, which she describes as “the high point of my day.”

David is a senior tenor sax player whose mind is very sharp but who is also very quiet and whose voice is not often heard because others are more

gregarious with their sharing. Since there are only two tenor sax players in the band, and since they often share parts with an ever-changing variety of other sections, their ability to listen and match with others is of critical importance.

Our relationship with other instruments depends on what music we are playing because we may have to blend with the baritones, or alto saxes, or bass clarinets, or bassoons, or trombones, or 3rd clarinets – just about anybody, really. When we work in sectionals it is hardly ever just the two of us – so it complicates things a bit because we have to listen and establish who it is we have something with before we can think about blending and matching styles.

Kristy is a junior clarinetist who sits first chair second part and who sometimes is called upon to run sectional rehearsals with the full clarinet section. She looks at her decision to come to this school instead of a nearby magnet school as a serendipitous stroke of good fortune because she loves being in the wind ensemble here and knows she would not have had those same experiences if she had been accepted into the magnet program at the other school. She is an avid swimmer who teaches young children swimming in a neighboring county and sees clear parallels between the learning processes in both of those endeavors.

Not only is there the patience factor but you have to grab their attention and make sure everyone is listening so they can understand. And sometimes you have to use simpler terms or break down a complex action into its components, like when I was teaching the young kids how to do freestyle. I could see that they were at all different levels so I had to break up the whole system into manageable parts and then put them together so they could move forward in the pool, like we need to move forward in the music.

Kristy is an academic high achiever who sees the wind ensemble class as a stress-free zone where she can lose herself and leave her academic pressures behind. She freely makes connections between reading books and reading music

and is looking forward with very mixed emotions to her younger brother joining her next year at the high school.

Each of the six students in this inquiry are hard-working and dedicated members of the ensemble who genuinely care about doing their best every day in band. Several are self-described “band nerds,” one is a competitive athlete, several serve in leadership roles within or outside of the ensemble, and all of them matriculated through the same middle school band program. All of the students bring with them some type of external musical experience that provides them with a richer context upon which to consider in a thoughtful and reflective manner their experiences within the band setting, specifically as it relates to the preparation of music for an adjudicated performance. None are freshman, and therefore, all of them have been through the adjudication experience at least once at the high school level with this ensemble and this director.

The Director

The experience that any student has in a large ensemble setting is influenced both directly and obliquely, for good or ill, by the actions and words of their director. As I work my way into this particular phenomenon, it becomes increasingly obvious to me that it would not only be nearly impossible, but phenomenologically inadvisable, to attempt to extricate his behaviors from the students and their experience. In many fundamental ways they have become almost organically connected, as if they have grown together into a symbiotic relationship that is highly interdependent at its very essence.

Mr. Britt is in his sixth year at this high school. He has conducted the wind ensemble for the last five of those six years and each year the ensemble has earned an overall superior rating at the adjudicated performance that serves as the locus of this particular preparation cycle. While his primary band instrument is the trombone, he is an accomplished piano player and he has sung extensively within his church and community music experiences. Based on my observations and on his recollections along with those of the students, each of these skills plays a significant role in shaping his pedagogical approach.

I didn't sing much in high school in the band setting – I just started to sing on my own. I would just vocalize the part before I played it. Now, for instance, I will find myself vocalizing the flute part even though I can't necessarily play the flute part. I was just under the impression that occasionally singing was better than just playing all the time. It never occurred to me *not* to sing. And if there was one other thing that I am really happy I did it was learn to play the piano. People who have that skill have such an advantage as a musician and teacher.

He graduated from a high school in another part of Baltimore County and did his student teaching at yet another different Baltimore County high school. He attended several institutions of higher education on his way to earning his undergraduate degree and he brings insights from each of these life experiences to our conversations and to his teaching. In each of the individual and group student conversations, some action or phrase attributed to Mr. Britt finds its way into the student narrative and plays an important role in shaping their experience.

The Ensemble

The culture of a group has a profound impact on the experience that a member has as a part of that group. The culture of a large student musical ensemble is often characterized by a high degree of complexity and

interdependence on a variety of intertwined realities that are subject to an equally large variety of influences. Some of these influences can be controlled, some are less amenable to management efforts, and some just happen, no matter what anybody does. One of the major factors affecting the culture of an ensemble that is open to a degree of control (or at least management) is the tone that is set and maintained by the conductor/teacher. This next section explores the culture of this ensemble as illustrated through the words of the students, the thoughts and actions of their director, and from the observations I made as I shared the space and time in which they lived through the experience of preparing music for an adjudicated performance.

Letting Learn / The Paradox

Returning to ideas brought forth in Chapter Two, the concept of letting learn is one that Heidegger articulates in his description of teaching as an exalted activity, a craft that “is more difficult than learning because what teaching calls for is this: to let learn. The real teacher, in fact, lets nothing else be learned than – learning” (1968, 15). Van Manen continues with this line of thinking by stating that “Good teachers... know when to let go of control” (2002, p. 89). Sometimes this can be manifest by the release of control by a teacher when they allow another “expert” access to their students to provide feedback and instruction. Another way that this “letting learn” may be accomplished is by the application of what this director (Mr. Britt, pseudonym) describes as a “constructivist” approach to rehearsing. As opposed to the high degree of control that many ensemble directors (I was one of those practitioners of this more controlling approach)

exercise in the scope of their conducting and pedagogical duties, Mr. Britt, although exceedingly well planned and organized, tends to give his students the opportunity to engage in learning activities that provide his students with wait time, the opportunity and freedom to make mistakes, and the chance to figure things out for themselves, instead of simply directing them to do this or that to get to his desired end result in the most expeditious way possible. In our conversation he shares:

Perhaps this organic method or approach to these pieces allows the students to **own** the music, rather than simply executing some master plan that I have laid out in advance. I mean, I have borrowed a bit of the structure that I use with the two youngest groups and applied it to this ensemble this year but I don't want to remove the organic feel from the process of this group's music making. It's too important for them. They are too smart and too intuitive for me to think I have all of the answers. They need to be able to figure many of these answers out themselves.

Mr. Britt provides the opportunity for them to “construct” their own learning in a way that is patient yet focused, well-planned but flexible. It is a plan that also caused me no small amount of angst while observing the rehearsals due to the divergence of this approach from my personal instructional style which could best be characterized as decidedly more prescriptive and controlling than Mr. Britt's approach. I kept thinking that time was being wasted and that ensemble precision would be lacking because of his constructivist approach and his abiding patience with his students. Was I right? Or was I missing the point? Was my experience as a band director clouding my objectivity regarding this alien approach which was more relaxed and organic? As I moved through the rehearsal process I would be given pause at numerous times to consider the benefits of his approach. While it was clearly successful at developing in the students the ability

to think more actively and purposefully as musicians, was it an efficient and effective approach to bringing the students to a high level of performance? Ultimately, the question to ask might be - What is the end goal of this entire endeavor – a more polished performance or learnings that surpass the manifestation of a particularly effective and precise performance at one moment in time? The students had a variety of things to say about Mr. Britt’s approach to instruction that were both enlightening and insightful and reflected on how his behaviors and expectations contributed to the culture of the ensemble, and consequently, to the nature of their experience as part of that ensemble.

Patience and Wait Time

Many teachers say the right things in rehearsals, but many do not give the students the opportunity to internalize and find a way to remember those important learnings. One of the very simple, yet very powerful, ways Mr. Britt contributes to setting up an ensemble culture of learning is by providing wait time so students can actually write into their parts whatever directions have just been given.

What he says we need to do – he doesn’t just say “write that in” or “mark that” - he says what needs to be marked and gives us the time to do it. That really helps because not only are you writing it down but you actually are given the time to figure out how to play it the next time – it’s more efficient. And it shows that he respects us and expects us to actually do what he says to do. And if he doesn’t see everyone writing in their parts, he looks at them and waits until they do. (Kristy)

Based on my observations of this ensemble’s rehearsals, Mr. Britt follows his own directions by writing in along with the students whatever he directs them to write into their parts, mentioning that students need to use their emergency

back-up pencils if they have misplaced their regular pencils. In Mr. Britt's own words:

If you have not already marked on what beats you move or on what off beats you move – you'd better mark it – because rarely do you do the same thing two times in a row. Like when the trumpets and trombones come in – you move on three and then on the and of two and then the and of one and then the and of two. As you can see you move all over the place. It will feel awkward so mark it in with your pencil – in my case my emergency back-up pencil since mine is in the console tray in my car. You are going to mark it now – what beats you move on – use the pencils – start writing – downs or ups or whatever it will take for you to get it right. The point is that you help yourself by writing what will help you the next time we play this.

The simple but powerful message is – I will wait for you to do what I ask – it is that important. It could be said that if they don't have the time to mark it now, they will have to take the time when they make the mistake again the next time they visit that spot, and that would be an abrogation of their responsibility to the ensemble, an idea related to the culture of the ensemble that will re-surface in subsequent student conversations. While the expectation of having a pencil at every rehearsal may seem on the surface to be a very superficial aspect of responsibility to the ensemble, Claire shares that the guest conductor of the high school honors orchestra told them a story of his experience with a major symphony orchestra.

The director told us this story about the members of the Chicago Symphony and how they have velvet lined pencil holders attached to all of their music stands because they felt it was that important for them to be prepared to write in notes from the conductor so once a change is made, it is there for good. He said, "If it's important enough for these professional musicians to write things into their music, why would I not need to do the same thing? Do I think I am better than they are?"

Claire seemed to clearly get the message from this anecdote as shared by that guest conductor that no one, not even seasoned professionals, are exempt from certain fundamental truths. In this instance that fundamental truth is that no one can remember everything and that when written down, the conductor's instructions can be recalled immediately upon the next revisitation of that written message, thus eliminating the vicious circle and wasted time associated with repeated and avoidable mistakes. The writing of bowings into string parts is a notable example of this kind of indication that is supplied by either a director or concertmaster (mistress) with the clear expectation that it will be written into the part. In the various rehearsals that I have observed involving professional ensembles, the active and copious use of pencils to mark in changes or reminders at the moment of their mention by the conductor is indeed clearly evident. Is this due to the heightened sense of responsibility felt by the paid professional, intent on keeping his or her position in the ensemble by careful adherence to specific performance expectations? Or is it a different type of responsibility: a responsibility to the integrity of performance practice that the conductor seeks to convey through a particular bowing approach? Or might it be a serendipitous juxtaposition of both of these rationales?

In one of the group conversations, several of the students suggest that a main reason that it was important to them to write into their music whatever Mr. Britt told them was so they wouldn't have to waste time by needlessly making the same mistake over and over again. Rosie in particular commented that she would get frustrated when members of the band would neglect to mark in what they had

been told because then “we would need to do it over again and that would be a waste of time.” Rosie and many of her peers in the ensemble place a very high value on the limited rehearsal time at their disposal within the school day. Their rehearsal time is in many ways every bit as precious to them as it is to the members of the Chicago Symphony. The symphony just has better looking pencil holders.

No Bench / Everybody Plays

Within the context of a large ensemble rehearsal structure a director sometimes decides to cut a few players out of a particular section for balance or intonation considerations. Sometimes this reduction of players makes the difference between being in or out of balance or being in or out of tune as an ensemble. One of these decisions made by Mr. Britt, against the recommendation of that particular section leader, told me and the students in the ensemble much about Mr. Britt’s level of trust and appreciation for the contributions of the flute players on a particularly exposed and treacherous section of Incantation and Dance. The opening statement of the main “incantation” theme is played by the flute section in the particularly challenging lowest register of the flute range. Some directors will choose to have only a few very advanced players play this exposed section to raise the level of probability that it will be perfectly in tune. Mr. Britt had other ideas and shared this with the students:

The best thing would be at assessments is that I don’t take anybody off the part. It’s written for everyone, it’s not marked “one on a part” but usually you have to chop off people until you get it in tune. But if you can all go all the way down there to the low C and play it in tune, and I believe you can, that’s impressive. I have faith.

As the rehearsal process moved forward, there were moments of doubt expressed by the flute section leader who recommended to Mr. Britt that they indeed cut out some of the section to make it easier to get that particular part in tune. Mr. Britt reiterated his expectation that the full section would play it because he felt it was more important for all of them to be involved than to remove several players in the pursuit of better intonation. This, to Mr. Britt, was more about full participation than about the possibility of intonation perfection.

After listening to the recording of the adjudicated performance and upon hearing one judge comment that “Oh, we are not completely in tune here” Mr. Britt made the following comments to the band:

I have to comment here – the last time we played this piece (five years ago – his first year teaching) we had three flutes play it – not the eight we have here – which is huge props to you (scattered student applause) and I am not chopping four or five people out to get to that. My old high school band director would have called that “practicing safe festival” (when you cut people out until it is in tune) – so the fact that the judge made that comment – I am okay with that. It’s accurate but boy was it close to being in tune with the whole flute section. All of you playing low D’s and C’s? That’s just crazy. Good job.

This practice of inclusion is not lost on the students. Kristy remarks:

I think Mr. Britt has our backs as our teacher. He doesn’t expect less, he doesn’t let us off easy. He expects more from us so I feel like when you have that attitude from your teacher you have the confidence to do your best. I feel comfortable with Mr. Britt because he never expects you to fail. He expects you to succeed. And he instills in you that same sort of feeling – like – you can do this – so you never want to disappoint him.

The idea of choosing music for the ensemble that involves nearly full engagement of all the ensemble members is one that several of the students mentioned after reflecting on previous adjudication performances by other schools they had heard in the recent past. Mr. Britt’s philosophical approach to

selecting literature for the ensemble is similar to that exhibited by his decision to include all of the flute players in the opening statement of Incantation and Dance. He displays a sense of trust and has high expectations for the students, and his literature selections include significant engagement for all of his players. For the students, this means that they all will have interesting and challenging parts to play, instead of all of the demand being placed on several select student musicians while others play decidedly subordinate roles. This “significant engagement” is something that the students have not always heard in other adjudicated performances they have witnessed. Jefferson comments:

It might have been last year at adjudication where this one band that will remain nameless, it was like it was a concerto for these several star players and everybody else just played a little bit here and a little bit there. I mean, what must it be like for the other fifty players to just sit there and listen to their five best players carry the group? I guess either the director doesn't have faith in most of the band or they just aren't very good. Whatever the reason, it can't be anything like it is here for them there. Everybody is part of what is happening here with this ensemble. Everybody's got ownership.

Jefferson brings up a very salient point in questioning what type of experience the students in some of those other ensembles are having if they are not fully engaged in the learning or music making process. What is the quality of that experience in that other group where there is less engagement and involvement? Do those players who play less feel less important to the group? Is their sense of belonging compromised? Or, are they relieved that they don't have to shoulder the burden of those more difficult passages? Ultimately, is not their lived relationality with the music compromised because they are passively alongside the music making of others instead of actively engaged in the music making themselves? Reimer (2003) suggests that “practicing music making –

creating sounds that are considered music in a particular context – is experienced in a way nothing else in the world precisely matches. When we are engaged in such practices we are experiencing music through our creation of it” (p. 67). As Jefferson suggests, not only is “everybody part of what is happening here with this ensemble,” they are experiencing through their practice of music making something that is unique within human experience. Unlike the students in the ensemble that Jefferson alludes to above, the students in this ensemble are fully engaged as participants and “creators” and not simply as passive bystanders.

Family and Belonging

In Chapter Three I briefly explored Heidegger’s notion that a fundamental part of being-in-the-world involves *being-with-others*. For Heidegger, “The world is always the one I share with others. The world of Dasein is a *with-world*” (Heidegger, 1926/1962, p. 155), wherein we relate to others, most specifically “those from whom...one does not distinguish himself – those among whom one is too” (p. 154). The primary “ones” from whom these student participants do not distinguish themselves are their student peers within the ensemble. Their director is the single significant other who has a great impact on this particular aspect of their experience but is not in the same way one of “those among whom one is too.” He is not a peer, but he is a part of the gestalt of their experience in a way that contributes significantly to the theme of family as experienced by these students in this environment.

O’Donohue (1997) says that “A friend is someone who wishes what is good for the other” (p. 9) and that “people who are really awakened inhabit the

one circle of belonging” (p. 24). As reflected in the conversations and journal entries of the student participants, the feeling of “inhabiting the one circle of belonging,” the mutually supportive attitudes and shared goals, the wishing for “what is good for the other” and the generally high level of camaraderie and community are attributes that characterize their sense of *being-in-the-world* of their wind ensemble. Their peers and their director have differing but powerful influences on their sense of being a part of something special.

Kristy shares an early reflection from the band’s work with the new literature that brought the idea of community to mind.

Because most of us had never heard this particular piece before, we weren’t sure of how to phrase and articulate certain parts. Since you have to play the style correctly in order to play as an ensemble the full group has to understand the style you are supposed to play. You know, a common approach, like a community working together on a project or something.

In my first rehearsal observation, the warm-ups were conducted by several students, each of them conducting the band in a particular exercise and then providing brief commentary and critique to the band on the performance of that warm-up exercise. It was immediately apparent to me as the observer that the students in the band demonstrated a high level of consideration and respect for their fellow student conductors. After each student finished his/her task, the other students listened quietly to their feedback, and some students even were awarded a smattering of applause for a job well done. Perhaps this mutual respect was due to the understanding that each of the students in the ensemble would have their turn in front of the band and it might be prudent to be courteous to others since they would be up there soon themselves. Perhaps the courtesy was due to the

understanding of everyone in the ensemble that this was not an easy thing, getting up in front of one's peers and conducting, since each of them had done it at least once in the prior marking period and had that personal experience on which to reflect. Perhaps the unheard story was the groundwork for mutual respect that had been laid by their director when the original concept was shared with the students in the beginning of the year. Whatever the reason, the feeling of support and encouragement from band members to student conductor was palpable and critical to the success of the exercise on many levels. It was almost as if everyone was silently rooting for their peers to do a good job while on the podium. They seemed to be perpetuating the rehearsal as a safe place, a sanctuary where it is okay to take some chances and stretch out of your safety zone. As Jefferson shares after one of the warm-ups that didn't go all that well for the conductor, "It's okay, we're all friends here."

Within both the student-to-teacher and the student-to-student aspects of this student conducting experience, there is a lived relationality that is not only powerfully important from a pedagogy of music standpoint, but also from the standpoint of developing and nurturing the individual as a feeling and maturing person, able to interact effectively with peers in a variety of potentially stressful situations. Van Manen (2003) reminds us that this special lived relation to the other is:

Highly personal and charged with interpersonal significance. In this lived relation the child experiences a fundamental sense of support and security that ultimately allows him or her to become a mature and independent person. And in this lived relation the child experiences the adult's confidence and trust without which it is difficult to make something of oneself. (p. 106)

The trust that Mr. Britt exhibits by the very fact that each student is given important rehearsal time to take the podium and act as the conductor speaks volumes about his understanding of the need to provide his students with enhanced opportunities to explore their sense of lived relationality within the ensemble setting. Through these and other similar opportunities to engage in a diversity of lived relationality with their teacher and their peers, the students experience trust and support in a way that, while most likely beneath the awareness level of many students, allows them to grow in much more diverse and profound ways than a more typical rehearsal experience might provide.

During the second rehearsal observation, Mr. Britt shares with the students an incident that had occurred over a lunch period a few days before involving non-band students coming into the band area with the intent of stealing. “Stranger danger” is what he called it and his comments to the students were:

By default, do not trust those you do not know because they may not be here for good purposes. Be like, ‘Can I help you, young man?’ (Students laugh.) It’s nice to know we are in a place where this type of thing does not happen very often. I think it is the first time since I have been here. It comes down to you guys being vigilant. This needs to be your safe place, a sanctuary of sorts. We are family, after all, and we need to look out for each other.

Connecting once again to the idea of “those from whom...one does not distinguish himself – those among whom one is too” (Heidegger, 1926/1962, p. 155), Rosie, in one of our group conversations, shares a recollection of spontaneous singing of band music. Immediately following her revelation, heads nodded in agreement and smiles of knowing recognition spread across the faces of

the other five students, each knowing they, too, had done the same thing at various times.

I definitely sing parts from the pieces – they just pop into my head at random times – sometimes right after band or at lunch I will be talking with Kristy and I'll just start singing a part that we played or something and she will look at me and go – “Rosie, are you okay?” (Rosie)

In my individual conversation with Rosie, which occurred later during the preparation process, she elaborated on this theme and tied it to how she believed most members of the band felt about the ensemble.

I think a lot of why the group is so good is just the atmosphere in the band – the band is very committed – they aren't just there to get the credit – and pretty much everybody feels that way - most of us have a lot in common. I feel like our band is like a family. We have other classes together and sometimes we'll just spontaneously start singing some piece from band in another class or sometimes at lunch. Like the other day, Sophia (a flute player Rosie had done a duet with for solo and ensemble festival) started singing the slow pretty melody from Jupiter and then I started singing it and then Carolyn, another flute player, started singing it too. We got some funny looks from other non-band students at the table, but that's because they didn't understand. They didn't get it because they weren't in on the story, you know.

Rosie's use of the word “committed” to describe her and her fellow band members conjures implications of belonging and dedication, in this case to the ensemble and potentially to each other as well. One of the possible definitions that the Oxford English Dictionary provides for the word “committed” includes the phrases “to pledge oneself” or to engage in “a contract,” each of which imply a resolution to support a long term relationship of some type. When explored as the verb root “commit” the definitions lead us to consider that the students “entrust” themselves into the care or judgment of another, in this case, their director and by extension the other members of the ensemble itself. Rosie hints at this in her

opening statement above and goes on to share some of the ways that she and her peers display a sense of belonging and dedication to the ensemble through their behaviors, explaining that the students are deeply invested in this activity; they are in it for more than “just the credit.”

Further along the continuum of their journey the students demonstrated yet another example of this sense of peer support and respect. One of the judges for the adjudication was a percussion specialist and focused heavily on all things percussive. The students and the director agreed in their post performance critique of the judge’s evaluation that these comments, while nearly always completely accurate, did seem to be, in the words of one trumpet player, “awfully particular.” One comment, however, brought a spontaneous round of applause of support from the students for one of the percussionists. Hearing the judge say, “Awesome job on the tambourine roll – Nice!”, most of the students in the band turned to face the tambourine player and smiled and applauded as he modestly bowed his head in deference to their show of appreciation. This type of spontaneous student peer congratulations is seldom scripted and can have a profound positive effect on both the student performer and their relationship with their peers.

These disparate behaviors and experiences all seem to share one fundamental connecting principle relating to the relationships between the students and those with whom they share the experience in one way or another. As discussed in Chapter Three, and in keeping with Heidegger’s goal of “laying bare a fundamental structure of Dasein” (1926/1962, p. 65), *being-in-the-world* involves being with things and being with others. The *in* of *being-in* therefore is

not simply a spatial construct (being on stage, for instance) but rather points to a familiarity or involvement such as being *in* a relationship, being *in* a group, or in this case being *in* the band. For these students, the *being-in* the band is often felt and interpreted as *being-in* a family of sorts. They are in a place where they are safe, where they have much in common with each other, and in which they share goals and expectations. The concept of family as shared by the students themselves opens a window into understanding better the culture of the ensemble in which these students find themselves, a culture which affects their experience in myriad ways.

The More You Think About Playing Wrong Notes...

I recently interviewed a candidate for a teaching position in our school system who shared that his private teacher in college had a particularly Zen-like approach to reducing performance anxiety. The phrase he shared went like this, “The more you think about playing wrong notes, the more wrong notes you’ll play.” As soon as I heard that phrase I knew it had to find its way into this narrative because it expresses so well a critically important aspect of the culture of the ensemble in which our student participants find themselves.

In Chapter Two, the varying approaches of several famous conductors were explored as they related to the establishment of a particular culture of trust in ensembles under their baton. Gunther Schuller, a notable French horn player, conductor and composer, probably due in large part to his experience playing the French horn (one of the toughest wind instruments on which to locate pitches because of the nearness of partials and the vast array of notes which can be played

with the same fingerings) was known for “creating an atmosphere where it’s okay to miss a note” (Green & Gallway, 1986, p. 195). Several of the student participants shared that they felt their ensemble was characterized by a similarly sympathetic approach to the difficulties often faced by young wind players. Rosie shares:

We aren’t afraid to mess up in band class. If you make a mistake you just fix it the next time. Mr. Britt isn’t gonna jump all over us when we do (unless we keep doing it, that is). Sometimes he’ll actually make a joke about it – kind of play it down, so we don’t get all tense and nervous. I know some of my friends in other bands say they are scared to make a mistake and that makes for a more tense and scary atmosphere and then if you are so focused on not messing up, you’re just gonna get more nervous and make more mistakes.

Green and Gallway (1986) suggest that the tension that results from the pressured feeling that you’ve “got to do this...don’t have time for that...mustn’t forget to keep the fingers curved and play the right dynamic...worrying whether I have got everything under control” (p. 213) is a sign that bodily awareness is blocked and that the musician has lost contact with his or her intuitive, deeper sense of the music and of themselves. Rosie’s reflection above suggests that the tense and nervous atmosphere that results from the fear of making a mistake actually makes it more likely that mistakes will occur. The musicians have lost touch with their inner relaxed musical spirit and are consumed by anxiety and apprehension. Green and Gallway suggest that “When you can return to a calm and relaxed state, you may find that your unresolved problems have a way of receiving unsolicited solutions – without all the mental anguish” (p. 213).

Heidegger (1962), on the other hand, seems to suggest that this type of anxiety has a clarifying purpose; that it helps to situate one’s understanding of

one's place in the world. He contends that "being-anxious discloses, primordially and directly, the world as world" and that the "*world as world* is disclosed first and foremost by anxiety, as a mode of state-of-mind" (p. 232). This suggests that the anxiety alluded to by the students in their recollections is not necessarily in and of itself a negative thing. Perhaps it is an essential manifestation of reality that must first be experienced by the individual and that only through the struggle to overcome this innate anxious state-of-mind that exists in many of our ways-of-being, can "anxiety make manifest in Dasein its *Being towards* its ownmost *potentiality-for-Being* – that is, its *Being-free for* the freedom of choosing itself and taking hold of itself" (p. 232). Heidegger suggests that, in this way, "Anxiety brings Dasein face to face with...the authenticity of its Being" (p. 232).

Claire had a specific recollection from a recent rehearsal where the stress was introduced by the students themselves and actually exacerbated by their own self-induced desire to, as Green and Gallway cited earlier, "get everything under control." In this instance, though, the anxiety was manifested more as stress from trying to maintain control of a situation as opposed to a sense of fear or foreboding; the very fact that she recalled this event seems to support Heidegger's contention that "Anxiety brings Dasein face to face with...the authenticity of its Being" (p.232).

Just the other day in band we kept playing this section over and over again and it kept getting worse and not better. It was kind of like at some point it gets worse if you keep trying to just drill it into your head that "I really need to get these notes!" If you just keep on trying to get them right you start to fall back into pure muscle memory and if you didn't have it right already, then you are just going to keep making the same mistake over and over. And then you get more stressed with every wrong note and it's just one big, ugly, vicious circle.

Claire's recollection above ends with her "big, ugly, vicious circle" description which Heidegger (1962) might compare to the notion of "circular reasoning" in its endless and ineffective repetitions. Claire's mention of muscle memory suggests that the body itself may contribute in some physical way to a manifestation of that "circular reasoning" that inhibits growth and the positive circularity found in effective practice or rehearsal. Kristy, while placing much of the responsibility for precluding this type of frustrating and ineffective rehearsal atmosphere on the director, alludes to the fact that student receptivity to a more relaxed and less stressful approach is also important:

It all depends on the director's tone and how they make the atmosphere relaxed or tense. I mean, if you are just going to instill fear in all the musicians, then nothing is ever going to get better. But, even if the rehearsal is relaxed, you still don't want to be the one person who plays in that rest, you know? You want to do well so you don't disappoint him or yourself or the rest of the band, not because you are afraid he is going to make a fool of you. I guess you could call our rehearsals relaxed, yet focused.

Van Manen (1986) speaks of "atmosphere" as a way of knowing and says that "the sense of atmosphere or mood is a profound part of our existence. By it we know the character of the world around us" (p. 32). Kristy senses this as well, that the tone and the atmosphere of the rehearsal setting are critically important aspects of what defines their experience in band. Her sense of this complex phenomenon parallels that of van Manen in another important aspect, the impact had by the one experiencing the mood or atmosphere on the mood or atmosphere itself. "The mood of a place also depends on the disposition or frame of mind we bring to it" (van Manen, 1986, p. 32). Kristy supports this assertion when she says

that “Even if the rehearsal is relaxed, you don’t want to be that person that plays in the rest, you know?” The implication here seems to be that tone or mood are not just established on one side of the pedagogical act, but that they are active and dynamic phenomena that are dependent on all parties within the pedagogical situation for their generation and sustenance.

Mr. Britt believes that the character of the ensemble is important to think about when deciding how relaxed to be with regard to students making and fixing their own mistakes. Although he often makes light of student mistakes, knowing that they will be fixed by this group that has a common sense of purpose and desire for excellence, he readily admits that not all students are mature enough to thrive in this type of environment.

Although everybody looks at the one who made the mistake and I make a joke about it, the understanding is that the maturity of the students causes these obvious errors to be fixed quickly. It really does have to do with the culture of the ensemble. It wouldn’t work with every group. I know that. It’s funny that you mentioned that safe atmosphere idea. I do try not to be a jerk about it when the kids make mistakes. But admittedly, some of the less mature ones will take advantage of that. I modify my approach with the younger and less mature groups. They need to demonstrate they are ready to work in that type of environment before I will go there. But I think it is definitely worth it to go there if they are ready, and this group is. They get it that mistakes are normal and human and we need to pick ourselves up and move on.

Green and Gallway (1986) also write about the idea that granting permission to fail often leads to success. They view it as imagining that you always have a second chance - that you need to give yourself permission to fail before you can succeed. In many ways Mr. Britt gives these students this permission by his, in Kristy’s words above, “relaxed yet focused” approach to rehearsals. By not forcing his students to be perfect, by releasing the tension that

can easily arise while trying to navigate a technically challenging section of music (or by releasing the tension that could have been created by an overbearing and impatient director) students can remove an enormous obstacle to success.

In this ensemble's rehearsal environment, no extra stress is imposed on the students by their director. In fact, he makes a conscious effort to reduce stress within the rehearsal and allow the students to approach their learning organically as opposed to in a forced or perfunctory way. In my conversation with Mr. Britt, he spoke about how he approaches the task of tuning differently now than when he first started teaching and how it has changed the way the students think about the challenge of playing in tune. He believes this is based on both their changed roles in the process and on his patience with them as they initially flounder through the process, allowed to make mistakes, to fail at first, so they can learn how to achieve in the future.

It used to be – okay, we have tuned and we are now in tune and we are done – period. But now the attitude is – we need to stay in tune – we need to actively work to stay in tune. This is in contrast to my first several years of teaching where I just had them tune to one note. I found that when we got to adjudications we were far more out of tune than when we started this approach. The kids have said that they think about it differently now – they have to listen – they can't escape it – they absolutely **have** to listen. Sometimes it sounds terrible the first couple of times but eventually it starts to work. You can see it in their faces. They know that they are in or out of tune and when they need to do something. They know this is a safe place where they can make mistakes or be out of tune. Because if they don't make the mistakes, I can't help them or they can't help themselves. They need to be able to make these mistakes and they need to be able to hear how to fix them, without being terrified of making the mistakes in the first place.

Mr. Britt indicates that the students can't escape their responsibility to listen with this new approach, saying that "they absolutely have to listen." Since

he no longer gives them the answer to the question of who is flat or sharp, if they are to find the answer (and they know that they are indeed expected to find this answer), they are now required to listen and make the judgment themselves. They absolutely **have** to listen because no one else is going to provide them with the answer to their intonation quandary. They must now exercise a level of self-determination that was not the expectation in the past. As Nieto (1994) asserts, “Even more important than simply listening is assisting students to become agents of their own learning and to use what they learn in productive and critical ways” (p. 421). By shifting the focus of responsibility for tuning from him to the students, Mr. Britt has moved them toward becoming “agents of their own learning,” and their place within the pedagogical situation has moved from that of a passive receiver of knowledge to an active creator thereof.

Heidegger says that “what teaching calls for is this: to let learn...he (the teacher) has to learn to let them learn” (1968, p.15). Based on my observations of several rehearsals, there is indeed a culture present in this ensemble setting of “letting the students learn” through their experiences, both successful and not so successful. They are given ample opportunities to fail, to learn, to grow, and ultimately, to succeed. Mr. Britt attributes some of the genesis for this approach to a particularly memorable experience he had in pep band while in college, one that he “never wants any of them to have.”

This one year of college I was in pep band and so much of that music was written out but exactly how they used it was almost passed down like an oral tradition – you know, we don’t take that repeat but we do take this one. And of course these details weren’t written in the parts. You just kind of had to know it, intuitively. Well, I was unaware that this particular song was about to end and here I am with the next beat loud and clear – all by

myself – and I must have turned as red as our shirts – and – well, he (the director) just stared through my soul. Knowing how I felt right then, that is a feeling I never want any of my students to have because of a mistake they make with me as director. That is why I try to make light of honest mistakes that they make. Sometimes they really do make the most god-awful sound and everybody stares at them and often it is pretty funny. But, I don't want them to be terrified of making a mistake. I mean, you can't be very musical or very confident when you're scared to death of making a mistake.

As Mr. Britt suggests, playing in a perpetual state of fear does not align in any way with a positive experience of engaging in music, whether it be in rehearsal or performance. If every exposed note or difficult passage causes one to worry that a mistake will prompt their director to “stare through their soul,” the possibility for meaningful music making is destroyed. As Mark Stryker, the music critic for the Detroit Free Press suggests in his forward to Green's *The Mastery of Music* (2003):

There is no such thing as a mistake, only a missed opportunity... In the end one has to stop *thinking* about music and actually *make* music. This is more than a little scary because the possibility of failure is always in play; yet...one must take the leap and *dare* to make music, the fear of failure be damned. (p. 4)

These students are working in an ensemble setting where that fear of failure is removed and where they can dare to approach the task of making music unfettered by needless and counterproductive anxiety and stress.

Lightening the Mood and Reinforcing the Message

Van Manen (1991, p. 202) suggests that “Humor is a marvelous device for maintaining a relaxed, friendly, open, sympathetic atmosphere between teacher and students.” This is a recurring theme that characterizes the culture of this ensemble as shared by the students and reaffirmed in my numerous observations

of rehearsals, and it often serves the additional purpose of reinforcing concepts and furthering instructional goals and as Rosie shares, keeping it interesting.

There is hardly ever any tension. Mr. Britt cracks jokes the whole rehearsal, but these jokes make you think about how it is to be played, kind of like a metaphor. Some of them make you laugh, some just make you smile, but they all kind of make our mood better. This morning he said he wants us to play like chocolate or velvet for the beginning of Incantation and Dance. We laughed at first. It seemed silly but you start to think, okay smooth and rich and flowing like melted chocolate. Okay. I get that. So it helped us remember. We'd forget that he told us to play it smoothly in a day or two but we are gonna remember the silly chocolate analogy. What he says is more interesting and makes you remember. Some band directors are just – well – they're boring, basically.

My youngest daughter's only experience as a member of a middle school honor band member reflects a similar theme to the one shared by Rosie. My daughter had shared that, although she was excited to have been chosen to participate, and the playing level of the group was very good, she would never audition for another honor group again. Disappointed, I asked her why.

Dad, I was bored to tears. The director had absolutely no personality. He never smiled, he never said anything funny, and he didn't make any stupid jokes or tell any stories. He was just incredibly boring. He was no fun at all.

For her, that was the end of auditioning for an honor group because she thought all of them would be as dull as the experience she had on this occasion. As van Manen (1991) reminds us, "Humor can open new possibilities where things otherwise get edgy, messy, stodgy, dreary or stuck" (p. 201). For my daughter, her experience in that ensemble clearly fell into the stodgy or dreary category. She was also quick to point out that she always had a much better time in her band class at school where her directors "keep things fun while getting a lot done. They have a sense of humor and it's never dull." Based on the expressions

on the faces of the students in this band as they rehearse, and the number of times they smile or actually laugh at something their director says, it is obvious that these students, too, are having fun while they are engaging in their music making. And as the eponymous band director in the movie *Mr. Holland's Opus* tells his students, "Playing music is supposed to be fun!" (Cort & Herek, 1995).

Some of the many subtle examples of humor demonstrated by their director and observed in these rehearsals are not jokes or analogies in the most overt sense, but rather colorful ways of expressing an idea, a subtle display of irony, or the creative couching of a mistake or oversight made either by himself or by a student. During rehearsals the band members are often asked to sing as part of the learning process (an aspect of the phenomenon that I explore further in Chapter Six), either for tuning work or to change the listening environment for balance or timing. After a particularly successful multipart vocal interlude by the students, Mr. Britt shares with them, "Why even play – we should just sing," which was immediately greeted with laughter from most of the group and a few feigned comments of effrontery from others as if their honor had been besmirched. Later in the same rehearsal, after indicating he wanted to start at a particular spot and then immediately stopping because the students weren't where he wanted them to be, a student says "Uh, you said 216" to which Mr. Britt responds, "Wow, it's a shame you can't read my mind – I actually meant to say 194." While not late night television monologue material, these interactions represent a general tone of comfort and relaxed rapport between the teacher and the students that clearly is appreciated by all involved and goes a long way to

establishing and maintaining a culture where, as my then 13 year-old daughter said to me many years ago, “they keep things fun and we get a lot done.”

Stress-Free Zone

Van Manen (1991, p. 202) suggests that humor “is the ability to make things lighter and more bearable where they might otherwise weigh us down.” When used as part of building an environment where stress is either re-channeled, minimized or eliminated entirely, humor can contribute to a culture where students are at ease and able to focus and improve without the burden of the excess stress that several students shared was a characteristic of the rest of their school day, and in some ways, of their life in general.

Every time I find myself in a city that has a Hard Rock Café, I visit the restaurant gift shop to buy a city themed t-shirt or magnet as a souvenir of my visit to that city. One of the more unusual messages you will see as you enter a Hard Rock Cafe, and there are plenty, is the entreaty to visitors that there are “No Nuclear Weapons Allowed” or that the cafe is a “Nuclear Free Zone.” Several of the students describe the band experience at this school as their Stress Free Zone, or as an oasis in the middle of their desert of stress. Kristy shares a particularly poignant recollection of a recent experience related to her stress levels.

I actually had a little bit of a melt-down the other day (laughs). I had a moment and I got to cry a bit. Too much stress – AP prep – just not enough time. It’s my first year taking AP classes and it’s really my first time with this level of stress. But wind ensemble helps. It fully occupies my mind, and my body. I become completely consumed in the music. Even though it’s a very high level class and the music is very difficult, it just feels comfortable. Almost like when I swim. I’m completely embraced by the water when I swim and by the music when I play in band. For that amount of time the stress just isn’t there. And I think some of that is because of Mr. Britt. This class could be really stressful but he never

does anything to raise anybody's stress or to demoralize anybody. Even if you don't know everything he expects you to know he doesn't make you feel stupid. He makes you feel comfortable to ask for help or to ask a question. He makes you want to improve without making you anxious. And he often makes us laugh and that's nearly always good for relieving some stress.

Kristy's story not only touches on the way a relaxed atmosphere and the occasional opportunity to laugh can reduce stress, but she also touches on the power of music itself to carry one away from their stress. When Kristy is fully consumed by the music, she has in essence become the music, as T.S. Eliot suggests when he writes "You are the music, while the music lasts" (1944, p. 33). She is fully occupied by the music in mind and in body and, similarly to how she feels when she is embraced by the water when she swims; she is fully immersed in the music, "while the music lasts."

Green (2003) devotes an entire chapter in his book *The Mastery of Music*, to an exploration of the state in which musicians, athletes, artists, writers and similarly task oriented artisans sometimes find themselves where they function at a level of presence and immersion that is beyond what one might describe as normal activity. It is identified by a variety of terms including "flow," "peak performance" or simply as being in "the zone," and it has been described as "the state that occurs when risk and skill are in appropriate balance" (p. 166). The salient point of this "relaxed concentration" seems to be the paradoxical juxtaposition of an intensity of focus with a relaxed and seemingly effortless ability to engage in the activity. In similar ways, Kristy is "in the zone" when she loses herself in her music. For her, this often happens within the wind ensemble class. Green (2003) suggests that "When in the zone, one pays complete attention

to the task at hand. The performer is almost entirely focused on relevant cues, and disruptive internal thoughts are essentially blanked out” (p. 168). For the time that she is in wind ensemble and is entirely focused on her task, Kristy is “in the zone” where, as Green suggests, “it seems you are in a world of your own, a world in which you have an inseparable connection to your music” (p. 171).

Kristy suggests that not all stress is a bad thing, depending on your attitude. She shares:

I always feel disappointed when wind ensemble is over. I like to escape from my stressful life and if I can spend extra time playing music – those are moments that make my life better. When I said stress free zone earlier I meant stress free from my life outside of music. There is still stress in music but since it is something I like (laughs) – I know that sounds funny but I like the stress that comes with music. I enjoy it because it comes from that feeling that you always want to improve. It’s not something I can’t handle; it’s something I **want** to handle. And that changes your whole attitude about something. If you really want to do something, even if it is really hard or difficult, then it’s fun.

This is similar to the notion expressed by Gadamer (1960/1989) and explored in Chapter One as “ease of play – which naturally does not mean that there is any real absence of effort but refers phenomenologically only to the absence of stress” and which “is experienced subjectively as relaxation” (p. 105). Kristy intuitively knows that while there is much effort being put forth in their music making endeavors, it is manifest in a way that does not appear as stress to her or to the other musicians so intimately involved with the musical task at hand. Gadamer (1960/1989) suggests a “general characteristic of the nature of play that is reflected in playing: all playing is a being-played. The attraction of a game, the fascination it exerts, consists precisely in the fact that the game masters the players” (p. 106). This may be what Kristy means when she says, “I like the stress

that comes with music.” What she describes as stress may actually be the manifestation of the game’s (in this case the music’s) efforts to *master* her as the player. Gadamer (1960/1989) further suggests that part of the allure of any game is its potential for risk, which harkens back to Stryker’s comments cited earlier, describing the act of making music as “a little scary because the possibility of failure is always in play” Green (2003, p. 4).

Returning once again to Gadamer (1960/1989), he points out that it is important to “define play as a process that takes place ‘in between’. We have seen that play does not have its being in the player’s consciousness or attitude, but on the contrary play draws (the player) into its dominion and fills (the player) with its spirit” (p. 109). In this instance the player is Kristy, and she is indeed drawn into the dominion of the “play” and has become part of it. Deasy (2005) might identify the place where Kristy is experiencing this risk-taking and absorption in the spirit of play as a “third space,” the “in-between” mediating safety zone where students can take risks, become deeply engaged and creative in an artistic endeavor, and “both lose and find themselves” (p. 22).

Returning to Kristy’s reflections on how Mr. Britt often makes them laugh, I found it interesting that the tenor of the final class period before the adjudication event was characterized by much the same tone as prior rehearsals, despite the fact that the adjudicated performance was essentially upon them. This was the penultimate class observation I made, and the class appeared to be running essentially as all others had before with just a little bit more coaching from Mr. Britt about how to deal with any unforeseen occurrences once they took

the stage that evening. The rehearsal began as usual with the band playing mini-scales in a variety of challenging keys and with different articulations. He reminded the students that the warm-up will be their opportunity to get a feel for balance on what will be a strange stage with different acoustics. When he reviewed the schedule with the students for the day, he asks them, “What time do you have to be here?” He mentions *sotto voce* that he doesn’t have his pencil and a student who hears this says, “Pencil check!” Mr. Britt responds, “I have my emergency one in my folder. Nice try.” This was followed by scattered laughter from the class based on the failed attempt by a student to catch their director without the very tool he checks them for on a regular basis. His casual and light-hearted response went a long way toward maintaining that relaxed atmosphere that so completely characterizes these ensemble rehearsals and that could very easily, on the day of the adjudication itself, move quickly from relaxation to high stress and anxiety. This relaxed atmosphere could be conceived as a correlate to the relaxed concentration that Green and Gallway (1986) suggest is the “master skill” of the Inner Game perspective (p. 23). By situating the students in a place where no extra mental or bodily tension or distraction is invited, their director reduces the effect of what Green and Gallway call “self-interference” (p. 13) and provides the students with their best chance to operate in an “alert, relaxed, responsive, and focused” way (p. 23).

During the subsequent run-through of the adjudication pieces, David, the tenor sax player in our study group, came in early on an entrance and in a spot that was heard clearly by everyone. Instead of “staring through his soul” as his

college band director did when he made a similar mistake in the pep band experience mentioned earlier, Mr. Britt explains to him:

If you do that, I will know who it is and you will turn blood red, but the judge won't be like – okay, the tenor sax came in early – that's it – you get a 5 (the lowest rating possible). (Students laugh heartily at this jest.) That has never happened before. Just go for it. No worries.

Later in the rehearsal Mr. Britt goes after a concept that also is intended to lower student anxiety and stress (and reinforce some of his long term instructional goals that will be explored in later chapters) for the upcoming rehearsal and performance. He points to the slapstick player and says:

You are the one who actually gives us that downbeat. Zach was in the process of synching that part and then your part didn't come in at the right moment – BUT – you came back and fixed it. The most successful bands are often characterized less by flawless execution than by active recovery. Anyone can mess up a note or an entrance but only really good music students can recover – and we recovered right there and that was good. That is the idea. Use your brains to think in the moment and react to whatever the situation throws at you.

Their director is going to great lengths to downplay the impact of potential mistakes in anticipation of unforeseen musical occurrences that may happen that evening on the stage at adjudication. Similar to the idea of "*Befindlichkeit*," roughly translated as "the state in which one may be found," this director is working to establish a state of mind or mood that may set up the students for the most successful experience possible considering the unpredictable nature of the adjudication process. In so much as the idea of "active recovery" is contrasted to the relatively unachievable "flawless execution," Mr. Britt may be trying to anticipate the potential immediacy of mood change on the part of the students when they make a mistake of some type, and attempting to provide proactively

the students with the rationale that will allow them to move beyond the proclivity to fall into a mood of despair should they perform at a less than optimal level.

Heidegger (1926/1962) reminds us that “Even in the most indifferent and inoffensive everydayness the Being of Dasein can burst forth as a naked ‘that it is and has to be’... and the ‘whence’ and the ‘wither’ remain in darkness” (p. 135).

This focus on active recovery by Mr. Britt may indeed be an unconscious, yet prescient, effort to provide the students with tools to find their own “whence” and “wither” that does not situate them in a place of abject disconsolation at the anticipated minor technical flaws that befall any student performance, no matter how well prepared.

Similarities also present themselves in many ways to what Heidegger terms “thrownness,” a concept that implies that our *being-in-the-world* is often not within a context of our own choosing. In this case, the site of the adjudication performance (a foreign stage with unknown acoustics) is one example of a condition not of the participants’ choosing that could play havoc with the students’ experience. The adjudicators themselves are outside the realm of either the students’ or the band director’s choosing and represent another example of “thrownness” in this context. These students and their director are engaging in last minute efforts to determine in some small way how they will respond to a situation that they are “thrown” into. It is a situation that is influenced by how we project ourselves into the myriad of possibilities that exist. This director is engaging his students in several potential scenarios in an effort to prepare them to

best handle some of the possibilities that may present themselves once they take the stage for adjudication.

The Power of Trust

Revisiting a theme from Chapter Two, the idea of trust came up during several of the individual and group conversations, and evidence of a mutually trusting atmosphere was indeed observed during each of my rehearsal visits. The evidence of trust pervaded the performance itself and was perhaps most strikingly manifest in the sight-reading experience where the ensemble and the director have a very limited time to study a piece of band music they have never seen before and then must play it in its entirety for an adjudicator.

Steven M. R. Covey (2006) states that trust is “the one thing that changes everything” (p. 1). The type of trust I am exploring in this situation is what Covey calls relationship trust, a trust that is “all about consistent behavior ...and interacting with others in ways that increases trust and avoiding interacting in ways that destroy it” (p. 205). By exhibiting a certain type of behavior, directors can build this trust within their students, or they can weaken the level of trust that their students have in them.

So much in the pedagogical setting is contingent on this trust relationship. As a teacher who sets expectations, we trust our students to live up to those expectations. As students, we trust our teachers to treat us with respect and kindness and to follow through on what they say they will do. Each side of the trust relationship is responsible to the other in order for that trust relationship to continue to exist and to flourish. Abrogation of that trust relationship is easy to

identify from either standpoint, the teacher's or the students', and behaving in a way that causes this trust relationship to be weakened hurts those on both sides of that relationship.

Several examples of this trust relationship were readily observable in the rehearsals I attended. Several more examples were made evident as a result of the conversations with the students or with their director. One particular example connected to Mr. Britt's approach to planning and communicating with his students struck a chord with me. This example was made manifest in the way that his actions caused the students to be able to plan (because they could trust) what music would be rehearsed on a particular day, thus allowing them to be able to focus on a manageable amount of music on a given night. Understanding how much stress most of his upper level band students endure on a daily basis, Mr. Britt approached his planning in a way that brought the students in on the plan, and provided them with a way to minimize their load on any given school night because they could trust that he would focus on a particular section of the music during the next rehearsal period. This served two purposes: 1) to focus the students on the section of music to be rehearsed on a specific day, and thus, to lighten their preparation load; 2) to focus his instruction so that all relevant sections of the pieces under study would be given the appropriate time and attention. In this way he demonstrated that he trusted his students to use this information to guide their own preparation. By sticking to the plan that he communicated to his students each week, he captured and maintained that level of

trust week after week because they knew they could depend on him to do what he said he would do. Mr. Britt says:

When I first started to distribute the rehearsal schedules (the week prior) for the coming week, I told them that it was for a twofold purpose – one is for you, so you know what is coming in the next day or so and you would know what you should have worked on the night before leading up to it – and one is for me to make sure we get to everything. And you know what, some of these kids really feed off of this structure. They seem to like to know what is coming and seem to appreciate the opportunity to have more focus, maybe because they are all so busy. They understand this is a way to keep them from wasting their valuable time on something less relevant or something that is not going to be applied in class the next day.

This action gets at what Covey (2006) calls the “principle of credibility” (p. 41), the foundation of all trust. It is a matter of saying what you are going to do and then doing what you said you would do. How long does it take for students to see that a teacher who fails to follow through on the test they said they would be giving is not credible? What has this done to the trust relationship? The students quickly know that their teacher does not really mean what he or she says. When this happens, credibility is lost. The reason that Mr. Britt’s approach to this week at a time planning works is that he does what he said he would do and the students can depend on that. He proves his credibility and reinforces the trust relationship. By behaving in a consistent and reliable manner, he confirms that he is to be trusted, and the trust relationship is strengthened.

Covey (2006) believes that the idea of trust as manifest in self trust, and the trust others may place in you can best be understood when it is broken down into what he calls the “4 Cores of Credibility” (p. 54). In his estimation these four cores are integrity, intent, capabilities and results. Grouped together they fall under two broader categories that deal with issues of character and competence.

Inherent in this broader understanding is the knowledge that it is not enough to mean well and have good intentions – they must be supported by skills and performance. So for Mr. Britt to have meant well (intent) with his stated plan of structuring the rehearsals so that students knew what would be coming on a given day is one thing. It is entirely another for him actually to follow through and make that plan work (results), for the good of the individual students as well as the ensemble at large. Several students specifically mention how this approach to rehearsal seems to work well for them. They are seeing, hearing and feeling the results first hand. And from a complementary perspective, Mr. Britt sees and hears that the students are better prepared for class because they know what to expect and what to practice. In this way the reciprocal nature of this trust relationship is strengthened because each party understands and experiences the exhibited credibility of the other. One student shares a reflection that highlights the nature of the trust relationship in this ensemble and how it contributes to the feeling the students have about themselves:

I think Mr. Britt has our backs as our teacher. He doesn't expect less from us – he doesn't let us off easy. He expects more from us so I feel when you have that kind of trust from your teacher you have the confidence to try and do your best. He doesn't expect us to fail, he expects us to succeed. He trusts that we will live up to his expectations. And this kind of helps us to trust ourselves more too. It makes you feel like – you can do this.
(Rosie)

During the sight-reading experience at the actual adjudication, the band members demonstrated their trust in their director in ways that are best illustrated in the words of a significant other connected to the experience, the sight-reading judge himself, when he shared with the band after their sight-reading experience:

Ladies and gentlemen, I have to compliment you on how you managed your way through that very difficult and awkward piece of music. Now it wasn't what I would have called a polished performance in any way but what you demonstrated was something really important and that was how you think under pressure and what you do when you get lost or lose your place in the music. I saw pretty intense concentration throughout the performance and Mr. Snare Drummer, it was obvious you had lost your place but you know what I saw you do? As soon as it was clear you were lost, you immediately looked up at your director and watched him for the tempo and downbeat and from what I could hear, you proceeded to make up the part but stayed in time with your director and together you drove the band successfully to the end in one piece. If you didn't trust your director implicitly to help you through that type of situation, you would have buried your face in the music and hoped for the best. And it wouldn't have been pretty. As it was, you exhibited total faith in your director's ability to get you through this tough situation and that was the absolute smartest thing you could have done. And I saw that same kind of trust in most of the rest of the band as you struggled to find your way through this piece. That exhibition of trust tells me a lot about this group. And it's all good.

Had this director and the students not established and maintained this reciprocal trust relationship, the sight-reading experience would have been an entirely different story. Had the students not trusted Mr. Britt to be competent in his management of the sight-reading process, they would have been less inclined to exhibit the level of trust that the judge clearly saw, heard and felt them exhibit in that very unsettled and challenging situation. The judge himself said that if they hadn't trusted their director they would have buried their faces in the music as if the answers to how to deal with their situation were somehow mysteriously embedded in the page. And he suggests, that approach would not have led to a pretty result. As it turned out, most of the students initially thought the performance was indeed pretty miserable.

As much as I tried to find the pulse I just couldn't. And the judge was sitting right next to me so I felt like such an idiot because I just couldn't

find it. I thought, okay just look at Mr. Britt and maybe you will find out where you are. (Kristy)

Jefferson echoes those concerns:

I was playing the mallet part and everything was just repeated rhythms for like fifty bars so I am like watching him and then looking down at the music and asking myself – okay which one of these measures is where we actually are? It was just so easy to get lost because there were so many repeated rhythms. It got to the point where all I could do was look up and watch and try to stay with Mr. Britt.

But, after hearing the judge deliver his comments following the sight-reading performance, the students agreed that they relied on the trust they have in their director to help them through something difficult.

Initially when the judge said that he thought we had done a good job I thought – what are you talking about? Did you hear what we just played? But when I started to think about what he said, it made more sense. He understood the challenges in the music and how we overcame them. And like Mr. Britt said the morning of adjudication, it isn't always about being perfect, it's about recovery. It is about how well you overcome obstacles along the way. And the only way we recovered was by trusting in Mr. Britt to help us get through it. And the judge saw that. So, I guess that was pretty cool after all. (David)

Within David's comments we hear him refer back to Mr. Britt's assertion that the goal is not always flawless execution, but more how you recover from or hurdle over whatever human performance foible strikes you at any given time. What is it that the students and the ensemble recover when this happens? What is it that has been lost that needs to be recovered? Maybe it is simply their place in the music that has been lost. Perhaps it is a solid and reliable tempo that has been lost.

Perhaps it is a sense of ensemble precision. They may have lost their pitch center, causing chords and unison lines to be acoustically out of synch with one another.

Perhaps it is a deeper sense of confidence that has been lost because of errors in

their performance or changes in what they hear and feel as they perform. As we are “thrown” into new and challenging situations, most often not of our choosing, it is how we respond that is often of more consequence than how perfectly we perform. Within the scope of these students’ sight-reading experience at this adjudication, the power of their ability to recover was not only evident, but it was noticed and recognized by another very significant “other” connected to the phenomenon, the adjudicator himself.

Roles and Response-abilities

Within the scope of any group effort, the issue of roles and responsibilities is one that has to be grappled with in a way that strikes a synergistic balance between the needs of the full group and the needs of the individual members. This is true of athletic teams where each member must play a different position (everyone on a football team can’t be the quarterback, for instance), and in a musical ensemble where everyone can’t play the melody at all times (otherwise there would never be harmony). Similarly, the student participants in this study bring different things to this experience based on their own background and personalities, as well as the particular role or instrument they play in the band. They have to be “able” to provide a “response” to a particular demand placed on them by their place or role in the ensemble.

In his book, *The Mastery of Music* (2003), author Barry Green organizes his chapters in a manner that links personality traits to individual instruments or groups of instruments. The roles that these instruments often play in ensembles and the personality often associated with certain instruments (discipline for solo

woodwinds, fun for low brass, confidence for trumpet), forms the core of this metaphorical fugue subtitled *Ten Pathways to True Artistry*. As an instrumentalist and trumpet player, the themes he captures with his pairings are often uncannily on point and generate smiles of recognition and nods of agreement each time I read them. However, keeping in mind that generalizations, as van Manen reminds us, “are almost always of troublesome value” (2003, p. 22), it is important to note that these are simplifications of perceived similarities between certain groups of instrumentalists, that certainly sometimes are true but do not account for the infinite variability of reality. Not all trumpet players are over confident; not all flute and clarinet players are quiet over-achievers, and not all tuba players are anxiously waiting for the next oom-pah opportunity that comes along. Although there is plenty of evidence to the contrary, many people, rightly or wrongly, continue to hold on to these clichés about identifiable characteristics of musicians who play certain instruments. I was only recently reminded by a trumpet playing colleague of mine of a well known (at least in the trumpet world) tongue in cheek trumpet player salutation that illustrates this point. It goes like this: “Hi. Nice to meet you. I’m better than you are.”

The point to be made here is that members of a band have different roles and serve different functions and sometimes exhibit personality traits consistent with or divergent from those functions within the phenomenon that we call band. The students in this study (and their director) shared several accounts of how they understood and played out these roles as they prepared this music for the adjudication. They also shared observations of instances where their music or the

roles they played within the musical experience deviated from their expectations and how that both intrigued and challenged them.

Rob, the senior trumpet player, says that when it comes to either playing in the full section or playing as a solo player:

I usually prefer playing as a solo – just because – well, I know I will play it right, because I only have to be responsible for myself. I often get frustrated with the section because I feel like I need to carry them and if I drop out they won't be able to hold up their parts.

Rob is describing a level of confidence that he has in his own abilities that he does not have for the members of his section. He seems to be fine with the performance pressure there might be on him as a solo performer, because the stress and frustration that results when he has to be concerned about the playing of his section is of even greater concern to him.

Although Rob's words are eerily similar to something I said about my own attitude while a high school trumpet player in Chapter One, this is in sharp contrast to a recollection of Kristy's that puts her closer to the other end of that independence and confidence continuum:

During my freshman year I just wanted to hide myself in the section. I didn't want anyone to notice me so I understand why some of the freshman might be a little cautious about playing out. I definitely can relate to that. You don't want to shine just yet, because you really aren't that sure of yourself. But for me, getting the experience of teaching the young swimmers has changed my attitude about what role I need to play in band. I am still working on that confidence thing though because I am still pretty self-conscious. (Kristy)

Both Rob and Kristy have section leader responsibilities within their respective sections, but they bring quite different personalities and perspectives to that role and that task. During my observations I did not have the opportunity to observe

Rob conducting a sectional rehearsal, but I did have the chance to see Kristy running a clarinet sectional in the hallway during a rehearsal where most of the band was divided and distributed around the music wing of the school, working in small groups. I ask her about that particular situation and she shares that this was the first time she had run the full clarinet section rehearsal because the first chair first part player was away at All-State that day and it fell to Kristy to run the group rehearsal.

That day you were walking around checking in on the sectionals. I remember that. It was the first time I had actually led the entire section and of course it happened to be when you were walking by. I had done the smaller group before but I was confident enough to be in front of all of them and to get done what needed to be done. I certainly wouldn't have been able to do that a year or two ago. It's a role that I just now am getting comfortable with.

During the first full group conversation, Kristy contributes an observation about the blurring or mixing of roles that was immediately greeted by nods of agreement from the other five students:

You want to lead by example but you want everybody else to pay attention and do what you are doing. This is how you play this articulation; this is how you play this part. It's almost a mixing of roles. You aren't just the individual musician anymore. You are trying to be more than one player.

Even more than a mixing of roles as Kristy states above, is this an expansion of their felt level of response-ability to the ensemble? Might it be a manifestation of an altruistic desire to help bring others into their sphere of influence so they can broaden their positive impact on the ensemble? Claire picks up on this thread and leads us back to where Rob had been (preferring solo performance over ensemble):

I definitely agree with that. It's almost as if you are trying to spread yourself around when you want something to be right. Like if you are working on a duet and you're trying to fix certain things that are not quite coming together, it's really hard if the other person doesn't want to do that; if they think it's just fine. Sometimes I just think it is easier to play a solo. (Claire)

David, our senior tenor sax player, on the other hand, has had a different experience from the perspective of solo work versus working with someone else in a section or ensemble. He shares:

There's not a huge difference between section and solo work for me. I guess I do prefer working in a section though, since the other people I've worked with have been at essentially the same level as me, so whoever's first chair, it never became a matter of one person constantly helping the other and carrying the part.

David's experience of working in a section appears to have been substantially different than Kristy's, Claire's or Rob's in that he has never felt that he needed to carry more than his own metaphorical weight. In contrast, he simply played his part and all was well. The other students were part of a more heterogeneously constructed section that carried with it additional layers of complexity and responsibility when pursuing high levels of performance.

Jefferson, the senior percussionist, experienced the concept of roles and responsibilities from a completely different perspective than the wind players. He is still part of a section as are the other students, but the character and composition of the percussion music is such that their roles have to be approached in a different way than any of the wind sections approach their roles.

For us, I mean, rarely do any of us have the same parts as one another. We each have one or two pieces of a much bigger puzzle. It's more about being interdependent and counting and planning and working like cogs in a machine, because if they slip out of the gears, the machine grinds to a halt. Sometimes we have simultaneous responsibilities – two or three

different instruments to play in one piece - and shared parts where one of us plays this instrument for this part and then someone else comes over and plays that instrument in another part of the same piece. We actually have to plan where things are going to be placed so we can get there when we need to get there. If you don't figure that out and practice it, you will get SO lost. Not to mention falling over top of each other. You have to understand what your role is in the "percussion world." And you have to understand what everybody else's role is too.

Jefferson describes above some of the most fundamental musical and kinesthetic characteristics that help us understand the music and the concomitant tasks that often bedevil percussionists. In most wind sections in a band (and certainly in most string sections in an orchestra) there is a remarkable level of congruence from one instrument part to another. This provides a level of comfort and safety because rarely are individual students required to play something fundamentally different than their like-instrument playing peers who are seated beside or around them. Percussionists, on the other hand, are part of a section where it is entirely possible for no one player to have anything resembling what any other player has, thus requiring an unusually high level of independence and confidence for the player to have any chance of success with their task. Jefferson goes on to describe how wind player recruits or volunteers sometimes respond to this difference in expectation upon entering the percussion section when called upon to assist.

Sometimes we will have to recruit a wind player to help out because there just aren't enough of us to cover all of the parts. And it's pretty funny to watch the looks on their faces when they first come back and see all of what we have to do to make it work. It's a lot different than just sitting in a chair and playing one part for a whole piece.

In a rehearsal about two weeks before the adjudication, the band was observed to be engaging in their normal warm-up routine, but with a bit more

wobble to the tempo than was usual due to the fact that they were not being conducted at the time. They were doing this task without a visual tempo around which to wrap their playing. The director asks them what they thought was wrong. The students respond with the overly simple explanation that they “slowed down.” Mr. Britt further focuses that observation by clarifying that “We were all over the place with our tempo.” He proceeds to ask them what section was rushing. Most students respond that the brass section was the main culprit in the tempo problem. Mr. Britt’s reflection on this was:

I think the brass are trying to do a little tempo ego maneuver here. ‘My tempo is the superior tempo and all of you must submit to my tempo.’

This over generalization was greeted with scattered laughter from both woodwinds and brass, but it illustrates the power of playing with perceived assumptions about behavior and how they can be incorporated into the instructional process.

An additional example is focused on the answer a trumpet player gave to a question in a previous rehearsal where Mr. Britt was working on achieving better balance with a chord in the trumpet section. When asking the trumpets which chord tone was too soft, the first trumpets respond that theirs was the one that needed to be heard more. Mr. Britt responds with: “Yes, the typical first trumpet response. My part must predominate over all others.” At that time as well, the student response is light laughter, knowing the supposition that, actually accurate or merely perceived, first trumpet players often seem to believe that their part is more important than any others. Even if this is an inaccurate belief, it is useful to be aware that it is out there, either to be embraced or refuted as reality requires.

These students understand the preconception even if they do not really accept it as reality, and understanding this about his students allows the director to use his knowledge of that preconception for a useful pedagogical purpose.

Many factors come into play when establishing and maintaining a culture in a dynamic and complex organization such as a large musical ensemble. Any organization comprised of so many disparate personalities with different personal backgrounds, talents and interests, roles and responsibilities, and complex and fluctuating feelings and attitudes, will be a veritable Petri dish of possibilities. Before we can begin to understand what happens in such an ensemble, it is important to approach at least a nominal level of understanding about the complexity and composition of that culture. All high school bands are complex organisms affected by a rainbow of influences, both personal and organizational. Bringing them forward in this chapter begins to set the stage for the exploration that is to come – the journey into the lived experience of high school band students as they prepare for an adjudicated performance.

CHAPTER FIVE:
THE REPERTOIRE:
EXPERIENCE IN COUNTERPOINT

The repertoire a director chooses for study and performance by a student ensemble is of enormous significance. In many ways, it constitutes the core instructional material around which the learning experiences of the students are structured. As was explored in Chapter Two, it is not enough to have chosen quality repertoire, it must also be appropriate for the ensemble from a developmental standpoint. Only when the technical level and pedagogical potential of the music aligns with the developmental readiness of the musicians will optimum musical experiences be possible. Just as reading Shakespeare might be inappropriate for a fifth-grade reading class, so would the repertoire studied by this ensemble (both adjudicated selections came from the highest difficulty classification level used for identifying the technical and musical challenges incumbent in band literature) be inappropriate for middle school or inexperienced high school bands. As Gadamer (1960/1989) describes in his musings on the concept of “taste” (in this context we would think of it more as judgment), “Taste...seems to prove itself most where not only the right thing is chosen, but the right thing for the right place” (p. 41). Battisti (2007) similarly suggests that ensemble directors should strive to make repertoire decisions that are both excellent (in quality) and appropriate (for the students and the context).

Much of the content of the conversations with the six students and with their director focused on the repertoire itself and their interactions and experiences with that repertoire. They spoke of the challenges inherent in each of

the pieces, how the two adjudicated selections were different from one another, and about their feelings and attitudes toward the pieces and how those feelings and attitudes changed over time. Several of the students shared very insightful reflections about how they came to understand the music differently during the rehearsal cycle and how a burgeoning understanding of the compositional structure of the music impacted their experience.

Different Kinds of Difficult

The two judged selections that this ensemble prepared for the adjudication were both of the highest level of difficulty (for school bands), which is designated as grade level VI on the Maryland Band Directors Association graded list. This level of difficulty is typically only performed by the most advanced high school bands or by college ensembles. This group was the only band at the county adjudication festival to perform that difficulty level.

The Adult Experience

The challenges inherent in these two selections were made evident in quite different ways. Jupiter, one of the movements of The Planets, an orchestral suite by Gustav Holst, is an orchestral transcription and was a departure for this director to select for performance at the adjudication. Mr. Britt states:

I have never done an orchestral transcription before for adjudication. I mean, in general why would you? It's a band adjudication, why not do a band piece? It's not like there isn't any good literature out there. But this group seemed to be a good fit for Jupiter. We'll see how good a decision that was in a month or so.

Strings and winds just don't do things the same. Mr. Britt describes his understanding of the ways the two selections are different from each other based

on the type of ensemble for which each selection was originally written and further highlights the kinesthetic differences between the tasks that wind players and string players are called upon to perform:

When it comes to how it is difficult, since it was originally written for a full orchestra, there are lots of parts that were originally written for strings that are now written for winds, and strings and winds just don't do things the same way. Bowing, tonguing, breathing. Lots of things are different and some of them just don't translate well, from an ease of playing standpoint, when you shift it from a violin to a clarinet. It's just not the same kinesthetically. Some of those parts just weren't meant to be played by wind instruments. And then there is the issue of style and how it is created differently on a string instrument – the difference between string tone production and wind tone production. There are pretty fundamental resonance differences between string instruments and winds. And then there is the fact that string players never need to actually breathe during a phrase. That's a big difference. But this is great music and these kids are going to grow a lot by making the effort. They are as capable as anybody.

Through his extensive and insightful description of the differences that exist between a piece that is originally written for band and one that is transcribed from an orchestral original, Mr. Britt displays a powerful sense of how this particular repertoire choice will pose challenges for his students. Leinsdorf (1981) reminds us that while “bowing is of the uppermost concern in relation to the sound of the strings...the wind and brass players need a conductor who is above all a breathing musician” (p. 186). This comment illustrates the fundamental difference between wind and string playing; it is possible for a string player to play for an extensive period of time simply by changing the direction of the bow while never removing the bow from the string. A wind player has a significantly more finite capacity to sustain a melodic line, and when playing a part that was originally written for a string instrument, the wind player must somehow manage that difference in capacity without sacrificing the integrity of the phrase. Claire,

when initially looking at one of the extended technical passages in Jupiter, questioned “where are we supposed to breathe? The part just doesn’t seem to stop.” A string player would not even have thought to raise the issue since breathing is not directly linked to their ability to play long phrases.

Even though he says specifically that “some of those parts were just not meant to be played by wind players,” alluding to the phrasing challenges highlighted by Leinsdorf, he nevertheless has decided that his students will “grow a lot by making the effort” and is confident in their ability to embrace this challenge. Although this is his first experience programming an orchestral transcription for their adjudication performance, he feels that “this is great music” and a good fit for the ensemble and is confident that his students will gain much through their experiences in rehearsal and performance. Perhaps this is just one more way that he is calling on his students to stretch their capacities and to work to find innovative solutions to unusual performance problems, ones that might not occur in a piece written originally for wind instruments.

Revisiting a band classic. Mr. Britt had conducted the other adjudicated piece with the top band at this school during his first year teaching and has a deeper experiential relationship with that piece. When discussing that selection, *Incantation and Dance*, by John Barnes Chance, he says:

Incantation and Dance is one of those pieces that every band that is capable of playing, should play. It’s not only a classic in the band literature but it is just too fun NOT to play, if your students have the skills. And it has so much value both educationally and from a performance standpoint. I will program that tune every four years if the band is capable. I have a few lesson plans that I used when I first taught this tune several years ago that I will revisit to make sure the students understand how this

piece is constructed and how it is really much simpler than they will initially think it is. It is just so masterfully and creatively put together.

With this particular choice, Mr. Britt is selecting a widely respected piece of core band repertoire that he has programmed before and for which he has developed and implemented lesson plans to help students not only to improve their performance skills but also to better understand how the music is constructed. Similar to how there are masterworks of literature (or art or theater) that all students who are studying a particular discipline should have experienced in some way, he feels that this selection is of sufficient value that it deserves to be studied and performed by all bands that possess the required kinesthetic and musical skill levels. One of the ways that this idea of “value” becomes present for the students is through the gradual revealing of layers of construction and content through sustained engagement with a particular piece of music. Jefferson says how he came to understand and appreciate the way that *Incantation and Dance* was constructed as the inner structure became apparent when he could hear how various parts of the piece were connected and made structural and musical sense when more fully understood. Some literature, while enjoyable to play, does not warrant or withstand sustained study because it is not of depth or substance. It does not wear well over time. The masterworks of the genre, on the other hand, provide a substantial musical experience for the students, one that is not revealed quickly or by chance, but that rather unveils itself through careful and thoughtful focus and study.

Full disclosure: My experience with the music. When it comes to the experience of preparing music for an adjudicated performance, I have shared my

particular connections from the multiple perspectives of student performer, teacher, supervisor and adjudicator in earlier chapters. My previous experience with *Incantation and Dance* goes a little deeper and requires a bit more explication. As van Manen (2003, p. 46) reminds us, it is often not that we know too little about the phenomenon we are investigating, it is that we know too much. He suggests that “It is better to make explicit our understanding, beliefs, biases, assumptions, presuppositions, and theories” (p. 47). To that end, I share a little bit more about my particular experience with *Incantation and Dance*.

I have had the opportunity to engage with *Incantation and Dance* as a college wind ensemble member (allowing me to better relate to what the students shared in our conversations), as a high school wind ensemble conductor (allowing me to understand better Mr. Britt’s perspectives from the podium), and in a more unusual but intense experience as a marching band director that yielded some insights that had escaped me in both of my other experiences with this piece. During one of my last years as a high school band director, I selected *Incantation and Dance* to use as the core musical material for our competitive marching band show for that season. Realizing that the music was indeed quite difficult, yet nevertheless quite compelling, I set out to rescore the original concert band setting for the marching band idiom, making modifications only in the areas of what instruments might carry various melodic or rhythmic ideas best in an outdoor setting. The flute parts that Mr. Britt alluded to in Chapter Four and that open the selection were revoiced for a solo flugelhorn player (an all-state trumpet player who was more than up to the challenges of that level of exposure), and various

technically demanding woodwind running passages were doubled in the mallet percussion for extra strength and projection.

During the course of making the arrangement, I came to learn the piece in a much more comprehensive way than I might have if I had been simply preparing it with the standard concert band for a stage performance. Because I had to arrange the music for marching band instrumentation and to make sure that phrase structures lined up with count structures to which our drill designer would write corresponding marching movements, the phrasing and compositional structure became very clear to me and my understanding of the piece and how it was constructed developed to a very deep level. After the multifaceted experience of arranging the piece for marching band and rehearsing it over the extended period of a full competitive marching band season with numerous evening rehearsals and multiple performances, I and my students actually came to understand the music in a uniquely bilateral way - both musically and visually. Each segment was realized through both the musical phrase and within the corresponding marching movement; the physicality of the marching gave new depth of understanding to the metric and rhythmic devices used by the composer since they were experienced aurally and kinesthetically, often simultaneously. The marching band judging circuit, for which I judged for many years, employed a uniquely apt verbal construct to allude to this type of bilateral musical manifestation. They termed it “visual musicality” and described it as when the musical and the visual elements are in synchronization to the point that they are both more strongly manifest than either would be without the other. The nature of

my unique experiences with Incantation and Dance allowed me to experience its essence with a profound degree of “visual musicality.” The nature of my students’ experience was also enhanced because they lived the music in a uniquely bilateral and synergistic way. Phrases became felt and seen instead of simply understood. This felt sense of phrase was made more real within both metric and contour aspects. The count structures and the overall shape of the phrases became almost symbiotically linked with one another, as if the visual and the musical became one. In much the same way that the students in this inquiry shared that the music made more sense to them when they could add another dimension (clapping, singing, playing within different groupings of instruments, seeing the big picture and not just their individual part) to their experience, this juxtaposition of the musical and the visual enhanced student understanding with an extra aspect of meaning that was generated for and by the students.

Battisti and Garofalo (1990) advocate an approach to score study that is similar to the exhaustively detail-oriented approach I had to use on this piece when preparing the arrangement for the marching band. The often tedious method of analysis reminded me of diagramming sentences in my youth, but yielded a level of detail knowledge and structural understanding that is difficult to come by otherwise. This understanding was further enhanced by the actual act of rehearsing the piece over numerous summer rehearsals and for an entire competitive marching season, in addition to having to add the kinesthetic activity of actually marching while playing. I share these reflections because several of the component experiences alluded to in this recollection recur within the

accounts of the students' and the director's experiences with the music as they moved through the process of preparation for the adjudicated performance. These recollections of the multidimensionality of the student experience have enhanced resonance with me because of my own parallel experiences many years ago. What might the students in this ensemble have experienced if they had been called upon to march in place while playing the music, in much the way that my students did so many years past? Might that have added another layer of kinesthetic awareness and understanding? This is a layer of physical engagement that was not explored in this situation but that might have proven useful as a further means of connecting the students with the music in an overtly kinesthetic and bodily felt way.

The Student Experience

Each of the six students shared their experience of the difficulty of the music with several adding insights about how they understood the music and what made it unique and interesting (or not) to them. Some of these reflections seemed to be heavily influenced by their particular place in the physical layout of the ensemble (from their place in the spatial context of the experience), while some appeared to be tied more to what instrument they played and consequently influenced more by that unique window onto their musical experience. Each player, based on the particular part and instrument played, was confronted by unique manifestations of difficulty including interpretation issues, sheer quantity of notes to play in a given temporal space, complex and interwoven rhythms, and tricky and sometimes counterintuitive articulation patterns. The difficulties in this

repertoire manifested themselves in a polyphony of challenges for the students, leading them to a varied spectrum of insightful observations and reflections.

Struggling with style and interpretation. David suggests that, especially with the orchestral transcription, it was difficult to get a grasp on the interpretation and style issues until he heard a recording of Jupiter that Mr. Britt played for them in class. He shares the following after he heard it played for the band in class:

I decided I wanted to have it to listen to – to help with interpretation but also because I enjoyed it. When I first played it I knew lots of the style we were playing was wrong. Even with markings it's hard to get it exactly how it should be because staccato, legato, they can all have a range of meanings for different sections and in different places. There is only so much you can put onto the page and only after we heard the recording did we get a real sense of style that the written music just couldn't convey. Like with the strings, there was this kind of bounce that just isn't natural for winds. It's just so different kinesthetically. You can bounce a bow off of a string but what do you bounce off of a tenor sax?

In these comments, David touches on the area of interpretation and how even in the most copiously notated music, there are still many decisions that are left to the conductor or the musicians or both. As he implies, all interpretative markings have potentially different meanings in different contexts. A staccato marking in a piece by J. S. Bach typically has a very different intention than one found in a Sousa march, for instance. Sometimes it is only through the hearing of the possible ways to execute a particular marking that awareness and understanding comes. Hearing several versions of a staccato articulation can provide a range of possibilities for the students to listen to and assess as to which of those they should emulate in order to achieve the appropriate stylistic outcome.

As Dufrenne (1973) tells us, “We have only an inadequate idea of the work so long as we have not attended its performance or at the very least imagined it. But through the performance, we aim at the truth of the work” (p. 24). The point David makes is similar to that suggested by Dufrenne in that the indications on the page only *begin* to tell the story of how the music should be played. The stylistic indications found in the music are critically important, but they do not tell all that is needed. They only start the conversation. If we have no aural reference we “have only an inadequate idea of the work” (Dufrenne, p. 24). Through careful and critical listening to examples of various stylistic possibilities - either through isolated vocal or instrumental examples as demonstrated by a teacher or a peer, or through listening to recordings of those who have performed a particular work before - additional insight into the various interpretive possibilities can be gained. This additional experiential exploration enables the students to understand the music better and to perform it in a more musically satisfying manner than would be possible if they were only visually connected to the musical score and not from a listening standpoint as well. Copland (1939) reminds us that “The ideal listener is both inside and outside the music at the same moment” (p. 16). He goes on to say that what we are looking for is “a more active kind of listening...you can deepen your understanding of music only by being a more conscious and active listener...not someone who is just listening, but someone who is listening *for* something” (p. 16).

David also alludes to the very different kinesthetic character of playing wind instruments as contrasted with string instrument technique. Leinsdorf (1981)

suggests that the “crucial differences between strings and winds are response and phrasing” (p. 187). Where on a string instrument it is indeed possible actually to bounce the bow off of the string, this same effect has to be created in a fundamentally different kinesthetic way on a wind instrument. Returning to Leinsdorf’s assertion that response and phrasing are the primary differences between strings and winds, this “bouncing” expectation is one that will stretch a young player’s ability to borrow a stylistic technique that is fundamentally foreign to his particular instrument. As David reasonably asks, “What do you bounce off of a tenor sax?” For that type of effect, the bouncing object would need to change from the bow to something else, perhaps the player’s tongue on the reed. The difference in mode of articulation here is significant. One of these articulations is achieved with an object held by the musician (the bow), while the other is accomplished by using a part of the musician’s body (the tongue). In each of these articulations, the idea of “touch” is significant. What touches what and how does that touch affect the sound that is produced? In this instance, there is a clear divergence in the manner of articulation. The resulting stylistic implications of that difference would undoubtedly be accurately realized only after some experimentation and critical self assessment. Is the attack too heavy? Are we getting more of a thud as opposed to the bounce that we are looking for? These potential challenges would connect to the issue of response as posited by Leinsdorf above.

All of these possibilities of style and interpretation are fundamentally dependent on hearing the performance effect and assessing to determine if it is in

keeping with the intention of the music. Only through aurally experiencing either isolated stylistic examples or, as David suggests was especially valuable to him, listening to actual performances or recordings, can a musician develop the palette of interpretive possibilities needed so they can make appropriate stylistic decisions in the music they study and perform. It may also take some kinesthetic experimentation to achieve the desired aural result. The “touch” of the articulation, the “feel” of the phrase; all of these things must be heard and then felt before they can be communicated.

Are we anxious, excited, or both? In one of her journal entries, Rosie writes that she always gets a little nervous when she first gets the pieces for assessment. She saw this year’s music as a lot harder than last year, especially Jupiter, because it required so much technique and contained so much rhythmic complexity.

Everyone is really going to have to do their own part to learn the music and be sure to come in at the right time. Last year’s music was hard but we played lots of the hardest parts together. There really wasn’t that much independence. With this music, we can’t depend on people in our section to know when to come in. We will need to be independent and really work on counting and keeping in time.

Kristy shares a similar reflective account:

The first impression whenever we get the adjudication music is always a little fear and anxiety. You know it’s going to be challenging but what’s the challenge going to be? When we got Jupiter this year, I was just flabbergasted by the length and complexity of the piece. In some respects I think I was even more terrified of the piece after we listened to it because I felt like we have to sound just like this recording does! Once that initial shock wore off, I could see that it is going to be difficult to get things to fit together rhythmically. Last year’s music was hard but it was more the density of notes that made it hard than how well the ensemble would have to work to be able to keep it together.

Both Rosie and Kristy reflect that the repertoire for this year will require an increased level of independence on the part of the musicians, as well as an augmented awareness of their need to listen to and work with the other members of the band due to the complexity of the ensemble challenges. They each have discerned that this year's music, while no more technically difficult than last year's repertoire, is more complex in its construction, and based on this complexity it will provide a greater challenge to the ensemble in the areas of precision and cohesion. It will not be enough for all of the students to learn their parts and simply play them well together. They will have to listen to and actively engage with the other members of the ensemble in a way that they were not required to do with last year's repertoire. They will have to interact with and be responsive to their fellow musicians in ways that will require much more sophisticated listening skills and ensemble sensitivity.

Green (2003) writes about how musicians exhibit this merging of musical identities in a "kind of nonverbal, rhythmic union: they call it a form of entrainment" (p. 23). He cites how highly able and sensitive musicians, when called upon to play together, often behave "as though the two of them somehow miraculously blend into one musician performing in twin bodies" (p. 22). This phenomenon occurs in other non musical contexts such as hospital operating rooms, where the players here, the doctors and nurses, are also moving in a "common rhythm" or "in harmony" with one another. This seems to be what Rosie and Kristy are speaking of when they say "how well the ensemble will have to work to be able to keep it together."

Returning to Rosie and Kristy's comments on the fact that there is always a little fear and anxiety to deal with whenever they get the music for the upcoming performance, some sorting and clarification may be in order to reveal fully what this fear and anxiety really means. Perhaps this state of mind that they find themselves in is less a manifestation of anxiety and more aptly described as excitement about the challenges and opportunities that are newly being presented to them. Or, are they displaying a type of "falling" as Heidegger might describe a situation where we are not in control? And if so, does this particular instance of "falling" actually *enhance* the experience for the students because it causes the being of *Dasein* to show itself in this state of mind that can alternately be described as anxiety or excitement? Would the experience resonate in the same way for the students if there was *not* a feeling of anxiety, fear, or excitement about the new music to be explored? Is this "state of mind" essential to the disclosure of their particular *Dasein*? Green (2003) cites a Hollywood studio trumpet player, George Graham, who says about fear, energy and taking risks that "Most of us (studio musicians) have learned to take the fear and turn it into a positive energy" (p. 197). Graham continues by sharing a message that he once saw on a poster that said, "Ships are safe in harbor – but that's not why ships are built" (p. 197). Perhaps this is what the students feel when they call it fear and anxiety. They are really feeling the excitement of getting ready to take their metaphorical ship out of dock and plying the potentially stormy seas of musical performance.

Looks can be deceiving. Kristy has another viewpoint about the relative difficulty of Incantation and Dance. She identifies the preponderance of syncopated rhythms but feels that at first it didn't look that challenging. But once she sight-read it she relates:

I learned that looks can be very deceiving. It's normal that at least one of the assessment pieces is challenging from a fingering and technique standpoint, but this piece had accidentals in almost every run. The overall style is really aggressive, but light, so breathing and articulation are crucial to get under control in order to play it correctly.

Implicit in Kristy's final statement is an expectation that they will all need to achieve a particular level of "correctness" in order to be successful with this music. She suggests that it will not be enough simply to manage to get from one end of the piece to another, but that the successful performance of the music will require that notes and articulations and style and precision will need to be mastered in order for the music to be performed "correctly." By using the word "correctly," is Kristy making the assumption that there is only one "correct" way to perform this music in order to be successful? Or, is she implying that only by performing with a sense of unity and consistency of style, can the performance be considered successful? These potentially contradictory interpretations of "correctness" may need to be reconciled for these players and the ensemble before congruence in understanding is achieved.

Muscle memory. When Claire initially saw the music for Incantation and Dance, she also noticed the extensive runs in the later part of the piece. Always being one to look for patterns and structure, she was perplexed by the lack of predictability within those runs.

I tried to figure out if they were minor or major or whole tone or something but they just weren't. They were partly chromatic but not completely so all of those scale patterns I learned for this or that audition were just not all that helpful. Well, I guess they were helpful in that I could figure that these runs weren't like any of those. It didn't make them any easier to play, though. I will just have to try to commit them to muscle memory because it goes by way too fast to actually read all of the notes. And looking at it each time isn't going to help either. So I will have to play them slowly and play them with different rhythms so I can get the patterns - which aren't like any patterns I have seen - to actually sound like they make sense.

Claire speaks often of the idea of muscle memory and its role in the successful execution of technical passages. She, like most successful musicians both young and old, has learned many patterns that after a time become nearly automatic in order for them to be executed correctly. When Claire plays through many of her major scale patterns, she is not consciously thinking about what fingers to press down; that physical act has been transferred essentially from her conscious mind to an area that lies below her threshold of cognitive awareness. It has been assigned to her store of muscle memory. In a way, that part of her music making is functioning on autopilot where she does not really have to think about the actual mechanics of the task. Musicians could rarely perform music of much complexity if they didn't routinely convert much of the technique required to play their instrument into muscle memory. By shifting those skills out of an active mode into a more automatic one, the musician is then free to focus his or her attention on those things that can't or shouldn't (ensemble sensitivity or balance, for instance) be consigned to the vault of muscle memory. For Claire, the particularly vexing passages in *Incantation and Dance*, "which aren't like any patterns I have seen," will simply have to be placed into muscle memory because

they move too fast for her actually to think about each note while she is playing it. It will have to happen automatically or it won't happen at all. This placement of musical and kinesthetic patterns into muscle memory, moving an initially conscious cognitive and kinesthetic activity into an area within our minds and bodies that is closely related to where we regulate breathing nearly unconsciously, is what makes it possible for a musician to focus on moving past simply playing notes, and into a place where they can make music. The patterns are obviously still there, but they do not require conscious thought to reproduce. We do not say to ourselves, "Here is that almost but not quite chromatic scale again." Instead, our internal musical sensors engage our muscle memory and the part "plays itself" without any overt conscious thought.

David's tenor sax part in *Incantation and Dance* contained some of the same awkward runs that were found in both Claire's flute part and in Kristy's and Rosie's clarinet parts. Reflecting on how it felt to try to play those runs at first, and echoing Claire's insights about muscle memory, David says:

When I was first learning those runs, it would take a couple times to even play it slowly. Then about a week later it got a bit better, but I still couldn't just look at it and play the runs. After a couple of attempts it would be there but not immediately. And you don't get a bunch of second chances when you are playing with the group. Compared to where I was about four weeks ago, I can actually play those runs now. It was a gradual process but there was this one practice session where I just really dug into it and pretty much got it and then, like Claire likes to say, the muscle memory kicks in and once I've got it, it's there.

Merleau-Ponty (1962) writes that "It has long been known that sensations have a 'motor accompaniment', that stimuli set in motion 'incipient movements'...and that the 'perceptual side' and the 'motor side' of behavior are

in communication with each other” (p. 243). David and Claire seem to have moved some of their most technically and cognitively challenging musical tasks from their “perceptual side” to their “motor side,” and although neither student consciously thinks about the specific notes in those passages anymore, the perceptual side and the motor side are clearly in communication with one another, allowing their muscles to “remember.”

The clarity paradox. As the students became more familiar with the music and spent more time rehearsing and figuring out some of the more fundamental technical challenges, they became more aware of some of the ways that the music was put together, but also how the level of difficulty seemed to increase as they became better able to play the notes and rhythms. Kristy reflects:

Most of the rhythms we have gone over are just a pretty simple eighth note pulse with sixteenths thrown in occasionally but the main melody lines are often split up between everybody in the band and you have to hear all of the beats and it has to fit together. It’s kind of like everybody is part of this great big machine that has to function in rhythm with itself to make any sense. When we first started to work on it, we really weren’t even thinking about that.

In many art forms, as clarity begins to be achieved, the awareness of the lack of clarity that remains becomes, paradoxically, enhanced. A clinician who worked with my band at one point said that it is kind of like a painter approaching a canvas. If the canvas is dirty, it really doesn’t matter so much where the artist puts his brush and applies the paint, because the background clutter obscures the image. But if the canvas is pristine, then every brush stroke can be seen. In the same way, when there is musical clutter resulting from a lack of precision, the placement of notes is less critical because the background clutter obscures the

musical “image.” But when the background musical clutter begins to disappear as performance expertise grows, the instances of imprecision are more noticeable because the musical “canvas” is more pristine and the imprecision is more easily discerned. Kristy describes the band as a type of machine that needs to function in time and in synch with itself for all of the musical ideas to make sense. But when they began their process, they were working with what was essentially a dirty canvas and didn’t really understand what the musical image was all about. Only as it became clearer to them, did they then understand fully the level of interdependence and clarity that would be needed to achieve in order to perform the piece successfully.

Discovering the structure within. Jefferson brings a unique set of insights to the discussion of Incantation and Dance possibly because of his experiences from within the percussion section, but also because he has a tendency to see and hear things from a composition and construction standpoint. He has been taking Advanced Placement Music Theory and has become very intrigued by how pieces of music are structured and how the various parts relate to one another. His experience with the Incantation and Dance musical score, briefly discussed in Chapter Four, draws on the various roles that the instruments play, how the various voices interact with one another and how the simple and the complex interweave to create a “really unique and interesting piece.”

With Incantation and Dance, I thought it was just really unique because the beginning of the fast part is more like advanced percussion parts and more simplistic wind parts – actually incomplete wind parts – not fully involved or realized - a few notes here and there. It’s like the winds have this foreshadowing of the main themes to come while the percussion does the heavy lifting at first. I probably realized this earlier but it really hit me

at a rehearsal just recently. This piece is different. There are more than just patterns here. Not only is the melodic material being exchanged from percussion to winds, it's also about simplicity versus complexity in a bunch of different ways. Then there is this part at the end when the winds set up these two measure features by the percussion where all of the percussion parts from the beginning that had been played out one after the other are suddenly stacked on top of each other. It's basically the same material but it sounds so much more complex because it happens at the same time instead of in sequence.

Jefferson hears what he terms the wind players' "foreshadowing of the main themes to come" within the overall construction of *Incantation and Dance* through his auditory experience of hearing the relationships between the various percussion and wind parts. The Oxford English Dictionary defines the verb "foreshadow" as "to serve as the shadow thrown before (an object)" or "to represent imperfectly beforehand, to prefigure." In so much as Jefferson is hearing and describing the melodic and rhythmic fragments in the woodwinds as an indicator of things to come, a "foreshadowing," he is aurally discerning a compositional technique that might elude many students. In order for him to discern this "foreshadowing" he has to have had the opportunity to reflect back to what he had heard in prior rehearsals and compare and contrast those various melodic and rhythmic snippets of sound. This needed to occur *over* time because of his need to listen, compare, and eventually to discern that the germ of an idea was being incrementally exposed, and then eventually developed into a more complete entity. He notices that these are not just patterns, but that the rhythmic and melodic material are crafted in a purposeful and developmentally significant way that allows the various musical entities to unfold gradually and grow from the simple to the more complex. Gadamer (1975/1989) writes of "the intuitive

anticipation of the whole and its subsequent articulation in the parts...the circular movement of understanding runs backward and forward along the text” (p. 293). In a similar way, Jefferson’s “intuitive anticipation of the whole” occurs within this “circular movement of understanding” that is running “backward and forward” along the musical “text,” that for him, is subsequently articulated as the sum of the various parts found in the musical score.

Messing with our expectations. Kristy tells a similar story of the simple and the complex and how *Incantation and Dance*, in the very way that it is similar but different within its own manifestations of melody, harmony, and rhythm, is interesting and challenging because of the very fact that it does indeed “mess with your expectations” by subverting what you expect to happen next in the music.

There is this spot towards the end of *Incantation and Dance* – quarter note triplets where we end on a downbeat in unison the first time but the second time we end on a much different chord. When we rehearsed it slowly – everybody starts in unison and we went note by note and then you realize at the very end that the pattern is not the same. If you aren’t careful, especially the brass, you can easily miss the intervals because you expect it to do the same thing as it did the first time – but it doesn’t. It’s pretty cool actually. There are a bunch of similar things the composer does like that. He writes almost the same thing but with a different articulation or by offsetting the rhythms by a beat, adding a beat of rest to the measure, or changing the harmony. It makes it really interesting because it messes with your expectations.

Kristy speaks of this composer’s proclivity to set up a particular expectation in the music and then to deliberately subvert in some way the very expectation that he has established. Much the same way as a writer of fiction might establish a pattern of narrative and then insert a plot twist of some type, these subversions of expectations are what may make a particular work of art or music or literature more interesting to the reader or listener because of the

insertion of an element of uncertainty or surprise. Through the establishment of structure - be it a manifestation of rhythm, melody, form, or a combination thereof – composers are able to set forth a musical “plot” for the listener to follow.

Copland (2009) asserts:

Structure in music is no different from structure in any other art; it is simply the coherent organization of the artist’s material. But the material in music is of a fluid and rather abstract character; therefore the composer’s structural task is doubly difficult because of the very nature of music itself. (p. 95)

The difficulty Copland ascribes to the task of the composer relates fundamentally to the temporal, and therefore fleeting, manifestation of music’s very structure as a performing art. Because music exists *in* time, it must be *perceived* in time, and cannot be reflected on in the same way as a work of visual art. This makes it more difficult to identify larger formal structures upon first hearing a piece of music.

Copland (2009) asserts that “Almost anyone can more readily distinguish melodies and rhythms...than the structural background of a lengthy piece of music” (p. 95). The structure of this piece seems to take full advantage of this human proclivity for recognizing melody and rhythm over formal structures. This piece is characterized in large part by the organic evolution of melodic and rhythmic motifs that manifest themselves in ways that these student musicians, Kristy and Jefferson in particular, found to be intriguing and engaging, both in their construction and implementation and, paradoxically, in their structural irregularity.

In our first group conversation, Kristy points out that she noticed that Chance (the composer of *Incantation and Dance*) often scored the music for

unexpected instruments or combinations of instruments, resulting in uncharacteristic timbres, textures and orchestrations. Several pairings of instruments in particular were very surprising to her and contributed to her feeling that the selection was unlike most of what she had played in the past.

I think a very interesting part of this piece is that there are a lot of places where sections that you don't expect would ever play in unison actually do. Like the clarinets and the trombones. In *Incantation and Dance* we actually play a main theme together. You would never expect that those two groups of instruments would have the same melody, much less at the same time. Mr. Britt did say in class that he felt that was one of the tougher trombone excerpts he remembers in high school band music. It makes sense for a clarinet to play it, or even a trumpet, because the rhythm is very active and the articulations are so fast and need to be so light. So it was a big surprise to be playing it with the trombones.

Within much traditional band and orchestra literature there are certain fundamental characteristics present in what could be considered an idiomatic part for a particular instrument. Green (2003) bases his entire approach to exploring what he describes as “pathways to true artistry” (p. 8), on highlighting the close associations that could be made between skills mastered by those musicians who play similar instruments and perform similar roles within an ensemble. The uniquely predictable nature of these individual parts defines in many ways the experience musicians have in an ensemble. For example, flute and clarinet players often have very tuneful and technical passages to play requiring a lot of finger dexterity, while tuba players are often called upon to play supportive and sometimes punctuating parts that provide a harmonic and rhythmic foundation for the ensemble. Kristy notices that within *Incantation and Dance* some of the often predictable nature of particular parts is subverted and turned on its head. She specifically alludes to the fact that the clarinets and the trombones share a nearly

identical statement of a highly technical and demanding melodic passage that, while not unusual for the clarinet, is not at all typical for the trombone. Recalling that van Manen (2003) cautions against making generalizations about human experience, saying that they are “almost always of troublesome value” (p. 22), it is sometimes useful to understand these generalizations if only to serve as a backdrop upon which to locate a more completely realized or overtly contrary experience so that it may be understood more deeply because of that very contrast. The generalized expectation that trombones aren’t required to play that sort of technique is subverted by the very existence of this demanding and uncharacteristic trombone excerpt, in much the same way as the melodic and rhythmic material is often developed in this piece in surprising and unanticipated ways.

This other cool section. The next recollection occurred as a steady stream of input from four of the students as their ideas built on one another almost as if they were passing around the voices in a Bach contrapunctus. Inspired by Kristy’s ideas about the clarinets and trombones sharing melodic ideas, Jefferson chimes in with, “There is this other cool section where the bass clarinets have this part.” But before he could finish his thought, he was interrupted by a very eager Claire who says with enthusiasm, “I know what part you’re talking about, it’s where the bass clarinets have this really angular line that Mr. Britt keeps telling them to play louder, the one with lots of skips and octaves.” Kristy adds, “It’s in the bassoons too.”

A perfect storm of existentials. When Jefferson returns to the conversational fray he adds an observation that alludes to not only how the particular part is constructed and the relationality of the various parts to one another, but also how the musical effect is changed because of the altered spatial dimensionality of this particular musical manifestation.

And then the tuba and the euphonium and the third trombone have the part that the bass clarinet and bassoon had – but they have it split up between them. Mr. Britt sent them off to work on it the other day – with the bass clarinets just so they could get it to mesh together – to see how it is supposed to fit with the three or four different instruments trying to get it to sound like the one part that the bass clarinets and bassoons were playing in unison earlier. It’s a pretty cool compositional device to split it up like that between the different low brass instruments. I mean it’s pretty cool when the bass clarinets and bassoons play the whole line, but when it gets traded back and forth by the different brass players the sound is just like it is coming at you from all over the place. It’s all the same notes but the effect is really different because the colors of the notes are not all the same because they aren’t coming from the same instrument, and the direction where all of the notes are coming from is not the same. It’s coming at you from all different places. Surround sound, I guess.

Within Jefferson’s recollection above, he ventures into what van Manen (1990, p. 101) calls “existentials” or fundamental lifeworld themes. Within this one particular vignette of student experience, the themes of lived body (corporeality), lived space (spatiality) and lived human relations (relationality) are present in ways that help to color and enrich our understanding of the multidimensionality of this phenomenon. The feeling of the notes coming from the various instruments is manifest both in a bodily way (as the students feel the vibrations themselves for those closest to the players), but also in a spatial way as the part comes at the musicians from different directions. Jefferson alludes to how the experience is actually different *because* of how and from where the sounds are

coming at him. When the low brass players have the part in a divided format where each of them is responsible for only a small portion of the whole, the individual sounds are coming from several different sources. Depending on the spatial orientation of the listener, this experience is significantly different than if the entire part was played by one instrument that resided in a stationary location. As Jefferson says, “The sound is just like it is coming at you from all over the place.” This would be similar to the difference in sonic perspective one might have if listening to a movie on their Smartphone as contrasted to the aural experience afforded to the listener by the same movie as experienced in a theater with, as Jefferson so aptly suggests, “Surround sound.”

The issue of relationality is present in the nature of how the parts “relate” to one another. This is apparent in the way in which the parts fit together, as well as the way the different “colors” of sound are made audible by different instruments, both individually and in various combinations. While there is certainly a difference in tone color between a bass clarinet and a bassoon, the fact that those instruments play the part together in its entirety means that the resulting tone color is an amalgamation of the two different timbres. The low brass parts, on the other hand, are divided between the various voices, and therefore, display more of a variety of tone colors in their particular voicing.

Mr. Britt sent the low brass away to practice with the low woodwinds *because* of the difference in the relationality of the component players in the contrasting occurrences of this particular melody. When the bass clarinets and the bassoons have the part, it is essentially in unison and, therefore, much more

straightforward from a relationality perspective. The low brass players who split the part and, therefore, never own it in its completeness, need to follow a different path into a relational comfort zone in order for this extra dimension of interdependence to result in a convincing ensemble performance. By sending these two groups away to work together on this particular part that they share in slightly different manifestations, the director makes an effort to provide for the opening of new understandings for the low brass that have the more difficult relationality challenge to master. While the low woodwinds *own* their part in its completeness, the low brass players *share* their part and need to work their way into their comfort zone as individual, yet interdependent, components of a larger musical entity.

In, Through, and Over Time: Changes in Student Experience

Van Manen includes the idea of “lived time” or temporality as one of the fundamental lifeworld themes or “existentials” (1990, p. 101) that he suggests is useful in guiding reflection within the research process. Within the broadest conceptualizations of music, there are several incarnations of what we might call temporality, or the way music is experienced “in” time, “through” time, or “over” a period of time. Several of the students mentioned instances where they need to attend to playing “in time” to achieve a sense of ensemble precision. In the simplest sense, this understanding of temporality alludes to the pulse issues that are inherent in successful musical performance. Typically, for a piece of music to be successful in performance, performers need to demonstrate a perceptible and consistent pulse or beat and function in a way that displays ensemble cohesion;

essentially they have to play “in time” with each other. This is a manifestation of temporality that all ensemble musicians must focus on in order to play as an ensemble, and in a way that allows the music to be felt, heard, and understood within the strictest rhythmic constructs and tempi.

The sense of temporality that manifests itself as “through time” might be demonstrated by the experiences of the students as they travel through a particular rehearsal. Van Manen (2003) reminds us that “Lived time is subjective time as opposed to clock time or objective time” (p. 104). As Kristy shares, she nearly always feels that the wind ensemble class is over well before she is ready for it to end. In this situation she is living “through time” more quickly than she would like. She would prefer for that rehearsal to, if not actually move more slowly, at least last longer since she enjoys that time. Conversely, when a student is unengaged within a rehearsal, the lived time seems to crawl inexorably to the rehearsal’s conclusion.

The next section of our reflections attends to the way that students experience the music “over” a period of time. While this is a more extended experience of music considered through a larger temporal window, it is one that yields interesting insights from the students as to their experiences and interactions with the music and how those change over time.

Claire suggests that her conception of the various runs in *Incantation* and *Dance* changed as her ability to navigate the technical challenges grew, and her playing became more accurate and precise. She alludes to the idea that as one revisits the same material but at a different level of intensity or depth (similar to

how the hermeneutic circle represents a revisiting of an idea or experience but with new insights and growth resulting from each re-visitation), the experience itself changes due to that modulation into a deeper level of engagement.

In the beginning, we were more focused on just knowing that the runs were there and not necessarily actually playing all of the notes because we were still either sight-reading or just getting familiar with the music. So it's almost like we are entering another layer of learning because now we are learning more of the notes and exactly how it should sound and moving toward that bigger goal. First we just had to start and stop the runs together. Now we actually have to play all of the notes and more pieces have to fall into place.

Layers of learning: “Real numbers” and music. Claire continues along this path when she shares an especially fascinating and insightful analogy in her first journal entry (with a diagram to help illustrate the connections). She further elaborates on it in our face-to-face conversation about how she perceives a similarity to how she learns music and how the real numbers system is constructed.

I compare the process of learning the music to what a diagram of the real number system shows about how that can be understood. Let's say you have four concentric circles and in the first one – the one in the center, you start out with natural numbers – 1, 2, 3, etc. – like in music you start out with the right notes and the key signature. Then in the next circle you add in another aspect which for the number system would be whole numbers (add the 0) and for the music maybe you would add rhythms. In the third circle you add in the integers (the whole numbers and their opposites – think -1, -2, etc.) with the corresponding musical ideas maybe being dynamics and articulations. In the outermost circle you would add the real numbers which includes decimals and fractions which could correspond to bigger musical ideas like interpretation and ensemble blend and balance. Since each new circle that you add encompasses what came before, you are kind of moving to another phase but you are not leaving behind anything in the process. Those things that are in the first circle can't be ignored or forgotten once you start getting into the concepts in the outer circles.

Claire identifies that the learning of the real number system and the way we learn music is similar in several ways. Neither happens all at once. They both occur in permeable stages that allow for concepts and skills to become internalized and revisited. She also suggests that it is not a process that is disjointed or that can happen either out of sequence or in isolation from the other stages. Perhaps most profound, however, is her understanding that both processes are cumulative and involve the remembrance and revisitation of prior learnings. There are clear similarities between her understanding of how both of these processes work and the circularity of the hermeneutic process where enhanced revisitation of prior learning or experience is a source of renewed insight and understanding. She explains:

I like this comparison because learning music isn't completely linear or in phases that don't revisit what we've already learned. It corresponds to how you learn music over time. Throughout the whole process we go back and review the basics, making sure the notes and rhythms and articulations are still correct. Each new thing we learn encompasses the previous layers and expands on them while retaining the prior learning – like the numbers in the concentric circles of the real number diagram. And this process has to happen over time. It can't happen all at once. And you can't leave those basic elements behind. They need to still be there.

From the standpoint of planning and implementing a rehearsal, this understanding that Claire presents of not leaving something behind as you move forward is of critical importance. I have heard many an ensemble perform with high levels of emotion and expression, but with very poor tone quality and intonation. In the process of achieving their high level of expression, they have lost their sense of tone quality and pitch center. As Claire might remind them, “You can't leave those basic elements behind.”

Within Claire's unique and insightful analogy, she is acknowledging that your relationship with and understanding of whatever you are studying, be it a piece of music, a work of art, or a mathematical construct, changes over time as you become more deeply aware of the various layers that are manifest in that entity. Green (2003) reminds us that "There is much more to learn than what appears on the surface" (p. 19). The pedagogical and temporal significance of this understanding clearly is manifest in an analytical way for Claire and she understands that these multiple layers lying beneath the surface require further examination and attention, over time.

Listening for plot. Some of the other students share recollections of more visceral feelings about the music and how that feeling changed over time. In my one on one conversation with Rosie she says:

At first I didn't like Incantation and Dance at all. It just didn't seem to make any sense. Now I really like it because we play it better and because we are getting the flavor of it and we are getting the notes right and the rhythms right and the technique, and it's cool to see how it started out. When we first sight-read it nobody could tell what story it was trying to tell, or what it was supposed to sound like but now – everyone is really getting into it and everybody seems to like it including myself.

Kapilow (2008) focuses an entire book on helping to develop the ability to listen to music the way one might watch a movie, for plot. "Listening for the way musical ideas are connected and strung together to create a purely musical 'story'" (p. 7) or listening for plot, is something that "can only unfold if listeners are hearing and understanding each moment not in isolation but as part of a whole" (p. 8). The challenge Rosie alludes to is the difficulty that musicians have in getting the bigger picture, when either first exposed to a piece of music, or

when immersed in the technical and ensemble challenges inherent in a particular selection. In the case of these students as they first began the study of this music, they were bedeviled by both of these complicating issues; they were challenged by the technical demands of the music, and they were unable to group and remember musical events or place them in some sort of larger context for interpretation and reinterpretation. It was only later in the process, as they became more familiar with the music and its construction, that they could “reinterpret the meaning of earlier details in light of later plot developments” (p. 8). Jefferson admits that, while he might have been aware of it earlier, it just hit him during that one rehearsal that the short and incomplete melodic and rhythmic fragments that occurred in the woodwinds in the beginning of the fast section of Incantation and Dance later became fully developed into complete musical ideas. When he had this “aha” moment, his understanding of the “plot” of the music became much more fully crystallized, and “things just made so much more sense.”

Understanding and Appreciation: Inexorably Intertwined Ideas.

Rosie’s comments also suggest that one’s competence with and understanding of a piece of music can have a considerable impact on one’s feelings about that piece of music. For her, when it didn’t make sense, she didn’t enjoy it. Once the pieces started to fall in place, however, and the piece made more sense to her, she began to enjoy playing it more. She also alluded to the idea that the comfort level of the group as a whole is important to her own opinion of the piece of music. It might not be enough for her to be better at playing her part. It might be necessary for everyone to have progressed for the piece to make more

sense for her and to, therefore, be more enjoyable. This attends not only to the idea of temporality (as they work on the piece and it improves over time), but also to relationality as it is manifest in the collective efforts and relative success of the band as a group in a lived relationship with one another and with the given piece of music. Rosie's sense of understanding, and her resulting sense of satisfaction, is inexorably intertwined with the overall ability of the ensemble to help her make sense of the music.

Divergent opinions. Rob, the senior trumpet player, also was not initially enamored with Incantation and Dance and shares that he did not have a very optimistic view of that attitude changing over time.

As far as the music goes, I enjoy Jupiter more than Incantation and Dance. I think Incantation and Dance will be one of those pieces that as you continue to rehearse it for awhile, it will get more and more annoying, and you won't want to play it anymore. Right now, Jupiter is one of the favorite pieces I have played throughout high school. I really enjoy the lyrical melodies that are in the middle section of Jupiter. They give you the opportunity to be very expressive.

I must admit that I found Rob's general antipathy for Incantation and Dance to be a surprise. From quite a temporal remove (thirty years at this writing) I still remember my first experience with that piece. It was in my college wind ensemble, where at every rehearsal the first chair trumpet player displayed what might be described as over-the-top enthusiasm for some of the more dramatic entrances that we were called upon to make after the woodwinds finished their extensive and demanding technical passages. I can still hear him saying, "Get ready, here it comes...Man, that is the coolest thing!" Perhaps it was his anticipation of the impact of the coming entrance that captivated him. Perhaps it

was the fact that we had been resting for numerous measures and it was time for our “grand entrance.” I don’t recall ever asking him what it was in particular that he felt and why that particular entrance was so exciting for him. I can only attest to my own engagement with that musical moment. Although the entrance itself was a simple fanfare of two repeated eighth notes followed by a sustained whole note of the same pitch, I am compelled to agree with his assessment that it was indeed “the coolest thing.”

Jefferson, in sharp contrast to Rob, exhibited a nearly immediate affinity for *Incantation and Dance*, but that might easily be attributed to his place within the percussion section and his compositional mindset. In my experience with that piece over time, and in several capacities, percussionists have always been excited about rehearsing it and proud to have an opportunity to be responsible for more than the supportive material that most often constitutes their contribution in much band literature. My oldest daughter has played this piece twice, once when she was a member of her high school band (under my direction) and in the percussion section of the teacher band that I conduct each spring, and she shares Jefferson’s affinity for the piece. For Jefferson, the temporality of the experience he had with the music only served to enhance his appreciation for it as he came to know the music in different ways over time. The epiphany he experienced when figuring out the relationship of the simple to the complex that was discussed earlier, exhibits another example of temporality, that instantaneous burst of insight, that “aha” moment, similar to the nano-second when the out of tune note suddenly glides into phase and the beats of out-of-tune-ness disappear as the note pulls into

focus. Since these moments exist in time, and often only for that brief instant, they still must be considered within an overall temporal framework. If it were not for the living out of the experience over time, then the moment of clarity alluded to by Jefferson would not have occurred.

The physical difference. Another temporal aspect of the students' experience with the music manifests itself in the physicality of that relationship and how that changes over time. Van Manen (2003) speaks of the lived body as referring "to the phenomenological fact that we are always bodily in the world" (p. 103). Within their own corporeality, or lived body, each student had a unique bodily-kinesthetic experience with their particular part of the music. They each shared that the music was difficult to play from a physical standpoint. Several related to the technical challenges of the extended non-chromatic running lines (Claire, Rosie, David, and Kristy), one related to the physicality of the movement demands with and between the instruments themselves (Jefferson), and one as it related to the articulation demands of tonguing rapid passages (Rob). The juxtaposition of physical demand and the change in the nature of that experience with the music over time was alluded to within two very different anecdotes. One came from Jefferson connected to the near choreography needed for multiple people to navigate multiple instruments and parts in the percussion section, and one by Kristy, drawing on her experience with teaching young students to swim. Jefferson relates:

Sometimes we have to double up on parts since there are not enough of us to cover all of them and then sometimes we get wind players to come in and help. But when we have the wind players help out, it takes extra planning and rehearsal time to get them acclimated to what they need to

do. Physically you have to plan and actually rehearse the movement between instruments, not just the music, and like anything you rehearse, (if you do it right, that is) it gets better over time. So there is a layer of movement here that, if you miss a move by even part of a second, you may actually run into one of the other players as you both try to go through the same spot to get to your respective instrument. Timing is critical. And at first, it can get pretty comical but once you get used to where and when you have to move, it's almost like its choreographed, like a dance.

Jefferson suggests that the players are responsible for their own movement from instrument to instrument. But also, in order to avoid mid selection collisions, they essentially have to choreograph the movements of the full percussion section so the confluence of lived body and lived relationality is one that is free of the cacophony of colliding bodies and inadvertently crashing cymbals; there needs to be fluidity of movement that is free of kinesthetic as well as musical dissonance. The intertwining parts of the percussion machine must go about their business in a harmonious way, and this can only happen with the careful planning and cooperation of all involved.

Strength and stamina. When I ask Kristy during our one-on-one conversation what she felt the band still needs to work on, she shares several areas that she considered still in need of improvement. One was tempo maintenance (keeping the tempo steady and at the requisite speed); one was some technical clarity and precision on the running passages, and one was the fact that she felt the band overall was playing everything too loud. An additional area that she still feels is in need of improvement connects to her swimming experiences and would ring true for any athlete. Kristy likens the physical demand of playing the clarinet, especially as it relates to the extended phrases in Jupiter, as similar to the

physicality of swimming in its relatedness to endurance and conditioning. Green (2003) articulates that musicians are what he calls “small muscle athletes, so the same principles of physical conditioning which apply to athletes also apply to musicians” (p. 206). He goes on to say that “Preparation and physical conditioning have by now become an accepted part of preparation for musicians, especially those like brass and wind players or singers, who have to perform with stamina and depend on good cardiovascular breath control” (p. 206). In her recollection, Kristy speaks specifically of the need to be able to manage extended phrases as a key to successful performance of one of the band’s selections.

There are a lot of phrases that are long and extended, especially in Jupiter, where we need to make it feel like it is moving forward and not just laying there. That is really a strength thing too. It’s not just mental. It’s physical. It’s like conditioning, like for swimming. You have to build stamina over time. You can’t just decide – oh, tomorrow I will do this. You have to build up to it. And if you are too busy or too lazy to practice what you need to practice, over an extended period of time, then you won’t build up that stamina. It’s that simple.

Kristy alludes to the necessity of building strength and stamina “over an extended period of time.” In this one recollection she connects to two of the lived “existentials” that van Manen (2003) suggests we may use to help frame our investigation into lived experience. Both strength and stamina are aspects of how we exist in our physical corporeality, in our lived bodily connection to our experiences. The idea of how corporeality is affected by the temporality, or lived time, of the experience is significant in that they essentially cannot be separated from one another. Stamina and strength, both alluded to by Kristy as attributes essential to the effective performance of particular sections of the music, are such that they can only be developed within a larger temporal framework. They can

only be developed “over time.” Kristy also suggests that much of what a musician does in order to re-create effectively the music that exists on the page is physical as well as mental. She astutely captures the uniquely bipolar nature of the musician’s task and confirms that more than mental and cognitive acuity is necessary for successful musical achievement.

A confluence of temporality. Jefferson and Kristy approach the idea of time from very different perspectives, but both represent an intimate way in which time is inexorably connected to the experience of learning this, or any, music. Each of the student vignettes associated with the many ways that time is a factor in their experience with how the music is felt, emanated from their unique perspective and place within the experience. The temporal impact was felt in both macro and micro incarnations, in ways that were “in time,” “through time,” and “over time.” Some of these experiences were characterized by levels of physicality that also manifest over time, as their bodies as well as their minds grew better able to handle the physical demands of the music “over time,” if the right steps were taken “through time,” that allowed them to be able to play their parts competently and “in time.”

Music as Product, Music as Process

The philosophical questions revolving around what makes music what it is and how best to structure music education experiences for students, are questions that are not often taken up by practitioners deeply involved in the day to day performance preparation that characterizes most public school band programs. Many of the repertoire decisions made by band directors are made more with an

eye and ear toward expediency and how best to get the students prepared for the next performance, in what may seem to be an endless parade of performance obligations. Thus, many times they are focused less on the purpose of structuring the actual musical development and experience of the students. This is not meant to imply that care is not given by many teachers with regard to their repertoire selection. There are many who care deeply and anguish over those repertoire decisions because they do indeed understand the instructional importance of those choices. The intent instead is to initiate the following line of questions: What is the critical piece of the pedagogical puzzle? What tells the pedagogical tale? Is it the performance *product* itself? Is that end result the true purpose behind what we do as ensemble directors? Or, is the *process* of learning the music the most salient and important aspect of the experience? The differences in perspective on what constitutes the essence of music is explored by Reimer (2003, p. 48) when he compares the contrasting ideas of Boulanger and Elliott as they espouse their views that product or practice, respectively, are music's central characteristic. Certainly you cannot have practice without the product. The product is what the practice brings to life. Singers and instrumentalists have to sing or play something. Similarly, one can argue that the product, which from another perspective may be perceived as the performance, is more important than the process, which from another perspective may be perceived as the rehearsal process that leads up to the performance. One cannot occur without the other, but which one constitutes the essence of the experience from the student perspective? Is it the culminating product, or the performance, or both? Or, is it the many hours

of rehearsal and the musical moments that may have happened in those rehearsals that may or not find their way onto the stage at that culminating performance?

These questions of product and process are ones that have been debated and written about extensively by philosophers of music education, but which began to emerge in unique ways through the accounts of the students at work over their period of preparation for their adjudicated performance. The next facet of the exploration into this experience is a journey into the rehearsal process itself, the learning laboratory where much of the actual work of preparing the music for performance takes place. It is in this laboratory and through the process of preparing the music for performance where many sources of illumination and insight are found. In many ways it may not be relevant to even search for an answer to the question of what is more important, the process or the product. True relevance may actually be found by searching for a more fully developed pedagogical competence arrived at through a deeper understanding of both of these aspects of the student experience, the process *and* the product. This is the direction I take in Chapter Six as I explore the rehearsal process as the learning laboratory.

CHAPTER SIX:

THE REHEARSAL: A LEARNING LABORATORY

In Chapter Three, the circularity of the rehearsal process was explored, noting the parallels to the hermeneutic process itself, a cyclical back and forth movement that builds upon itself in a way that enriches each subsequent re-visitation of the material in question. This can be seen, felt and heard in the overarching rehearsal cycle that may span weeks of class periods leading up to a performance of some type. It may also be experienced within an individual rehearsal, the circularity thus exhibiting itself in either a macro (rehearsal cycle) or micro (individual rehearsal) manner depending on the scope of the cycle. In this chapter, the focus of inquiry and explication is on both the macro and micro manifestations of this circular process, the individual rehearsal and the larger rehearsal cycle, entering the process through the words of the students themselves.

The content of my observations and conversations with the students and their director as they move through both types of cycles, the macro and the micro, allows me to venture into the rehearsal process through the eyes and ears and minds of these participants as they live the experience. As is found in the nature of the hermeneutic process itself, each rehearsal builds on the one before, and each re-visitation with the students comes with new insights and perspectives, in ways that enrich rather than simply restate what is heard or observed. True to Heidegger's view that understanding develops through a circling back and forth between presumption and surprise, "a remarkable relatedness backward and

forward” (1926/1962, p. 28), the rehearsal itself is a fundamental locus of hermeneutic activity. The rehearsal structure itself, based on the pedagogical thoughtfulness of their director, allows the students to experience the music in ways that provide opportunities to let them learn needed skills and techniques, while also gaining broader musical understandings along the way. Whether from within the full rehearsal, from within a sectional or component rehearsal, or in their own personal practice efforts, the manner in which the students engage with the music nearly always exhibits this “remarkable relatedness backward and forward,” and acts as a doorway into the experience as lived by the students.

The Lived Plan: Pointing the Way

Based on the accounts shared by the students themselves, the director, and on the content of my rehearsal observations, it was clear that throughout the macro rehearsal cycle there was a carefully constructed micro plan in place for achieving a particular level of performance success with the repertoire these students and their director were studying. While I did not see the actual weekly plans constructed by the director until several weeks into the rehearsal cycle, there was clear evidence of a master plan in place, and what made this even more interesting was that students seemed aware of the plan and actually were paying attention to it. They knew what to expect and seemed to come to rehearsals ready to work on what was scheduled for that day. As fundamental and straightforward as this concept might sound, it is not something that many high school band directors actually practice when it comes to the macro planning of rehearsals. Within the scope of Mr. Britt’s first journal entry he alludes to how he would be

using this approach this year (one he had used with his younger groups for some time but typically had not used with the more advanced ensembles) since he was doing two grade VI selections. The extra level of difficulty in the repertoire played a part in this decision to change his long range rehearsal strategy.

An Organic Evolution

In the past I have felt comfortable enough and have been pretty successful rehearsing pieces “on the fly” – not really winging it but knowing what needed to get done and then simply going about achieving those goals. I rarely formalized those plans with the upper ensembles beyond a broad sketch of concepts I wanted to hit. Perhaps this organic method allows the students to own the music a bit more than if I simply had them execute some master plan I put in place. I don’t want to take the organic feel out of the process so if the plan was to focus on improving rhythmic integrity and developing an awareness of part importance, but the band is forcing me to focus on tuning and intonation, then I will modify the plan accordingly. You have to go in with a plan, but you also have to have the freedom to adjust when what you hear deviates from what you expected to hear.

Van Manen (1991, p. 103) describes lesson planning as “an exercise in systematic anticipatory thinking.” He suggests that when planning a lesson we “imagine how we will traverse the landscape of learning” (p. 103). Mr. Britt describes how he has approached his rehearsal planning task in the past with this particular ensemble as not overly prescriptive, but still knowing what needs to get done and then going about the task of making that happen. While he does systematically anticipate what might occur in his rehearsals, his traversing of the “landscape of learning” is accomplished more with a metaphorical compass than with turn by turn directions. The destination is still clear in his mind, but the path has flexibility as long as the objective is achieved. Van Manen goes on to say that, while it is “impractical not to plan...we need to see as well that curious

consequences flow from planning when this planned instructional program becomes too fixed, too inflexible, too prescriptive for life with children” (p. 103). Mr. Britt expresses a level of solidarity with this view when he states that in rehearsal one has to have the freedom to adjust the plan “when what you hear deviates from what you expect to hear.”

Mr. Britt, however, senses a need for a slight adjustment to his typically “organic” approach this year, mainly due to the higher level of repertoire difficulty on this program. While he doesn’t want to lose the organic nature of how he has worked with this ensemble in the past, he feels that perhaps a bit more structure is warranted.

This year, I am borrowing the weekly planning approach that I use with the two younger bands and applying it to the wind ensemble. It’s probably because this is the first year since, oddly enough, my first year here, that we are playing two grade six pieces with the kids, and that is why I am changing my plan somewhat. Last Tuesday I handed out this week’s rehearsal schedule and will continue to do so throughout the remainder of the adjudication preparation process. I am hoping that this will insure that we will not miss any important detail and the students can also lead themselves in more focused practice sessions at home since they know what they are going to be doing at the next rehearsal.

Several students share what this approach means for letting them in on the rehearsal plan and communicating that rehearsal plan to them in advance.

We always know what’s coming in rehearsal. Like, for the adjudication schedule he hands out what we are doing for the next week so we can practice before class or at least know what we are doing that day. You are never surprised by what we are going to do in class and lots of people really do go home and practice so when we all come to class we don’t need to learn the part. We know it already. It’s more about perfecting it and putting it all together. (Rosie)

Battisti (2007) affirms that “Rehearsals should be reserved for doing things that players cannot do themselves. Rehearsals should not be used to drill or

learn parts. Players can practice their music at home” (p. 94). Rosie and many of her peers in the wind ensemble seem to understand that, if they have really gone home and practiced, when they come to class they “don’t need to learn the part.” They know it already. Then they can attend to “doing things that players can’t do by themselves.”

Kristy, who earlier notes how many of the students in the band are also taking upper level academic classes and consequently have a lot of academic pressures and stress, states that Mr. Britt’s practice of sharing the plan for the week in advance really helps them balance their tasks and practice more efficiently. She feels that it also shows the students that he respects them enough to acknowledge the demands that are being placed on them by other teachers and to help them manage their load by being focused in his expectations. So what might this structure be that is not a structure?

Structure in Flux

I really appreciate the fact that we know what is coming in class. A lot of us really thrive on this type of structure because we have so much to balance between all of the upper level classes we are taking. And some of us are in the school musical as well. We like to know what is coming and it helps to have this extra focus. We are all so busy and this helps us not waste our time practicing things that aren’t going to be rehearsed just yet. That doesn’t mean we shouldn’t practice some of the tougher passages since they need work over time to get fixed. But this approach still helps you plan your own practice, what little time we have for it. (Kristy)

This approach, a clearly communicated yet malleable structure, seems to have a serendipitously dual positive impact on both the rehearsal process (causing students to come to class better prepared) and on the students themselves (allowing them to be more efficient and focused in their practice time and

consequently less stressed than they might be otherwise). Kristy points out that she and many of her peers seem actually to thrive on this type of structure because it helps them better organize and prioritize their very challenging schedules and conflicting demands. In a way, they are better able to re-structure the dissonance and cacophony of their own very hectic lives into a more harmonious, although still quite active, polyphony of intertwined responsibilities and experiences.

The plan in flux: Adding flexibility as we go. As the students and their director move closer to the adjudicated performance, Mr. Britt modifies his approach somewhat because of their different place in the preparation continuum. While still having a plan, he alludes to the fact that he has to incorporate a bit more flexibility with his rehearsal expectations as they move forward:

At this point, I am not really keen on penciling in too much specificity into the plan. I don't want to force us into doing something when in reality we really have to do this other thing instead. Let's say, tomorrow we have to hit this particular section because it was a mess today. You can't plan that a week in advance. And at this point in the preparation, the students really don't have to woodshed any parts. They are basically there. It is the ensemble issues that are the most relevant and in need of attention. And that is nearly always a full rehearsal issue, not an individual practice issue.

This flexibility in planning accommodates the shift from individual to ensemble rehearsal needs that characterizes the movement along the continuum of the rehearsal cycle. As they near the performance, ensemble issues become more pressing and require an increasing amount of full rehearsal time.

Plans in every key. Another aspect of how this approach impacts the student experience relates to the efficiency with which the rehearsals themselves are carried out. This is in many important ways also directly tied to Mr. Britt's planning approach alluded to earlier, a plan that engages the students in a wide

array of learning experiences in a variety of modalities, including visual, auditory and kinesthetic. Lisk (2010) asserts that learning actually decreases when “students become bored from the monotony of a rehearsal that follows identical or habitual patterns each day” (p. 14). Within the rehearsals I observed, there was indeed structure, but within that structure there was a high degree of variety provided through explorations in different key centers within the warm-up exercises and through varied student performance expectations including singing, playing and clapping. Lisk (2010) cites that one of the most widely occurring sources of rehearsal monotony is the incessant over emphasis on using the B flat concert scale to the exclusion of all others. In one particular warm-up period I witnessed, the band was led through all twelve major scales within the scope of that warm-up. There was no opportunity in that rehearsal for either boredom or monotony. The students were provided the opportunity to explore the entire color spectrum as represented by the different major scales, instead of constantly swimming in a sea of gray.

Several students share their thoughts about how focused, varied and forward moving rehearsals typically are with this group, and how on those rare occasions when they are not, it is a very frustrating experience for everyone. Based on the recollections of the students, those frustrating rehearsals are rare, indeed. I first examine an example characteristic of the vast majority of the rehearsals, where the plan and pace provide the students with a focused and productive learning environment.

Plans to reveal. Rosie points out a rehearsal where Mr. Britt projects onto a screen a page of the score (and also distributes to each student copies of two pages of the score) for Incantation and Dance as a way of showing them how all of the parts fit together. In her words:

When he gave us a copy of the score and projected the one page on the wall so we could see how the parts match up and fit together, it was just really helpful because some people have upbeats and come in on the “and” of a beat while others have downbeats and play ‘on’ the beat. We had thought it was super complicated and probably would have kept thinking that if he hadn’t showed us how it fit together and what all the different rhythms sounded like. Our rhythmic accuracy and ensemble precision improved almost immediately. We could have worked on that for days and not gotten any better, but once we saw and understood how it worked, it got better really fast.

By “seeing” the music in a different way, from another window in what O’Donohue describes as a “tower of windows” (1997), Rosie and her peers have experienced real growth and a new vista of presence. By moving to a different window through which they look at the music, in this case a window that allows for a much more panoramic view and the possibility for deeper understanding, their frame of vision has changed from that of the student to that which is more like that of their director. They are now able to see and comprehend the music in an entirely new and fresh way that opens up a world of possible understandings.

Kristy shares a similar experience of this particular rehearsal technique and adds a further layer of insight about why she feels it was so effective and efficient.

I think the main reason he gave us copies of the score was so we could find what is the main rhythm throughout the piece. It’s just a simple one-and-two-and-three-e-and-a-four-and but it’s split up between everybody in the band and we had to figure out how it’s making it more complex because it’s not just one section playing this simple rhythm. It showed us

how you can take something relatively simple and make it really complex and interesting. But until he got us to understand that, we were kind of stepping all over each other with the rhythms.

Claire's observation was decidedly less extensive, but nonetheless very compelling, in describing how she experienced that moment. "It was kind of a revelation. Like, oh wow – *that's* what's going on!" Although she had rehearsed the music in class for several weeks, only through this particularly revelatory experience was she able actually to understand how all of the various parts fit together. The polyphonic structure of the music was, until that time, a mystery that had yet to be revealed to the students.

Demystifying Rhythmic and Tonal Construction

In a revisitation of Mr. Britt's plan for that rehearsal, it was clear that this type of insight, the demystification of the rhythmic and tonal construction of *Incantation and Dance*, was the intended goal. In a way, his plan allowed the students to be able to see the big picture (the forest) better and this helped the students to put their part (the trees) in the proper place. They were given a new perspective on the context of their contribution to the big picture. Returning to our tower metaphor, it was as if instead of viewing a small copse of trees through an arrow slit, the students were moved to a wide and expansive terrace that allowed the entire forest to be gazed upon and appreciated.

What do we see? Mr. Britt cited in his objective that "students will understand and be able to perform the counterpoint in *Incantation and Dance*."

His closure includes this summation:

Hopefully today you have gained some insight into not only good performance practice for a piece like this, but also perhaps some insight

into compositional practice. Even though this piece sounds quite complicated, when broken down it is really pretty simple.

Copland (1939) suggests that “most people want to know how things are made,” yet “the work of the composer is often “shrouded in impenetrable darkness” (p. 17). Mr. Britt seems to be making an effort here to ameliorate within his students what Copland suggests is characteristic of most listeners in that they feel “completely at sea when it comes to understanding how a piece of music is made” (p. 17). Mr. Britt is opening the door into understanding an aspect of the mystery that surrounds the compositional process, and in doing so, is improving his students’ ability to play with better understanding. He is taking a step toward “demystifying” the compositional process for his students, and in doing so, makes it possible for students like Claire to have the revelatory experience that prompted her succinct characterization: “*That’s* what’s going on!”

From Claire’s observation and recollection, it is evident that students were able to see things differently because of this particular lesson plan. They saw things that they would not have been able to see because their personal view of the musical structure was only what they could see through the window of their individual part. O’Donohue (1997) reminds us that “So much depends on the frame of vision – the window through which you look” (p. 127). By displaying the full score for all of the students to see, Mr. Britt opened another window into the music for the students. Because they could now see all that was on the page, they experienced a more panoramic view, a view through a window which they had not heretofore been afforded the opportunity to gaze.

What do we hear and feel? The facet of the plan that has been elucidated above focuses on the students' visual experience with the music. Levin (1989) speaks of the enduring domination in many cultures of *oculocentrism* that is predicated on the theoretical power that vision has assumed based on "the capacity of our gaze to *turn away* from the entities it has seen and yet retain an image of them in isolation, abstracted from their situational assignments" (p. 30). While this manner of being *present-at-hand* is a powerful tool that in some ways transcends the temporal limitations of sound, Levin suggests that there is a "very different wisdom deeply inherent in listening" (p. 31). An equally important facet of the learning experience that was included in this particular lesson plan is mentioned by Rosie and moves beyond the visual to focus on the aural and kinesthetic aspects of the learning.

As part of that rehearsal where we saw the full score, he had different groups of instruments clap other instruments' parts so we could get a feel for what other parts are playing and what we should hear while we are playing our parts. After that we clapped the rhythms together – with each section doing their own part and then we actually played it together and it was much improved from what we had played earlier. You could really hear the improvement.

By moving beyond the visual realm and into aural and kinesthetic modes of experience, the students are moved away from an essentially one-dimensional engagement with the music into a significantly more physical and multifaceted relationship. By moving the sonic and rhythmic aspects of the music into a more favored position we allow the students to hear and feel the music, engaging with it in ways not possible from a purely *oculocentric* perspective.

The students heard and felt things in a different way than they had before this rehearsal experience. Within the lesson plan, Mr. Britt had indicated that the identification of different timbres in the texture would help the students isolate the various lines and make it easier to hear them. Conversely, when doing the clapping that Rosie alluded to earlier (and which was the next step in Mr. Britt's instructional plan for the rehearsal), Claire points out that the change in timbre from playing their instruments to clapping the parts gave them a different understanding of how things fit together.

When everybody was clapping the rhythms, it was like everything was the same sound medium. It wasn't different instruments anymore. It was all the same instrument so it was actually easier to hear the various parts line up – or not. It kind of takes away a layer of aural complexity. It levels the volumes and timbres. It certainly sounded and felt different than when we play our instruments. And that seemed to be a good thing – it really opened our ears to different ways of hearing things.

Within the scope of this particular rehearsal plan were elements that attend to each of van Manen's four existentials. Since the objective for the class was focused on the understanding and correct performance of rhythms that exist in a decidedly temporal way, they touched on the idea of lived time. The exploration into the interplay of the various voices in the counterpoint of Incantation and Dance (as seen in the score and then made audible by the students) is a sort of lived relationality. This initially appears in the written music itself, then in the music as heard by the students, and finally in the music as performed. The challenges associated with the spatiality of the music is another aspect of the phenomenon that the lesson plan was designed to ameliorate so that the students could understand better and execute more adroitly the back and forth nature of the

counterpoint, similarly to the back and forth nature of the hermeneutic process itself. And finally, the lived bodily aspect of the experience is addressed by engaging in different modalities of sound production that provide contrasting kinesthetic understandings of the corporeality of the music making process. By singing and clapping, the students are creating sounds with no instrumental intermediary; they are essentially becoming the instrument themselves, and by doing so, they are more physically in touch with the music than they would be if they were separated by the instrument as they usually are when playing.

The Spectrum of Pacing Possibilities

Another generally temporal manifestation of the rehearsal process has to do with the pace of instruction. Some rehearsals are briskly paced and efficient, while others seem to crawl and go nowhere very slowly. Many others fall somewhere in between these two extremes. It is also useful to examine the overarching rehearsal cycle, where the content and flow of instruction from rehearsal to rehearsal also is profoundly impacted by issues of pacing.

Cycles of Possibility

The individual rehearsal can be construed as being a micro incarnation, while the rehearsal cycle would be the macro manifestation. Each of these cycles, the individual rehearsal and the more extended rehearsal cycle, has an impact on student learning. These cycles were the subject of student conversation and reflection as they related to their experiences preparing their music for the adjudicated performance. Within both the micro and macro embodiments of the rehearsal process, the idea of variety in both instructional strategies and pacing

seemed to have great relevance to instructional efficiency and was the subject of much student interest and reflection. Danielson (2007) reminds us that “A well designed lesson has a definite structure, and students know where they are in that structure...and pacing is related to structure” (p. 84).

Pacing for engagement. One of the rehearsals that I observed (about two weeks prior to the adjudication) was characterized by a swift pace, very little down time, brisk and seamless transitions from one task to another, and an almost bewildering array of different mental and physical challenges being placed in front of the students. There was no opportunity for the students to become complacent or off-task. The need for students to stay focused was critical but reinforced, not by pounding or pressure, but by the fast pace itself, the variety of tasks, and an unspoken but clearly understood and evident mutual expectation of exceedingly high levels of engagement and on-task behavior.

Changing modalities. Most of this day’s warm-up revolved around a series of mini scales where the students were asked to move through the circle of fifths in minor keys alternately playing or singing, all the time continuing to be accurate with pitches and articulations, regardless of their particular performance modality. Assigned roles of singing and playing were changed nearly every cycle – first the woodwinds played and the brass sang, then the roles were reversed. Then everybody was asked to sing on a neutral syllable. This was followed by everyone having to sing it on solfege syllables. As I observed and listened to the students engage in this fast-paced and varied warm-up, I wondered how they kept up with what seemed to me to be a nearly relentless pace. Were some of them

getting lost? Were they really engaging deeply with the task, or were they simply going through the motions? As I tried to put myself in their place, I found it difficult to imagine that they were *not* totally engaged because the visual and aural evidence I saw and heard (fingers moving over keys in appropriate and mostly confident ways – vocal technique and key changes handled deftly, if not perfectly) would have been highly improbable otherwise.

If you listen, you will be late. On the next iterations of this particular exercise Mr. Britt had everyone play only the downbeats and then subsequently play only the upbeats. The next time through, the brass played the downbeats and the woodwinds played the upbeats. Then they switched roles. Mr. Britt then shared that if they hoped to play it in time (which they had not done on the first try of the brass doing the downbeats and the woodwinds doing the upbeats) they should “not listen – just play it where it goes. If you listen you will be late.” His suggestion hints at the malleability of the temporal context within which the students play. Because of the pace of the tempo, the relatedness of the notes to each other within the particular passage, and the acoustical truths of response time on certain instruments, his suggestion to “not listen – just play where it goes” is, while seemingly paradoxical, probably on target in its instructional intent and efficacy. If the students wait to hear the prior note before they play their own, they will indeed “be late.”

Thinking hearing. This and similarly insightful commentary is regularly shared by their director, or (as often if not more so) pulled from the students themselves through frequent direction to critique the work of their peers in ways

that occasionally brings mild laughter, but always invokes thoughtful listening and engagement throughout the warm-up and rehearsal process. Levin (1989) suggests that “Our listening can develop our capacity to think: think in a way that is not just more ‘reasoning’ and ‘reflecting’” (p. 17). He continues by advocating that we practice a “thinking hearing” in the manner that Heidegger (1968) espouses, which is a thinking that listens and a listening which is thoughtful. While Levin (1989) acknowledges that the practice is an arduous one, he believes that if it is engaged in a step by step manner, mindful in particular of “our bodily felt sense of the listening dialectic – significant modulations will happen” (p. 17). The regular engagement and thoughtful listening that is expected of these students seems intent on catalyzing modulations in the way they experience and understand their own and their peers’ contributions to the music learning process.

Fixing their own mistakes. Related to this self and peer analysis that is a regularly observable part of the rehearsal process, is the understanding that students are given the opportunity to fix their own mistakes. Frequently these mistakes are pointed out by their director, but as often as not, the mistakes simply seem to disappear on the next iteration through a particular section because the students know they are wrong and they spontaneously fix the issue. Some of this error evaporation may also be due to the coaching and spontaneous problem solving advice that Mr. Britt provides throughout the fast paced approach to warm-up and rehearsal. This advice is more often than not of the *suggestion* as opposed to *direction* persuasion, providing the students with more latitude to make their own corrections. The single most salient point remains, however, that

the students are allowed to learn for themselves. As Heidegger (1968) suggests, “What teaching calls for is this: to let learn” (p. 15). By “locating listening at the center of teaching” (Schultz, 2003, p. 7), by letting the students learn and “by engaging students in posing questions and critique” (p. 2) do we not only honor their individuality and their ability to contribute to their own learning, but might we better prepare independent and self-actualizing thinking listeners?

More Than Just Playing

My observations of several rehearsals allowed me to see and hear that the regular usage of varied warm-up techniques and differing sound production modalities (playing, singing, clapping), both in the warm-up period and throughout the rehearsal. This practice allowed the students to experience their music learning in a much more kinesthetically diverse manner than would those who only play their instruments during rehearsal. Levin (1985) asserts that a shift to a more bodily felt paradigm is needed in our metaphysical conception of thinking. “We must take our thinking ‘down’ into the body. We must learn to think *through* the body. We must learn to think *with* the body” (p. 61). In these rehearsals, the students are indeed involved with music learning *through* and *with* the body. While the act of playing an instrument is clearly a physical one, it is often the *only* physical act that occurs in a rehearsal. In this ensemble, the palette of physicality has been expanded to include singing and clapping, both of which propel the students into another facet of kinesthetic engagement.

This enhanced physical engagement is a reality that has not been lost on these student musicians. (It should be noted that I did not employ this multi-modal

type of approach very much when a band director myself. In retrospect, I believe that my efficiency and effectiveness would have been enhanced had I done more.) These students were not only aware that this is not typical (most of these students have played for a variety of directors in different ensembles during their years in middle and high school), but they shared accounts of how they felt that it enhanced their ability to hear, play or understand their music in a different and more complete way than playing their instrument alone would have provided for them.

Like we are all playing the same instrument. Claire shares that when Mr. Britt was showing the full score as a way to let everyone in on the big rhythmic picture in *Incantation and Dance*, he had the students clap the component rhythms to isolate them so each section could hear them without the various tone colors of the instruments getting in the way:

When everybody is singing or clapping it's almost like we are all playing the same instrument. So we are able to hear all of the rhythms line up or the parts fit together. There was a rehearsal recently where he did that with just the trumpet section. The flutes don't play there so it was easy for me to hear. They were having trouble getting their chordal passage in the beginning of *Incantation and Dance* to be in time so Mr. Britt had everybody else play their regular part but the trumpets had to clap their entrances. This made it easier to isolate where they were supposed to come in and to hear where it was working and where it wasn't.

I recall a technique used by a leading drum and bugle corps from my early days as a teacher that was similar to this technique of clapping to isolate the downbeats that the trumpets were not executing well. The technique is called "bopping," and it is accomplished by only sounding the attacks of each different pitch – no notes are sustained. Mr. Britt essentially did the same thing here with

the trumpets. Since they were clapping, no sound was sustained. All that was heard was the attack or the beginning of the sound. It was remarkable how this focused the players' attention on clarity and precision of attack by removing an obscuring dimension of the sound (the sustained tone itself) and allowing them to concentrate on the one aspect that was lacking in clarity, the attack.

Becoming the instrument. Claire takes that notion a step further when she mentions in her reflection how singing changed how she experienced a particular musical moment differently than if she had been playing it on her instrument. During one particular rehearsal Mr. Britt commented after the band sang a section that “you actually did it better singing than you did playing.” When asked if she felt this was true she responds:

I definitely think that was true. Probably because, even though playing an instrument is a mental task, it's really physical too and I think that when we sing it kind of removes a technical obstacle – the mechanics of playing are missing. So when you sing, that particular complexity disappears. The task of actually playing the instrument doesn't get in the way.

Claire's thoughts bring to mind the technical challenges of playing on what Heidegger (1926/1962, p. 97) reminds us is a piece of equipment that forms a part of an equipmental totality inexorably connected to the living out of this particular phenomenon. Playing in a band is an equipmental totality that is inclusive of the various instruments in that band. If the technical aspects of playing the flute are removed completely, then we no longer are talking about playing in a band; we are talking about singing in a choir. In many respects, the technical and equipmental facets of the instruments themselves are what define the experience of playing in the band. Granted, this is a bit of an artificial

dichotomy to make using singing and playing as mutually exclusive polar ends of a continuum of music making, but the dualistic nature of playing and singing in the band setting is one that this particular director seems to have reconciled in a way that allows the singing to contribute to the enhancement of the playing. It should be noted that Mr. Britt is very comfortable with singing, having sung in church and community choirs for most of his life. That comfort level is manifest in the very natural approach he takes to the use of singing as an instructional tool within the scope of his rehearsals. And that comfort level carries through to the students as evidenced by the natural and unselfconscious way that they respond to his direction to sing during class.

David also feels that singing changes the way he experienced the music. His thoughts parallel those of Claire in how they relate to the removal of the physical demand of playing the instrument. However, he explores the contrasts between playing and singing from a slightly different perspective, including how it feels. When the band sings he feels like the balance is changed:

I can spend more time listening – I mean – it isn't as demanding for me to sing my part as it is to play it. It kind of frees up thought capacity to listen to everybody else. I think we feel it differently too because our body is producing the sound without any mechanical assistance. You open your mouth and the sound comes right out of you, not the instrument. You kind of become the instrument.

Abram (1996) speaks of “the body’s native capacity to resonate,” and that humans are inclined to “learn our native language not mentally but bodily” (p. 75). David seems to suggest that through the more bodily connected nature of singing, since the sound “comes right out of you, not the instrument,” that he becomes a more primordial producer of sound since there is no intervention of the

equipment of the instrument. He essentially becomes the instrument. Green (2003) affirms this unique and powerful bodily connection that exists with singers because “the singer’s instrument is within the singer’s own body...and the sound of their voice is transmitted to them through their facial bones” (p. 220), so there is no intermediary; they are indeed the instrument themselves.

I ask David how he feels about the relationship between singing in band and the fact that from my perspective it seems like the band sings pretty well – for a band, that is. His response actually raises more questions than it answers; “I’m not sure if it helps develop our musical ear or if it’s proof that our ear is more developed.” David’s recollections connect us to the idea of lived body, as they address their corporeality as they “become the instrument” when they sing. This is indeed a fundamental difference between the lived experience of playing in a band (most bands yes, but not as much in this one as we are seeing) and that of singing in a chorus. During one of our conversations, Mr. Britt mentions that he thinks it is good for bands to sing for several reasons, first among them because it requires you to produce and experience the sound from within and not just through the equipment of the instrument. He shares:

Like with vocal warm-ups in a choir – as the director, all you have to do is play something on the piano and then have them sing (or play) it back. We should do more call and response and echo style warm-ups like they do in choirs in band class, a little every day. It is a great way to develop the ear. Because if band kids rely solely on their instruments to get the notes, and not their ears, then they will never really learn to hear like they should.

Abram (1996) asserts that we “appropriate new words and phrases first through their expressive tonality and texture, through the way they feel in the

mouth or roll off the tongue” (p. 75). This assumes both a listening *to* and subsequent production *of* those words and phrases. The call and response and echo style warm-ups that Mr. Britt suggests are effective tools for developing the listening capacities of his students and are outgrowths of this same understanding. Krause (2012) takes this a step further by suggesting that the very development of music is tied inextricably to the sounds of nature. He describes “the tuning of the great animal orchestra, a revelation of the acoustic harmony of the wild” as the likely “origins of every piece of music we enjoy and word we speak” since at “one time there was no other acoustic inspiration” (p. 10). Mr. Britt seems to be making his own contributions to his students’ aural development through the thoughtful inclusion of call and response and echo style warm-ups as a way of introducing an additional layer of “acoustic inspiration” in his rehearsals.

Chunking – Whole to Part to Whole

One of the six research activities that van Manen (1997) describes as elemental to hermeneutic phenomenological research is “balancing the research context by considering parts and whole” (p. 31). An effective rehearsal strategy in many ways mimics this back and forth process where small discrete sections of the music are addressed in great detail, and then they are folded back into the larger context of the music. In many ways the cyclical nature of the over arching rehearsal cycle itself is also an example of this back and forth, whole to part to whole pattern of movement. The temporal limitations of an individual rehearsal require an approach where parts of the music are identified for deeper analysis and scrutiny. This is then typically followed by the reintegration of that

component into the full musical material to provide the students with a sense of context and flow. Unfortunately, not all directors approach their rehearsals in this way, and the results are often unsatisfying. Some directors simply start at the beginning of a piece and run it from top to bottom, never attending to the detail or specificity that makes the music work at a deeper level. It has been said that “the devil is in the details” and from a rehearsal standpoint, that is often quite accurate.

The approach that Mr. Britt uses in his rehearsals is something that the students called “chunking,” where certain sections of the music would be worked on in great detail during a particular rehearsal. This “chunk” of music would in essence constitute the instructional material for the day. These “chunks” would find their way onto the weekly plan that their director would distribute to each of them the week prior to its implementation so the students could better prepare for the coming week of rehearsals. Rosie talks about the fact that “We tend to ‘chunk’ things. We focus on little chunks of the music each rehearsal. It always seems to come together better for us that way.” Based on what I saw and heard during my rehearsal observations, the process did indeed seem to work very well. Nearly every rehearsal I visited was characterized by significant perceptible improvement of whatever section was the focus. Hardly anything remained at the performance level where it started at the beginning of the class. I could actually hear it improve over the course of the rehearsal – there was audible evidence of student growth. The “significant modulations” that Levin (1989, p. 17) suggests can occur when we practice what Heidegger (1968) describes as a thinking which listens

and a listening which is thoughtful, were audible to me within the rehearsals I witnessed. When I shared that observation with Rosie she responds:

I think one reason we get better so quickly is that we know what to practice and what he is going to work on and most people figure out the notes in advance so in the rehearsal we can get the parts to line up pretty fast. If everybody hadn't worked out the parts themselves, then we would be wasting time in rehearsal waiting for somebody to do something they should have already done. Because we know what "chunk" is going to be the focus, we are better prepared to play it right.

This band rehearses every day for a period of 45 minutes, a relatively brief amount of time for any music rehearsal, considering set up and clean up demands for an activity involving equipment and instruments. Reflecting on what Rosie had just shared about "chunking," I wondered aloud if the proclivity of Mr. Britt to use this approach had anything to do with that relatively short rehearsal period. Rosie agrees with my assumption and follows up with how that approach changes a bit as they get closer to the adjudication:

That is probably one of the reasons he does it. But it really does seem to work. The only time we have made a full run through of the music was when we sight-read it the first time. We haven't done another run through since we started rehearsing it in detail. We just do certain parts of the music. But when we get closer to adjudication, at least that is what we did last year, we try to run it a couple of times so we get a better sense of how it all needs to flow from beginning to end.

After hearing and digesting this particular recollection from Rosie, and after seeing and hearing the various rehearsals I had visited, I paused to reflect on how this approach might be different if their band rehearsals were for a longer period of time but every other day as they are in some of the high schools in the area. I wondered if the whole-to-part-to-whole aspect of rehearsing might be easier to accomplish within this longer period of time. Doing a full or partial run-

through of any of the pieces to achieve the “whole” would seem to be relatively easy within that longer period. Mr. Britt, however, works in a different temporal reality. He has only 45 minutes in which to engage his musicians and, therefore, has less opportunity for full or partial run-throughs of the musical material.

Rosie’s accounting of the fact that they do very few run-throughs initially caused me to think I would be filled with angst if I was the one not having the time for developing the sense of flow and transition with my band that had become second nature when I taught in 80 minute periods. Might it be less important with certain pieces, those where transitions were less problematic and more natural? Would it have less impact on certain groups? Has Mr. Britt found a way to function at peak efficiency for himself and for his students by using his weekly planning approach and the “chunking” technique that Rosie feels is so very effective for them, especially as it fits within their temporal reality of the 45 minute rehearsal? Perhaps, but difficult choices remain.

Choices and Consequences

Choices have to be made when engaging in any type of instructional endeavor. These choices might include how much material to cover, how to approach the material, how to pace the instruction or how to assess if the students understood and internalized what was taught. All of these choices associated with the instructional process come with consequences. If we move too fast, we may lose many students. If we try to cover more material than is reasonable for a certain group of students or for the time allotted for instruction, we may frustrate both ourselves and our students. If we don’t ask enough of our students, we may

encounter boredom and off task behavior. If we keep gnawing at the same vexing problem with the same ineffective approach, we may find ourselves caught in a vicious circle of wasted time and mindless repetition. Within several of our conversations, the students and their director shared accounts of choices that were made (or considered) and the consequences that resulted (or might have).

The law of diminishing returns. Early in the rehearsal cycle, Mr. Britt wrote out one of the main extended melodic lines from Jupiter for all of the voices in the band to play in unison, as a means of making the teaching of phrasing in that section more efficient, since everyone would be doing it simultaneously. Several of the students commented about how it was initially very effective, but they felt that after a few repetitions it lost its value.

When we played that excerpt from Jupiter all together, in the beginning I thought it was actually pretty helpful because we all had the same articulations and phrasing and all. But then it became just like beating us over the head with a stick. People stopped taking it seriously. It lost its novelty and they just went through the motions. (Rob)

Jefferson echoes that sentiment and compares it to something he had recently heard in his economics class:

Like in economics – the law of diminishing returns. You play it a couple times and you think – that’s cool, I get it. But after the third or fourth time most people have checked out – mentally at least. It just won’t get better for them. Maybe some people need to hear it again, but most are tired of hearing it because they got it the first time.

While initially valued by both Rob and Jefferson, this particular approach quickly moved from an area of engagement and appreciation to one of boredom and tedium. Van Manen (1991) suggests that “The experience of boredom or ennui spells dullness, tedium, sleepiness, lethargy, passivity. No deep, meaningful

learning can take place in such an atmosphere” (p. 196). Rob and Jefferson both seem to agree that the approach outlived its usefulness fairly quickly, since it appeared to have “lost its novelty” and most of the students “had checked out – mentally at least.” Once the students had lost their sense of engagement, there was little hope for deep or meaningful learning to take place.

Losing focus. Kristy mentions that the practice of rhythm patterns also could fall into this category of too much being not a good thing. She states:

We practice rhythm patterns with the entire ensemble and I think you play through it once or twice and you figure out the counting but if you play it over and over you are going to lose focus and you will start to mess up.

Jefferson agrees with Kristy on this and then expands on this notion with the following contribution:

I agree with Kristy about losing focus. It also happens when you are still trying to pick out the notes and you start missing rhythms too. You overly focus on one aspect of the music because you know you have been messing that up. You focus on this one hard spot and then you aren't thinking about where you are in the music or when you have to come in next and then you screw that up.

Mr. Britt shares his own recollections of his high school and college experiences in band where he also reached a point where he “started to tune it out.” He shares how he feels that impacts the way he approaches his rehearsals.

I try not to rehearse anything to death. I think, kind of like for me as a player – I am a reader. I think I only get so much benefit out of rehearsing something over and over. After a point I start to tune it out. Most of the wind ensemble kids are like that. I think our approach yields a more intuitive and actively engaged ensemble because they know I am not going to go over it a bunch of times.

Based on the recollections of the students and the implied common characteristic that they are all good readers and do not need to be “beaten over the head with a

stick,” as Rob describes, Mr. Britt seems to be accurate in his assessment that “most of the wind ensemble kids are like that.” After a point in the rehearsal process, both he and his students have found themselves in situations where they simply started to “tune it out.” They had approached the threshold of tedium and their minds had moved elsewhere. Van Manen (1991) might describe this as a place where the waning of interest due to boredom leads to a loss of attentiveness because attentiveness “must stand in a direct, primordial relation to interest” (p. 197). Despite the fact that the “subject that interests me is a subject that matters to me” (p. 196), when interest wanes, attention wanders.

Keeping it fresh. A later conversation with Mr. Britt yields another insight that ties with this idea but from a larger, more macro perspective. He shares that similarly to how he approaches rehearsals with this band, he tries to select repertoire in a way that keeps the experience fresh for the students. He recalls hearing another group at the adjudication last year play a very long, involved and difficult warm-up selection. Knowing that these selections are not officially adjudicated, he wonders why they might have programmed something like that as their warm-up.

I usually like to keep the warm-up short and simple – something that gives us the chance to sound good and get used to the stage. Last year at adjudication we witnessed this band play a warm-up that was just a beast and I thought – all the time that must have gone in to getting this together and that could have been spent on the adjudicated selections. So I wondered – maybe they played it on a concert the previous semester? Some people will do that sort of thing – start working on their adjudication repertoire early in the year and therefore spend a lot of time on it. For these kids, that would be foolish. This group needs to be doing fresh material every performance. Anything else would be insulting to them and frustrating to all of us. They are capable of so much more and they deserve more respect than that.

Clearly there is an effort made here to keep the literature fresh for the students so that they have access to the widest range of musical experiences and the opportunity to interact with as much quality literature as time will allow.

Working Smarter Not Harder

Related to the idea of working smarter and not necessarily harder, Claire returns to an earlier thought she shared about writing notes in the music to mark important ideas or changes, thus precluding the mindless mistakes that might occur if those markings had not been made. She feels like if it is important enough for Mr. Britt to tell them to write it in the part, it must be something they should do once so they don't have to waste time doing it over.

Focusing outside yourself. She and Jefferson take this a step further by sharing that they will often write things in their parts that help them keep their place when they are resting or playing a repeated pattern for an extended period.

Claire remembers an experience playing in orchestra:

I literally had hundreds of measures rest. I was playing piccolo parts and so I wrote in my part where I heard something important happen or an interesting or unusual instrument come in. Let's say the French horn comes in here – okay, mark that in measure 43 of the 'rest that never ends.' Then the melody comes back in with the clarinet at measure 88 of that big rest – okay, mark that. That way I knew what was going on even in the midst of those interminable rests so I wouldn't miss the entrance and cause us all to waste time and go back and do it over because I lost track of the counting.

Jefferson's recollection was tied directly to his current experience with

Incantation and Dance:

For us in Incantation and Dance, we have just one repeated pattern that repeats like 17 times the first time we actually come in and after playing it about four times, you just start to lose count. You really have to pay

attention since its just repeated so many times you just *have* to know where you are. You have to listen to other parts and use those as a kind of gauge for where you are. Otherwise you keep playing after the part ends and then, oops, we have to go over it again and waste some of the precious little rehearsal time we actually have.

Implicit in Jefferson's assertion that you just *have* to know where you are is the need for some type of focus, so that in this case you don't get confused or lose track of your place in the music. Davidson (2011) tells us that "Without focus, the world is chaos; there's simply too much to see, hear, and understand, and focus lets us drill down to the input we believe is most useful to us" (p. 2). Jefferson suggests that in this case, the focus needs to be on what *others* are playing so that these aural stimuli may be used as a gauge to confirm your location in the music. Davidson cautions, however, that, "Because focus means selection...it leaves us with blind spots, and we need methods for working around them" (p. 2). For Jefferson this could mean that he would have to notate multiple aural reference points in his music, so that one particular aural blind spot would not stymie the successful completion of his task. If he were to choose the wrong aural reference point on which to focus his attention, perhaps an entrance by a less than reliable peer, he runs the risk of that entrance being missed and consequently losing his musical way.

Both of these students are reflecting on parts of their music that are not at all technically challenging but require an effort of a different sort to manage successfully. The overt thought process of establishing anchor points in their music to help them navigate their way successfully through the score is an example of how they are taking steps to avoid falling into a path of diminishing

returns by not working harder but by working smarter. They are avoiding the mindless or needless repetition and the ensuing frustration that can manifest itself as the vicious circle that so often obstructs the successful music making process. One of the ways that the students are accomplishing this task is through what Green and Gallway (1986) call “the power of awareness...the simple quality of attention that we can pay to events, people, and things...that illuminates things that we were ‘in the dark about,’ and shows us clearly things that we already almost knew” (p. 37). These students seem to understand how thoughtful and careful attention to detail, structure and individual responsibility are critical aspects of successful participation in a high level performing ensemble.

More Dark Knight, less Rainbow Bright

Gadamer (1975/1989) tells us that “Youth demands images for its imagination and for forming its memory” (p. 19). Van Manen (1991) suggests that “Stories prompt pedagogical reflections” (p. 48). A story, analogy or metaphor can immediately give students the mental image that Gadamer alludes to, allowing them to open a new way of understanding a concept or idea. They can illustrate and make more vivid a theme with which the student is superficially familiar and make it less opaque and more transparent. They can add color and nuance to a thought or idea that lives in a world of grey and make it come alive for a student in a rainbow of vibrant hues. And they can engage the students in ways that connect them to the teacher and to their student peers, and contributing to the building of community within the ensemble rehearsal. Schultz (2003) asserts that, since the “official school curriculum often has a relatively

insignificant influence on adolescents' lives...popular culture, peers, and the exigencies of daily life hold more of their attention" (p. 77). Stories, analogies and metaphors can be extremely powerful instructional tools that, when used effectively by teachers to connect with student's lives outside of school, can fundamentally alter the pedagogical relationship in a way that more organically and successfully engages students.

During the first full group conversation I had with the six students in this inquiry, I asked them if Mr. Britt ever used analogies or stories to help them visualize or imagine scenes or create moods that might help them with their musical interpretations. Claire's immediate response was greeted by a chorus of laughter and nods of agreement. She says that he told them to think "more dark night, less rainbow bright." When I ask if this clarified what it was he was looking for, she smiles and answers "Yep, that's all it took." When I pursued the idea further I found an interesting dichotomy in how the students were interpreting this pretty simple, yet effective, metaphorical construct. While all of the students agreed that it made them play the passage differently, the reasons they gave were slightly different based on their individual perception of what Mr. Britt actually meant. The dichotomy actually fell along gender lines. Kristy relates:

With that visual, it not only gave us a style but it set a mood that each of us could understand. It made me think of something dark and sad and depressing as opposed to something very happy and very light. I think once you get your mind around something like that you can better create that mood when you play.

Dufrenne (1973) writes that "We understand directly others' experience after being made sensitive by our own experience, and we would remain closed

off from others if nothing prepared us to accept their experience and live its meaning. There is no feeling (sentiment) without a sort of presentiment” (p. 133). While Rosie and Claire agree with the dark as gloomy and light as happy image and mood dichotomy, they were sensitized to that mood in a very broad way. Their “presentiment,” based on their own experience, was of a holistic nature. Although the metaphor was effective for them at achieving the appropriate and intended mood change, they applied few details to that vision. The boys in the group, however, reference a much more specific visual when asked what it brought to their minds. Their “presentiment” was of a more highly defined nature and, as suggested by Dufrenne, was based on their particular experiences.

Jefferson shares his meaning of this visualization:

Dark Knight – Batman – Christian Bale standing on top the skyscraper in Gotham City with his cape blowing in the wind. All kinds of visuals came to mind and the mood Mr. Britt was looking for was right there. You know, the contrast couldn’t be any clearer than between Batman and the Care Bears. Like Claire said, that’s all it took.

The images that Jefferson describes were exactly how I perceived the metaphorical allusion as well. Before I asked the students to describe what they saw, I had the Batman image vividly alive in my head. Since the metaphor was an oral one, the spelling of the content did not prejudice how one perceived the detail of the image. The dark and brooding effect was achieved even though the perspectives of the students were different in their specificity, coming from different experiences.

Context matters. This difference in understanding and context made me recall one of my own less than auspicious uses of a particular metaphor in a visit

to one of our high schools to observe a new teacher. After the teacher taught the class for part of the period we switched places and I shared my observations and worked with the group for a few minutes. The ensemble was having some problems in achieving good articulation, and I tried a metaphor that had worked very well at another school earlier that week. Recalling how amateur choirs and church congregations often mangle a particular slur in the singing of Silent Night (the unintended glissando that so often accompanies the word ‘peace’ as it carries across an ascending major third) I tried to evoke that sonic image for this ensemble as a way to get them to articulate more cleanly and not smear their slurs. As the metaphor thudded pathetically with absolutely no resonance for these students, I suddenly remembered where I was and why it wasn’t effective. This school is the home of the largest Jewish population in our county, and hardly any of the students in the ensemble had ever witnessed that horrid glissando because they hadn’t sung Silent Night. Message lost. The lesson that was learned here was pretty simple – context matters.

Assumptions of similarity. While the six student participants and the wind ensemble as a group share a generally homogenous social and academic culture, and they all live in the same area, they did not bring the same image to mind when they were given the metaphor from their teacher to help them visualize the mood he was targeting. While it is clear that metaphor, story and anecdotes are powerful ways of reaching students, it also seems apparent that all attempts at drawing a mental image for students may not have the same intended effect based on the differences that the students bring to their classroom

experiences. Storr (1992) says that “Our ordinary understanding of other people depends upon an assumption of similarity” (p. 113). Schultz (2003) echoes this idea when she states that “People have a tendency to assume likeness between their experiences and those of others” (p. 12). My unsuccessful effort with the “Silent Night” story was the fault of my erroneous assumption of similarity of experience between myself and the students in that particular high school. Even in relatively homogeneous settings like this school and this ensemble, the potential for differences in interpretation are real and offer challenges as well as opportunities when working to connect with students through imagery and story. It should be noted that Mr. Britt’s trampoline analogy, “I am giving you trampoline downbeats that you need to bounce right off of,” that he used in the week before the adjudication was uniformly interpreted by all of the students in the manner in which it was intended. That assumption of similarity was on target.

Mr. Britt shares his concern about how his methods and references might work, or not, with a different set of students with different backgrounds than those he currently teaches. He asks some pretty provocative questions in his first journal entry:

Each of the students in this band comes from a fairly similar background and has had a generally similar set of musical experiences – the same middle school teachers, the same community. The references I use are pretty easy for these kids to get because there is that commonality here that might not exist in a school or ensemble that was less homogenous. Would the way I do things with this group work as well for another group that doesn’t have the same things going for them socially, mentally, musically, attitudinally? Would I be able to do the same thing and get the same results with a different group? Several of the students have mentioned working as a community and having a common understanding of how to play things and that visual imagery helps to establish that common mindset. If students don’t understand the analogies, what is lost?

Mr. Britt implies in his query that these particular students have certain things “going for them socially, mentally, musically, and attitudinally.” He asks what he might do differently with a collection of students who did *not* have these positive attributes “going for them.” By asking these questions Mr. Britt is reaching into areas touched on by Van Manen (1991) who suggests that “Pedagogy is a self-reflective activity that always must be willing to question critically what it does and what it stands for” (p. 10). Mr. Britt is asking probing and thoughtful questions about what he does in the classroom and how it connects or doesn’t connect with his students. He is being reflective and seems to be striving to develop what van Manen calls “pedagogical thoughtfulness” by developing a keener sense of what his students bring with them to the pedagogical situation.

Trading Places

Once each quarter, every member of the wind ensemble conducts a brief warm-up with the band. The students are given fundamental conducting instruction as a group and are expected to provide basic feedback to the ensemble after their turn at the podium. Each quarter the expectation for feedback to the group reflects an increasingly broadened listening focus. The first quarter, students are expected simply to navigate through the conducting pattern from the downbeat through the cut-off without any additional responsibility. During the second quarter they are required to include a listening focus for their particular section (flutes, trumpets, etc.) and to provide a comment to that section about their performance during the warm-up. During the third quarter, the listening focus

broadens to include the larger section to which they belong (brass or woodwinds or percussion) with the fourth quarter listening and commenting expectation aimed at the ensemble as a whole.

Auditory intentionality. Ihde (2007) speaks of the “attentional aspect of auditory intentionality” and how it alters the listening experience in fundamental ways. He suggests that the auditory field “has already been proximately anticipated in the observation that all things or occurrences are presented in a situated context, ‘surrounded’ by other things” (p. 73). Before the students have the opportunity to conduct and thus hear things from the podium, their situated context, where they are “surrounded by other things,” is based on their place in the ensemble and how they hear from that location. By moving the students physically to the front of the ensemble as the conductor, the students undergo changes in auditory intentionality both from a change in location and by their movement through a continuum of listening focus; first they focus only on their particular section, moving later to the larger constitutive section and then to the full ensemble. They are essentially traversing through a changing listening landscape because of the change in their listening focus and the change in their particular situated context. As they move through this auditory journey over the temporal landscape of the full year, they are asked not only to move physically to the front of the ensemble, but also figuratively to move from a “me” orientation to a “we” orientation.

The sound hits you differently. Kristy shares her perspective on this change in perspective and how it changes the way she thinks about the ensemble:

For this quarter we have to not only listen to our section but to the rest of the band and see what they need to do to improve. You get an idea of what Mr. Britt has to do and to pay attention to and it opens you up to the fact that it's not just about you and your section. It's about everybody in the band. You get this really broad spectrum and you get to hear everything and you have to ask what do we need to do to make it better? What do we do well and what do we need to work on?

David speaks of how the sound and the feel of the ensemble are different in front as the conductor than from his place in the tenor sax section. He brings in some spatial as well as aural considerations in this description:

It definitely feels and sounds different to be in front of the band. You get an entirely different sense of how the band is arranged. I am in the back when I play and it feels rectangular to me from back there. I don't perceive that I am part of a curve and I don't really hear the trumpets all that much sometimes because they are normally directly to the right of me. I don't hear them because their sound is going forward. But once you are up front I think you can hear the balance of the band better. It changes your perception because the sound hits you differently. Everything is coming directly at you rather than having bounced off of a wall or two before it gets to you. I mean, the same sound is being produced by the same instruments so, I guess the proportions are the same but the way you perceive it changes because you aren't in the same place.

David speaks of the difference in how something sounds when he is on the podium because "the sound hits you differently." Ihde (2007) reminds us that sound "never occurs simply alone but within a field, a limited and bounded context" (p. 73). Within this particular bounded context, David reminds us that when he is on the podium, "everything is coming directly at you rather than having bounced off of a wall or two before it gets to you." The bounded context of the band room causes the sound to "re-bounce" back to the students in their seats, but not to the director on the podium. David mentions that, despite the fact that "the same sound is being produced by the same instruments...the way you perceive it changes because you aren't in the same place." His place within the

field, the limited and bounded context of the band room, is different, and therefore, his situated context has changed along with the way he perceives the sounds.

What's it like on the podium? In Rosie's reflections on the conducting experience, she shares how she has always wondered what it would be like to conduct the band. Her recollection deals with the emotions she felt, as well as the things she saw and heard, while in front of the group. In her words:

When I sit in my chair just watching Mr. Britt, I've always wondered what it feels like up there. And when he told us at the beginning of the year that we were all going to get the chance to conduct I was excited and nervous. I didn't know how to do it, and the idea of being in front of all of those people was pretty intimidating. The first time I got up to conduct I was scared out of my mind. I mean, he taught us how to do the hand motions but – *all those people were looking at me* – but once I started conducting it just felt kind of natural and I actually started to like being up there. I could hear everything. Well, at least a lot more that I hear from where I sit. And I could see what people were doing too. I could see who was looking at me. I could see who was really playing and who was not. I didn't think you could tell that until I got up there and I saw and thought – well he's not playing and neither is she (laughs).

Rosie reminds us that when on the podium, all of the eyes of the musicians are trained on you. Judging by the tone of her voice when she shares that “all those people were looking at me,” it is clear that she intensely felt the attention of all of those eyes being focused on her. Might this be a manifestation of what Sartre (1943/1956) describes as “the metaphysical apprehension of the existence of my body for the Others” (p. 463), an experience of alienation that “is made in and through affective structures” (p. 462) such as shyness or timidity? Rosie alludes to the fact that even though all of the students had received some fundamental conducting training, she was intimidated by the prospect of getting in front of the

ensemble and felt a palpable sense of fear when she took the podium for the first time. While that fear passed quickly for her, what did other students feel when they were in the position of conductor? Did they move quickly from this place of “metaphorical apprehension” to an emerging level of comfort, or did they simply suffer through this potentially traumatic experience, knowing that it was only to happen once every quarter?

When I ask Rosie if that experience changed how she thinks or acts when she is in her seat in the clarinet section she says:

Since I have been on the podium I definitely try to listen across the band more -so I can hear balance. But, from my seat I can never hear balance like you can when you are on the podium. When I was up there I could really hear what Mr. Britt is talking about. Now when I’m back in my seat I think about balance more and I think about it differently than I used to before I heard it from up in front.

While Rosie admits that she tries to listen more to balance now that she understands what the band sounds like from the podium, she readily admits that “From my seat I can never hear balance like you can when you are on the podium.” Even though her context has changed back to her situated-ness in her seat in the ensemble, she says that she thinks more about balance and she thinks about it differently now that she has heard it from “up in front.”

Taking it Outside

The students in this ensemble exhibited behavior that aligns with Mr. Britt’s expectation that they come to class prepared for whatever the musical focus will be for that day. While this goal is in itself a noble one and it works for this ensemble, what if the students did not know how to prepare the music for the coming rehearsal? Assuming they did indeed practice at home, what is to say that

the practice was constructive and not just mindless repetition of technical passages with no actual plan or focus for improvement? What if their home practice was “reduced to the level of a vicious circle” (Heidegger, 1926/1962, p. 154)? It is one thing to say to a student, “Go home and practice that tonight” with no guidance or model for them to follow, and it is another entirely for the student actually to have a plan that results in improved playing outside of the rehearsal in preparation for the next class period. As Heidegger (1926/1962) suggests, “In the circle is hidden a positive possibility of the most primordial kind of knowing” (p. 154). This is the circle where directors want their students to operate when practicing.

Knowing how to practice: Finding the common denominator. Often, within the scope of the rehearsals I observed, there was clearly delineated instruction provided on how to practice a certain passage, either by outlining a step by step method or by the modeling of how it might be accomplished through teacher or section leader actions. Several of the students share specific examples of how they practice their parts on their own outside of class in preparation for an upcoming rehearsal.

David talks about how he uses the idea of subdividing to help him master some of the complex rhythms that are an important facet of the pieces on which they are working.

The subdivisions are the main thing. It really helps you to be able to look at a rhythm and play it without really thinking about it. I mean, there are downbeats here and downbeats there so once you isolate the downbeats and look at what is between, you figure this goes there and so it has to sound like this. It’s a little like finding a common denominator. Once the framework is clear – and the subdivisions are figured out – then the pieces

fall into place. This is something that is often easier to do at home than during the rehearsal. And then that way it's already there in your head and it just works when you get to band.

David's idea regarding subdivision harkens back to how Mr. Britt had instructed the students to mark in the down beats and upbeats in a particular section of Incantation and Dance because the rhythm pattern changed every few beats. Mr. Britt explains why this was important by saying:

If you have not already marked on what beats you move or on what *off* beats you move, you'd better mark it - because rarely do you do the same thing two times in a row. Like when the trumpets and trombones come in – you move on 3 then on the “and” of 2 and then on the “and” of 1 and then on the “and” of 2. You move all over the place. It will feel awkward so you need to mark it.

The clear message from Mr. Britt is that marking in the subdivisions and the downbeats and upbeats is a critical way to prepare the music, and David had taken that to heart in his individual practice outside of class. David likens it to finding the lowest common denominator or the fundamental organizing entity, in this case the shortest or fastest note in a particular passage. That entity is placed in its temporal structure as David says happens when “you isolate the downbeats and look at what is between...then the pieces fall into place.”

Hearing the spaces. Claire takes a slightly different slant on the subdivision idea and relates how what she hears in the rehearsals helps her with her practice at home. She shares that when it comes to rhythms,

I kind of think as much about rhythms in terms of rests as I do notes and if there is an equivalent number of rests, then the other notes in the measure have to fit into the overall structure. It's almost as if I am listening more for the rests and hearing the spaces, than I am the actual notes. And listening to the space allows me to hear more of the style too. I try to do this when I sight-read especially. That way I hear a rhythm and then when I practice it at home I might remember – oh, that sounds like what the

percussion had or like what the clarinets had. Being able to make those connections with something I have heard really helps.

Claire talks about two ways in which she uses her listening skills to make sense of what her visual skills allow her to see on the page of written music. She says that she listens as much for the “the rests and hearing the spaces,” as she does the actual notes. From a visual perspective this might be understood as a type of negative space that allows its surrounding colors or images to be seen in a new light and from a perspective that provides those colors or images with more contrast from their surroundings. Considering this from an aural perspective, Levin (1989) speaks of the “presence of absence and the absence of presence” (p. 238). Claire seems to be experiencing this absence of the presence of sound when she focuses on the rests, the place where sound is not.

Listening back – in time. Claire also suggests that she uses what she has heard and what she remembers from her past listening experiences to help make sense of new rhythms. “Being able to make those connections with something I have heard really helps.” Within a broad and inclusive temporal context, either recent or from further in the past, she shares that she makes connections that help her solve the rhythmic analysis tasks incumbent in her current situation, whether it is in the full ensemble or at home as she prepares for the next rehearsal. But, as Levin (1989) reminds us, “Sounds are transitory and impermanent, ever insubstantial, belonging to the realm of temporality: they cannot be grasped, held, possessed” (p. 34). Is it possible that Claire has indeed possessed these sonic manifestations in a way that allow her to recall rhythms so that she can apply them later in her own playing? Is her experience with these rhythms made more

concrete because she has unconsciously analyzed them so that they have become real to her in more than the aural dimension, but in a cognitive way as well?

Dufrenne (1973) suggests that “Memory gives us more than a knowledge of the past but never quite gives us its living actuality. Memory oscillates between reconstruction and actualization” (p. 44). Claire may indeed be oscillating between reconstructing and actualizing those rhythms that she has internalized from her past aural experience.

Counting, clapping, circling and highlighting. Rosie recalls how she goes about the learning of awkward or different rhythms by engaging in a variety of graduating steps of engagement, moving from the simple to the more fully engaged:

I sit where I practice at home and count out the part first and then clap it out and finger through it before actually trying to play it on my clarinet. Only after I could finger through the part at a slow tempo did I start to use a metronome and try to do it that way. All of those things together helped me get that rhythm down eventually. And I wrote in the counting to help me too. Since I am a visual learner, if I see something and it makes sense I learn it quicker. So writing in the counts definitely helps.

In her narrative above, Rosie alludes to the kinesthetic nature of what she does in her individual practice as well as the cognitive activities that are taking place. And she is quick to point out how she believes she best learns, in a visual way, and how that influences how she approaches her practice.

A message from the past. Rosie often writes notes to herself in the music – she circles things and highlights dynamics and phrasing ideas. She goes on to say that these markings in the music, from herself or left from a student who played from the same part in an earlier time sometimes help to clarify what she

needs to do either in the band rehearsal or in her home practice. She views the notes left by other students,

Like a message from the past. It kind of connects us to other people who have played the music before and can be really helpful with counting rhythms, or figuring out style stuff or balance things. I hope my notes and the counting and whatever else I write in the part is useful in some way to the students who play this next. It can help people figure stuff out quicker, you know. It can take some steps out of the process so you can get it right faster.

Rosie could have described the notes left behind on her music as a type of time capsule, where some of the essence of one's experience with a particular piece is left behind on the written page as a record for future musicians. "It kind of connects us to other people who have played the music before." Dufrenne (1973) reminds us that, "All aesthetic objects attain their most complete form in being sensuously presented to perception" (p. 17). "Performance reveals the being of a work by completing it" (p. 24), and these messages in the music reveal aspects of the experience as felt by previous performers that bridge, in some small way, the chasm of time between those performances. They are an additional layer of connective tissue between musicians who may be decades removed from one another, but who share the experience of performing this particular music from this particular score.

Rosie is not alone in finding helpful hints and encouragement and a connection to the past through the notes left behind from previous players of her particular part. Kristy recalls:

My music had a lot of comments on it. There was a lot of counting and arrows – things like that – but also things like "count like crazy" or "watch out here for this or that." I have an old and tattered copy but it's nice in a way because you can see that they worked hard and they wrote down what

they needed to do and to watch out for this section or that rhythm. That is probably one of the reasons Mr. Britt always gives us time to write things down. That way if you forget what he said in class, it's written in the part and then you know how you should practice it.

Abram (1996) describes a mnemonic device used by classical orators of Greece and Rome where “the orator would imagine an elaborate palace, filled with diverse halls and rooms and intricate structural details. He would then envision himself walking through the palace, and would deposit at various places within the rooms a sequence of imagined objects associated with the different parts of his planned speech” (p. 176). On a much simpler level, Kristy suggests that she and her peers are essentially depositing their own “objects” (directions on how to play this or that) in strategic places in the music so that when it comes time for them to deliver their “planned speech” (the musical performance) they will be able to recall the instructions given and perform as planned.

Breaking it down – parts to whole. Kristy also reflects on how teaching young students how to swim helped her to figure out how to improve not only her own approach to practicing, but also how to approach her peers better when she is leading a clarinet sectional. She feels that the parallels between teaching swimming and teaching music are strong:

You have to make everything simple enough for everyone to understand. I feel the same way with music – with my brother (also a clarinet player) and the clarinet section. Everybody may not know terms or ideas that I know so I have to explain and get them to understand. It might be breaking up a whole system of movement like moving all of your body parts to swim forward. You have to figure out what all the parts or specific techniques are and then how to put them all together to make that something actually happen.

Similar to how an effective rehearsal is structured, Kristy suggests that it is important to approach new concepts or skills by breaking them down to their constituent parts and then putting them all back together again in a way that generates meaning and learning. Because they share both cognitive and kinesthetic qualities, she suggests that the parallels between music and sports, in her case swimming, are especially strong. The parallels to what the students describe as the “chunking” approach their director uses in rehearsals are obvious. When they “chunk” a particular section, they are isolating a specific aspect or portion of the music for intense attention and focus. Once that portion is in a state of acceptable preparation, then they return it to its place in the larger work.

Battisti (2007) puts forth a description of how to approach rehearsing difficult passages that shares this idea of isolating and then reincorporating discrete elements of performance as they grow in performance competence and confidence. “Passages that are technically and rhythmically difficult should be rehearsed slowly. Start by isolating the rhythm and rehearsing it slowly on a single pitch. Once this can be done correctly, add pitches and rehearse the passage until it can be played well” (p. 102). In much the same way as a complex combination of body movements found in any sport need to be initially isolated into their constituent movements before they can be mastered, so too, must distinct elements of a larger musical idea be targeted in their most basic iteration initially before moving from part to whole.

Something to latch on to. Kristy continues with this line of thought and shares how she applied a technique (similar to the one outlined by Battisti above)

that she learned from another instrumental music teacher at the school, Mr. Taylor, a percussionist, to the clarinet sectional she ran and that I had the chance to observe as a part of one of the rehearsal observations. She says that during one of the days when Mr. Britt allowed the students to work in the small ensembles they would be taking to the solo and ensemble festival, Mr. Taylor was walking around and offering assistance to groups. She tells the following story:

All I wanted to do for the sectional was break things down and then add on bit by bit. I learned this when we were getting ready for solo and ensemble festival and Mr. Taylor suggested breaking down a complex rhythm and then adding on just the next downbeat so everybody ends in unison. I wanted everybody to have an anchor – to end in unison and I wanted it to seem simple. I guess it was similar to how I broke things down for the swimming when I was teaching them freestyle. I wasn't going to break it down at first, but once I realized they were all over the place – at all different levels – I had to take it apart and then find physical anchors for them to latch on to. After they could do that, then it would be okay to move on. But without an anchor, they would never do it the same way twice.

While Kristy alludes to the need to break things down and then put them back together again, in this narrative she also focuses on the need to provide anchors so there is something for the students “to latch on to.” Not like an anchor that weighs you down, this anchor functions more as a foundation upon which additional materials may be added while maintaining the “center” on which Jordan (2010) places such importance. He suggests that “While we all possess Center to some degree, the challenge is to anchor that Center deeply within us” (p. 48). This anchor Kristy speaks of exists in any number of ways for students, depending on the particular context, but it always represents a stability or “center” that makes it more possible for students to “latch on to” an idea or a kinesthetic or musical feeling. Copland (1939) applies this idea of a foundation or anchor to the

tonal soundscapes in which a composer works. “Just as a skyscraper has a steel frame below the outer covering of stone and brick, so every well-made piece of music has a solid framework underlying the outer appearance of the musical materials” (p. 59). This framework that Copland speaks of is analogous to how Kristy uses the idea of anchor, especially as it relates to the establishment of a tonal center or place of sonic repose. “I wanted everybody to have an anchor – to end in unison.” This anchor, this unison note, this grounded place can provide the stability needed for a student to establish both a kinesthetic and aural understanding of a musical context in which they are working.

Eliminating the garbage between the notes. While individual practice is an absolutely essential aspect of becoming a better musician, it is something that often does not produce the intended effect of smoother technique and better facility. Kristy speaks of a method she uses to not only smooth out her technique, but also to prevent the onset of tedium when she practices by making slight alterations to the details of whatever she is working on at the time. She says:

When I am working on a long run or some technical thing, I sometimes change the rhythm so I don't fall into a rut with my fingers. Mr. Britt had said something about how those running parts are as much about how you get from one note to the next as it is just getting through the whole thing. When I slow it down and change the rhythms it makes it clearer what the fingers are supposed to be doing to get from one note to the next in a really smooth way, because when I do it with the uneven rhythm, the strength and the weight and pressure of the fingers on the keys is slightly different and you notice that.

Kristy alludes to the notion that subtle changes in the pressure she places on the keys with her fingers sometimes makes the feeling of that act unique enough to bring clarity and awareness to the kinesthetic nature of what is needed

to perform that technical passage effectively. She says that when the weight and pressure of the fingers is slightly different, “you notice that.” This idea of the transition from note to note is explored by Green (2003) as he relates how a fellow bass player approaches learning technical passages, “holding on to each note for at least eight seconds, and making a seamless connection to the next note” (p. 86). Green continues by saying that it is most important to “eliminate the garbage between the notes so there is no noise” (p. 87). This aligns with Kristy’s idea that when she slows it down and changes the rhythms “it makes it clearer what the fingers are supposed to be doing to get from one note to the next in a really smooth way.”

Forte fingers. Kristy’s idea about slowing down and modifying the rhythm to isolate the finger placement to get a technical passage to be cleaner reminded me of a clinic experience that my band had at a festival in Tampa, Florida. We had played a transcription of a Mozart Overture that was replete with rapidly moving parts in the woodwinds, and the clinician’s suggestion made sense and was couched in a musical metaphor that all of the students understood. He said that the woodwinds needed to play with what he called “forte fingers.” He said that the fingers needed to slap the keys so hard that they would produce a loud (forte) popping sound from the impact the fingers had on the keys. He proceeded to borrow a student’s clarinet and finger through a passage and produced that “forte” finger popping. He shared that the key in getting the technique to be clean was to minimize the slow or incomplete movement of fingers in fast technical passages. His “forte fingers” idea did the trick. It’s a

metaphor that I have used often since that time as a way to reinforce the kinesthetic action that produces clean technique on an instrument. Kristy's changing of rhythms and noticing the changes in how your fingers "go from one note to the next" is similar to the "forte" fingers approach in that they both result in a kinesthetic change in the way the musician feels the actual act of playing the instrument. Because these changes are actually felt by the students, instead of simply thought about abstractly, they have a deeper kinesthetic significance and a more lasting impact.

You can't hide when it's just you - or two. As part of each students' experience in this ensemble, they are required to participate in the county solo and ensemble festival; they must either play a solo or be part of an ensemble. Rosie shares how she felt that the experience of rehearsing for *that* performance, even though it had no direct relationship to the adjudication music, helped her to improve as a musician and to make her more of an asset in the large group. Rosie says that she felt very strongly that it was a good thing for everybody to have to do the solo and ensemble festival preparation.

I think in some ways you gain a little more than you do in band because you learn how to work directly with another person. In the real world you need to learn how to cooperate with other people and nobody can hide when it's just a couple of you. You really have to be independent on your part. If you are in a duet and you miss a note or are out of tune, you can tell. Unlike in the regular band class where if you miss a note it might not be that big a deal because likely no one will be able to hear it. Playing in the solo and ensemble festival is more about individual responsibility. You have to be totally responsible for yourself. I think it is a great idea that we all have to do it.

Rosie actually played two duets, one with a flute player and one with a fellow clarinetist. She talks about how the experience was different based on what instrument the other player played.

When I play with Erica, the clarinet player, we focus mainly on dynamics, not so much on tuning because we are always pretty much in tune anyway. I think it's easier to hear that you are in tune with the same instrument. But when I am practicing with Stacey, the flute player, we really have to listen to tuning because we play two different instruments. It's harder to hear if you are in tune or not. Two different instruments equal two different sounds. It's two different ways of producing a sound; one uses a reed and one blows over a tone hole. We definitely have to focus more on how we can sound like one.

Rosie's comments remind me of Claire's earlier idea about the band when they sing and how she feels that it is "easier to listen because it's like they are all playing the same instrument." These students appear to share a common understanding about listening and hearing and how differences or similarities of timbre affect one's ability to listen and to hear. But as Corporon (1998) reminds us, the goal is to get all of our students to "*hear* what they are *listening* to" so that we can "facilitate an encounter with the composer and an interaction with their work of art" (p. 72). He goes on to say that "There is that glorious moment when everything becomes absolutely clear and you hear better than ever before what has always been there on the page....This clarity is not an illusion, it evolves in the ensemble; it does not just appear" (p. 72). While this clarity may not be an illusion, the fact remains that it is often an elusive goal. How is it that we achieve this ability? How do we get to this place of aural clarity and deep understanding of what has already been there, but that has not yet been apprehended by our ears and minds?

Do They Hear What I See?

The rehearsal experience itself is infinitely complex and multifaceted, in much the same way as the light that emanates from a prism. That one entity – the rehearsal – is comprised of many intertwined and interdependent elements. It is driven by the repertoire that is studied, the approach that the director feels is most appropriate for a particular group of students, and by the ever-changing dynamics of the many personalities and skill sets of the student participants. But the overarching uniqueness of any musical activity is the sound itself. And the way we approach the nature of the aural experience in the rehearsal is through the critical skill of listening. Corporon (1998) suggests that while there are a number of important factors that contribute to successful music making, “none is more central or critical than listening” (p. 72). He goes on to suggest that an ensemble director “must continually be in the question of ‘Do they hear what I see?’” (p. 73). Even more central to this inquiry is the following question: what do the students actually hear, and how is it that they experience their sonic environment?

In Chapter Two I began a preliminary exploration into the various ways in which students listen, both inside and outside the rehearsal setting. As I delved further into the student experience within the rehearsal structure it became increasingly apparent that listening plays a number of very important roles in shaping that experience. Similar to how Heidegger describes the use of “equipment” as a means *in-order-to* gain an understanding of the *worldhood-of-the-world* (1926/1962, p. 97), the students use the “equipment” of their ears and their perspectives as equipment *in-order-to* experience their musical world in a

different way. The students share numerous recollections of how active listening is engaged in for a multitude of purposes: from listening *in-order-to* play in tune, to listening *in-order-to* match articulations or style considerations, to listening *in-order-to* play in time and for ensemble precision. They share how their physical location in the ensemble changes what they can and cannot hear. They share how they listen differently after a particular new experience or newly acquired perspective. They make connections between how things look and how they sound, and how what they see affects what they hear. They share how the intent of their listening changes what they hear. They share how modifications in timbre affect their listening and hearing perspective. And they share how certain behaviors and techniques that their director uses in rehearsal change how they listen and what they hear, and fundamentally alter their interactions with each other and with the music they study.

What *Are* We Listening For?

The intentionality of the listening act is one factor that affects how the perceiver of a sound experiences the phenomenon of hearing (Ihde, 2007). Upon what are we focusing our listening? What is the purpose of a particular listening activity? Claire suggests that this idea of focus is similar to when you take a picture and the internal mechanism works for a few seconds before whatever the camera decides is the central image comes into focus. “It’s like taking a picture; the main object is in focus but the background is blurry – but it takes a few seconds to get there. It’s like the camera has to decide what to focus on.” She also shares that it reminds her of when she goes to the eye doctor and sits at the

machine where the lenses keep changing and the doctor asks, “is this clearer or is this clearer.” Depending on what line of letters she is focusing on she may have a different answer. For a person of my age who uses what are identified as progressive lenses, my direction of focus is constantly on the move if I want to see a clear object. It all depends on where that object is situated at any given time. This same sense of moveable focus is critical for the musician since the focal listening target is often also on the move.

Targeted listening. In the band rehearsal setting, the listening focus is often, but not always, aimed at some individual or ensemble performance aspect that will become a target for remediation or growth and eventually result in a more satisfying musical outcome. We may be listening to improve intonation, to match style, or to achieve better balance. But the focus of our listening attention is such that it can be changed and is not necessarily predisposed to hear certain things. Ihde (2007) suggests that listeners typically focus on a particular sound or direction of sonic input, but with filters that modify or exclude certain sounds based on that intentionality. His analogy highlighting the differences in what is heard by a tape recorder (not having any particular intentionality – hearing all things indiscriminately – chairs scuffling, students coughing) and what would be heard by a listener focusing on a particular sound source (their director’s instruction, the trumpet player behind them) illustrates how one’s intentionality can affect how and what one hears, and what one does *not* hear. The phenomenon is experienced in a different way based on the intentionality of the one doing the listening.

On the podium – hearing things differently. When students have their turn on the podium to conduct the warm-ups, they hear things in a different way in part because of their different sense of intentionality. As students go through this process each quarter, they are instructed to expand their listening focus, from listening to their own section to listening to the entire band. Kristy shares that, based on this change in her listening intention,

You get an idea of what Mr. Britt has to do and to pay attention to all of what is going on. It opens you up to the fact that it's not just about you and your section. You get this really broad spectrum because you get to hear everybody, and as you move through that change in what you are supposed to be listening for, you hear things differently. I mean, the expectation is that you will say something about the whole band and not just your section. So you'd better be listening to more than your section. When you focus your listening to include more, it really does change the way you listen.

Hearing it before we play it. As a part of nearly every rehearsal's warm-up structure, the band plays through a series of long tones as they build chords in the pattern of bass voice first, alto voice next, tenor voice next and then the soprano voice last. The pattern is abbreviated on the board and recognized in the minds of the students as the acronym B-A-T-S. The *intention* of this particular warm-up is to focus student listening on playing the chord tones in tune. Claire suggests:

This really helps us tune because we are hearing it before we are playing it. When the flutes come in on the "S" you are hearing the tones – bass, alto, tenor – you hear these parts of the chord before you play your note so immediately as you hit it you can tell – oh, I need to change my pitch. It just makes it so much easier to hear.

The clear intention of this exercise is to get the students to listen in an anticipatory way so they know where the final tonic note should be placed based

on the chord tones that have preceded it. It is as if their note completes the musical entity. They need to “hear it before we play it,” to paraphrase Claire. The target has been hinted at with each successive chord tone, and when the flutes and upper clarinets hit their final pitch, it is much easier to hear if it is out of tune because a sonic framework has been established. There now exists an aural anchor, the partial chord, upon which the soprano voice must rest, in tune, for the chord to be fully realized. Because of that aural framework, and the tonal anchor that it provides, it is much easier for the students to focus their hearing and get the final note in tune when it is their turn to play. Their listening intentionality has been thoroughly focused on where that pitch should be placed, and they consequently play it better in tune.

Hearing the brain at work. During one of the rehearsal observations I conducted I heard the band go through this process, and I could indeed hear voices that weren’t quite in tune actively pulled by the students in the direction of the tonal center, thereby bringing the note better in tune. The students were demonstrating their understanding of the intentionality of this particular exercise by their active response to those aural stimuli – moving the out of tune notes closer to the intended pitch center. Mr. Britt’s commentary to the band students during that class period illustrates how he contributes to the clarification of that intentionality of purpose and also how he gently nudges the students further away from their comfort zone in an effort to stretch what they are listening for and how they are producing the sound. He tells the students:

Did I make as many faces today? Hopefully not. You can almost hear your brains working on it. So it’s like – wow, wait a minute – oh, there it is!

Now, let's try a little variation on this. Bass and alto play, soprano and tenor sing. Do we need a helper player (anchor) or can you just sing it straight through? Flutes, where are you likely to be on this? Sharp or flat?

Their director gives them credit here for the fact that their thinking is audible in its intention – that of getting the notes better in tune. He tells them, “You can almost hear your brains working on it.” When I ask him later in the process of preparing the music for the adjudication if he often recorded the group and had the students listen to it, he shares that he rarely does that because,

Often, with recordings of rehearsals or concerts it is very difficult to tell balance because it is so dependent on where the mike is set and you can't really depend on the quality of those recordings. I want to do it more so they are more exposed to it for overall listening, but they are just such good *active* listeners that I feel that continuing to rehearse is a better use of our time.

For Mr. Britt, the intentionality of the student listening activity is fully in line with his intention to develop his students into more active listeners. Based on what I have seen and heard in the rehearsals I experienced, the students are indeed very good active listeners, a characteristic that is not shared by many groups that I have the opportunity to hear. Mr. Britt attributes the high level of active listening to the regular use of these chord harmonizations and the fact that the patterns are memorized so the students can focus their listening. Another factor he cites is that they do these in all different keys, and this addresses the various pitch tendencies of particular pitches on particular instruments, more comprehensively covering the full spectrum of intonation concerns possible with wind instruments. In Mr. Britt's words:

We do these in whatever key the music is in and I believe the reason it works is that we do it in different keys *all* the time. I barely turn on the

tuner anymore. I will tell the class – I don't care if you are out of tune with reality, I care if you are in tune with each other.

What does it mean to be out of tune with reality? Who would know if all of the students were in tune with each other but were, as Mr. Britt suggests, out of tune with reality? In this situation, as in many ensemble situations, it may be more important to be in a place of congruence with the other ensemble members than to necessarily be "right." Thinking hypothetically, if one student is actually perfectly on pitch but all of the other ensemble members are in tune with each other, who is it that sounds wrong? Our ears would likely tell us that the one person who is different is the one who has the wrong pitch, even if that pitch is actually perfectly in tune, just not in tune with the rest of the ensemble. As Sommers (2011) suggests, "Situations matter," and it is critically important for us to understand the power of context and how it shapes how we experience our world.

Mr. Britt goes on to explain how these exercises change the way the students think about tuning and how it has helped shape their understanding of what their continuing role is in the tuning process.

The kids also realize that even though they go through these harmonizations (four chords in sequence that focus the ears on a tonic triad at the end of the pattern) they are only partially tuning their instrument. They have only focused on a few notes, so tuning is still very active.

He further elaborates with an explanation of how the tuning expectations have changed over time and how there has been an evolution in not only his outlook on the tuning process but in the students' outlook as well. He shares how their understanding of what they need to do as active listeners with regard to the tuning process has grown over time.

It used to be – okay, we have tuned and we are now in tune and we are done. But now the attitude is – we need to *actively* work to stay in tune. Sometimes it sounds terrible the first couple times but eventually it gets going. You can see it in their faces. They have to hear it and feel it for themselves. Listening can't be active if they are always waiting for me to tell them what they need to do.

Corporon (1998) describes this as “listening in progress” and suggests that the main challenge when rehearsing and performing is to “create active listening skills in the players which help them to stay physically involved and mentally engaged in the musical process” (p. 75). One of these “active listening skills” as described by Corporon is made manifest in the rehearsals I observed by students demonstrating that they understand they “need to actively work to stay in tune.” They know that they have to stay “physically involved and mentally engaged” in order to stay in tune. As Mr. Britt reminds us, “They have to hear it and feel it for themselves.” No amount of telling or analyzing can substitute for the active bodily engagement that eventually lets you see “in their faces” that they get it.

Where Did that Sound Come From?

Several of the student participants share how it feels and sounds different to be in front of the band as they conduct the warm-ups once each quarter. They speak of how the directionality of the sound is different and how the sound is coming directly at them instead of bouncing around the room before it gets to them like it does when they are sitting in their normal place in the ensemble. They say how it felt like the sound was coming at them from different places at the same time when the one melody in *Incantation and Dance* was split between several players seated in slightly different positions in the ensemble. And they

share how sometimes it seems that sounds are easier to hear when they were coming at them from a particular direction, either from behind or the side.

Ihde (2007) suggests that sound is both omnidirectional and directional, that “the field-shapes of sound include both directionality and surround ability” (p. 77). He suggests that these two dimensions of auditory field spatiality are “constantly copresent, but the intentional focus and the situation varies the ratio of what may stand out” (p. 77). This noematic differential in sound awareness may help to describe the variances in student accounts of their aural experience based on their different location orientations and areas of focus. They hear differently when they are in front of the ensemble than they do from their seats within the ensemble; they hear differently when the sound source emanates from multiple points as is the case in the contrapuntal section of *Incantation and Dance*; they hear differently when they are actively focusing their aural acuity on a particular sound element or section of the ensemble.

Seeing is hearing – and believing. Claire mentions how sometimes it seems that if she could see where the sounds were coming from, it is easier to hear them. She says:

When I am playing and when I actually see the instrument in front of me I hear them better. I also think I hear things better when they come from behind me, even though I can't see them.

Claire's observation suggests that her intentionality, affected additionally by her vision and, therefore, influenced by what she can see, may alter the ratio that determines what stands out to her from an auditory perspective. Because she can see the sound source, it is more present to her awareness. Paradoxically, she says

that sometimes she believes she can hear things better “when they come from behind me,” even though that visual reinforcement is not present. Even though she is unable actually to see the sound source, is this a manifestation of the directionality of that particular sound source, given that it might be coming from an instrument that is highly directional by nature, such as a trumpet or trombone?

Easier to hear what’s coming toward us. Kristy shares Claire’s opinion that the direction from which the sound comes has an impact on her ability to hear it:

I have a harder time listening to things that are in front of me. It’s easier to hear what is behind me and to the side. I understand you have to listen across the ensemble especially to the bass lines – the tuba and the low reeds that are on the other side of the band. You really have to listen for that but it’s just harder from where we are to do that.

When I ask the students if they feel that they could hear those instruments that were playing behind them better because they were playing *toward* them, Claire responds with, “That could be it.” Rob continues this thought thread by sharing his perspective from the trumpet section:

From where I sit, I hear a lot of percussion. I guess that makes sense because I sit right in front of them. And I hear a lot of tenor sax too, since they are right beside me. But when it comes to upper woodwinds, well, I don’t hear anything. So when Mr. Britt says play softer so we can hear the woodwind runs, I can’t hear them anyway so I can’t tell the difference.

For Rob, his location in the ensemble (behind the upper woodwinds), makes it nearly impossible for him to hear them, since they are doubly removed from his particular sonic orientation. They are not only non-directional instruments (as opposed to a trumpet or trombone), but they are also separated from his ability to hear by the physical body of the student playing the instrument.

This provides two layers of sonic buffering between Rob and this particular sound source. Is it any wonder that he can't hear the upper woodwinds?

Visual and aural implications. These student recollections indicate that their visual as well as aural perspective influences how they hear the various voices in the band from their particular spatial orientation in the ensemble. Ihde (2007) speaks of how spatiality affects how we experience the sensation of hearing and how that experience can change over time or when influenced by changes in our sense of that spatial orientation. He cites how a blind person who gains sight through a medical procedure undergoes a change in the way they experience sound. It moves from a more omnidirectional orientation to a gradually more forward focused orientation. Although not the same experience, there are implications here for how and what students hear depending on their directional and spatial orientation in the ensemble. What way are they facing? What do they see? What is being played toward them? What is being played away from them? What is between them and the sound source they desire or need to hear?

Although Ihde (2007, p. 65) writes of the relative omnidirectionality of sound, the juxtaposition of the visual and aural perspectives that the students experience in the band setting complicate the listening task placed on them when playing in band. As Ihde (2007) reminds us, "The intentional focus and the situation varies the ratio of what may stand out" (p. 77), so even though the sound is relatively omnidirectional, its manifestation in the ears, minds, and body of the students is affected by a variety of factors that intrude in some way on this

omnidirectionality. The relative spatiality and directionality inherent in each of these sensory experiences sometimes helps to clarify what is happening, but at other times confuses and obfuscates. The listening task incumbent on the students when playing in band is complex and multifaceted. It is one that this director and his students take quite seriously. Paradoxically, however, sometimes that critically important listening task may need to be sublimated in order to achieve a particular musical result.

The Listening Paradox

Listening is clearly a critical skill for members of any musical ensemble. But, is listening what we always want our students to do when they play in a large ensemble? Is there a time when listening is *not* the best idea? If so, when would that possibly be the case? What could be gained by this seemingly counterintuitive action?

During an earlier accounting of a warm-up activity, Mr. Britt mentions briefly to the students that for this particular exercise, they should not listen. They should just “play it where it goes.” The exercise was essentially a direction that contradicted most of what they had been learning to that point. However, the ensemble challenges inherent in *Incantation and Dance*, based on the nearly constant interplay between isolated down and upbeats shared across the band, made it necessary for Mr. Britt to take a different approach to the idea of note placement, from a decidedly temporal standpoint. Two particular sets of instructions he provided to the students about how to approach this task caused

me to think more deeply about the relationship between what we see and what we hear as members in a musical ensemble.

Don't listen – just play where it goes. The first of these thought provoking instructions came as a part of the rehearsal I observed approximately two weeks prior to the adjudication, where the pace of the warm-up seemed to me to be nearly exhausting in its speed and variety. Mr. Britt had the students play one particular warm-up in a number of different manifestations. The one that struck me from the idea of ensemble precision and a micro sense of temporality was when he split the band up and had the brass play only the downbeats and the woodwinds play only the upbeats. The initial result was what we might call a musical train wreck. It was very unsteady and imprecise. Mr. Britt responded to that unfortunate performance with the direction that they should change their thought process. He said, “Don't listen. Just play it where it goes. If you listen you will be late.” He essentially told them that all of the previous learning they had done up to this point about the importance of listening should be discarded for this particular situation. The task that Mr. Britt had placed in front of the students required them to play independently of their listening because the delay in the response time for their instruments to speak (if they had waited to actually hear the preceding eighth note) would have made them late, just as he had said they would be. In this situation, the students had to step out of their normal paradigm of listening to embrace a different approach to ensemble precision, one predicated more on watching and thinking than on listening.

The “to listen or not to listen” question above, and the angst that might accompany this contradictory instruction for a student, reminds me of an experience from my own high school years where the musical demands of a particular setting required an atypical approach to the music. When playing jazz, especially in a swing style where eighth notes are not of equal value as they are in classical music settings, it is generally necessary to play certain rhythms without consciously waiting for the downbeat that precedes the subsequent upbeat. If you were to do that, like the students in the exercise above, you would be late. My director had said that if I waited to actually count the downbeat rest, by the time I played, the upbeat note would be past already, just as it would be for the students in this band who were waiting to hear the preceding downbeat before playing their upbeat. The temporal realities of reaction time made listening the wrong thing to do in this instance. Because of that reality, both of these examples were situations where listening was, paradoxically, not the best idea. It was of much more importance to “just play it where it goes” as Mr. Britt told his students, because “if you listen, you will be late.”

Eyes for tempo – ears for everything else. The second set of thought provoking directions came as the ensemble was rehearsing in the final days before the adjudication. In this rehearsal Mr. Britt reviewed general instructions that he felt might help the students achieve more success in the different environment where they would find themselves on the evening of the performance. His advice for the students that related to ensemble precision connected back to that experience they had with the warm-up where the brass and the woodwinds played

alternating eighth notes. He urged them to think about their ensemble precision task in the following way:

You need to lock on to the tempo with me and I will lock on to the tempo with the percussion. You will be using your eyes for tempo and your ears for everything else. If you do that you should be fine.

He was instructing them when to listen and when *not* to listen. The upcoming performance would present these challenges just as Mr. Britt had anticipated. However, the differences between the stage where they would play for the adjudicated performance and the rehearsal environment where nearly all of their pre-performance preparation had taken place, turned out to be more of a factor than even their director had anticipated. What happens when the students' ability to listen and respond as they have been so well prepared to do is interrupted, altered or removed nearly entirely? How might it feel for a sighted person to suddenly be thrust into total or near darkness and have to continue with an activity that depends heavily on the sense of sight? What does it feel like when the sounds you are used to hearing in a certain way are either modified or absent all together? And perhaps most importantly, in what way does the confluence of these changes to multiple sources of critical sensory input affect the perceiver?

The student experience of hearing differently, feeling differently, and consequently playing differently on the unfamiliar stage played a profound role in the quality of the final performance. In Chapter Seven I explore student accounts of the performance itself in an effort to understand better their experience of performing this program for adjudication on an unfamiliar stage.

CHAPTER SEVEN:
THE UNFOLDING:
THE ADJUDICATED PERFORMANCE

In Chapter Six I explored the various activities that characterize the extended period of rehearsal preparation that precedes an adjudicated performance. The rehearsal, both in its individual manifestation and as part of a larger rehearsal cycle, is a learning laboratory where most of the learning occurs for the students and where many of the individual and ensemble challenges that await the students and their director are addressed. This chapter addresses the performance itself and includes an exploration of that morning's rehearsal, the adjudicated performance that evening, and the sight-reading experience that immediately followed the stage performance.

Dufrenne (1973) suggests that music and architecture share a similar organizing theme based on a "secret affinity between the temporal and the spatial" (p. 272), a theme that plays out in music through the material organization and the temporal manifestation of the aesthetic object itself. Within the individual and the overarching rehearsal structures, are not the students and their director building a capacity for performance that is structured similarly to how an architect moves from concept to drawing to model to finished product? Within the circularity of the rehearsal process, the complex essence of the music is only superficially attended to at the outset. Only through carefully organized and choreographed uncovering of the essential building material of the music and the performance skills of the students, both existing in fundamentally temporal as well as spatial

ways, can the construction of the capacity for successful performance be achieved.

Many skills, techniques, attitudes and ways of thinking are developed within the rehearsal structure and have a significant impact on the quality of the performance. Many of the learnings are also of the type that transcend a focus on one particular performance and have broad applicability to performances in general. One of these skills, the skill of listening in all of its many manifestations and applications, is one that these students had been particularly well prepared to demonstrate. They had spent much time successfully developing skills of hearing in different ways and applying those skills to their individual playing and to the playing of the ensemble as a whole. Paradoxically, many of the challenges that faced the ensemble in their actual performance were related to that skill of listening and were affected by alterations to what the students could hear and how they were able to interact with that modified aural environment at the performance.

What might it be like for the architect who has drawn plans and constructed scale models, to be advised, just as construction is to begin, that all of his plans need to be modified because the site and concept-specific materials he has planned to use are no longer available? In a similar way, the tools, skills and plans that had been developed by these musicians were, at the performance, no longer available to them.

A Morning of Possibilities

O'Donohue (1997) says that "The dawn is ... a time of possibility and promise" (p. 2). The rehearsal begins as usual as this school day dawns for the students and their director.

Just Like Any Other Day

This is the day of the adjudication, and the band goes about their normal routine of playing mini scales in various keys and with an array of different articulations. After they play their four chord harmonization in the key of B flat, Mr. Britt stops the band and has them sing the chord and then play it and then play the unison tonic note. Van Manen (1991) reminds us that "Children need security and safety so that they can take risks" (p. 55). And since Green (2003) asserts that making music "is more than a little scary because the possibility of failure is always in play" (p. 4), is Mr. Britt's clear adherence to his normal routine on this, the day of the adjudication, a pedagogical gesture of caring for his students? Is this a planned effort to solidify his students' feeling of safety and security, by not deviating from their normal routine?

The challenges to come. As they continue the warm-up, Mr. Britt suggests that they now consider the balance element a bit more. Their playing immediately takes on a more controlled character and demonstrates that they are listening more carefully for other voices. His next statement hints at the challenges coming with the different acoustics of the unfamiliar stage, a factor that represents one of the risks alluded to by van Manen (1991) and reinforced

through Green's (2003) depiction of music making as "more than a little scary" (p. 4).

Okay. Remember the warm up will be our time on stage to get a feel for that balance element. Remember it will be like any foreign stage. It will sound strange. Really listen and focus back. The judges will be making some decisions in their minds about the coming performance but it isn't set in stone so go for it. I'd hate for us to sound tentative. Make it musical and have fun with it. (Mr. Britt)

Mr. Britt, through his declaration that "I'd hate for us to sound tentative," seems to be advocating a similar approach to Green (2003) when he advises that it is time to "take the leap and *dare* to make music, the fear of failure be damned" (p. 4).

Several days earlier in a brief conversation Mr. Britt had shared his concerns about moving from the band room to the stage, initially talking about his own school setting, but with the knowledge that the difference would be enhanced by the stage at the performance site. "The moment we run this on stage will be the moment it falls apart. It happened last year. The sound changes and then the kids change." What is it about the kids that changes? Ihde (2007) reminds us that there is an inherent "fragility of the musical phenomenon" (p. 221). Does this fragility represent the catalyst for the changes to which Mr. Britt alludes? Ihde (2007) asserts that this is not just due to the presence of other sounds in the auditory field, but the potentially detrimental effect of changes in the musical presence of the sounds that *are* intended to be heard and experienced. Mr. Britt seems to understand the potential for a detrimental effect when "the sound changes and then the kids change." When I ask Mr. Britt if he has a plan to forestall the "strange stage" issue, he shares two possible scenarios: the best but not really

feasible choice, and a next best choice that was feasible and that he planned to put into effect.

Well, we could do what the Westminster High School marching band used to do before their big BOA marching band show at Towson University and rent out the stadium so they could rehearse in the actual performance site. That approach is a bit over the top, but it would directly address the issue. We could take busses to the adjudication site and play on the stage beforehand. Or, what we end up with as our best feasible option is that we just go for it. The students lock in on me and I lock in on the percussion. I tell them that they need to use their eyes for tempo and their ears for everything else and they should be fine. Theoretically, that is.

With those final three words, Mr. Britt is acknowledging that his plan, although feasible and a theoretical possibility, still possesses a layer of uncertainty and may not work exactly as conceived.

Keeping it relaxed. Aware that there would be issues on the strange stage, Mr. Britt continues with the rehearsal in a way that retains the general focus of prior rehearsals, where the students alternate modalities of musical practice between playing, singing and listening to continue to develop and enhance their experience of the music through a variety of lenses and perspectives. He also continues to display the relaxed approach to interactions with the students that several of them had shared was such a powerful de-stressing force within the rehearsal. Mr. Britt seems to be demonstrating what Deasy (2005) suggests is a fundamental aspect of creating the “third space in schools...a place within which young people and adults...are liberated from...the fear of failure...a space where students and teachers succeed and do so together” (pp. 116-117). And on this day, of all days, would it not have been easy to lose some of that relaxation, remove that liberation from the fear of failure, and inadvertently raise student stress levels

instead of remaining steady and focused? Two examples of this relaxed approach that were alluded to in Chapter Four include his re-visitation of his pencil check policy and his lighthearted dismissal of the tenor sax player's errant note in the one beat of rest where there is to be complete silence in *Incantation and Dance*. Either of these could have escalated into an unpleasant exchange or rebuke in a different setting with a different director. But here, the focus was on de-escalation and, to paraphrase the British mantra from WWII, keeping calm and carrying on.

This final rehearsal is plagued by many similar little mistakes and losses of clarity, but the director ends the rehearsal by explaining how his expectations are more focused on recovery than about perfect execution:

Successful bands are often not so much about execution but about recovery. Because anyone, even professionals, can mess up a note but only good musicians can recover, and we recovered from that last little issue and that was really good. That is the idea. (Mr. Britt)

It seems that Mr. Britt adheres to the concept that music is more about process than about product, and that the final destination (the performance) is no more the determining factor of success than the musical journey that has taken the student musicians to this point.

As he dismisses the group he shares how he felt about the tempo in their final run through of *Incantation and Dance*. As is typical for his approach, the comments are laced with an undertone of humor that the students understand (based on the laughter that followed) and appreciate. He says:

This piece is one of those pieces that just naturally wants to accelerate as you go so about that last run through, I am very happy. In terms of tempo, it didn't run away. If you start to feel the tempo do that – be sure you look up. My job is to put together the average of all of our tempos into the stick and that way we can meet at this point (shows the end of the baton) right

here. I don't want to go any faster because that will be a case of – “okay; you are on your own – meet you at the end – good luck.”

He then asks them what time they need to be there that afternoon and they respond in unison with “Four.” He closes the rehearsal with “See you at four o'clock. Have a relaxing day.”

In the Moment and Reflecting Back

The ensemble's performance that evening is excellent in many ways. It is very musical, very technically competent and displays many of the attributes that characterize this ensemble. However, a variety of performance issues occur for the first time that evening, and based on the reflections of the students after the fact, the unique nature of the space in which they were playing had a lot to do with those issues. To a person, the student participants in the inquiry share that what they could hear on the stage was significantly different from what they were used to hearing in their rehearsal space, and this difference affected their experience in a variety of ways, most of them negative.

The Sound Went Up and Out and Just Disappeared

The students have the opportunity to hear a recording of the performance during the band class a few days before the full group conversation from which most of these recollections are drawn. That experience of hearing the performance from the different perspective of the microphones in the concert hall itself allows the students to contrast more clearly what they hear on stage and what they hear on the recording. The students speak of how the contrasts are often stark and they highlight how the aural experience for them on stage is dissimilar from the perspective that one might have in the audience or from the judge's seats. Several

students mention that they couldn't hear much at all from their place on stage and share how that reality significantly handicaps them when it comes to doing some of the things that had almost become second nature within the rehearsal atmosphere. Rob shares:

When I was on the stage I could not hear anything. It was like I could hear no other voices - like the low brass didn't exist, so I had nothing to listen to in order to tune. And when we listened to the recording I could really hear the intonation issues across the band. And they hadn't existed before. I'm pretty sure that happened because we couldn't hear and adjust. It was like the sound went up and out and just disappeared.

Rob's description of this phenomenon reminded me of an outdoor concert I had conducted with my high school band early in my teaching career. It took place in an idyllic setting, on an outdoor stage with a lake in the background so all of those in the audience would be able to see the lake behind us as we played. It was indeed a beautiful locale, but because of the fact that the stage had no back wall to help with sound projection, we experienced a similar feeling to Rob's description of the sound simply going up and vanishing with absolutely no reverberation or resonance to assist us with either tuning or ensemble precision. The concert was in a lovely place from a visual and aesthetic perspective, but it was severely lacking musically because of the very setting that was so attractive. Dufrenne (1973) writes that "The aesthetic object often requires its own background...to inspire respect for the work" (p. 151). He further asserts that "Drama demands a theater which completely encloses the production both to focus on it and to protect it" (p. 151). In this outdoor concert setting from my past and in the present day adjudicated performance of which these students were part, there was *not* a complete enclosure of the production "both to focus" and

“protect.” That requirement was not met and the aesthetic object was compromised.

In both of these settings acoustical support from the lived space in which we were working was not provided, and the ability to perform effectively was significantly and negatively impacted by that setting. Ihde (2007) identifies listening as “to be dramatically engaged in a bodily listening that ‘participates’ in the movement of the music” (pp. 155-156). Rob’s recollection that the “sound went up and out and just disappeared” made it impossible for him to “participate in the movement of the music.” Similar to the acoustical reality of the outdoor concert from my own experience, Rob describes a situation where, despite the fact that the music is generated from the performers themselves, the spatial and acoustical considerations of the environment prohibit the music performers from actually hearing their own musical product. Thus, the performer is denied the opportunity to be fully engaged in the bodily listening that Ihde (2007) describes as essential for full participation in “the movement of the music” (p. 156).

Uncanny Emptiness

Jefferson, our percussionist, agrees with Rob’s listening difficulty assessment and adds:

I could hear the tuba but it was almost like he was playing piano all the time. When I was playing timpani and I was trying to tune, because we often have the same pitches, it just wasn’t working. I could not really hear him most of the time. And the fact that you can’t hear makes it impossible to tune. If you can’t hear what the other pitch is – you can’t attempt to match it. You just can’t match what you can’t hear.

Ihde (2007), when describing the disengagement of sound says, “Emptiness which can be uncanny is silence in the auditory dimension” (p. 83).

For both Jefferson in this recollection and for Rob in his, the silence that is occurring in their auditory dimension is indeed an emptiness that is uncanny as well as debilitating. Neither student is able to interact with their musical environment in the way they have been able to in the past because of this disengagement of sound. The sound has been there in the past for both of them, but it is no longer there at this moment, and this silence is incapacitating in fundamental ways. The fact that Jefferson knows that he shares pitches with the tuba and has been able to hear and adjust in the band room but is unable to do so on the stage, is very frustrating for him. He continues:

It affected our ensemble precision as well. We have this rhythm at the end of Jupiter – between the timpani and the saxophones. And we always hit it spot on in rehearsal – it’s always been there. And when we listened to the recording it was off. I guess that happened because we couldn’t hear each other. And in the moment on stage, we couldn’t even tell we weren’t together. It was very frustrating to hear because it had never been a problem before.

The silence that Jefferson felt on that stage was both incapacitating and frustrating. He was unable to match pitches with the tuba or to discern that he was not playing in time with the saxophones on a part that had never been a problem before.

What You *Can* Hear and What You *Can’t* Hear

Based on what I had heard in rehearsal and what I could hear from backstage at the performance, the performance was good but not as good as it could have been, partially because of the very different acoustical properties of the stage and how that affected the students’ ability to hear. What you could hear and what you couldn’t hear were huge factors in the student experience –

especially as it related to what they had been accustomed to hearing and listening for, with the goal of better intonation and better ensemble precision. Jefferson goes on to share something that made me wonder if the listening difficulties were exacerbated by the fact that this ensemble had been so thoroughly prepared to listen carefully and respond accordingly:

This one spot, it was always pretty solid and then we played it and thought – “What is going on here?” It was something we weren’t used to hearing and responding to because it had never happened before.

Could the challenges faced by the students in this ensemble on this stage have been the manifestation of an exaggerated negative effect because of the instructional focus on – and subsequent reliance on – using listening as a tool for addressing pitch, balance and tempo issues? Were the very tools they had developed and brought to bear on making the performance of a higher quality actually working against them because of the acoustical properties of this stage and the impact it had on their ability to hear? Ihde (2007) suggests that “In attempting to listen to music for itself we become more rather than less sensitive to introducing noises. As purists, each minor distraction becomes apparent, each scratch, each external noise distorts the music itself” (pp. 221-222). Are the student musicians actually *more* rather than *less* sensitive to the differences in the aural field in which they are working, precisely *because* of the fact that they are attempting to focus their attention toward a particular musical presence? Are they, as Ihde (2007) describes, exhibiting an enhanced “vulnerability in an increased openness to the environment’s total presence?” (p. 222).

How Can We Balance What We Can't Hear?

Kristy points out that the ensembles the students heard before their performance didn't seem to exhibit any evidence of having this same type of difficulty:

When we were sitting in the hall and listening to the groups before us, you could hear the resonance and everything. It sounded like you would have expected it to sound, so we didn't think anything of it. But when we were actually on the stage it sounded and felt totally different than what the other groups did when we were out in the audience. It was just so hard to adjust since we were used to being able to hear everything. It just felt wrong, off balance, you know? I mean, we didn't notice what *they* didn't hear on stage because we weren't on stage. We heard it from the audience perspective. We heard the overall effect. One of the judges had talked about balance on the recording and I thought, how can you balance what you can't hear?

Kristy's last statement is an almost verbatim and equally frustrated reiteration of the quote from Jefferson when he says "You just can't match what you can't hear." The students are vexed in a variety of ways because of their inability to hear as they have become accustomed. They speak of not being able to match pitches, achieve a sense of ensemble precision or to achieve balance. Based on their recollections, the students' ability to attend successfully to these three different elements of the same overall musical task is unilaterally inhibited by the changes in the level of presence of particular musical sounds within their aural field while on stage in performance.

Jefferson remarks about how the sound is different to him on the recording than it was as he recalled it from the performance itself:

On the recording, the whole band sounded more cohesive than we did on stage from where I was playing. Out in the audience, where the microphones were placed, it sounded a lot better than I first thought that it did, based on how the recording sounded.

The Effects of Aural Anarchy

I ask the students how hearing things differently affected the way they felt when they were playing. Jefferson relates:

It kind of made me feel a little bit shaky, so I was hesitant with some of my entrances. Like on the impact points on cymbals in Incantation and Dance. Some are syncopated and I didn't want to come in early but I also didn't want to be late.

Claire remarks that the trumpets seemed to be very far away and that was strange for her because she was so used to listening to them playing. Ihde (2007) writes that "With the experience of echo, auditory space is opened up" (p. 69). For Claire, this space was opened up, not by echo, but by the distancing of sound that was strange and unsettling in its dissimilarity. It made her nervous because it became a much different atmosphere than that in which she was used to playing. Rosie agrees with this and says that it not only changed how she had to approach her role in the band, but it had an impact on her mental state as well.

You really had to be independent and you had to really watch Mr. Britt. Like somebody said, I couldn't hear a thing except the clarinets and occasionally the trumpets. I usually don't watch Mr. Britt too much because I can usually hear and feel the rhythm, but on stage at adjudication I nearly looked at him the whole time because I couldn't hear anything. That really changed a lot – how we played – how we felt – the whole dynamic of the ensemble was different – it kind of messed with our heads.

Kristy has similar thoughts about how this different acoustical environment affected her mood and behavior on stage. She agrees that she usually only looks at Mr. Britt for entrances or endings or beginnings but:

When the tempo started rushing I looked up from then on because it just felt like things weren't quite lining up right. Don't get me wrong, it wasn't

bad; it just didn't lock in like it usually did. That did make me a little nervous, I have to admit.

Jefferson, Claire and Kristy each speak of the changes that occurred in their mental and physical states as a result of the differences in what they could hear while performing. Green and Gallway (1986) assert that "If you find yourself in a situation where you are overcome by your doubts and fears, you may be unable to focus on your task" (p. 85). While none of the students explicitly stated that they were overcome by doubt and fear, the fact that the situation made Jefferson feel "a little bit shaky," caused Rosie to reflect that it had "messed with our heads," and made Kristy "a little nervous," clearly indicate that there were perceptible changes in student mood and comfort level during this performance, and suggests that they may have been less able to "focus on their task" than they had become accustomed.

Shifting Into Survival Mode

Jefferson has similar thoughts to Kristy's about tempo and reflects that most of these problems might also be linked to them not being able to hear what they could usually hear in the way they were used to hearing it:

We were focusing more on just staying together which sort of takes away from the focus you can give to things like musicality and nuance. We were too busy just watching Mr. Britt – trying our best to listen to what we *could* hear. It just made it so much harder to put any attention into phrasing. We kind of got into a survival mode as opposed to "let's really show what we can do."

Jefferson takes this line of thought further and brings a sense of temporality to his narrative when he shares:

It kind of felt like – when we couldn't hear each other and we were just trying to keep it together – that we were going back in time to one of the

beginning rehearsals when we first played the pieces. We seemed to have lost all of the musicality just trying to get through it. It wasn't like it was sight-reading because we knew the parts, but it was like the first time we played it together. So it was like reverting back to the beginning stages of ensemble preparation. So many things we were capable of – and that usually happened – just weren't happening.

Jefferson seems to suggest that the finer points of the students' performance ability had been temporarily cast aside because they had been pushed into a metaphorical corner where survival, and not the expression of musicality, was the ultimate goal. The students' potentiality in performance had been compromised in a fundamental way. Where they once were eager and able to express high levels of technical skill as well as ensemble sensitivity, the rapidly escalating aural incongruities of their situation caused them to revert to a more primal place where simply getting from point A to point B in the music now superseded any nobler musical outcome. It was, as Jefferson put it, as if they had “lost all of the musicality” and reverted to “the beginning stages of ensemble preparation.” So much of what they were capable of doing musically, was now no longer accessible to them because of the deleterious and unsettling impact of their strange aural environment. Heidegger might indicate that these students were “thrown” into the world, that their particular *being-in-the-world* was within a context *not* of their own choosing. And clearly this “thrownness” had a powerful effect on the state in which they found themselves, their “mood” or *“Befindlichkeit.”*

Kristy speaks of how she felt that the band's generally pretty high level of confidence fell during the performance because people heard things differently and started to doubt themselves:

I think people couldn't hear the things they had become used to hearing and then they started to doubt themselves and play with less confidence. And then that feeling kind of spread throughout the group.

During the class period after the performance where the recording of the judges was being reviewed, Mr. Britt asks the band if they agree that as they got toward the end of Jupiter that the sound of the group got heavier and slower. He hadn't noticed when they were on stage, but as he listened to the recording and heard the judge comment about that, he had to agree that they were indeed going slower there and that he did not feel that way onstage. A woodwind player in the band responds to his question and offers the following observation about tempo maintenance and confidence levels, and how they seemed to be intertwined as they changed throughout the performance:

Near the end when he said we were slowing down, I remember feeling less confident at that point. From where I was sitting it sounded worse than we just heard on the recording. Because you couldn't hear anything anybody else was playing. After about nine minutes of playing you get tired so I was thinking that it was a combination of nerves and fatigue and like – we were thinking it didn't sound as good as it really did. It was like as the adrenaline was wearing off, we just didn't have the energy to keep fighting that feeling that it just didn't sound like it should.

This woodwind player makes a compelling argument that nerves and fatigue operated in a uniquely synergistic way to undermine the ensemble's ability to maintain that elusive tempo.

Things Sounded and Felt Different

The student recollections of their experiences on stage were complex and multidimensional. They spoke of disruptions in their ability to hear, changes in the way the ensemble members could communicate with one another, and ways in which the differences they heard and felt on stage changed their emotional state. It

was at times as if they were all either speaking in unfamiliar languages or were momentarily deafened as one might be after experiencing a particularly loud sound. They shared many ideas about how the experience was different for them from an aural and spatial perspective.

They said that things simply sounded and felt different that evening on that stage, and this affected their ability to perform at their best and as they had been prepared so well to do. Their sense of confidence and comfort with the music was seriously called into question because of how they heard and felt things differently on the stage. Some of those concerns turned out to be unfounded, based on how the recording of the ensemble sounded to them after the fact, but their experience on the stage was different enough from their expectations that their ability to perform at their best was compromised. The very things that they had become so competent with, the interactive listening and ensemble awareness skills that were such a large part of their preparation, could in fact be perceived as having worked to their disadvantage since their perceptions onstage were so different from what they had been used to experiencing. They had become, in a very significant way, a victim of their own success.

And Now for Something Totally Different: Sight-Reading

The final portion of the adjudication process for band and orchestra festivals in the state of Maryland is an ensemble sight-reading experience, where the band is presented with a completely unfamiliar selection at a level of difficulty one grade below what they performed on stage. Once the students make their way into the sight-reading room (typically another rehearsal room in the high school

where the adjudication festival is taking place), their director has several minutes to study the score while the ensemble members sit quietly. The students are then instructed by the sight-reading judge to turn over their music (which has been face down on their stands) and study that music for a three minute period as their director talks them through the unfamiliar selection. Once the three minute study period is completed the band commences a run-through of the selection for the judge to listen to and adjudicate.

This part of the larger adjudication process is perceived by some in the field to be in many ways more difficult and more of a true test of student musicianship than the performance of the prepared program. The rationale for this belief stems from the fact that the students and their director have to think and perform in the moment and with very little preparation, thus demonstrating the reading and musical skills that they have learned throughout their experiences in band, as opposed to simply presenting a carefully prepared program that may or may not actually demonstrate any transferable learning. In a sense, everything demonstrated in the sight-reading room is transferable knowledge and skill because nothing can really be prepared except the requisite skills and ways of thinking needed to read and perform competently an unfamiliar piece in a very short period of time. In the professional music world, many ensembles are regularly called upon to do this very task: perform with little or no rehearsal. In those situations, the ability of the musicians to negotiate music successfully at sight is not only important, it is critical for professional survival. These young musicians are certainly not being subjected to that level of scrutiny, but the

principle remains that one's ability to navigate and perform unfamiliar music in a successful manner is a profound test of one's level of musicianship that tests the ensemble from a very different perspective than the experience on the stage with the prepared program.

Divergent Opinions

I did not personally hear the band when they did their sight-reading, but I was in the room for the comments that the adjudicator shared with the band immediately following the run-through and which appear in Chapter Four. Student and adjudicator perspectives about the relative success of their performance in the sight-reading room diverged greatly from one another, but after reflection the students came to understand why the judge felt the way he did about their efforts. Once they moved to the *judge's* window in O'Donohue's tower of windows, they came to appreciate a heretofore unseen and unheard perspective on their performance.

Kristy has quite a bit to say about the piece and their performance in the sight-reading room.

I didn't like the sight-reading piece at all because I didn't think it showed our ability as a wind ensemble as to how epically awesome we are (laughs). It was easy but it was hard too. Like it was the same really complicated rhythm over and over, but it was like it was hard just to be hard. It was like the meter was complex just because it could be, not because it needed to be.

In this recollection, Kristy makes a frank and realistic assessment about the quality of the piece used for their sight-reading performance, highlighting its contradictory nature of being easy but also hard. She says that it seemed to be hard for all the wrong reasons, not musical reasons, or ones that had any aesthetic

value. It was difficult, just because. She continues by sharing how the judge's comments initially seemed to be so incongruous to her and totally unaligned with her own assessment of the band's performance.

Initially I was shocked when he told us we did a really good job with it. I thought, "What did *you* just hear?" But he understood the challenges and how we worked to overcome them. I remember he pointed out the snare drummer who he said did a really smart thing that saved the whole group from what could have been a real train wreck. He got lost (that wasn't the smart thing) but he immediately looked up at the director (that was the smart thing) and must have said to himself – "Okay, forget the music – I am watching you and we are going to make this work somehow. I might have to make it up" – and he did – but it made sense and he stayed in time and the band ended together.

In this recounting of what transpired in the sight-reading room, Kristy relates how the drummer took a very courageous and, in retrospect, very wise leap of faith that worked out for everyone's benefit. The drummer made a mistake but immediately compensated by deciding in that moment to trust his director to help him navigate his way to the end of the piece. By displaying what Covey (2006) describes as "the one thing that changes everything" (p. 1), this percussionist placed himself in a position where he was able to demonstrate this most "pragmatic, tangible, actionable asset" (p. 2) that had been created by their director.

Frustrating but Revelatory

Jefferson confirms that the seemingly endless repetitions were in many ways the most challenging part of the piece, and he was frustrated because he felt that really didn't prove anything about how good the group might be. He feels that it might only prove that a group could count all of those interminable repeats:

We had repeated rhythms for like fifty bars in a row. So I am watching Mr. Britt and then I look down at the music and I think – uh, oh – which one of these repeats am I on? I agree with Kristy that it was hard for all of the wrong reasons.

This sight-reading experience, while frustrating for the students in the short term, showed a lot about the ensemble. It demonstrated things about their general musical and technical ability, their ability to respond to challenges in the moment, and it demonstrated the level of trust that this ensemble has in their director. Several of the students had earlier mentioned that they felt Mr. Britt “had our backs” or was there for them when it was needed. During this sight-reading experience, he was certainly needed to help them navigate through the maze that was the selection being read. From my perspective as a judge, under those types of stressful circumstances, you can really tell what ensembles trust their director and what ensembles don’t. The ones who have not learned to trust their director will bury their faces in the music as if all of the answers are hidden on the page for their hoped for illumination in that moment. The ones who trust their director look up to him / her for help making their way through the difficult times. In this instance, this was not a metaphorical allusion. This was concrete behavior. The students knew they needed help to negotiate this piece, and they essentially forsook the music and invested their full faith in their director to get them through the challenge at hand. And, although very messy in many ways, the performance demonstrated profound evidence of a pervasive level of trust that exists between the ensemble and their director. Covey (2006) asserts that trust “changes the quality of every present moment and alters the trajectory and outcome of every

future moment of our lives” (p. 2). The trajectory of this moment in their lives was indeed altered, for the better, by trust.

The performance also exhibited clear evidence of the ensemble’s ability to problem solve in the moment, a skill that their director holds in high regard and discussed in the rehearsals leading up to their adjudication. That very morning he had shared with the students that, for him, it is more about recovery than simply execution. And recover is what they did in the sight-reading room that evening.

Looking and Listening Back: Post Performance Reflections

At this high school, the full orchestra shares wind players with the wind ensemble, and since the two groups rehearse at the same time, and since the full orchestra adjudication performance was on Friday night of the same week as the wind ensemble’s Tuesday performance, the wind ensemble did not meet again in their entirety until the following week of school. During that rehearsal, they engaged in an unusually thorough and reflective review of the recording of their performance and a thoughtful critique of the judge’s assessment of their performance.

I Want to Know What *You* Think

Mr. Britt displayed the completed judge’s sheet on a screen (with his final ratings obscured from view) while the group listened to the judge’s audio commentary from that evening. Mr. Britt was deliberate in his efforts to keep the final rating from influencing the students’ opinions about their performance:

After listening to the recording we will go over the judges’ comments and then we will go over the scores. You may have heard the final results, but just hold that out there if you can. I would rather have your opinions not tainted by the actual judge’s rating. I want to know what *you* think.

Their director was, in effect, trying to establish a sense of predispositionlessness within his students so he could hear from them what *they* really thought of the performance. In this way he was continuing to display the trust and respect for the students that had so fully permeated the rehearsal atmosphere leading up to the performance itself. Was he suggesting that their opinion was in many ways as valuable as the opinion of the judge? That would seem to line up with what I observed as a focus on self and peer evaluation as a means of improving their playing and understanding of the music. Their opinions matter, he seems to be saying. Based on what I heard and observed in that reflective listening activity, and how student input was engaged regularly and always respected, their opinions really did matter, even if they diverged from those of the judge, as some did.

Thoughtful Discourse and Student Engagement

It is interesting to note that student engagement in this process was not only encouraged but validated. Students were honestly being asked for their opinions and if they agreed with or disagreed with the judge. Student engagement in thoughtful discourse and reflection was the valued outcome of this particular classroom experience. Students were being asked to unpack what the judge said and then to insert their own opinions and perspectives into the conversation, focusing on critical analysis, reflection and interpretation.

As Mr. Britt plays the recorded judge's comments for the students, he reminds them to take into account their own impressions as they listen, and not to

just accept whatever commentary the judge provided as unquestioned truth. After the warm-up selection he asks them:

Does anybody have any reactions or an impression? It can be a reaction or simply a follow-through on something he said. Do you think he is right – do you think he is wrong? Is he inaccurate or accurate? Do you disagree with something he said?

In response to this last query, a woodwind player asks, “What he was saying about the sound of the snare drum – isn’t that kind of opinionated? Like based on how you might feel as an individual?” Mr. Britt responds:

To a degree, yes, but I think we would probably agree that the sound was not as resonant as we might have liked. He is a percussionist, this judge, so he does know his way around the various sounds you might want from the percussion instruments. But that was a good observation and reflection.

Later in the process Mr. Britt brings up an interesting aspect of the judging process when he mentions this to the students:

Hopefully you are reading between the lines. Sometimes what is very significant is what is *not* said. Not just what is commented on, but what is left un-addressed. Does it mean that it is fine or that it is good enough? There are a lot of comments he just is not making, like, wow, that is hardly out of tune at all. And based on the level of scrutiny he is applying to certain percussion sounds, you can bet he would be talking about things being out of tune if they were. And he is not. He is not making a lot of those comments because he doesn’t need to because these chords are in tune. We did a lot of work on that and generally it paid off, even though you have said it was really hard to hear on that stage like you usually can in rehearsal.

Not all positive aspects of the performance were acknowledged by the absence of negative commentary, however. There were numerous moments when the judge did comment favorably about a particular element of the performance. A little later in the program, this judge singled out one of the percussionists for praise when he said, “Awesome job on the tambourine roll – nice!” This comment

was greeted by widespread applause for the tambourine player and smiles aimed in his direction from throughout the band. This reminds me of how the band students responded to a particularly successful student conducting performance from early in the rehearsal cycle. The students were exhibiting genuine happiness for their fellow student musician and his success as recognized by the judge.

Later in the same piece the same judge followed a litany of specific commentary about tone color and pitch in percussion instruments and an incorrectly muted trumpet part with a “Nice job clarinets” that immediately resulted in the clarinet students delivering an audible “Yes” and dealing high fives all around the section. While these were very straightforward positive comments, perhaps because of their proximity to a string of specific critical thoughts, they seemed to stand out in their simplicity and positivity. Just as a bright spot of paint is more obvious to the eye when viewed against the background of a spotless canvas, so are these positive comments revealed in phosphorescent clarity when heard against the contrasting background established by the judge’s more critical commentary. And through that enhanced clarity, they are not wasted on the students who clearly appreciate hearing them.

Reflecting From a Distance

Two days after the group had the opportunity to listen to and comment on the judge’s reactions to the performance, I met with the students for our final conversation. I made a comment in my introduction to that last session that this conversation was taking place later than I had originally hoped it would. But then I shared that this fact might turn out to be a good thing, actually, since some of the

students had mentioned in their final journal entries that their perspective about the performance had changed with that passage of time. David mentions how he really appreciated the judge comments and his careful attention to detail. He also mentions how each time that he performed the music that it seemed to change and that having a brief respite between listenings allowed for some fresh insights and perspectives:

It's always nice to hear another perspective on our performance, and this particular judge we listened to had plenty of advice to share. And, hearing everything again after it was on the shelf for awhile opened up a few new thoughts about the whole performance, at least for me. For example, the occasional minor tuning or tone problems seemed much more minor than they had at the time, and some of the spots that I had thought had rhythmic and technical issues turned out to be fine too. Maybe it was my nerves, but that night it felt like I heard every slight mistake in timing or balance as being completely awful. Of course, that's ridiculous, but that is what I felt. It's interesting how your perception changes when a little time passes.

On stage, David's sense of proportion was altered by the strangeness of the setting and his "state of mind" at the time, a state affected by his nervousness and heightened awareness of every little mistake. In retrospect, he says that his overly negative assessment at that moment was ridiculous, but it took that distance from the actual event for him to be able to appreciate the reality. As van Manen (2003) asserts, "Phenomenological reflection is not introspective but retrospective" (p. 10). David is reflecting on his lived experience in a recollective manner. He is reflecting on experience that has already passed and that has been lived through, and through that retrospective lens, he is able to see the experience with more clarity, removed somewhat from the emotions of the moment.

Kristy has a similar thought about the passage of time and how it affects one's perspective. However, her thinking is more focused on the music itself and

how her perspective about the music changes over time. She starts out by saying, “It’s funny how the mind works, and that you would change your opinion about something as you spend more time with it. I guess it’s kind of like getting to know a person, and how a little time apart makes you think about them a little differently.” She goes on to share how her attitude toward the piece develops as they move through the rehearsal process, and how as she has the opportunity to learn more about the larger scope of the music and not just her individual part, that her thoughts about the music change as well:

It’s interesting that most times when I start singing parts to the music of either of the pieces, most of the parts I sing aren’t even my part. It’s like you don’t realize what you really like until you reflect on it and really think about it, sometimes with a little extra distance, like taking a break from the music. I mean, it would have been no fun to just sing my part because the actual rhythms come from my part *plus* the other parts. So while I am singing I add on to the rhythms up until I get the whole picture. And you can’t really do that until you learn what else is happening and that only comes with time and a little distance and reflection.

Kristy sees and understands the music in a more holistic way now that she can reflect back on it and consider it in its completeness. This was not possible until she learned more about the full scope of the music and about the other parts that, together with hers, constitute the totality of the work.

Understanding the Message Behind the Work of Art

Kristy carries this analysis further returning to her idea of the music and the experience being similar to that of reading or taking part in a play:

When I look at music, I read it as if I am reading a book. The first time through it’s like you don’t really notice the detail or the big picture. For music that would be the articulations, the dynamics, the style. You don’t realize the syntax or voice or word usage or subtext until you read it over again and analyze the text (or the notes) and see or hear what really makes it tick. You don’t realize why the composer or the author put this there or

wrote this that way until you think it over and go back and think it over some more. It doesn't really matter if it's a book or a play or a piece of music. You have to get the detail and the big picture too. And if you are going to perform either this piece of music or something with words, you have to figure out if you as the performer are conveying the message that was intended. You can't really do that unless you understand what it is about and what it means.

Reimer (2003) alludes to the fact that "Music is a way of extending our emotional lives, through the novel and customized forms of response it calls for to create and share it" (p. 89). He goes on to illustrate what he sees as a parallel relationship between how creating and performing music does for feeling what writing and reading does for reasoning. It seems that Kristy is thinking, at least in part, along those same lines as she makes connections with the idea of understanding the message behind the work of art, be it the written word or the written notation of music. Her concluding thoughts about these parallels touch on a particularly interesting and provocative idea about real life experience and how art forms, while often based on real life, are also paradoxically conduits of escape from that reality.

It seems like they both have the power to draw you away from reality even though they both come from real life experiences. So in truth, the experience is someone else's experience that you re-experience. But for us as musicians, we only re-experience that experience when we play the music. When we make it come to life. Does that make sense?

In fact, that very idea does makes sense to Dufrenne (1973, p. 4) in as much as "when the composer's job is done, the performer's begins. The work has been finished, but it has not yet been made manifest and present...these signs (notes) do have a meaning for me – a musical meaning, of course – they usher me into the presence of the work...the musical work is itself only when performed:

thus it is present.” Reimer (2003, p. 47) also believes that “At the core of music is the power to “in-corp-orate” (from the Latin *corpus* = body) meanings – to give meanings corporeal actuality for humans to experience. In much the same way as the music was present for the composer; the music becomes alive again through the performance, or as Kristy suggests, it is a “re-experience of someone else’s experience.”

In the final chapter, Chapter Eight, I explore the ways in which the counterpoint of student experience opens avenues into a wide range of pedagogical possibility. Questions of purpose, reality, and relationality guide the interpretative reflections that address the many reflective and refractive experiences through which the students have journeyed. The ideas of trading places, risks and rewards, and relating to the unknown allow me to dig deeper into the student experience and offer possibilities for prismatic and polyphonically enhanced professional practice, thanks to the shared experiences of the students and their director.

CHAPTER EIGHT:
REFLECTIONS AND REFRACTIONS:
POLYPHONIES OF PEDAGOGICAL POSSIBILITY

Listen to the counterpoint around you
at the dining table
on the train
on the street
in your own mind

Counterpoint is the natural state of things:

note the various branches of a tree,
on separate paths with one purpose;

the members of a family,
alone and dependent;

the intricacies of the anthill
and the exquisite lines formed by
migrating birds;

the canon of seasons at any one
moment throughout the planet;

the infinite counterpoint of
thought-feeling-dream-memory-imagination
in your mind at every moment
of your life. (Adolph, 1996, p. 45)

Throughout the process of sharing this experience with the students, I have tried to listen to the counterpoint around me. This counterpoint is found in the student and director conversations, within the rehearsals, on stage at the performance, and within my mind as I sort through the multiple melodies being contributed to the overall contrapuntal nature of this phenomenon. Adolph (1996) suggests that “Counterpoint is the natural state of things” (p. 45), and these “separate paths with one purpose” help to clarify the polyphonies of student experience that help to bring a deeper understanding to this phenomenon. I have

both purposefully and inadvertently viewed this contrapuntal experience through the various windows O'Donohue (2004) suggests await one's gaze in the inner tower of the mind (p. 127). I have looked at the experience through the window of a former band member, sitting in the ensemble, just like the students. I have peered at the experience through the window of the director, standing at the podium trying to make everything make sense for the students and insure the best possible performance. I have experienced it from the position of the supervisor who is constantly thinking about approaches he might suggest be taken by the director to ameliorate a particular performance issue. And I listen to the group as if I am the judge who makes the assessment at the adjudication itself, commenting about the music to myself or in my notes as they rehearse. It is as if they are on stage and I am at the desk in the back of the performance hall writing on judging sheets and speaking my commentary into a recording device for their future edification and analysis.

The themes that emerged throughout the inquiry were many and varied. Based on student recollections and from my observations and interactions with the students and their director, the experiential dimensions that seem to have the most resonance, both within the rehearsal and in the larger context of the full cycle of preparation, fall very broadly into the five areas of reflectivity, respect, ownership, understanding, and change. While there is some permeability between these broad thematic areas, they each have resonance and significance as discrete entities as well, and they are made manifest in different ways within different contexts and from different perspectives. In the spirit of phenomenology, where

the end is to develop pedagogical insights that will inform practice, the final section of this chapter elucidates pedagogical possibilities that have presented themselves in some way throughout the preceding narrative, but that bear reiteration and recapitulation for enhanced emphasis and clarification.

Reflecting on “Purpose”

I remember living this type of experience from each of these vantage points. The one thought that keeps percolating up from my subconscious is – why do we engage in this adjudication process? What is the overarching purpose? What is to be gained? Perhaps more importantly, however, is the question of how does this process of adjudication help or potentially inhibit the actual growth of student musicianship? Is it reasonable to believe that all band directors and students engaged in this process find fulfillment and growth in it?

Does the focus on the product itself, the adjudicated performance, preclude or obscure the music making that often characterizes what happens within the rehearsal setting? Is there not magic in some rehearsals that is not replicated at the actual adjudicated performance? Based on the commentary shared by these students after their performance, it seems that many of the most profoundly positive musical experiences for them were those that occurred in the rehearsals themselves, and not on the stage at the adjudication. Within the musical world, there are many “others” who reflect back to us the reality of a musical performance. These “others” may include the director who shares feedback during the rehearsal or the adjudicator who provides feedback during the festival performance for later study and reflection. But is it possible that the most

important “others” could be the students themselves after hearing a recording of their performance or after listening critically to their peers within the scope of a rehearsal? As it relates to the students’ musical experience, it seems that they were indeed significant “others” who reflected back to themselves and each other the reality of the musical performance that occurred within the rehearsal.

What is it that tells the pedagogical tale when it comes to high school performing ensembles? Is it the final performance on the stage or is it the experience the students have within the rehearsal? Is it their performance acumen in the moment or the enduring knowledge they gain? These students demonstrate a high level of competence with the technical and musical challenges within the repertoire they are studying. But do they truly understand the music simply because they have demonstrated the technical competence needed to re-create the notes on the page? Are they performing well and with understanding? What does it *mean* to perform with understanding?

Reimer (2009) begins his interrogation of what it means to “perform with understanding” by reminding us:

Throughout its history in the United States the music education profession has devoted much if not most of its energies to teaching young people to sing and play instruments. (p. 202)

He goes on to describe what I heard and saw in the ensemble from which the student participants for this study were drawn:

The level of performance of the typical school music groups – bands, orchestras, and choruses – is often remarkably high, especially in that most members of those groups have no intention of pursuing performance study in any serious way after graduation from high school. (p. 203)

While two of the graduating seniors in this study, David and Jefferson, are indeed continuing with some type of musical pursuit in college (David is playing in a concert band and jazz band at his university even though he is a physics major, and Jefferson is a music major but still undecided about which music track to formally pursue), most of the students in this wind ensemble are not continuing with music in their post high school years. Yet, as Reimer (2009) suggests is often the case, the ensemble performed at a very high level (earning an overall superior rating) at the adjudicated festival that served as the culminating performance for this study.

Reflections or Refractions of Reality?

Like the counterpoint that surrounds us, the multiple sources of feedback and reflection found in student, director and adjudicator analysis and commentary all have value for those who are looking for insights and ideas for musical growth. But there remains the question: whose reality is this? Is there only one reality that is *reflected* back to them, or is what they see and hear and feel *refraction*, where different aspects of the reality of the performance come forth for apprehension and understanding like the many colors that emanate from a prism, as a single beam of light is refracted into a spectrum of possibilities? This may be just one of a multitude of possible polyphonies embodied within this experience. For the students performing on the stage, what they hear, see and feel is *their* reality. For the director at the podium, what he hears, sees and feels is *his* reality. For the judge sitting at his desk listening and writing comments, what he hears, sees and feels is *his* reality.

Often these realities may seem to demonstrate a need to be reconciled with one another since they initially appear to be in conflict. The students and their director do not hear the same things in the same way. The judge hears different balances than the students hear from within the clarinet section. From the left side of the ensemble the percussion may sound too loud, while from the right side it is in balance with the other voices. How do we experience the differences between what we hear in the moment of music making and when we listen to the recording afterwards? The students shared that two of the judges who heard the same performance made conflicting commentary, as if they were listening to different bands. Ihde (2007) suggests that “Sound dances timefully within experience. Sound embodies the sense of time” (p. 85). For those judges who seem to be hearing different bands, is their sense of the sound dancing within a different experiential timeframe? Since the same single entity is being experienced in different ways by different people, this may be best described as a prismatic window into the phenomenon, one that casts a variety of colors out from the single beam that enters the prism.

At least two of the festival companies for whom I judge make it a point to require their judges to diverge from one another’s scores by no more than five points so that conflicting messages are not conveyed to the bands and their student members. While this expectation for higher levels of congruence between judges calls for communication and collaboration between judges, it does not preclude the occasional occurrence of clearly contradictory commentary that the students in this inquiry shared was part of their experience the preceding year.

That experience was puzzling to them, as if the judges had not been listening to the same performance. Without the careful deconstruction of the judge's comments through thoughtful student and director engagement, as was the case in this situation, the opportunity for confusion and frustration among the student musicians would have been a distinct possibility that could cast the entire process into question as to its value as an accurate reflection of their performance. These students were provided with a way to understand how the variety of colors or perspectives that emanated from this metaphorical prism all originated in that single beam of light, the performance itself.

For these students, as for any musicians, only by being outside of themselves in some way, either by listening to a recording of their performance or by trusting a peer or mentor to offer commentary, can they gain the reflective knowledge that is critical to continued growth and musical self regulation. Only by trusting others or by trusting in technology to recreate what has already transpired, allowing us to re-experience it, can we open ourselves to gain the self-knowledge and insight necessary to grow as a musician. However, just as we might want to have multiple references for someone we seek to hire, we also might benefit from multiple sources of musical input for consideration and reflection.

The possibility for contrasting interpretations of the same event brings to mind the parallels between the adjudication process and the overall idea of hermeneutic phenomenology. In a way, the adjudication process as practiced is an applied example of hermeneutic phenomenology, with a few notable twists.

Effective adjudication includes both description and interpretation with the added aspect of critique. As with hermeneutic phenomenology, it is not enough to carefully describe an experience or phenomenon; it must be interpreted as well, albeit through a different interpretive process. Are not the most valuable adjudication experiences for students and their directors those that are characterized by this balance between description and interpretation? Based on the recollections of these students, they appreciate and respect the detail and general congruence between what the judges say and what they, the students, hear on the recordings of the performance.

Refractions of Relationality

As with the pedagogical approach of the most effective teachers, there should not only be description or judgment, there must be interpretation and explanation so there is understanding and not just compliance. The students in this inquiry commented numerous times that they were made to think and to listen and to reflect and not simply to do this or do that. They actively were involved in the learning process. Their director had accurately described his approach as being a “constructivist” approach that was less deterministic and provided more of an opportunity for students to “discover” what he wanted them to learn, and for their own meaning making as well. Understanding and self actualization were major goals of all of the pedagogical activity that was observed by me and described by the students.

To think, to listen, to reflect. Throughout the process of learning this music, the students were made to think, to listen, and reflect and in many ways,

engage in a particular relationality with the music. Reimer (2009) acknowledges that many public school performing ensembles do indeed perform at a very high level and should be understandably proud of that achievement. His caution, however, has more to do with:

what students are or are not learning beyond the level of proficient sound production; learnings that cause their singing and playing to be musically authentic, genuinely expressive, fully artistic, and thereby deeply satisfying for themselves and their audiences. (p. 203)

Based on this caution one can return to the question, are the students performing with understanding? For this to be the case, students have to experience a certain type of lived relationality with the music, one that takes them on what Leinsdorf (1981) describes as “a personal search for the deeper truths in great music” (p. 209).

One of the factors that struck me about the nature of these students’ experiences was that they were characterized by a high degree of engagement and self-actualization instead of simple repeated and skillful parroting of what they were told to do. The students were challenged to think and to make decisions without being fed every direction. In line with Mr. Britt’s predilection for applying his “constructivist” approach to rehearsal, the students shared (and I observed) that they were often asked for their input and for their perspective on how something sounded or felt to them. The students were regularly asked instead of told. In this and many other ways, the students were participants in this process beyond what might be considered typical for most high school band students. The sense of relationality between the students and their director was much more balanced and reciprocal than many settings where nearly all learning is directly

predicated on what the teacher tells the students. Here, we find much more give and take, more back and forth, more engagement and reciprocity. Students were caused to think about what they had just heard or played. Was it in time? If it wasn't, what was wrong with it? Who was rushing? How might we fix the problem? Was that last section in tune? If not, who was out? How might we go about fixing it? These types of interrogations are directly in contrast to the type of teacher controlled or dictated instructional approaches that Reimer (2009) suggests are characterized by

the correct production of notated sounds as instructed to do so by a teacher who makes every substantive decision about how those sounds should be made. (p. 203)

In these situations, students never develop the ability to make their own musical decisions because they never get the opportunity to learn how.

A broader pedagogical vision. The students in this study, as well as the other members of the wind ensemble, routinely were called upon to engage with the music in more than a performance-only manner. They felt permission and were given the opportunity to fail, so that they might learn how to succeed. Many ensemble directors (me included) who choose to prepare this level of repertoire might feel compelled to focus nearly exclusively on the performance specific tasks. Students in these situations are often not afforded the opportunity to engage with larger issues such as learning to listen, changing the way they experience their roles in the ensemble, (by singing, clapping and otherwise changing performance modalities on a fairly regular basis), or by conducting the group in warm-ups during each of the four quarters of the school year. Each of these

activities took away from the time the ensemble could have been directly addressing specific performance issues. However, with a broader pedagogical vision in mind, these activities provided the students new ears with which to hear their ensemble, and a new place (from the director's podium) from which to see and experience the music making process. These different modes of experience were noticed and appreciated by the students as they made their way through the macro adjudication preparation process. And the student experience was fundamentally changed, and made more profound and memorable, because of these opportunities.

A more polyphonic experience. The second concern that Reimer shares about the quality of many school musical performances is related to the long term consequences of an approach to instruction that is “narrowly conceived and limited in focus” (2009, p. 204). Those ensembles that focus solely on the execution of the technical and discernible musical aspects of the performance itself fall into this category. As is often the case, many of these ensembles perform with great aplomb and proficiency. However, what do students take with them after this experience is over? Do they only have the ability to play these particular pieces exceedingly well, or have they learned transferable musical skills, knowledge and understandings, and have a broader musical perspective because of the breadth of their experiences? Schultz (2003) cautions that “Although direct instruction might produce a rise in test scores, it is questionable whether these methods are successful in engaging students in learning past their relatively brief time in school” (p.74). In so much as the test scores that Schultz

alludes to are in many ways the allegory of the adjudication ratings attached to the band's adjudicated performance, the question remains, what is the goal – the rating (the test scores) or the broader learnings that might or might not find their way to discrete manifestation in a rating or test score?

Mr. Britt mentions specifically that “these students need fresh repertoire for every performance” and their breadth of experience is enhanced by this attitude and practice. How might they have been limited in their musical experiences if their director had been so obsessed with producing a nearly flawless performance that he only programmed what was to be judged and began the preparation process on that repertoire as soon as school started in the fall? While that approach may indeed produce a technically superior performance, it would certainly fall into the category that Jefferson so eloquently describes as being characterized by “the law of diminishing returns.”

In many ways, the decisions made by this director as to how to approach the repertoire selection and rehearsal process, are very much in line with the suggestions made by Reimer as being the manifestation of a relatively recent and fundamental shift in instructional focus in nearly all curriculum areas. He credits this general reconceptualization of instructional purpose to the influence of national standards that are more geared to the development of broad and comprehensive understandings as opposed to being more narrowly focused on discrete and measurable performance objectives. In many ways, the students in this ensemble are experiencing a more comprehensive and fully manifested interaction with the music and with their ensemble because of how their director

structures their learning opportunities. They are experiencing band in a much more diverse and multifaceted way than students in many ensembles would. They really are seeing the experience through a prism as opposed to the monochromatic perspective that might characterize a more narrowly focused pedagogical enterprise. Their experience is more polyphonic, and is alive with more possibility. They are seeing and hearing the music; they are listening to themselves and others; they are feeling their contributions as well as those of their peers; they are experiencing music making through multiple kinesthetic and aural windows; they are engaging deeply with reflection and critique and are coming to a much deeper awareness and understanding of the music, their ensemble, and themselves in the process.

Is the Journey Really the Destination?

Mark Stryker, the music critic for the *Detroit Free Press*, in his forward to Barry Green's *The Mastery of Music*, suggests:

Music – indeed, all art – is less about perfection than process. Or to put it another way, great art is often defined as much by the journey as by the final destination. (2003, p. 4)

This message was heard by the students during their last rehearsal before the adjudicated performance: the band's performance should be more about recovery than execution. The clear implication for the students was that human error would present itself and that the true tale would be told by how well the students applied their broader learning to the task of responding to the myriad unanticipated issues that affect any performance and would surely affect theirs as well. Since the context of this particular performance is an adjudicated setting, it is fair to ask

how much of this learning is audible and recognizable by an adjudicator who has never heard the group before and does not have access to what has gone into the performance preparation. Does the performance itself, when considered as the destination, either fully reflect or potentially repudiate the learning and experiences that have transpired during the process of preparation? Is it possible that the performance is really simply another part of that journey and not a destination after all?

These questions revolving around the issue of adjudicated performances in general, lead us to the idea that it is critically important for there to be a well developed philosophical approach to the entirety of the preparation process (the performance included), and that students and their director understand what each of the facets of the process means to the overall pedagogical potential of the activity. The students involved in this inquiry regularly would speak about the multiple ways in which they interacted with the music and with each other. They shared how their different rehearsal experiences changed the way they saw, heard, felt and understood the music, and how these insights made them better able to present a performance that made musical sense both to them and to those who would listen to their various performances. By revisiting some of these student recollections of their experiences in preparation, performance, and reflection, I endeavor to distill what I believe are profound insights and awakenings of meaning that may have relevance to others who work with students as they prepare music for adjudicated performances.

Knowing the Score: Reflecting on the Forest *and* the Trees

...All too many members of our profession should know more about music. They have been trained to learn only those parts of a work written for their own instruments. It is as though they were espionage agents allowed to know only a tiny part of a grand strategic design. If it were in my power to arrange, every musician would possess and know the full score of every piece played and thereby come to appreciate wholly the beauty that he helps create. (Leinsdorf, 1981, p. vii)

These words, written by noted conductor Erich Leinsdorf about musicians in professional symphony orchestras, could easily be modified to apply to the instructional process in public school performing ensemble classes. When I observe classes and rehearsals, it often seems as if the teacher is trying to hold back some type of secret recipe for learning, as opposed to operating in an atmosphere of full disclosure when it comes to their thought process and the bigger picture of the learning outcome. Even through the sharing of class objectives, as most administrators expect their teachers to do, many secrets are kept by the teacher, either by design or by default. And many of those secrets that are not revealed for the students amount to missed learning opportunities.

The students in this ensemble pointed out several ways in which they were overtly let in on what their director was thinking so they would have a better and more complete understanding of what was going on and what they should be learning. Rosie shared that when Mr. Britt gave them a copy of the score to *Incantation and Dance* it was very helpful because what they thought was very complex and difficult was actually much more easily understood when they could see how it all fit together. Rosie said that “When Mr. Britt showed us how they go together and what all the different rhythms sounded like, our rhythmic accuracy

and ensemble precision improved, and we saw the piece as more simple and straightforward than we thought. It helped me a lot.” The expressed goal for this rehearsal was to “demystify the piece and show the students that it was actually pretty simply constructed.” By taking the mystery out of the rhythmic construction of the piece the students were able to connect with the music in a way that would have been nearly impossible had they not been made privy to their directors’ insights and understandings about how the music was put together. Had the students experienced the more traditional approach of focusing on each individual part (the trees) instead of pulling back from the detail and sharing the big picture (the forest) the students may never have gained the deeper understanding of the rhythmic construction of the piece and their playing and understanding of the music would have been less well developed. Had they not been let in on the secret, would they not have remained on the outside looking in? Only through the act of moving from their mental place in the process to a different metaphorical window (one with a decidedly more panoramic view) as O’Donohue (1997) suggests, were the students able to apprehend the larger context of their parts and consequently perform them with a higher level of understanding and competence.

Reflecting on Context: From Me to We

The location where students most often find themselves in a band setting is their seat in their section. This generally unchanging location typically stultifies any opportunity for them to hear or live the music in any way other than how it is perceived from that one seat in the ensemble. The students in this ensemble were

obliged to move off of their metaphorical island in the midst of the sea of the large ensemble and were given access to the experience of standing in front of the ensemble, both as a listener and a conductor, with each modality of experience bringing new insights and awarenesses. The experience was profoundly impactful for many of the students in the study. Their general observation was that they moved from a “me” focus to a “we” focus. As Kristy said,

It opens you up to the fact that it’s not just about you and your section – it’s about everybody in the band.

Refractive Roles

Another impactful change in the modality of their experience occurred for these students when they were called upon to sing regularly in the warm-up and rehearsal. Their music making became refracted into several different forms of sound production and sound awareness. Each of their forays into an aurally different context caused them to experience both listening and sound production differently than if they had only been asked to play their instruments. Although performing with competent technique on their instrument is usually enough of a challenge for most students, this additional complexity of working in different modalities as a way of enhancing student listening sensitivity adds a significant level of musical and aural challenge and sensibility.

As several of the students shared, the experience of singing their parts, either within the warm-up period or in the rehearsal itself, significantly changed the way they experienced that particular musical moment and gave them a new appreciation for and understanding of their role. Claire suggested that when they sing it’s as if they are all playing the same instrument and that they are more

readily able to hear things like rhythmic cohesion or intonation since there are no longer different volume levels or tone colors to sort through. Rosie echoed this sentiment when she shared that she felt it was easier for her to tune to her like-instrument duet partner than when she was playing a duet with a student playing a different instrument. David cited the fact that he felt that singing the parts removed a layer of technical demand, as if the mechanics of the performance were different and a layer of physical complexity was removed. He suggested that not actually having to play his instrument allowed him to “free up thought capacity” so he could better listen to everyone else. Each of these students noticed and appreciated the difference in their sonic environment that was, for them, a normal part of their rehearsal process. And doubtless, each of the students gained much in the way of aural acuity and listening sensitivity because of these opportunities.

Ihde (2007), in a comparison of Husserlian and Heideggerian approaches to gaining a phenomenological position, cites that while the former is focused on a progressive bracketing of presuppositions, the latter is aimed at the “gradual loosening of calcified interpretations” (p. 219). In many ways, the students in this ensemble are regularly engaged in, and benefit from, their own efforts toward the “loosening of calcified interpretations,” most specifically those efforts relating to their aural environment. This “loosening” was catalyzed by the refracted reality of their enlarged palette of sound production and awareness modalities. Their single white light of understanding was broken into a rainbow of different existential colors, providing a richer and more multi-hued experience.

Toward Listening as the Center

Another fundamental difference noticed between these student experiences and many that I see and hear in my work in classrooms and rehearsal spaces results from the paradigm that guides instruction. As Schultz (2003) suggests, “Placing listening at the center of teaching stands in stark contrast to the trend to hand teachers prescriptions or scripted texts from which to teach” (p. 7). Many teachers with whom I work will ask me questions as if they are looking for the one correct way to deliver a particular instructional message or to achieve a specific performance result. Moreover, they often are saying the right things to their students but there is something missing, and their students are subsequently not being successful because of this missing piece. Many of them are falling into the trap of thinking that *telling* is teaching.

Mr. Britt mentioned that he likes to look at his rehearsal approach as “constructivist,” and that it is contingent on reading what is happening within the ensemble and modifying his instruction accordingly. It is also most always manifest in a seamless back and forth with the students balancing exposition and inquisition. The students are an active part of the process, and Mr. Britt not only asks, but listens. This approach, by which the student experiences are largely shaped, is in line with what Schultz (2003) suggests as a necessary alternative to the typical instructional paradigm. She observes that “The dominant paradigm that guides teaching is telling; a focus on listening alters the role of the teacher and the nature of the pedagogical interaction” (p. 14). This focus on listening in

many ways describes the learning experiences that these students have as they move through the process of preparing music for an adjudicated performance.

Displacing the Familiar: Refractions of Auditory Awareness

Paradoxically, the very nature of the aural environment is at the heart of what characterizes the positive learning outcomes observed and made audible within the context of this study, as well as the daunting challenges experienced by the students when they performed their well prepared program on a very unfamiliar stage. Ihde (2007) speaks of how “It is self-evident that ‘movement’ is a primary phenomenological characteristic of music presence” (p. 220). He goes on to ask if it is also “spatial.” My response, based on my interactions with the students and their own recollections of their experience, is an emphatic “yes.”

Ihde goes on to suggest that in the musical experience,

The comfortable assumptions afforded by ordinary awareness are called into question and the phenomenological shift is one that demands that experience ‘speak’ in a new way...this shift is one that purposely and ‘violently’, if we use the Heideggerian notion, displaces the familiarity of the ordinary. (p. 220)

Ihde (2007) asserts that it is the “fragility of the musical phenomenon” that begins to stand out in relation to the phenomenon of listening to music, and that as we become more actively engaged in the listening process, “we become more rather than less sensitive” (p. 221) to differences in aural stimuli, and that “as purists, each minor distraction becomes apparent, each scratch, each external noise distorts the music itself” (p. 222). Is this not what happened to the students when they experienced the drastically altered aural environment of the concert stage at the adjudicated performance? Because of the intrusions into their

awareness (or the absences from, depending on how one characterizes not being able to hear what they had become used to hearing), their ability to act and respond as they had learned to do was inhibited. Ihde (2007) continues with the assertion:

This fragility of music increases in direct proportion to the concern of attention ‘toward’ it and paradoxically the fringe noises (or silences) of the environment begin to benefit from the attention toward musical presence. (p. 222)

In this way, the students’ increased awareness of and sensitivity to their aural surroundings actually worked against them when they were “thrown” into the completely alien environment of the stage where they were tasked with performing their adjudicated repertoire. Is it possible that, ironically, the students had a more difficult time managing these challenges in part due precisely to the effort, preparation and enhanced attention they were focusing toward handling those same challenges? By having become “more rather than less sensitive” (Ihde, 2007, p. 221), to the aural differences in their environment, each aural “unknown” to which they were exposed chipped away at their focus and their comfort level and exacerbated the differentness of their environment.

“Difficult” Relations

A related insight centers on the manner in which this musical program was challenging. As the students shared early in the process, each of them experienced the technical difficulties in their music in ways that were unique to their particular part or instrument. The woodwind players mentioned the non-chromatic runs as being particularly vexing; the trumpet player pointed out the difficulty of navigating counterintuitive articulation patterns; and the percussionist spoke of

the many repetitions of various rhythmic patterns and how easy it was to lose one's place when playing.

Last year to this year. During the conversations, the students also talked about how the music from the year previous was difficult, but in a different way than this year's repertoire. That repertoire was characterized by high levels of technical challenge, but it was more section specific and tutti in its manifestation. There was less back and forth movement between sections in complex rhythmic interactions that would potentially be more difficult in a performance venue where listening would be more problematic. This year's repertoire included *Incantation and Dance*, a piece that is characterized by significant ensemble challenges requiring listening across the ensemble and lining up distributed rhythmic parts that must synchronize into a single cohesive unit for their execution to be precise and for their meaning to be made manifest. Combine this with the unique challenges of executing a very difficult orchestral transcription with all of the attendant stylistic and string to wind technique transfer challenges, and you have a program with a significant amount of uncertainty built in even without the added element of an unfamiliar and unforgiving stage. Although, in retrospect, the use of "unforgiving" as an adjective for the stage may be a very context specific perspective. Is it possible that the "unforgiving" nature of the stage correlates with the level of aural acuity and responsiveness needed to negotiate successfully the ensemble challenges present in this repertoire? Since these selections call for an unusually complex level of interdependence and relationality between the musicians, it may be reasonable to intuit that a

correspondingly enhanced fragility is present in the aural world in which these students are working.

After hearing the groups before them on the night of adjudication, the students said that the aural deficits they felt on stage when they were performing did not seem to have been manifest for the groups that went before. Might this be related to the relative simplicity or homogeneity of demand that characterized the repertoire the students heard played by the other band to which they listened? Those students may not have been faced with the same level of aural and ensemble complexity in their repertoire, and consequently did not have the same type of contradictory experience as did the students in this ensemble.

The students in this study seemed to clearly understand that their music from last year, although quite difficult, did not present the same kind of ensemble challenges as this year's repertoire. The music was technically difficult, in that it required high levels of technical facility, but it was not as challenging from an ensemble precision standpoint since it was relatively homogenous and involved a good deal of tutti playing. The repertoire this year required a great deal of both independence and interdependence between the various voices and was susceptible to any number of aural intrusions that served as hindrances to a highly precise performance.

Otherness and strangeness. When these students heard the recording of the performance several days afterward, they felt that, in general, things sounded better on the recording than they did to them on stage in the moment of performance. Was that feeling affected by their particular level of aural acuity in

those two very different experiences, one involving playing *and* listening, the other devoted solely to the task of listening without the extra burden of simultaneous performance? To a person, the students shared that, while on stage, things sounded and felt totally different than they had become accustomed to hearing them sound during their rehearsal process. Because of the intrusion of unexpected silences and unanticipated colors and balances, and as the changes in what the students heard affected them, their ability to act and respond as they had learned to do was inhibited. As Ihde (2007) asserts, “Otherness and strangeness is dramatic in the difference of tongues” (p. 118). In a way, the students were being thrust into a situation where things didn’t sound or feel the same, as if suddenly everyone around them was speaking in an unfamiliar tongue. This “otherness and strangeness” created feelings of uncertainty that affected their confidence levels and consequently their ability to show, in Kristy’s terms, “how epically awesome we are.” Jefferson captured the frustration of the situation well:

It kind of felt like – when we couldn’t hear each other and we were just trying to put it together and keep it together – it was like reverting back to the beginning stages of ensemble preparation – so many things we were capable of – and that usually happened – weren’t happening.

Live performance always throws some surprises in the path of the performers, but it seemed that more things were unsettled in this instance because of the unique confluence of how well prepared the students were to listen, and the fact that by and large they could *not* listen as they had been so well prepared to do. For many ensembles, the tasks which they are presented are either so simple or so straightforward that all they have to do is look at their director and play together and they are fine. Playing together is not an issue for many ensembles

due to the relative simplicity of the ensemble demand of the music, even if the repertoire may be very difficult from an individual or collective technique standpoint. For this program, or for any program that is contingent on the performers being able to hear as they expect to be able to hear, it *was* an issue. Is it, therefore, reasonable to surmise that the more interdependency that is called for in the music - the more challenging it is from an ensemble standpoint - the greater the possibility for chaos when the performers are placed in a strange acoustical setting?

Most experienced directors understand that music can be difficult in a variety of ways but the levels to which that difficulty manifests in a particular situation may not percolate up to a level of true awareness until the actual moment of performance. In the moment of performance, when that level of awareness may finally be attained, isn't it too late to do anything about? Or is it possible to develop a readiness within the students to respond to an unknown or heretofore un-experienced challenge? Mr. Britt knew they would have ensemble challenges when they moved from the band room to the stage and had taken some steps to prepare his students for that anticipated reality. However, the degree to which those challenges presented themselves this year, with this music, on that stage, seemed to be of a much greater degree than previous programs presented by this ensemble in other spaces. The fragility of the aural experience, and the dramatic "otherness and strangeness" was experienced by both the students and their director.

Being “in the present” with the music. The music chosen for this program was of substantial pedagogical value, and throughout the preparation of the music for performance much of that value was revealed for and experienced by the students. Even though the group was not able to perform at their absolute best or to their own level of expectation on the stage at adjudication, is it possible that profound learnings took place *because* of these less than perfect conditions and the less than perfect (although still deserving of the superior rating that the ensemble earned) performance? Would a cleaner and more precise performance have resulted in more learning having taken place? Or was the performance simply just another aspect of the full spectrum of the musical experience? Perhaps the process itself, with all of its bumps and bruises, was actually more important to the students’ intellectual and musical growth than the actual performance. In the frustratingly imperfect though overall excellent effort, did these students gain a better understanding of the complexities of live performance, and with it a greater degree of empathy for those who have challenges thrown at them in unfamiliar situations? They were well prepared to play this program, but circumstances beyond their control inhibited their ability to play at their best, and they knew it and were frustrated by it. Green (2003) suggests that “Accepting the world around you for what it is, while also maintaining tolerance for your own limits, leaves you ‘in the present’ with your music” (p. 161). Perhaps learning to be “in the present” with their music was the most valuable lesson they could have learned in this situation.

Putting the importance of grasping at perfection into a student generated context, it is interesting to recall Kristy's comments about capturing the audience when you are performing. Her outlook on the relative importance of technical perfection as opposed to musical impact is summed up in the following message:

I think that even if something is not note-perfect, as long as you capture the audience that is what really matters - because you don't always capture your audience by just playing all the right notes. You have to show that you understand it and can get the message across.

Kristy alludes to a very important concept in her recollection; that it is not enough simply to play the right notes. Something more must be present. The famous cellist Pablo Casals is cited by Blum (1977) as saying that "Technique, wonderful sound...all of this is sometimes astonishing – but it is not enough" (p. 1). The abundantly clear implication is that correct notes and even prodigious technique are not enough to effectively convey the musical message. No matter how impressive it may be in its virtuosity, technique alone will not convey the essence of what a composer is trying to say in their music. As Blum suggests, a sense of wonder, "of touching upon an original experience," (p. 3) is the essence of musical profundity and expression.

Making the Journey Together

Throughout the process of adjudication preparation, these students were engaged in their own pedagogical enterprise. Students were regularly asked to listen and comment about various musical elements of the repertoire under study, whether it was the warm-ups with which they began every class period or the repertoire that would be the substance of the upcoming adjudicated performance.

Interrogative interaction. In one particular observation, the rehearsal moved with an almost relentless pace. There was coaching at each step but also a steady stream of interrogative interaction pulling from the students what was coming next to make sure they were with their director on this breakneck journey through the warm-up process. It was clear that there were high expectations and an implicit assumption that students would be giving this process a very high level of analytical thought aimed at quick problem solving and responsiveness in real time. In this and other rehearsals, students routinely assessed their own playing as opposed to simply waiting to be told what they should have heard. While that might have been quicker, would there not have been far less engagement on the part of the students had Mr. Britt simply told them everything he actually wanted them to come up with for themselves? Based on the number and variety of students from which responses were generated to these inquiries, most of the class felt engaged and welcome to contribute, not just a chosen few.

Refreshing reciprocity. Another example of how the ensemble dynamic was more student-focused instead of entirely director driven could be found in the tone of the rehearsal atmosphere. Each of the students commented about how they felt it was okay for them to “screw-up” in class because their director wouldn’t “jump all over us” for an honest mistake. And there was a refreshing reciprocity in evidence here as well – the director always acknowledged and made light of his own mistakes, setting an example of tolerance and forgiveness that established a trusting and safe atmosphere where both he and the students could work through difficult passages without fear or extra anxiety. Several of the students mentioned

pointedly that even though the music was very demanding and that there was a type of good stress involved in the class, they still generally looked at wind ensemble as a stress-free zone where they were free to relax and immerse themselves in making music together in a non-threatening and mutually supportive atmosphere. The periodic spontaneous applause for especially effective student conductors and the clapping and smiles that were directed toward the percussion section when the judge commented about how “awesome” the tambourine roll was were but two examples of the peer support evident in rehearsals.

Valued contributions. Perhaps the most telling of the decisions of their director as to how much he valued the contributions of the students came when he made the conscious decision to keep all eight flute players in for the exposed opening melody of *Incantation and Dance*, even though this would present an additional layer of complexity when it came to getting the line in tune. He stayed true to that notion of inclusion even in the face of the objection of his first chair flutist who suggested that they cut it down to only a few players. In this band, everybody plays – nobody sits on the bench.

The richness of the dialogue and interactions between the director and the students in the post adjudication class period also spoke volumes about the culture of this ensemble and the value placed on student input by their director. This is where they listened to and offered commentary about their performance and responded to the judge’s reflections on their performance. The students were challenged throughout this class period to question the assessment made by the

judge and to apply their own perspective to the performance. How did they feel about it? Was the judge accurate in his assessment? David agreed with most of the judge's comments when he heard them in the post performance critique. Even though he personally didn't hear it that way, David freely conceded that the judge may have been right.

Routinely the students in this band were asked what they thought of the performance and if they agreed with a judge's assessment. It would have been very easy for the director simply to run down how he felt about the performance and maintain complete control of the process of reflection, essentially removing the opportunity for the students to do any active reflecting, since all of the reflection would have been the director's. This is not what happened, nor is that what typically transpired in these rehearsals. Students were a part of the process, actively engaging in self and peer assessment, either from their seats in the ensemble on this occasion or from the podium during one of their quarterly forays as the conductor. And their input was always valued and encouraged, never dismissed out of hand. A mutually valued and honest reciprocal sharing of opinion was in evidence, especially within the post performance critiques.

Context Matters: Contextual Relationality

Schultz (2003) tells us that "People have the tendency to assume likeness between their experiences and those of others" (p. 12). But, as we have all no doubt experienced at some point, this assumption is far removed from reality, especially in the polyphonic nature of today's society where our students not only come to us from different neighborhoods, but potentially different countries and

cultures as well. And even if they do share a generally common background, as do the students in this study, they each come to us with their own unique worldview and back story. Kristy approaches her section leader role as she does her swimming instruction. Jefferson wants to dabble in composing and tends to think like a composer. Rob is a perfectionist and often loses patience with his section. David is going to be an engineer and is very staid and thoughtful. Rosie is surprised by the fact that she actually likes to be on the podium conducting her peers, and Claire looks for patterns and structures to help her understand her music.

These students are individuals, each with a personality and experiences all their own. If we as teachers assume the likeness between our own experiences and those of our students, how much do we miss in the way of pedagogical potential? These missed opportunities are not only due to our potential ignorance of our students and their lives but also from the fact that we allow our students to continue to operate within their own narrow worldview without any effort made to broaden and deepen their experience base.

Trading Places: Walking a Mile in Someone Else's Shoes

Sam Sommers (2011), a psychology professor at Tufts University, and author of *Situations Matter: Understanding How Context Transforms Your World*, suggests that it is important to break the syndrome he calls WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) and to, as often as possible:

Make yourself walk the proverbial mile in the proverbial shoes of others. If you teach for a living, then attend the classes of other teachers once in a while, sitting quietly in the crowd to rediscover what separates the riveting lecture from the one that sends the audience scrambling for the Sudoku

puzzle. This prescription works in the other direction as well, applying to service consumers as well as providers. If you're a student irritated that two hours have passed without an e-mail response from your professor, stop to consider that your ninety-nine fellow classmates might be making simultaneous requests for attention. (p. 40)

While these particular situations relate directly to his experience as a college professor (or his father's experience as a physician), the message is equally applicable to the public school experience with some minor modifications to specifics. Consider how, with the students in this study, their notion of what the band sounds like changed significantly once they took their director's place on the podium and got to experience firsthand what it is like to conduct the band and be required to listen and function in an entirely different way than they are required to do when they are sitting in their seats as a musician. How would their experience have been different had they *not* been required to do this switching of roles? What about their perspective would have gone unchanged had they not stepped on the podium? Coming at this from the other direction, Mr. Britt mentioned to the students during one particular rehearsal that he had played a particular passage on clarinet on Smart Music and thought, "I played this part on clarinet on Smart Music last night and thought – wow! That's really boring, and it's easy to lose track of where you are." He then sings the part and his students laugh. He feigns a confused look and says "whoa, where was I?" How many directors put themselves in the place of their students and get a feel for what they are experiencing? Through this lighthearted illustration he shows the students that he has taken a step in their shoes and knows what it feels like to lose one's place when playing this repeated rhythm.

Much of what transpires in these rehearsals seems to be focused on changing the way the students experience some aspect of their music making process. It occurs as singing instead of playing, or clapping instead of playing, or conducting instead of playing, or mixing the singing and playing in ever changing manifestations that cause the students to step out of their metaphorical shoes and enter into the experience from another place, standing in someone else's shoes. They are compelled to look at the experience through a different window in O'Donohue's tower of windows. They are moving from the window that only offers them the experience of playing to the window where they are called on to sing. They then move to the window that calls on them to clap, or to the window where they can experience the dualistic nature of singing *while* others are playing. With each movement to a new window, they are hearing with new ears as well as seeing with new eyes. Their perspective on the situation is fundamentally altered and they are taken outside of themselves for that moment in time, and they are changed by the experience.

Risk and Reward: Imagining the Possible

The approach used in this ensemble appeared exceedingly effective at moving students out of what could be characterized as an educational rut, but it has its risks as well. In an educational climate where classroom control is a generally highly prized commodity, mixing things up in this or any number of other ways is a risky proposition because the locus of control is altered and there is a fundamental shift in the climate of the classroom. However, if students are to become independent and highly functioning musicians, don't they need to have

their boundaries expanded in this and other ways? As Schultz (2003) suggests, “It is only by engaging students in posing questions and critique – imagining the possible – that we educate students to participate in our pluralistic democracy” (p. 2). In this ensemble setting, there were indeed elements of a refreshingly pluralistic and democratic approach that engaged students with the music and each other in imaginative and productive ways.

Culture and Climate Change

The climate and culture evident within the rehearsals I observed and about which the students and their director shared recollections was characterized by a high level of student engagement, an unusually high occurrence of rehearsal techniques designed to cause the students to think and listen and feel from outside of what characterizes a typical rehearsal paradigm, and to engage the students in nearly constant peer and self reflection in the pursuit of higher levels of musical self-actualization. My observations and the student recollections of their experiences in their wind ensemble class support the characterization of these rehearsals as fast paced, engaging, thought-provoking, enjoyable, relaxed yet focused, purposeful and productive, and well planned and implemented. Would this pace and content have been appropriate for another group of students? Mr. Britt himself openly questioned if this approach would have worked with another group of students. The content and delivery were carefully crafted for this particular group of students with their unique abilities “they are such good active listeners” and work ethic “most of these kids really seem to thrive on this structure – knowing in advance what we are going to do on any given day.” The

music and the approach were carefully chosen for this particular group of students and their unique set of talents.

The goals for this ensemble were not necessarily to produce a perfect performance but instead were focused on challenging the students in ways that caused them to reach outside of their normal technical and musical worlds, and to achieve something that transcended that particular moment in time on that stage playing that music. It was explicitly shared by their director that he was more interested in the student's ability to recover than execute perfectly, since even professionals drop a note here or there. Perfection in musical performance is an elusive and frustrating goal as we are reminded by Mark Stryker in the prelude to Green's *The Mastery of Music* (2003), when he says, "One has to stop *thinking* about music and actually *make* music. This is a more than a little scary since the possibility of failure is always in play...Music...is less about perfection than process" (p. 4). Certainly one of the instructional targets in this rehearsal plan was to produce the finest musical performance possible under the given circumstances. However, the overarching emphasis on learning to respond in the moment and recover when necessary permeated instruction in an even more organic and ubiquitous way.

In many ways that focus on producing the finest musical performance possible under a given set of circumstances drove the instructional process. But it did not preclude many forays into areas that had broader and more timeless relevance to the students and their macro musical growth, and may have inadvertently lead to less perfection but a more deeply felt process. And in some

of those forays into the broader and more timeless elements of musical experience I believe lie profound implications for pedagogical practice. Through efforts to change what goes on within the overarching rehearsal structure and to make the instructional process more student centered and less teacher directed we may catalyze our own very profound climate change in rehearsal approach and quality of student experience.

Relating to the Unknown

Based on what transpired in the rehearsals I observed and on which the students reflected, there was much more going on here than simply preparing music for several adjudicators to listen to and assess. Students were being challenged to broaden their experience in band in a way that both prepared them for their best possible performance, but that also placed less easily assessed (and managed) challenges in their path, many predicated on their ability to respond to “unknowns” in their experience. Some of these goals were achieved in ways that the adjudicators noticed but the students did not initially fully understand. The lived experience of the students in the sight-reading room, with heretofore “unknown” music, was one of those head scratching moments of bewilderment (“what was he listening to”) that only upon further reflection signified a significant learning.

The on-stage aural blind spots that severely stressed the students’ ability to listen to and adjust to each other as they had been so well prepared to do was an example of what many teachers or coaches might look back on as a “character building” experience. Although the students had been exceedingly well trained to

listen and respond to their fellow musicians, the acoustical reality of the unknown stage denied them the opportunity to perform at their best. The students shared that they were shaken by what they heard, and what they did *not* hear, but that they recovered their sense of self as they shifted their priorities to slightly more basic musical survival skills. They were exercising their newfound ability to “recover” in the moment. They still performed very well, but the fact that they noticed the difference in their ability to hear and respond signifies a developed level of aural acuity that is not found in many student ensembles. These students had begun to benefit from an approach that, as Schultz (2003) suggests, places “listening at the center of teaching” (p. 7). By moving the locus of instruction to the student and the act of listening, we move away from the “emphasis on teaching as telling (that) ignores a teacher’s responsibility to ensure that students become engaged in the process of constructing their own understandings” (p. 8).

These students have indeed been engaged in the process of “constructing their own understandings” and provided abundant evidence of high levels of learning about how to perform effectively in an ensemble setting. And, in my estimation, one of the main reasons these students are able to think this way and respond in this manner to their performance is because, throughout their rehearsal experiences, they were routinely called upon to place themselves in atypical “spaces” within the ensemble. Some of these atypical placements were physical (conducting), while others were experiential (singing, clapping) and still others conceptual in nature (seeing the forest – the full score – as well as the trees – their own parts). Through these experiences they became more responsible for

constructing their own understandings and were caused to experience their music learning in a much more multifaceted and polyphonic way. Similar to how the colors that emanate from a prism when a beam of white light is shone through it, the students were called upon to engage with the music in a multitude of different experiential hues that only begin to capture the full spectrum of chromatic possibilities that exist as potentialities in every rehearsal room.

Prismatic and Polyphonic Practice

As I shared in the beginning of Chapter Four, through the act of reflecting on and interpreting the insights and perceptions of the students and their director that have emerged through these conversations, observations, rehearsals, and performance, I am inspired and intrigued as ideas, thoughts and schemata that are familiar to me resonate as if being heard anew. I have begun to see the experience through their eyes and hear it through their ears. Fortified with this burgeoning understanding of the essence of this experience from their compelling, yet often overlooked and unheard perspectives, I venture forward with possibilities for pedagogical practice. Some of these are familiar, some are unfamiliar, but all are informed by looking through the window of the student perspective. These ideas all emanate from the lived experience of these students as they have interacted with their director, each other, the music, and the many spatial and temporal aspects of this experience as it unfolded over the course of this performance preparation cycle.

Future Thinking

Jerome Bruner (1977) tells us that “The first object of any act of learning, over and beyond the pleasure it may give, is that it should serve us in the future” (p. 17). There is no question that one of the major reasons that students participate in a band, orchestra or chorus, is because they enjoy the experience. Since participation in most of these ensembles is elective and not prescriptive, students do not have to be there. They choose to be there because they enjoy it. But, in keeping with Bruner’s assertion, the act of learning, in this case what is learned within the broad scope of the rehearsal and performance, should “serve us in the future.” What does this mean when it comes to a student’s participation in a band? What is it that they will learn that will serve them and others in the future? Specific transfer of skills and knowledge will be a short term gain if the pedagogical experiences are successfully crafted and implemented. Students will be able to negotiate unfamiliar rhythms better if they have learned how to analyze, disassemble, and reassemble rhythmic structures. Students will play phrases with more musicality if they better understand how to interpret and sustain the emotional contour of a phrase. But what are the longer term goals of this or any musical performance experience, and how do we re-imagine our pedagogy to better address both the short term and long term purposes of musical learning?

Bruner (1977) asserts that in addition to the specific transfer of skills there is a broader way that “earlier learning renders later performance more efficient,” and this is through “the transfer of principles and attitudes” (p. 17). Boardman (1989) applies this to the field of music when she states, “To help students

become independent musicians to the extent of their interest and ability is an unverballed, if not actually stated, goal of every music educator” (p. 2). She further suggests that “The potential for meaningful learning within the music classroom,” where students are engaging in essentially “the same kinds of thinking as the professional musician, albeit at a simpler level,” (p. 3) is a responsibility that all music educators must take very seriously. To focus solely on the level of performance expertise itself, or to focus on “learning ‘about’ things peripheral to music” (p. 3) is to miss the point and squander the potential that exists for meaningful learning in this most unusual of classroom experiences.

Drawing on the experiences shared by the students (and their director) in this inquiry, several key insights related to these broad philosophical perspectives on the purposes of education in general, and music education in particular, bubble to the surface and invite elucidation. Some of these insights relate to the specific experience of music learning, while others apply to learning and human experience in a broader way. It is my hope that reflections and refractions on these various insights may prove to be of value to pedagogical practitioners in the area of instrumental ensemble performance as they work with students now and in the future.

Pedagogical insights. If we are to follow the advice of Bruner who asserts that any learning should serve us in the future, it is incumbent on ensemble directors, indeed for all teachers, to consider the short *and* long term implications of our pedagogical decisions. It is quite easy to become caught up in the challenges of the moment and to lose sight of the larger vision, in this case the

development of independent musicians who are able to transfer principles and attitudes to new and unfamiliar music and situations in musically satisfying ways. Students at all levels of development can make these transfers in ways that render “later performance more efficient” (Bruner, 1977, p. 17), if future-thinking pedagogical relationships have been established and nurtured by their teachers. Enormous potential for meaningful learning exists in every classroom. The challenge is to see past the immediacy of the moment and set the students on a path where they become the instruments of their own learning, not simply the followers of our directions.

Moving Past the Apparent

O’Donohue (1997) suggests that “When we are familiar with something, we lose the energy, edge, and excitement of it...Behind the façade of the familiar, strange things await us” (p. 90). When considered within the framework of education, this façade may be comprised of those things that are most obvious or apparent to us as teachers. Some of this loss of “energy, edge and excitement” may be the result of this familiarity, and some may be a subliminal defense mechanism that we develop to insulate ourselves as teachers from the chaos of conflicting stimuli that characterize so many of our classrooms. This complexity is masterfully captured by Lee Shulman (2004) when he compares the practice of teaching with the practice of medicine:

The practice of teaching involves a far more complex task environment than does that of medicine. The teacher is confronted, not with a single patient, but with a classroom filled with 25 or 35 youngsters....The only time a physician could possibly encounter a situation of comparable complexity would be in the emergency room of a hospital during or after a natural disaster. (p. 258)

Perhaps in part because of this saturation of stimuli, many of us in education tend to over generalize and inadvertently dehumanize our classrooms. We reduce the energy and complexity of the learning environment to a surface veneer that masks much of the pedagogical wonder that can and should characterize the teaching and learning process. Throughout the journey with these students and their director, I have been witness to a deeper engagement with that energy and excitement that, in many places, is hidden beneath the surface of a well run but unenlightening and un-engaging rehearsal setting. Much of what I have seen and heard was aimed at moving into a place of more authentic and deeply realized engagement with and between the students, their music and their director as they moved through the process. O'Donohue (1997) cautions, "Familiarity is one of the most subtle and pervasive forms of human alienation" (p. 91). Therefore, any teacher with a desire to move beyond the apparent, will benefit from making meaningful and authentic connections with their students, and thereby diminish the possibility that the familiarity of the quotidian will cause them "to tame, control, and ultimately forget the mystery" (1997, p. 91).

From a pedagogical standpoint, what does it mean to move beyond the apparent? How do we regain connection with the mystery of the musical process in all of its glorious unpredictability? An example that emerged within this inquiry was the power of moving students out of their normal place in the ensemble as a way of stripping away the veneer of familiarity and allowing them to see and hear and feel the true essence of the music and their place within its realization in a new and powerful way. While challenging and fraught with the

potential for disorder in the classroom, the deeper engagement of the students that can result through a more prismatic approach to connecting with the music is a powerful way to enhance the student experience. Through this enhancement, the students not only improve their ability to think and function as musicians in the act of music making, they also are given access to more of the substance of the musical process than is often hidden within an ensemble experience. While singing, clapping, playing, listening and critiquing are all easily understood to be connected to the music making process, too often they are not a part of the rehearsal experience for students because of the director's perceived need to maintain order or executive control. Perhaps even more disheartening, this may occur simply because we, as the pedagogues in charge, don't respect our students enough to engage them in such a multifaceted way. Schultz (2003) suggests that it is time to move "Beyond scripted pedagogy ... to fashion a way of teaching that puts children's capacities at the center of teaching. This vision of teaching, which recognizes that the humanness of every child is closely tied to notions of democracy, values each person's contribution" (p. 35). Demonstrating respect for our students and their abilities, and engaging with them in a manner that displays this respect, while not exactly a shockingly new idea, is one that is enormously powerful for ensemble directors to consider when planning and implementing their instruction.

Pedagogical insights. Within any pedagogical situation, the veneer of familiarity and ubiquity often masks the organic and naturally exciting aspects of the act of learning. Students most often come to us with wide eyes and open

minds, and it is our responsibility to nurture and develop that innate wonder and enthusiasm, not to quash it through generalization and complacency. What may be apparent through an initial and cursory observation is often not even the tip of the proverbial iceberg. By looking beyond the façade of familiarity and apparentness, moving beyond the one window and seeing the situation, and our students, through O'Donohue's (1997) tower of windows, we may more successfully engage students where they are, not where we assume or expect them to be. The act of moving beyond the apparent can provide us with a significantly more polyphonic perspective on the possibilities that exist for all of our students.

Changing our Perspective: Through the Looking (and Listening) Glass

Many teachers make efforts to move themselves and occasionally their students into a place or perspective that is different from their typical point of reference. If this is done with a well articulated plan and purpose, it may help open new doorways of understanding into a particular experience. In this inquiry, students were regularly and strategically relocated, both figuratively and metaphorically, so that their sense of place and perspective was fresh and different and full of possibilities for new understandings. The overtly strategic and well prepared and scaffolded plan that had each student conduct a warm up with the band was a masterstroke of displacement and reorientation. A director could speak of how he or she hears something from the podium, but until the students step into that place with that orientation, whatever the director says bears little connection to the students' experience or reality.

The pedagogical possibilities that lie within this idea of trading places or changing one's perspective are replete with possibilities and bear consideration by all ensemble directors. Just as the nature of this study pulled me into a vicarious reliving of my years as a member of a school band and as the director, so might a similar shift in perspective allow teachers, as well as students, the opportunity to gain a fresh and illuminating perspective on this particular location and orientation-specific phenomenon. As I heard from the students, things feel and sound different from the percussion section than they do from the clarinet player's seat. And as each of them shared, the experience on the podium was particularly enlightening.

The typical rehearsal approach of many directors is to tell everything from the podium and rarely deviate from this highly centralized, highly structured and highly controlling paradigm. While efficient at promoting improvement in certain performance areas, this approach rarely allows for the students to construct their own knowledge and understandings through their own felt experience. Through carefully focused and scaffolded questions and engagement, and by the establishment and maintenance of a culture that encourages and accepts all student input as worthwhile in some way, students are brought into the conversation. They become part of the dialogue and not simply the passive receiver of whatever wisdom their director may bestow upon them. As Schultz (2003) suggests, it is important to define "listening as an active, relational, and interpretive process that is focused on making meaning. The emphasis on teaching as telling ignores a teacher's responsibility to ensure that students become

engaged in the process of constructing their own understandings” (p. 8). Schultz takes this a step further when she connects the act of listening to “interaction rather than simple reception...by listening to others the listener is called on to respond” (p. 9).

This active and inquisitive listening can be exceedingly powerful when it works both ways. Both teachers and students can engage in listening that requires some type of reciprocal action. Just listening for content is useful, but until the listening is engaged along with some type of interrogative act it does not reach its full potential to change the one who listens, to bring about a new insight or understanding, to apprehend some new perspective that enriches the relationship and fully engages the listener and the listened to in a dialogic pedagogical enterprise from which both emerge enhanced. By engaging with what is on the other side of the looking (or listening) glass, we grow in ways that are enhanced by the relationality and changed perspective that characterizes this journey to the other side.

Pedagogical insights. The regular and strategic relocation of students during rehearsals, accomplished both figuratively and metaphorically, has enormous potential for revealing fresh and different senses of place and relationships and is full of possibilities for new understandings. Despite the best descriptive efforts of teachers, only when students step into a different place with a different orientation, can they begin to internalize what that different orientation means. Shifts in perspectives, while initially disorienting and possibly unsettling, have the power to catalyze new understandings and awarenesses for both teacher

and students that are simply not possible when we stay in our usual place in our usual relationships. These shifts in perspective can be made manifest by singing instead of playing, by changing one's physical location in the ensemble, by shifting the seating of the students so that they are not hearing things the same way they always have, or by placing the students temporarily in the role of the teacher by having them conduct a warm-up or provide commentary and critique. All of these shifts of perspective, be they visual or aural, kinesthetic or tactile, have the power to fundamentally alter one's experience and bring about heretofore un-apprehended insights and awarenesses.

Looking in the Mirror: Reflecting on Our Own Experience

One of the hallmarks of hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry is the importance of reflection throughout the process. In this inquiry, I was called upon to be reflective during and after each of my encounters with the students and their director. I reflected on my own experience as a student, teacher, administrator and adjudicator. The students and their director reflected on their experiences both in and out of rehearsal. They reflected on past adjudication experiences, on how they engaged with the music and each other, and on the adjudication experience itself. What sets this rehearsal approach apart from many that I witness is the ubiquitousness of the reflective mindset. Very little goes un-reflected-upon. Perfunctory run-throughs are rarely heard. There is always a point and the point is shared before and reflected on after. Reflection is an organic part of this experience, both for the teacher and the students.

Pedagogical insights. Nearly any endeavor benefits from periodic reflection and analysis. The ensemble in this inquiry exhibited an almost preternatural proclivity for acting in a reflective manner. The reflective mindset was ubiquitous, and the ensemble and its student members benefited enormously from the regular practice of self assessment and reflection. The salient point to be drawn from this is that any ensemble, at any level of development, can regularly and to potentially great advantage employ a reflective mindset. By engaging students in both formative and summative peer and self reflection, and through the use of carefully scaffolded and focused interrogative behavior in the pursuit of this reflective activity, they are called upon to think and to act and to engage with themselves and their musical partners in ways that bring them actively into the music and into the process of music making.

Toward a Reflective Pedagogical Competence

Van Manen (2003) reminds us that “Phenomenological research gives us tactful thoughtfulness: situational perceptiveness, discernment, and depthful understanding” (p. 156). Since human science research produces a theory of the unique, it “appropriates the particular case, not prospectively or introspectively, but retrospectively” (p. 156).

Pedagogical insights. From a pedagogical standpoint, the salient points regarding this reflective or retrospective approach are several. First, thoughtful and honest reflection in action can be very powerful when it is an organic part of every rehearsal. This thoughtful and honest reflection can be modeled by the teacher and practiced by all present.

Second, reflection on the rehearsal immediately past can be a valuable resource to inform and clarify instructional plans for the immediate future. While a highly structured, organized and communicated rehearsal outline was implemented by this director and appreciated by the over-worked students, maintaining flexibility to respond to student readiness and achievement levels also appears to be of critical importance. A plan is imperative. A flexible plan is optimal. Schultz (2003) reminds us that “Teaching is a transaction that is at once carefully planned and spontaneously improvised by all participants” (p. 5). The effective teacher listens to his or her students and modifies instruction to utilize the resources and opportunities of the moment in the most efficacious manner.

Third, when working to improve the pedagogical situation, the application of candid, honest, sincere and focused reflection wields significant pedagogical power. Sometimes what we see in the mirror (confusing conducting patterns), or hear on a recording (a tempo that is too fast), can be a shock to our senses and serve as a reintroduction to reality. It is quite easy, when not being honestly reflective, to barrel forward with an ill-advised plan or an approach that clearly is not working. If we do not regularly turn the metaphorical spyglass onto ourselves, at best, we run the risk of benign neglect of our pedagogical responsibilities; at worst, we can do irreparable harm to our students and our program by blindly or deafly following a plan that may be well intentioned but entirely inappropriate. By engaging our students as partners in the reflective process, we stand to not only grow as a teacher, but exponentially enhance our effectiveness with our students by developing this reflective mindset in them as well.

Seeking First to Understand

Stephen Covey (1989) speaks of seven habits that are shared in some degree by highly effective people in diverse disciplines and fields of endeavor. All seven have relevance for education, but the one that feels the most “right” in relation to this inquiry is the one that reads, “Seek first to understand, then to be understood” (p. 235). Covey says that this is the “single most important principle I have learned in the field of interpersonal relations” (p. 237). Implicit in this elegantly simple statement is the idea of understanding the perspective of someone else before making any attempt to have one’s own ideas or perspective understood.

This idea has great relevance not only to this study but to education at large in several ways. Shulman (2004) speaks of the wisdom of practice and how the “challenge is to get inside the heads of practitioners, to see the world as they see it, then to understand the manner in which experts construct their problem spaces, their definitions of the situation, thus permitting them to act as they do” (p. 257). From a pedagogical standpoint, “getting inside the head of the practitioner whose skills you seek to understand” (p. 257) is not as easy as we might like it to be. We need to take into account the context in which these practitioners practice. What works for a master teacher in one situation may not work as well for the same teacher in a different situation. Context is hugely important, and it is useful for us to “treat the actions of the practitioner as, in principal, adaptive” (p. 258). When considering the approach used by Mr. Britt, to adopt it wholesale would most likely be ill-advised and less than optimally

productive in some situations. But certain aspects, when adapted, will no doubt prove to be highly productive and appropriate for many settings.

Pedagogical insights. Since teaching is above all else an interpersonal relationship, the importance of understanding those we teach is abundantly clear, if not always observable in the reality of the classroom or the rehearsal hall. Critically important is the overt act of taking into account the context into which our students are “thrown” and in which they live both within and outside our classrooms. What works for a master teacher in one situation may not work as well for the same master teacher in a different situation. And certainly what works for one teacher with one group of students may be unwise in a disparate setting with a different group of students. The key is to develop an awareness and understanding of our students by “getting inside the head of the practitioner whose skills you see to understand” (Shulman, 2004, p. 257). It is often not enough simply to employ methods that *should* work, and may indeed have proven effective in certain situations. What matters is that the methods are suitable for those particular students and engage them in a meaningful way that enhances their experience and places them in a better position for future learning. Extensive use of singing and the placement of students out of their comfort zones may not be the most prudent choice to make when teaching certain groups. For others, however, it may be just the right element of strangeness and dislocation to catalyze learning and keep the environment engaging and interesting.

Coming to Understand the Student Experience

Returning our focus to the students, “seeking first to understand” is the paramount purpose of this inquiry. The challenge has been to get inside the heads of the students who are the practitioners, the makers of sense and of music. From a pedagogical standpoint, when a teacher sets out to “see the world as they see it...to understand the manner in which (they) construct...their definition of the situation” and to better understand why “they act as they do,” (Shulman, 2004, p. 257) that teacher better understands their students and is better able to maximize learning opportunities. When teachers more deeply consider the context of how their students understand who they are within the ensemble and how that understanding shapes their behavior, attitude and readiness to learn, they are in a more powerful place to set the stage for significant and sustained learning.

Transformation

As I have engaged in this lived experience with the students and their director as they prepared for an adjudicated performance, I have reflected on my own experiences, engaged in dialogic conversations with the students and their director, observed rehearsals and spoken with adjudicators. I have been all of these people at one point and have tried to revisit each of those facets of the experience again, vicariously living it through the eyes and ears of these participants. I have recalled situations from my past that seemed to be playing out in only slightly different ways with this ensemble. I have called into question some of the techniques and attitudes that characterized my own pedagogy in light of what I have seen and heard here. Many things that I believe have been

validated, but many have also been called into question. How might my years as a teacher have been different had I been privy to some of the insights I now have by virtue of living this experience with these students and their director? I have been fortunate to be able to observe, engage, reflect on and with and question those who are the one's experiencing this phenomenon directly.

Throughout this process, both directly connected with this particular performance preparation cycle, and through all of the preparatory research that led up to this inquiry, I have begun to see and hear things differently than I did before. I am more attuned to the polyphonies of experience that characterize the large ensemble setting. I more deeply consider the context of how individuals understand who they are within the ensemble and how that understanding shapes their behavior, attitude and readiness to learn.

My work currently provides me with a variety of opportunities to interact with fellow members of the profession, as well as students still in the public schools. Each of the venues through which I have contact with others in a pedagogical setting has been impacted by changes I have experienced while engaging in this inquiry. When I engage with new teachers, veteran teachers, colleagues and school age students, my approach is now informed by the method of human science research and hermeneutic phenomenology. All of the courses I teach, observations I perform, rehearsals I conduct, articles I write, and presentations I make at conferences are all informed by the work I have done with this approach to research. It has become organically integrated into my professional being and I believe I am a better teacher and supervisor as a result. It

has been a transformative experience in many ways. The insights of the students in particular open up a new avenue into this phenomenon that I know quite well, but that until very recently, was missing an important facet. My perspectives are incomplete without the words, thoughts, insights and feelings of the students who lived the experience themselves, adding color and detail and nuance to the landscape.

My pedagogy will forever be changed for the better by virtue of my experience with these students and through the reflective and interpretive process of hermeneutic phenomenology as applied to the preparation of music for adjudicated performance, a phenomenon that has been and continues to be a perpetual presence in my professional life. It is my hope that the insights brought to the fore within this inquiry will have similar transformative effects for those who share them through reading and reliving these experiences.

APPENDIX A

Response Form – Writing Prompts

1. Describe your favorite piece of concert band music and explain why you like it.
2. Describe your feelings about being a part of the wind ensemble at PHHS.
3. Share a particularly positive experience you had in a recent band rehearsal.
4. Describe the experience of sight-reading a piece of music in the full band setting.
5. Describe a particularly challenging piece of music you studied in band and explain why you felt it was difficult.

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APPENDIX B

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

Dear Student,

I invite you to engage in a research study with me that will explore your experience of preparing music for an adjudicated performance. I am a doctoral student in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction within the College of Education at the University of Maryland at College Park, MD.

While there are many lenses through which the phenomenon of music preparation and music making has been explored, a relatively untapped aspect of this phenomenon is the experience as lived by the students themselves. For this research, you will be involved with reflection activities, open ended questioning, conversations, and interviews over the 12 week period of preparation for the adjudicated performance. During this period, you will be one of six (6) students who will participate in: a) three (3) audio-taped full group conversations, b) one (1) series of individual interviews, and c) individual journal writing activities. I will observe the ensemble in full rehearsal on five (5) separate occasions, videotape the rehearsal and take written observation notes. One post-performance conversation with the full group of six (6) students will be undertaken to respond to adjudicator feedback and to reflect on the culminating performance.

Conversations and interviews will follow an approach to inquiry known as hermeneutic phenomenology and will therefore not involve fixed, pre-determined questions. You will instead be asked to describe the various experiences involved with preparing music for an adjudicated performance including but not limited to: reading the music for the first time, playing your part in the full ensemble, practicing your part individually, listening to and responding to the direction of the conductor, struggling with a difficult part, and working on the music over an extended period of time. All transcripts and written notes from conversations, interviews and observations will be held in the strictest confidence. You will be given a pseudonym to protect your identity if your comments are used in the research. All participants will be encouraged to ask the researcher questions throughout the duration of the study and student participants may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Each of your experiences are unique. Information obtained in this research study may provide a deeper understanding of the experience of preparing for an adjudicated performance from the heretofore largely unstudied perspective of those most directly involved in the experience, the student performers themselves.

Sincerely,

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APPENDIX C

Initials _____ Date _____

Student Consent Form for Classroom Participation in Research

Project Title	Prisms and Polyphony: The Lived Experience of High School Band Students as they Prepare for an Adjudicated Performance.
Statement of Age of Subject	You state that you are over 18 years of age, are in good physical health, and wish to participate in a program of research being conducted by Stephen W. Miles in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in the College of Education at the University of Maryland, College Park.
Purpose of the Study	You understand that the purpose of this research is to investigate the lived experience of high school band students as they prepare for an adjudicated performance.
Procedures	<p>You understand you will be involved with reflection activities, open ended questioning, conversations, and dialectic interviews over the 12 week period of preparation for the adjudicated performance. You understand that during this period, the group of six (6) students will participate in: a) three (3) audio-taped full group conversations, b) one (1) series of individual interviews, and c) individual journal writing activities. The researcher will observe the ensemble in full rehearsal on five (5) separate occasions and videotape the rehearsal and take written observation notes.</p> <p>One post-performance conversation with the full group of six (6) students will be undertaken to respond to adjudicator feedback and to reflect on the culminating performance. One conversation will be held with significant “others” connected to the phenomena including the director and a clinician or guest conductor that might be engaged during the process of preparing for the adjudicated performance. All conversations will be audio-taped and transcribed by the researcher. The total time commitment for participants will not exceed 7 hours, including conversations/interviews and writing activities.</p> <p>Conversations will follow a phenomenological approach to inquiry and will therefore not involve fixed, pre-determined questions. You understand you will instead be asked to describe the various experiences involved with preparing music for an adjudicated performance including but not limited to: reading the music for the first time, playing their part in the full ensemble, practicing their part individually, listening to and responding to the direction of the conductor, struggling with a difficult part, and working on the music over an extended period of time.</p> <p>You understand that audio recordings of the conversations will be made for the researcher’s use in later transcription. You grant permission for these recordings to be made with the understanding that they will be stored securely</p>

	throughout the study and destroyed at the conclusion of the study.
Potential Risks	You understand that there are no known risks but that there is the possibility that you may become anxious, frustrated or uncomfortable during the course of conversations and also understand that you may withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty.
Potential Benefits	This research is not designed to help the student participants personally, but the results may help the investigator better understand the process of preparing for an adjudicated performance from the perspective of the participants themselves, the students. It is hoped that insights garnered through this research will be valuable to band directors as a means toward developing enhanced understandings in areas of critical pedagogical relevance related to the experience of preparing for an adjudicated performance. Each participant will receive a copy of the final product to see how their contributions influenced the research.
Confidentiality	You understand that your name will not be used in any public documents or oral presentations. A pseudonym will be used instead. You understand that the researcher will observe and video record rehearsals on five occasions and that during those times, identifying information will not be collected and notes will be destroyed after the conclusion of the project. Recordings and notes taken during the process will not be associated with participants' names and will be securely stored by the researcher. You understand that the researcher will analyze data on both the individual and group level and that a pseudonym and instrument played will be used for each participant to maintain participant confidentiality.
Medical Treatment	You understand that 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	You understand that your participation in this research is completely voluntary and that 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, you understand that you are to contact the investigator:

	<p>Stephen W. Miles 213 Golden Eagle Way Belcamp, MD 21017 410-812-7284 smiles@bcps.org</p> <p>Dr. Francine Hultgren Department of Education Policy Studies University of Maryland College Park, MD 20742 301-405-4562 fh@umd.edu</p>
<p>Participant Rights</p>	<p><i>If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact:</i></p> <p>University of Maryland College Park Institutional Review Board Office 1204 Marie Mount College Park, Maryland, 20742 E-mail: irb@umd.edu Telephone: 301-405-0678</p> <p><i>This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.</i></p>
<p>Statement of Consent</p>	<p>Your signature indicates that you 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 understand that you will receive a copy of this signed consent form.</p> <p>You understand that this research project involves making audio recordings of your conversations with your peers and the researcher on the topic of preparing music for an adjudicated performance. These recordings will be stored in a secure location by the researcher and will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study.</p> <p>_____ I agree to be audio recorded during my participation in this study.</p> <p>_____ I do not agree to be audio recorded during my participation in this study.</p> <p><i>I indicate that I agree to participate by printing and signing my name below.</i></p>

Signature and Date	PARTICIPANT NAME [Please Print]	
	PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE	
	DATE	

University of Maryland College Park

APPENDIX D

Initials _____ Date _____

Parent Consent Form for Classroom Participation in Research

Project Title	Prisms and Polyphony: The Lived Experience of High School Band Students as they Prepare for an Adjudicated Performance.
Statement of Age of Subject	You state that your child is in good physical health, and wishes to participate in a program of research being conducted by Stephen W. Miles in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in the College of Education at the University of Maryland, College Park.
Purpose of the Study	You understand that the purpose of this research is to investigate the lived experience of high school band students as they prepare for an adjudicated performance.
Procedures	<p>You understand that your child will be involved with reflection activities, open ended questioning, conversations, and dialectic interviews over the 12 week period of preparation for the adjudicated performance. You understand that during this period, the group of six (6) students will participate in: a) three (3) audio-taped full group conversations, b) one (1) series of individual interviews, and c) individual journal writing activities.</p> <p>You understand that students will be observed as an ensemble in full rehearsal on five (5) separate occasions and that the rehearsal will be videotaped and written observation notes taken. One post-performance conversation with the full group of six (6) students will be undertaken to respond to adjudicator feedback and to reflect on the culminating performance. One conversation will be held with significant “others” connected to the phenomena including the director and any clinician or guest conductor that might be engaged during the process of preparing for the adjudicated performance. All conversations will be audio-taped and transcribed by the researcher.</p> <p>Conversations will follow a phenomenological approach to inquiry and will therefore not involve fixed, pre-determined questions. You understand that your young adult will instead be asked to describe the various experiences involved with preparing music for an adjudicated performance including but not limited to: reading the music for the first time, playing their part in the full ensemble, practicing their part individually, listening to and responding to the direction of the conductor, struggling with a difficult part, and working on the music over an extended period of time.</p> <p>You understand that audio recordings of the conversations will be made for the researcher’s use in later transcription. You grant permission for these recordings to be</p>

	made with the understanding that they will be stored securely throughout the study and destroyed at the conclusion of the study. The total time commitment for participants will not exceed 7 hours, including conversations/interviews and writing activities.
Potential Risks	You understand that there are no known risks but that there is the possibility that your child may become anxious, frustrated or uncomfortable during the course of conversations and also understand that your child may withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty.
Potential Benefits	You understand that this research is not designed to help the student participants personally, but the results may help the investigator better understand the process of preparing for an adjudicated performance from the perspective of the participants themselves, the students. It is the researcher's hope that insights garnered through this research will be valuable to band directors as a means toward developing enhanced understandings in areas of planning and instructional delivery related to the experience of preparing for an adjudicated performance.
Confidentiality	You understand that your child's name will not be used in any public documents or oral presentations. A pseudonym and instrument played will be used instead. You understand that data provided will be analyzed both on an individual level and on a group level for reporting and presentation purposes. You understand that the researcher will observe and video record rehearsals on five occasions and that during those times, identifying information will not be collected and notes will be destroyed after the conclusion of the project. Recordings and notes taken during the process will not be associated with participants' names and will be securely stored by the researcher.
Medical Treatment	You understand that 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	<p>You understand that your child's participation in this research is completely voluntary and that he/she may choose not to take part at all. You understand that your child may withdraw without penalty at any time.</p> <p>Stephen W. Miles 213 Golden Eagle Way Belcamp, MD 21017 410-812-7284 smiles@bcps.org</p>

	<p>Dr. Francine Hultgren Department of Education Policy Studies University of Maryland College Park, MD 20742 301-405-4562 fh@umd.edu</p>	
Participant Rights	<p><i>If you have questions about your child's rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">University of Maryland College Park Institutional Review Board Office 1204 Marie Mount College Park, Maryland, 20742 E-mail: irb@umd.edu Telephone: 301-405-0678</p> <p><i>This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.</i></p>	
Statement of Consent	<p>Your signature indicates that you have read this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree for your child to participate in this research study. You understand that you will receive a copy of this signed consent form.</p> <p>You understand that this research project involves making audio recordings of your child's conversations with his/her peers and the researcher on the topic of preparing music for an adjudicated performance. These recordings will be stored in a secure location by the researcher and will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study.</p> <p>_____ I agree for my child to be audio recorded during his/her participation in this study.</p> <p>_____ I do not agree for my child to be audio recorded during his/her participation in this study.</p> <p><i>If you agree to allow your child to participate, please sign your name below.</i></p>	
Signature and Date	PARTICIPANT NAME [Please Print]	
	PARENT NAME (Please print)	
	PARENT SIGNATURE	
	DATE	

APPENDIX E

Prisms and Polyphony: The Lived Experience of High School Band Students as they Prepare for an Adjudicated Performance.

The following list represents sample/potential conversation prompts to be used to initiate dialogue or journal writing activities by student participants.

Describe the experience of playing your part in the full ensemble.

Describe your experience with playing your part by yourself.

Describe the experience of playing your part by yourself in front of your peers or your director.

Describe the experience of playing your part within your section.

Describe your experience with practicing your part individually.

Describe your experience with listening to and responding to the direction of your conductor.

Describe your experience with listening to and responding to the direction of a guest clinician.

Describe your experience with listening to and responding to the performance of your peers in rehearsal.

Describe the experience of hearing the music around you during a full band rehearsal.

Describe your experience with struggling with a difficult part.

Describe the experience of working on the music over an extended period of time.

Describe your favorite piece of the music you are studying in band and explain why you like it.

Describe your feelings about being a part of the wind ensemble at PHHS.

Share a particularly positive experience you had in a recent band rehearsal.

Describe the experience of sight-reading a piece of music in the full band setting.

Describe a particularly challenging piece of music you studied in band and explain why you felt it was difficult.

Describe the experience of listening to a rehearsal or performance recording of your band.

APPENDIX F

RESEARCH ANNOUNCEMENT SCRIPT

Good Morning,

My name is Stephen Miles. I am a doctoral student in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction within the College of Education at the University of Maryland at College Park, and I am here to invite you to engage in a research study with me that will explore your experience of preparing music for an adjudicated performance.

While there are many lenses through which the phenomenon of music preparation and music making has been explored, a relatively untapped aspect of this phenomenon is the experience as lived by the students themselves. For this research, six (6) student participants will be selected from among those who volunteer, complete and return signed consent forms, and submit a writing sample. These students will be involved with reflection activities, open ended questioning, conversations, and interviews over the 12 week period of preparation for the adjudicated performance. During this period, six (6) students will participate in: a) three (3) audio-recorded full group conversations, b) one (1) series of individual interviews, and c) individual journal writing activities. I will observe the ensemble in full rehearsal on five (5) separate occasions, video-record the rehearsal and take written observation notes. One post-performance conversation with the full group of six (6) students will be undertaken to respond to adjudicator feedback and to reflect on the culminating performance. One conversation with your director will also be used to gather input on the experience from the perspective of your director, a highly significant “other” in this process.

Conversations and interviews will follow an approach to inquiry known as hermeneutic phenomenology and will therefore not involve fixed, pre-determined questions. The six (6) participants will instead be asked to describe the various experiences involved with preparing music for an adjudicated performance including but not limited to: reading the music for the first time, playing your part in the full ensemble, practicing your part individually, listening to and responding to the direction of the conductor, struggling with a difficult part, and working on the music over an extended period of time. All transcripts and written notes from conversations, interviews and observations will be held in the strictest confidence. Student participants will be given a pseudonym to protect their identity if their comments are used in the research. All participants will be encouraged to ask the researcher questions throughout the duration of the study and student participants may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. I will analyze data collected on both an individual and group level and only a pseudonym and instrument played will be used to identify the participants.

At this point I will distribute the writing prompt sheet and the parent and student consent forms for you to take home, read, and share with your parents if you are interested in participating in the research. The completed written responses to the writing prompt and the signed student and parent consent forms must be returned to your director by December 12 in order to be considered for participation in the study. I will review the completed forms and, in consultation with your director, will select six (6) student participants who will be invited to participate in this study. The selection of the six (6) student participants will be based on the writing samples with consideration given to achieving a balanced and diverse group of student participants based on instrument played, year in the program and placement within your particular section.

University of Maryland College Park

APPENDIX G

Initials _____ Date _____

Adult Participant Consent Form for Classroom Participation in Research

Project Title	Prisms and Polyphony: The Lived Experience of High School Band Students as they Prepare for an Adjudicated Performance.
Statement of Age of Subject	You state that you are over 18 years of age, are in good physical health, and wish to participate in a program of research being conducted by Stephen W. Miles in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in the College of Education at the University of Maryland, College Park.
Purpose of the Study	You understand that the purpose of this research is to investigate the lived experience of high school band students as they prepare for an adjudicated performance.
Procedures	<p>You understand you will be involved with one dialectic interview within the 12 week period of preparation for the adjudicated performance. This one conversation will focus on your role as a significant “other” connected to the phenomena.</p> <p>The conversation will be audio-recorded and transcribed by the researcher. This conversation will follow a phenomenological approach to inquiry and will therefore not involve fixed, pre-determined questions. You understand you will instead be asked to describe the experiences involved with preparing music for an adjudicated performance from your perspective as a significant “other” connected to the process.</p> <p>You understand that audio recordings of the conversations will be made for the researcher’s use in later transcription. You grant permission for these recordings to be made with the understanding that they will be stored securely throughout the study and destroyed at the conclusion of the study.</p>
Potential Risks	You understand that there are no known risks but that there is the possibility that you may become anxious, frustrated or uncomfortable during the course of conversations and also understand that you may withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty.
Potential Benefits	This research is not designed to help the student or adult participants personally, but the results may help the investigator better understand the process of preparing for an adjudicated performance from the perspective of the participants themselves, the students. It is hoped that insights garnered through this research will be valuable to band directors as a means toward developing enhanced understandings in areas of critical pedagogical relevance related to the experience of preparing for an adjudicated performance. Each participant will receive a copy of the final product to see how their contributions influenced the research.

<p>Confidentiality</p>	<p>You understand that your name will not be used in any public documents or oral presentations. A pseudonym will be used instead. You understand that the researcher will observe and video record rehearsals on five occasions and that during those times, identifying information will not be collected and notes will be destroyed after the conclusion of the project. Recordings and notes taken during the process will not be associated with participants' names and will be securely stored by the researcher.</p> <p>You understand that the researcher will analyze data on both the individual and group level and that a pseudonym and instrument played will be used for each participant to maintain participant confidentiality.</p>
<p>Medical Treatment</p>	<p>You understand that 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.</p>
<p>Right to Withdraw and Questions</p>	<p>You understand that your participation in this research is completely voluntary and that 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.</p> <p>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, you understand that you are to contact the investigator:</p> <p>Stephen W. Miles 213 Golden Eagle Way Belcamp, MD 21017 410-812-7284 smiles@bcps.org</p> <p>Dr. Francine Hultgren Department of Education Policy Studies University of Maryland College Park, MD 20742 301-405-4562 fh@umd.edu</p>
<p>Participant Rights</p>	<p><i>If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact:</i></p> <p>University of Maryland College Park Institutional Review Board Office 1204 Marie Mount College Park, Maryland, 20742</p>

	<p align="center">E-mail: irb@umd.edu Telephone: 301-405-0678</p> <p><i>This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.</i></p>	
Statement of Consent	<p>Your signature indicates that you 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 understand that you will receive a copy of this signed consent form.</p> <p>You understand that this research project involves making audio recordings of your conversations with the researcher on the topic of preparing music for an adjudicated performance. These recordings will be stored in a secure location by the researcher and will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study.</p> <p>_____ I agree to be audio recorded during my participation in this study.</p> <p>_____ I do not agree to be audio recorded during my participation in this study.</p> <p><i>I indicate that I agree to participate by printing and signing my name below.</i></p>	
Signature and Date	PARTICIPANT NAME	
	[Please Print]	
	PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE	
	DATE	

University of Maryland College Park

APPENDIX H

Initials _____ Date _____

Student Assent Form for Classroom Participation in Research

Project Title	Prisms and Polyphony: The Lived Experience of High School Band Students as they Prepare for an Adjudicated Performance.
Statement of Age of Subject	You state that you are not yet 18 years of age, are in good physical health, and wish to participate in a program of research being conducted by Stephen W. Miles in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in the College of Education at the University of Maryland, College Park.
Purpose of the Study	You understand that the purpose of this research is to investigate the lived experience of high school band students as they prepare for an adjudicated performance.
Procedures	<p>You understand you will be involved with reflection activities, open ended questioning, conversations, and dialectic interviews over the 12 week period of preparation for the adjudicated performance. You understand that during this period, the group of six (6) students will participate in: a) three (3) audio-taped full group conversations, b) one (1) series of individual interviews, and c) individual journal writing activities. The researcher will observe the ensemble in full rehearsal on five (5) separate occasions and videotape the rehearsal and take written observation notes.</p> <p>One post-performance conversation with the full group of six (6) students will be undertaken to respond to adjudicator feedback and to reflect on the culminating performance. One conversation will be held with significant “others” connected to the phenomena including the director and a clinician or guest conductor that might be engaged during the process of preparing for the adjudicated performance. All conversations will be audio-taped and transcribed by the researcher.</p> <p>Conversations will follow a qualitative and reflective approach to inquiry and will therefore not involve fixed, pre-determined questions. You understand you will instead be asked to describe the various experiences involved with preparing music for an adjudicated performance including but not limited to: reading the music for the first time, playing their part in the full ensemble, practicing their part individually, listening to and responding to the direction of the conductor, struggling with a difficult part, and working on the music over an extended period of time.</p> <p>You understand that audio recordings of the conversations will be made for the researcher’s use in later transcription. You grant permission for these recordings to be made with the understanding that they will be stored securely throughout the study and destroyed at the conclusion of the</p>

	<p>study. The total time commitment for participants will not exceed 7 hours, including conversations/interviews and writing activities.</p>
Potential Risks	<p>You understand that there are no known risks but that there is the possibility that you may become anxious, frustrated or uncomfortable during the course of conversations and also understand that you may withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty.</p>
Potential Benefits	<p>This research is not designed to help the student participants personally, but the results may help the investigator better understand the process of preparing for an adjudicated performance from the perspective of the participants themselves, the students. It is hoped that insights garnered through this research will be valuable to band directors as a means toward developing enhanced understandings in areas of instruction and planning related to the experience of preparing for an adjudicated performance. Each participant will receive a copy of the final product to see how their contributions influenced the research.</p>
Confidentiality	<p>You understand that your name will not be used in any public documents or oral presentations. A pseudonym will be used instead. You understand that the researcher will observe and video record rehearsals on five occasions and that during those times, identifying information will not be collected and notes will be destroyed after the conclusion of the project. Recordings and notes taken during the process will not be associated with participants' names and will be securely stored by the researcher. You understand that the researcher will analyze data on both the individual and group level and that a pseudonym and instrument played will be used for each participant to maintain participant confidentiality.</p>
Medical Treatment	<p>You understand that 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.</p>
Right to Withdraw and Questions	<p>You understand that your participation in this research is completely voluntary and that 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.</p> <p>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, you understand that you are to contact the investigator:</p>

	<p>Stephen W. Miles 213 Golden Eagle Way Belcamp, MD 21017 410-812-7284 smiles@bcps.org</p> <p>Dr. Francine Hultgren Department of Education Policy Studies University of Maryland College Park, MD 20742 301-405-4562 fh@umd.edu</p>	
Participant Rights	<p><i>If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact:</i></p> <p>University of Maryland College Park Institutional Review Board Office 1204 Marie Mount College Park, Maryland, 20742 E-mail: irb@umd.edu Telephone: 301-405-0678</p> <p><i>This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.</i></p>	
Statement of Assent	<p>Your signature indicates that you have read this assent 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 understand that you will receive a copy of this signed consent form.</p> <p>You understand that this research project involves making audio recordings of your conversations with your peers and the researcher on the topic of preparing music for an adjudicated performance. These recordings will be stored in a secure location by the researcher and will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study.</p> <p>_____ I agree to be audio recorded during my participation in this study.</p> <p>_____ I do not agree to be audio recorded during my participation in this study.</p> <p><i>I indicate that I agree to participate by printing and signing my name below.</i></p>	
Signature and Date	PARTICIPANT NAME [Please Print]	
	PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE	
	DATE	

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