How Popular Musicians Teach:

A Narrative Mixtape

by

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ABSTRACT

As the incorporation of popular music into secondary and university learning spaces continues to expand, of particular interest is how ways of learning and teaching popular music might be enacted in a school environment. Well-meaning teachers, music education organizations, and corporate entities, in an effort to codify these ways, continue to explore various methods of operationalizing popular music to fit within the paradigmatic structures and core narratives of music education. Given this climate, what might teachers employing popular music gain from developing a better understanding of the diverse ways popular musicians learn, create, perform, and teach?

This narrative and multiple case study considers the stories of three professional musicians who, at some point in their performing career, also became music teachers. By exploring how the orientations (i.e., experiences, knowledges, beliefs, and practices) of these professional musician~teachers were cultivated through the diversity of their experiences encountered both on and off the gig as well as in and out of classroom, this study explores how these individuals blended their biographical pasts as professional musicians with their developing teaching practices in the popular music-focused classroom. Based on this exploration, the following questions guided this inquiry: 1) What are the individual orientations of professional musicians who also teach in popular music-focused learning spaces in secondary school settings?, 2) Where and how did these professional musician~teachers acquire their orientations during their time as student-musicians and as professional musicians?, 3) How do these professional musician~teachers approach teaching popular music in popular music-focused learning spaces in secondary school settings?, 4) How are their orientation(s) evident in their teaching practices?, and

5) How did their orientations evolve to include their newfound experiences as they developed their teaching practice?

Findings indicate these professional musician~teachers: 1) learned to teach by teaching and, through this process, developed a unique blend of content and pedagogical knowledge, 2) adopted a flexible perspective of classroom structures and teaching approaches and, 3) transferred evaluative skills gained from their experiences as professional musicians into the classroom as they sought out ways to improve their teaching practice.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

BECOMING . . .

The emerging musician.[1] I never wanted to be a teacher. You see, my father was a university sociology professor while my mother was a 35-year career band director. Because of her profession, I was well aware of the all-encompassing nature of the high school band director; Friday night football games, festivals, parades, and band camps were regular features throughout my childhood. I was a "band kid" before I was in band, and as I began exploring possible career paths, I had no desire whatsoever to follow in her footsteps as a teacher. I was, instead, entirely focused on becoming a professional musician.

Looking back now on my journey in music, it's clear that my notion of being musically flexible and adaptable—my desire and capacity to learn to play multiple instruments and be fluent in any number of musical situations—was modeled by her my entire life. My mother would pivot from one instrument to another, one style to the next by way of the jazz quintet that rehearsed in our living room, playing violin in one of the local churches' Christmas and Easter services, and even performing as the lead in *Mame* for our town theatre production. She was a musical chameleon, a one-stop shop for music in our small college town in rural Arkansas.

When I was in fifth grade, she brought home a different instrument every few weeks and let me try them out. I'm sure she gave me some advice, but I only recall her handing me the instrument and allowing me to explore as I saw fit. After learning to "play" various instruments, I settled on the drum set, most probably to

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[1] Much of this section is excerpted from and/or based on my chapter Intersections and Roundabouts: Connecting in-school and out-of-school experiences to teaching practices in the book *Places and Purposes of Popular Music Education: Perspectives from the Field* (2022).

the chagrin of our neighbors living within earshot. I was heartbroken when I was told there was no place for the drum set in the 6th grade school band, so I fell back to the trumpet. Here I remained for the next several years, until the summer after high school when I picked up the old Fender Mustang bass that had been used by the bass player in my mother's jazz quintet.

After I entered college, I declared the bass as my primary instrument, and I was soon practicing seven to eight hours a day, learning, studying, and performing songs by ear and improving my reading skills in several notational styles, i.e., chord charts, lead sheets, Western staff notation, lyric sheets, etc. This turn towards the bass also led me to focus on learning to become fluent in number of musical styles including jazz, gospel, funk, soul, metal, blues, rock, country, etc. I began asking my peers to "show me how you do that" and asking for suggestions about who and what I should listen to. I began going to live shows as often as possible, largely to watch the bass player: what kind of bass they were playing, what kind of rig they were playing through, taking notes on their stage presence, how they were holding the bass, and how they were interacting with the band. Within a few months of picking up the bass I was performing in at least five bands playing blues, country, southern rock, metal, and gospel. I even took apart our family stereo (with my mother's blessing, I might add) and fashioned a speaker cabinet, along the way learning about acoustics, physics, ohm load, and how various speaker configurations differed in the sound they produced. So many of these aspects I simply didn't "do" when I was playing the trumpet; they just didn't occur to me.

After two years of attending my hometown college, I transferred to Memphis State University, as I wanted to grow as a bassist in a city with deep musical roots. Moving to Memphis was unquestionably the best musical decision of my life as I was immersed in a multifaceted, diverse music scene while learning, creating, and

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performing music in various genres. When I arrived on campus, I declared jazz performance as my undergraduate major and the electric bass as my primary instrument as I thought this choice would present the shortest path to my ultimate goal—to be a full-time, gigging musician. Shortly thereafter, my jazz bass teacher informed me I'd need to not only take up the acoustic bass, but also take classical bass lessons as well. At the time, I wanted to focus on the electric bass but, somewhat begrudgingly, took on the upright bass as well.

As I matured as a young bassist, I began to realize that being proficient at both instruments—as well as understanding the different approaches to learning, teaching, and performing on these instruments—granted me to the flexibility straddle the often-siloed worlds of jazz and classical music, on-campus and off-campus gigs. Eventually, I declared a double major in jazz and classical bass performance for both my undergraduate and graduate degrees. On campus, I took every chance I could to play with any ensemble that would have me. Off campus, I played in several bands and musical groups performing jazz, salsa, orchestral, funk, pop, Broadway, R&B, chamber, etc. To me, the style of music didn't matter as, quite honestly, I think I would have been entirely bored focusing and playing only *one* style of music with *one* group of musicians. If I was asked "What's your favorite style of music to play?" my answer would invariably be "Whatever the person writing the check asks me to play." Here again, the ability to adapt to any musical situation was key to my success as a professional musician. It was in this rich, diverse environment where my foundational beliefs around how to create, play, perform, and teach music were fashioned.

Recognizing connections. I now understand that it is this complex collection of experiences, this stockpile of knowledge and beliefs, that I draw guidance when I teach. Looking back on my time performing in a variety of musical

settings, I often wonder why there was not a greater overlap between the on- and off-campus musical groups I was part of and how they approached the act of creating and performing music. I now recognize, at least to my present-day eye and ear as a teacher[2], a wealth of approaches that could be shared and applied across the various formats, with each manner of musical setting informing and influencing the others. Green (2002) reinforces this idea of a disconnect when noting "formal music education and informal music learning have for centuries been sitting side by side, with little communication between them" (p. 216). I certainly experienced this disconnect throughout my college tenure as I became aware that a majority of my peers pursuing classical music studies only participated in the more formal, on-campus ensembles. On the other hand, I also noticed the majority of my peers pursuing jazz studies participated not only in the requisite jazz ensembles, but also in several off-campus groups focusing on any number of musical genres.

Being flexible, capable, and adaptable was the way to get the gig. And because of this, I was able to gig seven nights a week, participating in a range of musical situations—an orchestral rehearsal in the afternoon, a jazz trio gig later that evening, followed by a late-night recording session with a rock band. It was in and through this musical "grab bag" that these outwardly unrelated musical settings began to reveal their possible connections. These undefined intersections began to establish an unconscious footing in my understandings of music and, consequently, is where the foundation of my teaching practice took shape.

At the time though, I wasn't thinking of the connections between the gig and the classroom because I didn't consider myself to be fully *in* the classroom, as I was

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[2] Spoiler alert.

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still playing full-time and only teaching by way of a handful of adjunct gigs. True, while I also taught private lessons, I considered myself more a bassist *coaching* other bassists in how to play the bass. I didn't view myself as a teacher because that was contradictory to my chosen path of playing music for a living. My viewpoint, at the time, was that teaching was an "out" if one couldn't get the gig, and I had no problem getting the gig. Teaching, at least for me, was a side hustle.

However, after completing graduate school and moving to Colorado, and as a way of providing an additional, stable income stream, I accepted a position. A teaching position. At a junior high/high school. At the time, I rationalized this new, part-time teaching position as an add-on to my standing as a professional musician— a bullet point on a resume—as the bulk of my efforts continued to focus on playing music. What I was entirely unaware of, at the time, was that the next nineteen years in this teaching position would allow me the opportunity to recognize and explore the connections and intersections of the knowledge I had gained, the beliefs I had developed, and the practices I had cultivated through my experiences as a professional musician. And, further, how these various ways of understanding and being influenced—and continue to influence—my teaching practice.

The evolving ~~teacher~~ producer.[3] Upon accepting my first teaching position at a school in Colorado—directing two jazz ensembles, one middle school and one high school-aged—I, at first, conducted rehearsals in a somewhat traditional manner that seemed appropriate given the in-school setting using a more director-centered style. In this role I chose the tunes, I diagnosed and remedied the musical problems

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[3] Here, I am thinking and using the term "producer" in a more band-oriented sense, similar to how a producer would interact, support, and assist a band in a recording studio, e.g., Rick Rubin, Quincy Jones, Mark Ronson, or George Martin. I am not thinking of the term as often used in hip-hop, where a producer creates beats with the intent of an artist using them as a bed track, e.g., Dr. Dre, early Kanye West, J Dilla, or The Bomb Squad.

the students encountered, and I was front and center at our concerts. I had observed these manners of teaching in other band directors and conductors for as long as I could remember and supposed that was how I, too, should go about directing a band (Lortie, 1975). At first, I struggled with establishing this type of learning environment as while it was similar to my experiences in the world of school music (Williams, 2011), it was not necessarily how I felt I should approach this style of rehearsal—it just didn't feel right, as though I was simply ignoring a large swath of my experiences that fashioned who I was (and who I am) as a musician and teacher.

As the program expanded to include bands focusing on R&B, soul, and salsa, I soon began to explore and incorporate some of my out-of-school experiences and knowledge into our somewhat conventional rehearsal environment. Over the course of this collective discovery *with* the students, I grew to a deeper understanding of how a hybrid learning environment—an atmosphere that encouraged a collaborative, co-learning spirit (Allsup, 2003) as well as a blending of formal, non-formal, and informal ways of learning and teaching (Green, 2002; Folkestad, 2006)—could be realized in this situation. This co-learning environment allowed me to explore a shifting of my roles and responsibilities within the ensemble (Allsup, 2003; Bowman, 2007; Holley, 2019). Further, this exploration led to a shift in my understanding of, and beliefs about, the "roles of teachers and students, music and talent, motivation, classroom management, and the milieu of teaching" (Thompson, 2007, p. 30).

Additionally, this hybrid approach not only served as a crossroads between my in-school and out-of-school musical experiences (as our emerging Commercial Music Program began offering additional ensembles and courses focused on production and entrepreneurship) but doubled as an on-ramp for the inclusion of students' varied musical experiences in genres including modern pop, hip-hop, neo-

soul, and EDM as well. Kruse (2016, following Tobias, 2015a) relates that this act of

crossfading[4] necessitates a mutual blending of in-school and out-of-school

experiences and ways of learning and teaching to the benefit of all and could, in fact,

be mixed and blended in varying degrees dependent upon the changing needs of the

learning environment (Folkestad, 2006, following Green, 2006). Further, this

flexibility allowed the collective to consider how the music and artists we studied and

performed were locked in cyclical patterns of influence with culture, history, and

society, thereby affording us the opportunity to incorporate the culture(s) of the

students into *their* learning experiences (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Oftentimes, we

would discuss the socio-historical/cultural meanings behind the music as a precursor

to rehearsing the songs.

My initial forays beyond the world of teaching how I was taught consisted of

simply asking the drummer to count off the tunes in rehearsal and, later, in

performances. From there, I increasingly ceded song selection to the students and

eventually exited the stage entirely during performances. As the students took on

additional responsibilities, we began to realize a deeper engagement with the music

that included arranging of songs, creating segues and mashups, and offering

suggestions to the other musicians as to how they might improve their part and, in

doing so, improve the song and the student experience. As the students became

more enmeshed in the management and organization of the rehearsals and

performances, my role in the ensemble further shifted to that of facilitator or guide—

to offering my experiences as a support to their musical journey. This shift away

from my serving as the sole source of knowledge in the classroom continued to

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[4] Crossfading, when used in a recording environment, is a means of blending two audio tracks by decreasing the volume of one track while, at the same time, increasing the volume of another.

nurture a more democratic environment where student agency, ownership, autonomy, and self-confidence could grow and flourish (Wiggins, 2001). The students, whether they realized it or not at the time, were exploring their agency and taking ownership of *their* band, *their* rehearsals, *their* performances, and *their* learning process.

As time went on, I soon withdrew from using the label of teacher or director and settled on *producer*. I viewed my role in the rehearsal process as similar to that of a producer in a recording environment, offering sage-like advice now and again when needed, helping to negotiate conflicts when they arose, and asking provocative questions in an effort to press the students to think more deeply, more critically about the music and the creative process. My intent was to facilitate the student learning process by way of the diversity of knowledges and experiences I brought to the classroom and to support students as they wrestled with various problems—musical and otherwise—one might find in any professional setting. Scott (2007) affirms this position when noting the primary role of the music teacher is to "model the thinking processes and tools of musicians and to facilitate each student's learning as they explore musical questions or problems" (p. 36). Banfield (2009) furthers this notion when suggesting the role of the teacher is to serve as a tour guide, of sorts, when adding aspects of culture through "pulling together an illustrative narrative overview that is reflective of the artistry and social movements that gave rise to music" (pp. 50–51). As we explored this collaborative environment, I continued to alter my role in rehearsals based on the needs of the individual students balanced with the desires of the ensemble.

As a professional musician, I came into teaching with a wealth of knowledge concerning the content of popular music, jazz, classical, Latin, rock, punk, metal, and the varied ways these musics are created, rehearsed, recorded, performed, and

learned, but perhaps, a lack of understanding how to go about conveying that knowledge. Shulman (1986) describes this intersection of content knowledge and an understanding of how to teach that knowledge as *pedagogical content knowledge*, defined as "the ways of representing and formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others" (p. 9). To improve my teaching practice, I began to critically wonder about the complex interactions of formal music education and informal music learning, seeking out ways to incorporate my experiences as I continued to "build, store, revise, reject, and refine [my] knowledge about teaching" (Campbell & Thompson, 2014, p. 457, citing Schmidt, 1998). How might I find ways to represent the connections and intersections between my in-school and the out-of-school musical experiences—and what I perceived to be a not-so-vast gulf between them (Green, 2002)—and realize ways of relating these experiences in a comprehensible, teachable way to the students?

       Connecting the gig to the classroom. With the benefit of hindsight, I now have a deeper understanding of how the knowledges I gained, the beliefs I developed, and the practices I cultivated through my experiences as a professional musician and a professional teacher shaped (and continue to shape) my ever-evolving pedagogy. Over time, my experiences as a band kid had meshed with my out-of-school musical self, forming a sort of mashup of these seemingly unrelated happenings, what Parkinson and Smith (2015) refer to as hybridized learning experiences. Later, I began teaching with the impressions of this hybridity underpinning my practice, but without the foundations of any formal training in a music teacher education program. I now realize that this multiplicity of musical situations, what Tobias (2015a, following Barrett, 2014) calls *dynamic intersections*— a remixing of my experiences in in-school and out-of-school environments with my knowledge and understanding of music in multiple creative, performative, and

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educative facets—formed the foundation of my pedagogical approach to music learning and teaching.

With this in mind, what might there be to learn and understand from stories similar to mine; narratives and paths that stand, perhaps, in contrast to the more conventional pathways of other music educators who move from high school into a university teacher education program and then into teaching? How might these unconventional stories support teachers who, perhaps, don't have deep experiences as professional, gigging musicians, but who, nonetheless, have a desire to incorporate popular music into the classroom learning experience? Davis and Blair (2011) note that pre-service teachers often feel unprepared to teach popular music due to a lack of training, resources, and strategies "to successfully incorporate popular music into their music curricula" (p. 128). This lack of preparation comes as little surprise as Springer (2016) discovered that upwards of 90% of music teacher education program graduates in his study reported taking zero classes focused on ways of learning and teaching with and through popular music in the classroom. As a result of this lack of preparation, Woody (2007) suggests the primary reason many music teachers are unwilling (or unable?) to incorporate popular music into the classroom in a genuine manner is because "they fear they wouldn't know the first thing about actually doing it" (p. 36).

Through illuminating the beliefs and experiences of the *professional musician~teacher*[5]—and revealing the dynamic intersections of the practices of learning, creating, performing, and teaching popular music—acquired through their

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[5] Sellers and Gough (2010) utilize the tilde (~) to establish a sense of "conjoining of co-implicated notions" (p. 2). In this inquiry, I'm thinking of professional musician~teachers as two perspectives fused into one individual, the professional musician as teacher.

time "doing the thing," what might music education stand to gain? Bernard (2012) suggests these non-traditional[6] teachers, due to the development of their teaching practices outside a music teacher education program, stand to offer a different perspective to the grammars (Tyack & Tobin, 1994) endemic to the traditional music classroom—that is, the "regular structures and rules that organize the work of instruction" (p. 454). Bernard (2012) continues by suggesting that "thinking deeply about this situation raises important questions for the profession—questions about the pathways to a career in music education, about the relationship between musical background and music teaching" (p. 2).

My path to teaching entailed a number of twists and turns. After spending the better part of my early adulthood avoiding the teaching profession, it was this long-winding path that, despite my attempts to steer clear of my mother's vocation, eventually led me to the only plausible route. And on this point, I wonder: How did the experiences, knowledges, beliefs, and practices gained from my journey in music impact the development of my approaches to learning and teaching in music? How does my biographical past continue to impact my teaching practice? And more to the point, I wonder if there are other professional musician~teachers who might have experiences and paths comparable to mine? And, if so, what are their experiences on the gig and in the classroom? What does their path to teaching look like? How do they approach the act of teaching popular music? To end, in the words of Pink, "Is there anybody out there?"

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[6] In the Definitions section of this chapter I discuss why I find the term non-traditional problematic, as the fluidity of the term can serve to reify long-held binaries, i.e., traditional or non-traditional, Western music or popular music, etc.

Purpose of the Study

This narrative and multiple case study considers the stories of three professional musicians who, at some point in their performing careers, also became music teachers. By exploring how the orientation(s) of these professional musician~teachers were cultivated through the diversity of experiences encountered both on and off the gig as well as in and out of classroom, this study investigates how their orientation(s) impact and influence their approach to the popular music classroom.

Opfer and Pedder (2011) define a teacher's *orientation* as a complex system consisting of the "interaction and intersection of knowledge, beliefs, practices, and experiences" (p. 388) around learning and teaching based on their biographical pasts. Further, they suggest an individual's orientation has an "extremely strong influence" (p. 389) (p. 389) on how that individual learns and teaches. As a basis for their interpretation of orientation, Opfer and Pedder utilize complexity theory, defined as a way of identifying "systems both within and across these different strands of research and the ways these systems intersect and recursively interact, resulting in the emergence of teacher professional learning" (p. 377). An example of a *complex system* might be a naturally occurring ecosystem such as a river or lake where the various elements of the system interact (e.g., water, fish, plant life, pollution, humans, etc.). Although independent parts of the ecosystem, each individual element an effect on the other elements and the system as a whole.

Cooper et al. (2016) use complexity theory as a framework under the auspices of contextualizing teacher leaders' efforts to create change, thereby extending Opfer and Pedder's suggestion that "teacher learning is nested within complex systems that have varying levels of overlap and influence" (p. 89). The various elements nested and contained within a complex system—described by

Mitchell and Newman (2001) as "a group or organization which is made up of many interacting parts" (p. 1)—characterize teacher learning and encapsulates the development of teacher learning as complex and consisting of multiple points of continuous connection and interaction. With this in mind, an example of a complex system focusing on the professional musician~teacher might include the observations of and experiences in multiple music learning environments (e.g., the K-12 classroom, the university classroom, influence of the music industry, teacher certification programs, participation in on- and off-campus ensembles, professional development opportunities, etc.) encountered in both in- and out-of-school settings as well as the cyclical nature of influence these systems have on each other.

With this conceptualization of a complex system in mind, Opfer and Pedder's (2011) notion of a teacher's individual orientation is but one area they highlight within the complex system of teacher professional learning. Opfer and Pedder (2011) define these areas as:

1) The individual teacher system [that] encompasses their prior experiences, their orientation to, and beliefs about, learning, their prior knowledge, and how these are enacted in their classroom practice;

2) School-level systems [that] involve the contexts of the school that support teaching and learning, the collective orientations and beliefs about learning, the collective practices or norms of practice that exist in the school, and the collective capacity to realize shared learning goals.; and

3) Systems of the learning activities, tasks, and practices in which teachers take part. (p. 384)

While taking in to account all three areas as defined by Opfer and Pedder, this study focuses on the orientation of the individual teacher and how their experiences,

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knowledges, beliefs, and practices impact and influence their teaching practice. Due to this focus, this study is somewhat limited as Opfer and Pedder's (2011) notion of a teacher's orientation takes into account all three of these systems (i.e., the orientation of the individual teacher, the school, and professional learning spaces). That said, these additional two systems will be referenced and discussed at points when encountered in the data, thereby providing additional context. With this limitation in mind, how might these various elements and systems influence and impact an individual's developing teaching practice? Specifically, how might the journeys through or experiences with these systems impact the orientations of the professional musician~teachers included in this study?

Research Questions

Based on this exploration into the orientation(s) and teaching practices of professional musicians who became professional teachers in secondary settings focusing on popular music, the following questions guided the inquiry and formed the core of the research puzzle:

1) What are the individual orientations of professional musicians who also teach in popular music-focused learning spaces in secondary school settings?

   a) Where and how did these individuals acquire their orientations during their time as students and professional musicians?

2) How do these professional musician~teachers approach teaching popular music in popular music-focused learning spaces in secondary school settings?

   a) How are their orientations evident in their teaching practices?

b) How did their orientations evolve to include their newfound experiences as they developed their teaching practice?

As the orientation of the professional musician~teacher is cultivated through diverse experiences encountered both on and off the gig as well as in and out of classroom, how might the orientation(s)—perspectives and attitudes that have been shaped outside participation in an undergraduate music teacher education program—of the participants in this study impact and influence how they approach the secondary popular music classroom? While Schmidt (1998) confirmed that both intra-and extra-musical experiences, understandings, and attitudes formed during high school and college play a role in how pre-service music teachers approach and conceptualize learning and teaching, there is scant research examining the teaching practices of the professional musician who also teaches in secondary learning spaces. Exploring the orientations and teaching practices of the professional musician~teachers in this inquiry will permit the examination of "the nature of these teachers' pedagogical understanding of subject matter that is informed by their past and present experiences, rather than by a program of professional preparation" (Grossman, 1989, p. 192).

To that point, this inquiry will focus on teachers who 1) have not participated in an undergraduate music teacher education program, 2) may or may not have participated in conventional music ensembles (i.e., concert band, orchestra, and choir) or private lessons during their time in secondary and university settings, and 3) established themselves as professional musicians before entering the teaching profession. This timing is important as it enables the participants to have fully engaged in the act of being a professional musician prior to becoming a teacher.

Strauss and Corbin (1998), when speaking to one's interest in a specific research topic, suggested:

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Choosing a research problem through the professional or personal experience route may seem more hazardous than through the suggested or literature routes. This is not necessarily true. The touchstone of your own experience may be more valuable an indicator for you of a potentially successful research endeavor. (pp. 35–36)

While my story runs both in parallel and in opposition, at times, to those of the participants, this exploration—through gaining a deeper understanding of the orientations of the participants and their paths to the classroom—has helped me better understand my orientation and my journey into teaching.

In this study, I serve as a participant/translator by way of interpreting, making meaning of, and presenting the stories of the lived experiences of the participants and how their orientation(s) impacted and influenced their approaches to teaching popular music. That said, although I began this research with the intent of the participants serving as co-researchers, I quickly discovered that not only did the well-developed teaching practices and reflective self-critique of their practices lend to rich, thick stories, but also that the depth of their assistance with the interpretation of their lived experiences left little need for me to translate due to their position as professional musician~teacher~co-researchers. This participant/co-researcher dynamic is discussed and problematized more deeply in Chapter 3 of this document.

Need for the Study

The traditional path of the pre-service music educator typically follows a cycle from 1) participation in conventional school-based ensembles (e.g., band, choir, orchestra), 2) on to the study in a university-based music teacher education program of the repertoire and techniques needed to conduct these types of ensembles, and 3) through to the newly-minted music educator, often acquiring a position teaching in a

K–12 music program centering this paradigm. While the research focusing on the experiences of those who have followed this conventional path through an undergraduate music teacher education program is plentiful, there is also a growing amount of research examining the informal learning practices of popular musicians (Green, 2002, 2008), the incorporation of informal learning practices into the classroom (Jaffurs, 2004; Vasil, 2016), the blending of formal and informal learning along a continuum (Green, 2002; Folkestad, 2006; Holley, 2019), the teaching practices of the popular musician in a one-on-one private lesson format (Robinson, 2010, 2012), the lived experiences of popular musicians (Yukevich, 2018), the experiences of second-career teachers (Berg, 2004; Grossman, 1989; Kahn, 2015; Martin, 2018; Novak & Knowles, 1992), non-traditional students entering a music teacher education program (Forrester & Eros, 2020; Talbot, 2018), non-traditional musicians entering a music teacher education program (Adams, 2017; Bernard, 2012), and the lack of popular music-focused coursework offered in music teacher education programs (Emmons, 2004; Hamilton & Vannatta-Hall, 2020; Sorenson, 2020; Springer, 2016; Springer & Gooding, 2013). Although this research focuses broadly on how the experiences of music teachers who have participated in an undergraduate music teacher education program might influence their approach and attitudes to the classroom, scant research has looked into the lived experiences of the professional musician. More specifically, there has been a lack of research exploring the lived experiences of professional musician with deep experiences in creating and performing popular music who then becomes teachers while maintaining their position as professional musicians. How might the totality of their lived experiences—their orientation(s)—influence their approach and attitudes in the popular music learning space?

Why does this deficiency in the research exist? Given the predominance of Green's (2002) book *How Popular Musicians Learn*, why hasn't there been more research on the how popular musicians *teach*? I suggest this exclusion is due, in part, to the biased attitudes that are prevalent within the music education model in the United States—a model where the vast majority of performance opportunities and research on music education focuses on styles of music and ways of learning and teaching that are embedded within the Western art music foundation and cultural norms of the American music education model (Abril, 2013; Boespflug, 1999; Bowman, 2004; Clement, 2008; Heuser, 2015; Rodriguez, 2004). Unfortunately, this focus is often at the expense of other(ed) styles of music, including popular music. Robinson and Hendricks (2018) note that the "elevation of Western classical" within the American music education model often exists in two distinct ways:

1) "Scholars have noted the intentional and unintentional ways in which the dominant class silences and erases a multitude of diverse music experiences by continuing to place emphasis on the re-creation of Western European classical music," and

2) "Eurocentric classical music not only dominates multicultural music curricula, but also serves as the lens through which all other music is viewed, making the multicultural music education movement another means of perpetuating White hegemonic culture." (loc. 1125)

Clements (2008) points to institutions of higher learning as the primary instigators of this gatekeeping, and further, that music teacher education programs perpetuate a conventional approach to music education, a continual cycle where tradition begets tradition when she declares:

These institutions, serving as gatekeepers to the profession, generally reserve admittance to students whose training in Western art music qualifies them to

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continue such pursuits. Our institutions can be seen as an integral part of the reciprocal cycle of music teacher preparation—we only accept a portion of those for whom formal music education has 'worked', and only if their voice or instrument is needed in a particular ensemble or studio. It is completely the wrong way to go about selecting the next generation of [music] education hopefuls. (pp. 5–6)

As noted above, this focus on Western art forms habitually disqualifies styles of music—and ways of learning and teaching these styles—that lie outside these hegemonic, Western norms (Bradley, 2006, 2007; Koza, 2008). Gellerstein (2021) suggests that the American music education model, either implicitly or explicitly, "maintains a legacy of cultural hegemony that has historically and systemically benefited the White students it was designed to serve at the expense of Black and Brown students and teachers" (p. iv). Cremata (2019, citing Kratus, 2015) goes so far as to admonish these "barriers to postsecondary music education and music teacher education" as being "blatantly discriminatory" (p. 421). Robinson and Hendricks (2018), when discussing Robinson's experiences around his Southern Gospel upbringing in contrast with a desire to audition for his high school's chamber choir, brought to light the ugly differences between the two paradigms. Explicitly, how the norms and audition processes of the Western art music-based chamber choir privileged Robinson's "White counterparts simply because White European culture and traditions were expected as the standard. Any deviation from those teachings was considered inferior purely based on racialized negativity that determines what is and is not music" (loc. 999).

American popular music is riddled with overlapping influences from a number of cultures, but none more than Black American culture. Hannah-Jones and Morris (2019) continue on this line of thought when stating unequivocally, "[Black music] is

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the sound not just of Black America, but the sound of America." When explicitly discussing how Black American popular music has guided and shaped the musical voices of generations of musicians, the field of music education must continue the arduous and much-needed process of interrogating our assumptions and privileges to "make our music education praxes more racially equitable and socially just" (Bradley, 2007, p. 135).

Black American popular musics, ways of learning and teaching these styles, and the voices that are culturally competent in these ways, continue to be othered and marginalized in the American music education model due to White privilege, power, insecurity, and misunderstanding of how styles outside the Western Euro-centric tradition—and specific to this study, styles inclusive of popular music—are created, performed, learned, taught, and theorized. This ugly circumstance, I believe, is the primary reason for the aforementioned blind spot in the research literature. Following Bradley (2007), this study involves an exploration of experiences in ways of learning and teaching—in musics both inside and outside the Western canon—by a group of professional musician~teachers who live at the intersection of these often-siloed worlds. These individuals became teachers not through the conventional path of a university-based music teacher education program, but rather came into teaching after having lived and worked as professional musicians. Through exploring the stories of their lived experiences as professional musicians—as well as the biases and assumptions entangled in their identities—what might we learn about (and from) their approaches to the modern music classroom as a frame of reference when approaching the popular music learning space?

The stories of the participants run counter to the dominant narrative often found among music teachers at the secondary level—an "off-the-rack, one-size-fits-

all account" (Bowman, 2006, p. 13) based on experiences in Euro- and Ameri-centric ways of learning, teaching, and recreating existing music. Through exploring the lived experiences of these outliers of the music education mainstream and what they have to offer, ~~I~~ we provide the reader what Stauffer (2014, citing Barone, 2000c) describes as "an occasion for conspiracy," an opportunity to discover "a social reality that may have gone previously unnoticed" (p. 146) due to the dominant voices of a Euro-centric music education. Clandinin (2009, citing Barrett & Stauffer, 2009), when speaking to these unnoticed voices and realities, encourages the use of narrative inquiry to "trouble certainty" in music education. Through telling these stories, we can center the voices and experiences of the often unnoticed and othered. Through asking questions that are not often asked and asking individuals who are not often included, the field of music education might discover ways of learning and teaching that are beyond our traditions and habits, to "highlight the relationship between what we do and who we are becoming" (McCarthy, 2007, p. 3).

Bernard (2012) suggests that listening to these othered voices "raises important questions for the profession—questions about the pathways to a career in music education, about the relationship between musical background and music teaching" (p. 2). Bernard furthers this concern when noting those who are identified as non-traditional musicians—defined as "individuals who play instruments that are not part of the traditional large ensemble program and people whose musical specialties lie in genres other than Western classical" (p. 2)—are more likely to be excluded from music teacher education programs due to their perceived standing as outliers.

This cycle of exclusion feeds directly into the notion of a binary where traditional and non-traditional musicians, instruments, and ways of producing and performing music are separate but, unfortunately, *not* equal in any manner in the

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eyes of the academy or their progeny. Further, this cycle of exclusion implies a hierarchy of acceptable, correct ways, and inversely, unacceptable, incorrect ways of learning, creating, and teaching music. Bowman (2007), when critiquing the field of music education, conceptualizes the field as both an inclusive and exclusive "we" when asking:

> Who, as music education professionals are "we"? To what range of skills, dispositions, and concerns does this commit us? And what (and whom!) does it *exclude*? What kind of people and actions and beliefs fall within and without the area that "we" so casually demarcates? (p. 114, italics original)

Bowman continues by questioning the claim to a "professional status as music educators [that] is at once inclusive and exclusive," asking "*Whom* does that claim exclude, and why, and how?" (p. 110, italics original). Further, Martin (2018) questions what it means "to be a 'qualified' music teacher. Does satisfactory completion of a traditional music teacher preparation program always trump other relevant experience?" (p. 99).

This study is a critical exploration of diverse experiences and circumstances of professional musician~teachers who followed roundabout paths into music education and how those experiences and circumstances guide their approaches in the classroom. By developing a better understanding of these professional musician~teachers, and further, how their multifaceted experiences and profound content knowledge impacted their teaching practice, the field of music education stands to realize a valuable expansion of the definition of who can be a music educator and, by extension, what music education could be (Clements, 2008; Martin, 2018). More to the point, how might teachers employing popular music in a school environment cultivate practices to more closely mirror the environments of popular musicians and the multitude of ways they learn, create, perform, and teach?

This expanded view of music learning and teaching brings on additional questions central to this study: Why is learning about the orientations and resultant teaching styles of these professional musician~teachers worthwhile? Why are these stories important? Through inviting new voices to the conversation and finding ways to relate to and with the stories of these professional musician~teachers, the field of music education might be afforded the opportunity to discover new ways of learning and doing (Allsup, 2015) to broaden the base of music education knowledge when considering additional ways of learning and teaching music. The stories of these individuals present a both/and understanding of the professional musician as a professional teacher. On this point, these stories extend the core narrative of music education when thinking about *who* is capable of teaching music (Stauffer, 2016). The implications of this expanded view of professional musician~teachers grounded in popular music idioms could also influence music teacher education programs and, further, the styles of music considered relevant and educative in a school setting. Through exploring the orientations and teaching practices of the popular musician~teachers in this inquiry, we provide a counter-story to the dominant narrative of music education and a challenge to the university-based music teacher preparation programs that serve as de facto gatekeepers for the Euro- and Ameri-centric ways of learning and teaching found in the music education paradigm. In short, this study provides an "occasion for conspiracy" (Stauffer, 2004, p. 173). Implications for this inquiry and further study include:

1) a critical observation of how popular music is learned and facilitated in the modern music classroom;

2) illustrating a diversity of ways the experiences of the professional musician might be integrated into music learning spaces;

3) a rethinking of how popular music is approached in the secondary and university classroom; and

4) a reconceptualization of how the act of teaching popular music is conducted in university music teacher education programs.

Definition of Terms

The landscape of popular music and popular music education is comprised of an assortment of practitioners and researchers, teachers and artists. Due to the variety of perspectives held by these diverse stakeholders, defining the terms and phrases employed within this landscape can be challenging at best and problematic at worst. Smith (2015) rightly notes that "semantics . . . lie at the core of current issues in popular music in higher education" (p. 34). The shifting nature of semantics Smith alludes to in higher education most certainly filters down to secondary and elementary popular music education as well.

With this notion of instability in mind, and given the often vague, overlapping designations and convoluted misinterpretations of a number of terms used both in the field and throughout this inquiry, I feel it important to offer additional insight into these terms. My intent here is threefold: 1) to support the reader in understanding how I am conceptualizing these terms; 2) to support the reader in understanding how another author is using these terms within in the context of a chosen quote as well as the context in which I am employing or citing a quote; and 3) to support the reader (and by extension, the field of music education) in understanding the differences and nuances of these terms. That said, these terms are ubiquitous throughout the literature, making it highly impractical, if not overtly awkward, to attempt a conversation around the topic of learning and teaching in popular music spaces without using them. Regardless, I will attempt to disrupt these binary notions

of formal/informal, classical/popular, and traditional/non-traditional in this document in the hopes of broadening the conceptualization of how popular musicians learn and, in the case of the participants of this inquiry, how popular musicians teach.

To convey the phrases and terms often used in popular music and popular music education—both in and out the classroom—I will briefly label and critique some of the jargon often used (and misused) in these spaces, thereby laying the groundwork for discovery. As a reconfirmation, I am approaching these terms as a professional musician, a veteran teacher, a scholar, and a fan of popular music. Through offering more lengthy definitions of these somewhat contentious terms, I hope not only to guide the reader through this semantics minefield, but also to definitively situate my perspective when I employ these terms.

Popular music. Popular music, as a musical genre, is exceedingly broad, encompassing and spanning a multitude of musics, artists, and times. More deeply, popular music is based on a complex foundation of cultural interaction, exchange, assimilation, cross-pollination, and appropriation—good, bad, and questionable—rooted in the lived experiences of the Black American diaspora (Banfield, 2009; Hall, 1997; Hannah-Jones & Morris, 2019; Morrison, 2015; Shuker, 2017). Bowman (2004) noted that providing a definition of the term *popular music* is "problematic, and authors have expressed disagreement on how this term can be adequately limited to a singular definition" (p. 35). Bowman (2004) further suggested that "popular music is not an 'it' but a 'them'—a vast, multifarious, and fluid range of musical practices with remarkably different and divergent intentions, values, potentials, and affordances" (p. 34).

The Association for Popular Music Education (Smith et al., 2019) troubles the relationship between the term and the academy when affirming popular music as a "term that many outside the academy do not recognize—for them, it is simply music

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that they like or with which they are familiar" (p. 3). Additionally, Davis and Blair (2011) illuminate the ambiguity around the shifting definition when describing popular music as "a social construct influenced historically and culturally while also developing and transforming over time" (p. 127). With these shifting perceptions in mind, this inquiry employs a definition of popular music that subscribes to Rodriguez (2004, citing Middleton, 2003), who defined popular music as based on three characteristics, a) the measurable consumption of music, i.e., position on the Billboard charts, b) delivery mode in certain media, i.e., movie soundtrack, streaming platforms, radio, live performance, etc., and c) the popularity of the music as designated by a particular group of people based on their collective ideals and values.

      Popular music education. *Popular music education* is a somewhat difficult term to define given not only the variety of perspectives on what musics are included—and whose musics are excluded—in the modern music classroom (Hall, 1997; Hess, 2015; Howard, 2020; Morton, 2001), but also given the shifting definition of popular music itself. In extending Bowman's (2004) expansive (if not altogether vague) definition of popular music to the idea of popular music education, would it be fair to state popular music education is comprised of a "vast, multifarious, fluid range of musical practices" that center popular music in the classroom? I believe so, but I also feel this characterization almost too amorphous, too unstructured. With this loose definition in place, it would seem any centering of any popular music in any classroom could be identified as popular music education. Under this definition, creating arrangements of popular music for the existing, conventional instrumentations found in ensemble-based music education, i.e., concert band, orchestra, and choir, would be sufficient. On this note though, Woody (2007) cautions this approach as inauthentic, if not somewhat problematic, as "the

music of Bruce Springsteen was not meant to be played by a marching band any more than a Sousa march was meant to be played by a rock band" (p. 32).

To establish some semblance of structure in popular music education—and similar to structures found in concert band, orchestral, chamber, choral, and jazz settings, I offer that the foundation of an education in popular music ought to be based on aligning its approaches with the authentic learning, creating, and performing practices of popular musicians. Those who incorporate popular music education, as I characterize it, into the classroom must find ways to offer the wealth of genres, stories, and creative means found in popular music and, further, discover ways of bringing these creativities into the classroom in a genuine manner that looks, sounds, and feels more like a collaborative recording session and less like the concert hall.

But even here we must be careful, as focusing solely on guitar-based rock bands will not suffice, as this approach could invoke a "new ethnocentrism . . . where students devote themselves entirely to mono-ethnic, male-dominated rock music" (Dyndahl & Nielson, 2014, p.113). Additionally, any incorporation of popular music in education settings must also include a critique of popular music and popular musicians, as the music (and the lived experiences of the musicians) often delves into areas of violence, misogyny, sexism, drug use, and a host of areas that might not be suitable—or at the very least, necessitate a guarded approach—in the school environment. Developing an emerging area of music education in a thoughtful, critical manner takes time and effort and, as Smith (2015) reminds us, "We are still trying to figure out exactly what popular music education is (in part because popular music never sits still), what purpose it serves, and what the best pedagogical models are and will be" (p. 44).

Formal/informal.[7] The debate around informal learning practices and their connection to popular music education has served as a point of connection, contention, and confusion. As the practices of formal and informal learning exist outside the construct of music education, Folkestad (2006) provides a music-focused definition of the terms when characterizing *formal* learning as when:

1) the activity is sequenced beforehand;

2) it is arranged and put into order by a "teacher" who also leads and carries out the activity;

3) however, that person does not necessarily have to be a teacher in the formal sense, but a person who takes on the task of organising and leading the learning activity, as, for example, one of the musicians in a musical ensemble. Moreover, this position does not have to be static, although this is commonly the case. (p. 141)

As a counterpoint, Folkestad's (2006) characterizes *informal* learning as when learning:

1) is not sequenced beforehand;

2) the activity steers the way of working/playing/composing, and the process proceeds by the interaction of the participants in the activity;

3) the activity can be described as "self-chosen and voluntary learning" However, as learning can never be "voluntary" in its true sense—it takes place whether or not it is intended or wanted. (p. 141)

In terms of how the instability of defining formal and informal play into this inquiry, Bell (2016) suggests that "popular musicians are as eclectic as the music

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[7] Much of this section is excerpted from my chapter Contemporary/Popular Music Pedagogy: Connecting the Gig to the in the book *A Pedagogy for Our Time: Conversation and Critique (2023).*

they produce," and further, that "popular musicians cannot be divided into a dichotomy (informal/formal), nor contained within a continuum (informal-formal); such models are not nearly messy enough" (loc. 6063). I maintain that *all* musicians—whether educated in conventional or non-conventional setting—do not learn *only* in a monolithic manner. *All* musicians take advantage of both formal and informal ways of learning—in varying degrees dependent upon a number of factors— with these ways appearing to "act in a dialectic way, such that musicians of all genres combine formal and informal learning strategies in their practice of musical learning" (Folkestad, 2006, p. 140). On this note, when using the terms formal and informal throughout this document, I keep in mind Folkestad's (2006, following Green, 2002) assertion that "formal-informal should not be regarded as a dichotomy, but rather as the two poles of a continuum" (p. 135) while also acknowledging the vast, open space between these two poles, thereby allowing for interaction and intermingling between them.

Non-traditional. The term *non-traditional* is one that I am both identified by and struggle with given I am considered non-traditional by the academy in a number of ways: a non-traditional musician, a non-traditional student, an adult learner, a second-career teacher, and as one who engages in non-traditional styles of music education. Bernard (2012), following the Society for Music Teacher Education's (2009) definition, provides a description focusing on one's musical background when characterizing the non-traditional musician as:

> . . . an individual who plays instruments that are not part of the traditional large ensemble program and a person whose musical specialty lies in genres other than Western classical music. (pp. 6–7)

The binary nature of this definition implies that there are traditional musicians who play what can only be thought of as traditional music on traditional instruments, and

conversely, that non-traditional musicians play what can only be thought of as non-traditional music on non-traditional instruments. To this, I ask what tradition(s) and whose tradition(s) are being characterized as the dominant, inevitably rendering anything (and anyone) outside this dominant tradition as *other*? And while these othered musicians—and by extension the music they create and perform—might not be thought of as conventional in the context of "school music" (Williams, 2011) these ways are most certainly conventional in how music is created, recorded, and performed outside the construct and context of the conventional school music paradigm.

An additional variant of the term "non-traditional" stems from a number of factors identifying a student as being outside the stereotypical college student as being outside of 18-25 years of age norm and having entered college immediately or soon after graduating high school. Brewer's (2014, citing Horn & Carroll, 1996) designation of the term places students on a non-traditional spectrum from "minimally" to "highly" non-traditional based on seven characteristics:

a) delayed enrollment,

b) part time attendance,

c) financial independence,

d) worked full time while enrolled,

e) dependents other than a spouse,

f) single parent status, and

g) absence of a standard high school diploma. (p. 24)

A report by the National Center for Education Statistics (2015) reports 74% of all undergraduate students possess at least one of the seven characteristics listed

above, turning the notion of the stereotypical, "traditional" college student on its proverbial head.

Finally, the term "second-career" often refers to individuals who have entered teaching after having pursued one or more occupations unrelated to teaching. Second-career status does not distinguish between those who have entered teaching after completion of a teacher education program, an alternative certification program, or who does not possess certification. Of interest for the purposes of this inquiry is the question of whether the professional musician~teacher pivoted out of performing and into teaching or, instead, entered the teaching profession while continuing to perform, thereby expanding the idea of the separation of careers and how a "first" career might influence the "second" and vice versa. In the case of the participants in this study, the latter holds true as all of the participants began teaching in the music classroom while continuing to perform. Further, how they discovered their (second) teaching careers often influenced how they approached their (first) performing career and vice versa. This interplay will be discussed more deeply throughout this study.

Prior research notes that non-traditional, second-career individuals, through their lived experiences outside the constructs of teaching and teacher education, might have an elevated capacity to conceptualize/approach teaching from a different perspective when compared to the traditional pre-service teacher (Bernard, 2012; Eifler & Potthoff, 1998; Forrester & Eros, 2020; Hargreaves & Marshall, 2003; Martin, 2018; Novak & Knowles, 1992). On this note, and following Bernard (2012), when using the term non-traditional, I am thinking more of a musical individual and/or situation that exists primarily outside the dominant music education paradigm centering band, orchestra, and choral ensembles and repertoire.

Orientation. For this inquiry, I will apply Opfer and Pedder's (2011) notion of a teacher's individual orientation—that is, a complex system entailing the "interaction and intersection of knowledge, beliefs, practices, and experiences" (p. 388) around learning and teaching based on the participants' biographical pasts and how their orientations are enacted in the learning environment. In this case, I'm exploring the connection(s) between their lives as professional musicians and, once they also became teachers, how their knowledges, beliefs, practices, and experiences impacted and influenced their approach to the popular music classroom and formed their pedagogical content knowledge. Shulman (1986) describes pedagogical content knowledge as "that set of understandings, conceptions, and orientations that constitutes the source of their comprehension of the subjects they teach" (p. 5) based on one's biographical past.

If we conceptualize the elements of one's orientation as containing "many interacting parts" (i.e., knowledge, beliefs, practices, and experiences), this heuristic helps lay the groundwork for comprehending the enormous influence one's orientation has in relation to their teaching practice as well as the complexity of how these facets that comprise an orientation interact and intermingle. This characterization lends itself well to the current inquiry, as the research questions aim to explore the "varying levels of overlap and influence" within these facets and systems that shape an orientation and contribute to a developed teaching practice. As the concept of complexity theory is itself complex, I will discuss the theory, how I'm conceptualizing these complex systems, and how I'm employing the model of Opfer and Pedder's (2011) orientation in a more in-depth manner in the Theoretical Framework section in Chapter 3 of this document.

Authenticity.[8] The concept of authenticity often serves as a bugbear of popular music education—a moving target of validity or a mythical level of real-world realization in the classroom. Hargreaves and Marshall (2003) suggest that the authenticity of school music, and "its relation to music outside school, is at the heart of the problem of contemporary music education" (p. 156). Kruse (2018), when discussing the concept of authenticity in hip-hop music education, suggests that "conceptualizing authenticity as a static condition or set of characteristics" (p. 149) may impede the music educator's understanding of the concept. Following this rocky path, one might regrettably view authenticity as a weaponized construct through a lens of either/or, i.e., authentic/inauthentic, formal/informal, good/deficient music, etc.

By viewing authenticity as an action instead of a checklist, music educators and music students can better understand Parkinson and Smith's (2015) concept of not a single authenticity in popular music, but socially constructed, plural authenticities. By incorporating the production and transmission practices of the popular musician—by thinking critically about the concept of authenticities in a manner that nurtures connections between in-school and out-of-school music experiences—popular music educators can better conceptualize and address the complicated question of authenticity. When using the term authenticity throughout this document, I am referencing not only my own experiences on the gig and in the classroom, but also the "genuine production and transmission practices utilized by popular musicians" embodied in the "musical processes inherent to the creation of

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[8] Much of this section is excerpted from my chapter Contemporary/Popular Music Pedagogy: Connecting the Gig to the in the book *A Music Pedagogy for Our Time: Conversation and Critique* (2023).

popular music and therefore valued by popular musicians" (Davis & Blair, 2011, p. 128).

Organization of the Document

This dissertation is organized into six chapters. Chapter One introduces the study and my interest/role in the study as well as my biographical past. The chapter also outlines the purpose of the inquiry, the research questions guiding the inquiry, the theoretical framework that will be implemented, the significance of the inquiry, and oft-used terms. Chapter Two presents a synthesis of the literature through the blending of vignettes and the representative literature. Chapter Three outlines how I went about the study, further discusses the theoretical framework used, and includes details surrounding data generation and interpretation. Chapter Four contains self-portraits composed by the participants discussing their musical journeys to teaching in their own words. In Chapter Five, I present how the orientations and teaching practices of the three participants parallel and intersect by way of individual and cross-case analysis. Finally, in Chapter Six, I present a discussion of the findings, implications for the field, and offer recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

SYNTHESIS OF THE LITERATURE

Discussion and debate around the incorporation of popular music in the modern music classroom has been an ongoing topic of debate over the course of the last 50+ years, as demonstrated by the expanding occurrences of publications, conferences, organizations, and school-based programs focusing on popular music education. Dialogue around the use of popular music in the context of a music education experience has spanned a multitude of questions around the *how* and *why* of incorporating popular music into the curriculum through to identifying and categorizing ways of learning and teaching popular music (Allsup, 2003; Bernard, 2012; Bowman, 2004; Clements, 2008; Folkestad, 2006; Green, 2002, 2008; Rodriguez, 2004).

As the integration of popular music into the elementary, secondary, and university classroom continues to expand, of particular interest is how ways of learning and teaching popular music might be identified, critiqued, and enacted in a school environment. More to the point, how might teachers employing popular music in a school environment cultivate practices that approximate the learning and teaching environments of popular musicians and the multitude of ways they learn, create, and perform? This conversation raises questions and possible concerns around the authenticity of the practices of popular music enacted in schools, the viability of these practices in school settings, and the capabilities of teachers to facilitate popular music experiences.

This inquiry focuses on the narratives of three professional musicians who, at some point in their career path, *also* become music teachers in a secondary school setting focusing on popular music. Additionally, these teachers did not participate in an undergraduate music teacher education program, but rather entered the teaching

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profession after being employed as professional musicians. By exploring how the orientations of these popular musician~teachers[9] were cultivated through the diversity of experiences, knowledges, beliefs, and practices encountered and gained both on and off the gig as well as in and out of the classroom, this study explores how these individuals blended their experiences as professional musicians with their teaching practice in the popular music-focused secondary classroom. Considering their biographical pasts offers a glimpse into the thought processes of these individuals as they wrestled with how, why, and when to integrate their content knowledge with their developing pedagogical knowledge in the modern music classroom (Shulman, 1986).

This inquiry considers the integrations of the various types of knowledges, as well as the fluid, complex identities these professional musician~teachers cultivated over the arc of their careers. Using hyphenated (ex. music-teacher) or backslashes (ex. musician/teacher) does not fully account for the multifaceted identities of these individuals, hence one of the reasons I chose to use a tilde (~) to indicate the conjoining of their various identities as they relate to this study. Further, the identities of the participants are not hierarchal (where one supersedes the other) nor transitional (where one is abandoned while another is commenced), but rather overlapping and fluid insofar as the three individuals continued to perform as professional musicians while also being employed as teachers. All three participants sought out ways to improve their teaching practice through continued engagement in professional learning communities and conference attendance/participation. Additionally, all three participants chose to pursue master's degrees: one in jazz

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[9] Sellers and Gough (2010) utilize the tilde (~) to establish a sense of "conjoining of co-implicated notions" (p. 2). In this inquiry, I'm thinking of professional musician~teachers as two perspectives fused into one individual, the professional musician as teacher.

performance and two in education. These opportunities offered additional support as the participants sought to reflect on and better understand the interplay of their orientations as students and professional musicians as they developed their teaching practices in the classroom.

As the orientation of the professional musician~teacher is cultivated through the complex "interaction and intersection of knowledge, beliefs, practices, and experiences" (Opfer & Pedder, 2011, p. 388) encountered both on and off the gig as well as in and out of the classroom, how might these participants' orientations impact and influence their approach to teaching popular music? Namely, how do these individuals with deep experiences in learning, creating, and performing popular music approach the act of teaching popular music in an in-school setting? Further, what might the field of music education learn from their experiences by exploring the intersection of their popular music-focused content and pedagogical knowledges? Findings of this inquiry may assist teachers in incorporating popular music into learning spaces while ensuring the voices and experiences of popular musicians are considered and represented in a genuine manner.

Through developing a critical understanding (followed by the reflective incorporation) of the experiences and practices of popular music and popular musicians, ongoing dialogue between the ones who know and the ones who wish to know, and continued critical examination of emerging ways of learning and teaching popular music, I assert that "we" (Bowman, 2007) can realize a viable, generative, and educative popular music experience that bridges the gap between the academy and the recording studio, the bedroom producer, and the gigging musician. In other words, music education stands to realize a practice-based theory through the unification and blending of the content knowledge of the professional musician along with the pedagogical knowledge of the teacher that is embodied in the blended

pedagogical content knowledge of the professional musician~teacher (Shulman, 1986).

Purpose of The Chapter

The purpose of this dialogue with the literature is to present the relevant areas of discussion as they relate to this study, to position the representative literature as a key piece of the research puzzle, and to place these two elements in dialogue with one another. This conversation with the literature, while not exhaustive, is representative of the discussions, arguments, and dialogues that are central to this inquiry (Torraco, 2016) as guided by the research questions:

1) What are the individual orientations of professional musicians who also teach in popular music-focused learning spaces in secondary school settings?

a) Where and how did these individuals acquire their orientations during their time as students and professional musicians?

2) How do these professional musician~teachers approach teaching popular music in popular music-focused learning spaces in secondary school settings?

a) How are their orientations evident in their teaching practices?

b) How did their orientations evolve to include their newfound experiences as they developed their teaching practice?

The organization of each section of this chapter is presented by way of three primary areas of exploration: 1) the value of experience(s); 2) ways of learning and teaching popular music; 3) issues around incorporating the practices of the popular musician into the modern-day music learning space. Each section opens with a vignette placing the relevant content within the context of a narrative centering a

popular music experience, providing a practical, real-world view of the concepts described in the literature. The themes of these vignettes are then placed in dialogue with the representative literature while considering the research questions, thereby assisting the reader in understanding the discussion from a more scholarly perspective.

Vignette – Experiences on the Gig

We had been in the recording studio for most of the day, and I could tell the vocalists were beginning to get a wee bit restless. The students built the track around a great drum loop that reminded me of Zigaboo Modeliste of The Meters—lots of snare drags and off-beat hi-hats—and the rhythm section was just finishing up tracking the last layer of keyboards.

I ambled over to the vocalists and reminded them the studio is all about "hurry up and wait," so they should be ready to lay down their tracks at any moment. They nodded their heads in agreement. Since the track had notably changed since the demo was produced, I asked how they were feeling about it. London mentioned she liked how "slinky" the track felt but wondered if there was now "too much" going on . . . if the track would overpower the vocal. I nodded and noted, "Good point. Do you think we need to change up the track to fit the vocal or the vocal to fit the track?" London looked up and to the right, thinking about the song and humming the hook melody. After a few moments, she got up from the couch, walked into the control room, and tapped one of the co-producers on the shoulder.

I drifted back and reflected on a time I was flown out to a studio to lay down bass tracks after the drums had been recorded. While I preferred to track alongside the drummer, overdubbing the bass was something I had done more than a few times before. When I arrived at the studio, the artist was still working out the tunes, changing things here and there, altering lyrics, and maybe changing a chord here or there. I was only in town for three days, so I figured they would have plenty of time to work out the songs, and I would have plenty of time to record. I found a spot in the corner of the control room

and, coffee cup in hand, just observed what was going on—the flow, the vibe, who was asking questions, and who was answering.

I spent the remainder of that day, and the next . . . and the next listening to the session, the whole time thinking about how I'd craft my part to fit the song while carving out a path between the control room and the coffee pot. Hurry up and wait, indeed. The producer, a high-energy, low-stress sort of guy, didn't seem fazed that my flight took off in less than 12 hours. I walked out of the control room and got comfortable on the couch, not knowing when I'd be needed. I woke up to the artist jostling my shoulder, saying, "You're up." I looked at my phone. 3am. My flight was leaving at 9am. I had a little less than four hours to track the songs, get to the airport, and make my flight. In what seemed a blur, we tracked 12 songs in those few, short hours while the artist served as my personal coffee fairy, much to my appreciation. I stayed in the control room so I could get immediate feedback from the artist, the producer, and the engineer—no need wasting time walking back and forth into the big room. On the first pass of each song, I played what I thought the song needed. Luckily, we were able to get a few one-takes. Beautiful. We only did a third pass on a couple of tunes as the artist had a specific bass part in mind. Not a problem—I wasn't married to my part; these were their songs, not mine. After we had completed the final tune, I packed up my bass, grabbed my carry-on, and walked out of the studio into the morning sun and a waiting car. I boarded the plane and fell into my seat, absolutely exhausted. I had a gig later that night, so I needed to get some rest. As the plane climbed above the coast of southern California, I began humming the hook of one of the tunes, the din of the airplane's engine serving as a sort of drone, lulling me to sleep.

The Value of Experience(s), the Worth of Knowledge(s)

Experiences provide a point of reference, a moment of reflection that offers the opportunity to think back, think through, and think how we might manage or approach a particular event. Our lived experiences, filtered through and impacted by our prior knowledge, beliefs, and practices, assist us in making sense of the world.

For teachers, these past experiences and the knowledges gained through experiences as student and teacher in both in- and out-of-school settings impact our decisions about what constitutes generative learning and, indeed, good teaching (Campbell, Thompson, & Barrett, 2010; Novak & Knowles, 1992; Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Schmidt, 1998).

Opfer and Pedder (2011) discuss how a teacher's individual orientation—the "interaction and intersection of knowledge, beliefs, practices, and experiences" (p. 388) around learning and teaching based on their prior knowledge and experiences— has an "extremely strong influence" (p. 389) on how they learn and teach. And while all teachers incorporate their attitudes and perspectives around music learning and teaching into their teaching practices (Campbell and Thompson, 2014), suppose these initial beliefs around learning and teaching practices are further developed not within the structures of a music teacher education program but, instead, centered around the knowledge and experiences encountered in more informal, out-of-school settings *in addition to* more formal, in-school settings. How might this orientation shape one's approach to the classroom?

Schmidt (2010, citing Dewey, 1933/1998, 1938/1963) suggests "all 'educative' experiences foster the development of attitudes, concepts, and skills that facilitate further learning in new situations" (p. 143). Here, it's important to note that Dewey (1933/1998) outlined three types of experiences: educative (i.e., experiences that impact learning in a positive manner), mis-educative (i.e., experiences that impede future learning), or non-educative (i.e., experiences that leave the learner unchanged). Schmidt (2010) further described mis-educative experiences as "misdirected" while depicting non-educative experiences as "disconnected from the learner's other experiences" (p. 132). Additionally, Dewey (1934, 1938/1963)

proposed two additional principles based on the quality of these experiences. The principle of interaction suggests that "individuals create meaning from an experience as they interact with its physical and social settings" while the principle of continuity submits that the "effect of experience is cumulative, with each experience shaped by prior experiences and in turn shaping future experiences" (Schmidt, 2010, p. 132, citing Dewey, 1934, 1938/1963). Learning and performing music, on both an amateur and a professional level, involves a constant state of reflection (what went well, what didn't go as planned) and reflexivity (how can I continue to play well more often and play less well less often?). How might these educative experiences—coupled with moments of critical reflection and reflexivity—impact one's orientation and, ultimately, their development as a teacher in the classroom? (Berg, 2004).

Without thinking explicitly about the complex relationships found in one's orientation and their influence, are professional musician~teachers employing this reflective framework in the classroom, unknowingly engaging in a critical pedagogy of sorts? McLaren (1988) defines critical pedagogy as "a way of thinking about, negotiating, and transforming the relationships among classroom teaching, the production of knowledge, the institutional structures of the school, and the social and material relations of the wider community, society and nation state" (p. 45). Abrahams (2005), when discussing critical pedagogy as a constructivist learning process wherein learners reflect on their prior knowledge and beliefs, discusses how the "knowledge children bring to school, derived from personal and cultural experiences, is central to their learning" (p. 14). Supported by Dewey's principle of continuity, I suggest Abraham's concept also applies to the knowledge and cultural experiences a teacher brings to the classroom, thereby influencing their approach to the classroom based on these prior happenings

Pedagogical content knowledge. But what knowledge(s) are valuable and, perhaps, essential to "good teaching?" Shulman's (1986) framework of pedagogical content knowledge, when looking into "how subject matter was transformed from the knowledge of the teacher into the content of instruction" (p. 3), parses out at least three of the knowledges that form the foundation of a teacher's approach to the learning space, these being:

1) subject matter content knowledge – the amount and organization of knowledge endemic to the topic possessed by the teacher;

2) pedagogical knowledge – knowledge that "embodies aspects of content most germane to its teachability" (p. 6); and

3) curricular knowledge – knowledge that "underlies the teacher's ability to relate the content" (p. 7) and find connections between topics being discussed in current coursework and across levels as well as the materials that support applicable intersections.

This study explores the pedagogical content knowledge of the professional musician~teacher at the intersection of subject matter content knowledge (understandings of and experiences with a variety of styles of music encountered both in and out of the classroom), pedagogical knowledge (they ways in which they convey to students their knowledge of the creative aspects and cultural underpinnings of popular music), and curricular knowledge (how they utilize their knowledge of popular music in an effort to deepen the student music experience). On this point, their experience as a professional musician may better enable these individuals to offer to a student "why a particular proposition is deemed warranted, why it is worth knowing, and how it relates to other propositions, both within the discipline and without, both in theory and in practice" (Shulman, 1986, p. 6). In line

with the assertion that a teacher's orientation contributes to an emerging teaching practice, pedagogical content knowledge can further be described as the:

> Blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues arc organized, represented, and adapted to diverse interests and abilities of learners, and presented for instruction. Pedagogical content knowledge is the category most likely to distinguish the understanding of the content specialist from that of the pedagogue. (Shulman, 1987, p. 8)

Specifically, when exploring the orientation and pedagogical content knowledge of the professional musician~teacher, "What are the sources of teacher knowledge? What does a teacher know, and when did he or she come to know it? How is new knowledge acquired, old knowledge retrieved, and both combined to form a new knowledge base?" (Shulman, 2013, p. 5). Opfer and Pedder (2011) note that a teacher's pedagogical content knowledge is acquired through the "blending and interaction of these various types of knowledge into a unique form" (p. 387). Kruse (2016, following Tobias, 2015a) relates this blending or *crossfading*[10] of experiences necessitates a merging of these in-school and out-of-school experiences, knowledges, and pedagogies to the benefit of all and could be mixed and blended in varying amounts dependent upon the changing needs of the learning environment (Folkestad 2006, following Green, 2006). This blending and interaction of "various types of knowledge" fits well with the use of one's orientation as a theoretical framework for this inquiry.

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[10] Crossfading, when used in a recording environment, is a means of blending two audio tracks by decreasing the volume of one track while, at the same time, increasing the volume of another.

Campbell and Thompson (2014, citing Stegman, 1996, 2007) suggest a "strong link" between a student teacher's beliefs of and prior experiences with music learning and teaching and the impact these facets have on an emerging teaching practice. Grossman (1989), when examining the pedagogical content knowledge of secondary school English teachers who possess a strong background in English literature (content knowledge) but no teacher education training, noted some difficulties for those learning to teach (pedagogical knowledge) from experience alone and additional troubles when anticipating a student's prior knowledge or potential challenges with the class content (curricular knowledge). In her analysis, Grossman determined that the teachers who did not participate in a teacher education program "were left to develop pedagogical content knowledge through their own experiences as students (both in college and earlier), as well as through trial and error in the classroom" (Mecoli, 2013, p. 21).

While incorporating the experiences of the professional musician~teacher *might* lead to what some consider a more authentic popular music experience, this stamp of authenticity does not necessarily equate to good teaching or a safe learning space. The orientations that individuals with similar biographical backgrounds as the participants bring into the classroom—as well as the biases and assumptions around music learning, creation, performance, and teaching—necessitate a critical exploration of how they, too, learned to teach through trial and error, and perhaps without the conceptual and philosophical supports provided within the context of an undergraduate music teaching education program. To this point, Grossman (1989) suggested that the experiences of these practitioners as teachers offers "the opportunity to examine more closely the nature of these teachers' pedagogical understanding of subject matter that is informed by their past and present experiences, rather than by a program of professional preparation" (p. 192).

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Additionally, when speaking of the importance of the ways non-traditional musicians (and, by extension, non-traditionally trained teachers) might approach the act of teaching, Bernard (2012) writes:

> I believe that individuals with non-traditional backgrounds, because they may not be tied to the way things have always been done in music education, may be able to think outside the box in terms of repertoire, musical activities, teaching strategies, and performance practices, bringing their unique musical experiences and perspectives to the ways that they structure their classroom practice. (p. 6)

Robinson (2012), when investigating how the popular musicians in his study taught in a one-on-one environment, details how developing a pedagogy in this environment—that is, elevating one's orientation as a professional musician as the primary filter of critical reflection and an emerging teaching practice above what might be understood about teaching purely through observation (Lortie, 1975)—"may encourage a certain freedom to create original pedagogy, particularly for instruments and musical styles for which little or no established syllabus material or grade exams exist" (p. 368).

Coulson (2010), when exploring the value of musicians' experiences through the lens of cultural capital, suggests the stories of professional musicians might offer "useful insights into the complex connections between music education and learning" (p. 267). This perspective on connection brings back the concept of thinking how musicians with these extensive experiences in popular music might find ways to foster previously unconsidered connections between music learning and teaching. Here, Smith (2015) encourages, "It is because of the inherent complexity in the nature of musicians' careers that those delivering popular education are keen to explore the most effective ways in which to do this" (p. 37). These insights, often

neglected by the field of music education, can be more deeply interrogated by investigating the ways of learning and teaching music that are embodied in the voices and practices of the professional musician~teachers included in this study.

Learning to teach by teaching. How might the emerging professional musician~teacher conceptualize the act of teaching? How might they consider the "most effective ways to do this" if they lack tangible teaching experience or explicit training in how to teach? Or, as Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann (1985) express the matter, how can a developing teacher avoid pitfalls when acquiring the skills and pedagogical knowledge needed to "avoid learning things that are inappropriate in any teaching situation and that will be reinforced by further unanalyzed experience on the job?" (p. 63). How and when might a teacher's experiences become a detriment to their developing teaching practice and, perhaps, to the student musical experience? Due in part to their lack of engagement in an undergraduate teacher education program, the professional musician~teacher might suffer a bout of Lortie's (1975) "apprenticeship of observation"—that is, grounding their emerging teaching practice solely on their observations of teaching through their experiences as students in the classroom while, at the same time, engaging in a trial-and-error approach to teaching in the classroom. Additionally, might their emerging teaching practice encounter additional impediments due to their "personal history and experience of schooling," and further how might this stance encourage their "perceptions of [the] classrooms in a way that makes it difficult to see alternatives"? (Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1985, p. 63).

These potential impediments run parallel with Bernard's (2012) notion that musicians and teachers with non-traditional experiences *may* be able to think outside the box of the music education paradigm, thereby offering different perspectives on ways of learning and teaching popular music. When discussing constructing a

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teaching practice, Robinson (2012) determined that the popular musicians in his study were not solely re-creating their out-of-school learning practices nor were they simply teaching how they were taught. Instead, these popular musician~teachers were:

> . . . creating their own idiosyncratic teaching strategies, drawing on those elements of their own learning histories which they valued, and supplementing these with aspects of musical learning which they felt they had missed out on; in short, they were attempting to teach as they would have wanted to be taught themselves. (p. ii)

This idea of "creating" one's teaching practice through prior experiences is true for those music teachers who participated in a teacher education program (Campbell & Thompson, 2014) *and* those who did not (Grossman, 1989; Novak & Knowles, 1992). Cultivating an approach to teaching is a "life-long process of constructing and refining, from diverse sources, personal definitions of 'good' teaching, developing ever greater congruence between their hypothetical models and 'themselves'" (Schmidt, 1998, p. 39). In short, *all* teachers learn to teach by teaching. All teachers learn to teach through varying amounts of trial and error and, hopefully, critical reflection followed by reflexive modification of their teaching practice.

The complexity of the professional musician~teacher presents an interesting opportunity to explore and critique additional possibilities and opportunities in music education. Professional popular musicians who enter teaching after establishing a performing career possess a wealth of knowledge concerning the content of popular music and the varied ways popular music is learned, created, rehearsed, recorded, and performed, but lack, perhaps, an initial lack of realized pedagogical knowledge or understanding of critical pedagogy. Through the combination of hybridized learning experiences (Parkinson & Smith, 2015)—that is, the blending of experiences

and knowledges gained in both in-school and out-of-school settings—coupled with time spent as a student musician and as a professional musician, the professional musician~teacher stands to offer a different perspective on the notion of pedagogical content knowledge and how their contextualized understandings might apply to the popular music learning environment. Barrett (2014) suggests the intersections of in-school and out-of-school experiences and knowledges are vital to understanding:

> . . . aspects of the lived experience of music teaching and learning [that] are often too nuanced, contextualized, and interdependent to be reduced to discrete variables. The dynamic intersections of subject matter, learners, teacher, and educational milieu are vital to our professional understanding. (p. 114)

By exploring the dynamic intersections between the orientation and pedagogical content knowledge of the professional musician~teacher—by connecting with "communities of popular musicians to help us find our flaws and pick apart our pedagogies" (Bell, 2016, loc. 6061)—what might the field of music education stand to better understand when considering the connections between popular music, popular musicians, and the music classroom? Further, how might the experience(s) and knowledge(s) of the professional musician~teacher be valuable in the context of the modern music learning environment?

Vignette – Learning on the Fly

> *For what seemed longer than it probably was, the band stared at the $100 bill the guy from the bar had gently placed on the front of the stage. He had been listening all night, with his bar stool turned towards the bandstand, turning his back to the band only when ordering another drink. He didn't bother to put the money in the tip jar, probably because he wanted us to see that he wasn't putting a $1 or $5 in the pot. After nodding to the band, he walked*

back to his spot at the bar, almost disappearing from view as he left the wash of the lights bathing the stage.

Every night on the gig, we asked for requests as it kept the audience in the club and us on our toes. Our version of "stump the band" was just a chance to practice and get paid at the same time. We never knew what song folks would choose, but the rule was that if more than two out of the seven knew the tune, we had to play it. And by "knowing the tune," I really mean more of a vague recollection of the groove, the form, and the lyrics. Can't remember the lyric in the second verse? Make something up, sing the first verse again, or call out for a horn solo while the keyboard player searches the internet for the lyrics. Sometimes this "game" resulted in an absolute train wreck, but at other times, it led us to dig deep, to listen, and to communicate with our glances, our head nods, and our instruments.

On this particular night, our new benefactor requested "Kissing My Love" by Bill Withers. The keyboard player looked over to me, and I held three fingers down on my right hand[11], indicating we'd play in Eb, the original key . . . I think. Before we had time to talk about the form—or anything else, really— the drummer dropped into their best James Gadson groove and, holy shit, it was in the pocket from the downbeat! The vocalist grabbed the mic, asking the crowd, "So how y'all doin' tonight?" when, really, they were just stalling so we could figure out the form. The sax player, who found a chart of the tune on their iPad, tapped their nose, so we knew there'd be a bridge or breakdown at some point – they mouthed, "I'll cue it." "It's just a blues," yelled the guitarist over the drums. And with that, they launched into the signature funky guitar bubble, followed a few bars later by the rest of us. As more folks flooded the dance floor, the vocalist put one hand on their forehead to shield their eyes from the blinding lights, pointed over to the guy at the bar, and our newest fan raised his glass in approval. We nodded back to him and slinked into the verse . . .

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[11] One of the many ways musicians denote keys is through hand gestures. For example, sharps can indicated by raising a particular number of fingers (two fingers indicates the key of D major) while flats are indicated by pointing the relevant number of fingers down (four fingers pointing down indicates the key of Ab major).

Whoa now when I'm kissing my love

Yeah thump a thumping in my head . . .

Ways of Learning and Teaching Popular Music

While an increasing number of scholars and music education organizations espouse Green's (2002, 2008) theory of informal learning practices, an approach based on her research into the learning practices of fourteen White rock musicians, as a foundational pedagogical element of K–12 popular music education (Cremata, 2017; Hess, 2020; Jaffurs, 2004; Robinson, 2012; Vasil, 2019), others caution against the adaption of a teaching practice, i.e., a monolithic *popular music pedagogy* explicitly based on a musical genre due, in part, to the multiplicity of ways musicians learn (Allsup, 2008; Clements, 2008). Further, as music education organizations and corporate entities explore methods of operationalizing popular music to fit the paradigmatic structures of music education, an additional point of contention arises; ways of approaching popular music in these spaces could be eclipsed by a non-critical, tradition-palatable approach to popular music that is disconnected from the creative practices of popular musicians (Bell, 2016).

Although there has been a marked increase in the discussion, debate, and research focusing on popular music education over the last three decades, the majority of research into the practices of popular music, the learning habits of popular musicians, and the resultant ways of teaching popular music in the secondary music classroom have been authored not by or with practitioners of popular music, but rather by researchers with little or no background experience in creating, recording, or performing popular music (Bell, 2016; Woody, 2007). This lack of practical experience, unfortunately, has advanced some misconceptions of popular music learning and teaching that often misinterpret the nuanced and

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complex systems that form the foundations of popular music, contributing to a disconnect in how music scholars and educators alike contextualize ways of learning and teaching as it relates to popular music.

Formal/informal.[12] For example, due, in part, to the fluidity of the terms formal and informal (much like the fluid definition of popular music itself per Bowman, 2004), the characterization of these terms is dependent upon who is using them, how they are using them, and in what context they are being used. Kastner (2014) laments that "music education seems to lack a solidified definition of informal music learning" (p. 72) while often comparing informal music learning with "terms describing similar experiences, like non-formal learning, popular music pedagogy, and vernacular music learning" (p. 72). Further, Cain (2013) notes that "attempts to distinguish clearly between 'formal' and 'informal' often founder" (p. 77). This somewhat confusing, undecided pedagogical climate underpins the conversation with the literature in this section.

Much of this confusion has centered around (mis)interpretations of the terms formal and informal as they relate to learning contexts. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (1995) defines *formal* learning as "always organised and structured and has learning objectives. From the learner's standpoint, [learning] is always intentional: i.e., the learner's explicit objective is to gain knowledge, skills and/or competencies." Inversely, the Organisation defines *informal* learning as "never organised, has no set objective in terms of learning outcomes and is never intentional from the learner's standpoint. Often it is referred to as learning by experience or just as experience." These non-music specific definitions, although

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[12] Additional definitions and discussion around the terms formal and informal can be found in the Definitions section of Chapter 1.

they seem to promote a binary understanding, help to assist in better understanding the concepts of formal and informal learning—and the spaces between these two alleged dichotomies—in the context of a music learning environment.

Green (2008) defines *informal music learning practices* as those ways of "passing on and acquiring music skills and knowledge" that exist "alongside or instead of formal music education" (p. 5). Specifically, she describes five main aspects of informal learning practices:

1) learner choice of what music to learn;

2) copying recordings by ear;

3) integration of creative processes such as listening, performing, improvising and composing;

4) a random yet holistic approach to the learning process; and

5) watching, listening to, and imitating others.

When defining *formal music learning practices*, Green denotes this paradigm as containing the "teaching strategies, curriculum content and values" associated with, and derived from, the "conventions of Western classical music pedagogy" (p. 4). Green (2002) suggests that the inclusion of informal processes can complement formal learning in the classroom and, further, considers formal and informal learning practices might be conceptualized as "extremes existing at the two ends of a single pole" (p. 6), suggesting that learners and teachers alike can—and should—engage with popular music in varying ways along this continuum, blending formal and informal approaches (Holley, 2019). Folkestad (2006), when speaking to "formal and informal [music] learning situations and practices or formal and informal ways of [music] learning" (p. 135), echoes this idea of a spectrum when stating, "formal-informal should not be regarded as a dichotomy, but rather as the two poles of a continuum" (p. 135).

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Cain (2013) troubles the possible root of the confusion between informal and formal music learning practices—that is, the characterization of the term formal as equating with classical music, conventional teaching practices, and school-based, teacher-centered ways of learning and playing music while equating the term informal with popular music, unconventional teaching practices, and out-of-school based, learner-centered ways of learning and playing music—when suggesting that conceptualizing musical pedagogies as a binary formal *or* informal, this *or* that, is "inadequate" (p. 74). Bell et al. (2019) assert this binary, formal-informal perspective as being "overly simplistic because pinning a person to a fixed point on an informal-formal spectrum, or on either side of a binary informal-formal model, fails to completely account for the entirety of their musical experiences" (p. 454). Bell (2016), when speaking to the inadequacy of a polarized continuum in the context of the diversity of popular music, popular musicians, and their associated experiences and learning styles, further notes:

> Popular musicians cannot be divided into a dichotomy, nor contained within a continuum; such models are not nearly messy enough. A more accurate model to depict the myriad ways musical cultures and their associated learning approaches intersect and integrate would be the streaks of paint on the canvas of Jackson Pollock's *Convergence*—we are a colourful collective colliding from different directions. (loc. 6063)

To this point, Wright (2016, following Folkestad, 2006), when discussing the connection between learning strategies in relation to teaching approaches, suggests conceptualizing an approach on a single continuum might not best "capture the messy reality of real-life learning" (p. 211). Instead, Wright suggests multiple continua focusing on various aspects, including:

1) situation (where the learning takes place);

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2) learning style (what is the character, nature, and quality of the learning process);

3) ownership (who is directing the learning – teacher or learner); and

4) intentionality (where the mind is directed).

Folkestad (2006), when suggesting that these various ways of music learning interact in a dialectic manner, echoes this idea of a side-by-side, interactive relationship between formal and informal learning approaches as theorized by Green (2002). Further, Folkestad does not ascribe either learning style to a particular musical genre but suggests musicians of *all* genres blend elements of various learning styles to develop their individual approach to learning music.

For popular musicians, and inclusive of the participants in this study, their associated learning approaches often consist not only of what might be perceived as informal methods but also combine with what might be assumed as more formal approaches to create an aggregate of learning strategies that are self-tailored by the musician to match their individual needs (Green, 2002; Robinson, 2012). Robinson (2012) states emphatically that these multi-modal ways of learning are "perfectly normal among popular musicians and can have a profound influence on their learning. Learning practices, then, are not confined to one or another musical world" (pp. 119–120). Popular musicians—*all* musicians—learn in any number of ways dependent upon the what, how, who, and where they choose to learn and practice their art, with these ways appearing to "act in a dialectic way, such that musicians of all genres combine formal and informal learning strategies in their practice of musical learning" (Folkestad, 2006, p. 140).

Misinterpretations of *How Popular Musicians Learn*.[13] Although Green's (2002) book *How Popular Musicians Learn: A Way Ahead for Music Education* seems to lay out in precise terms—and in the main title, nonetheless—just how it is that *all* popular musicians learn, I suggest there has been a widespread misinterpretation of Green's (2002, 2006, 2008) research. This misinterpretation, coupled with the sometimes hazy conceptions of formal and informal music learning, has led to the notion that popular music must be learned and taught informally; hence, the mischaracterization of informal learning practices serving as the de facto foundation of pedagogy in popular music. Green (2009a, 2009b, 2016) has argued that her work has often been mischaracterized, and while the concept of informal learning practices has often been (and continues to be) conflated with popular music education, Green (2016) states that one does not necessarily entail the other. Jorgensen (2012) elaborates on this misconception when suggesting that "some proponents of music educational informality see it almost exclusively in terms of popular musics" (p. 457).

When speaking to this idea of a monolithic, genre-based, pedagogical approach, Clements (2008) suggests it inappropriate to assign a singular way of teaching popular music, a style she describes as "individual, multidimensional, dynamic, and culturally and genre-specific" (p. 8). Extending this sentiment, Allsup (2008), when critiquing Green's (2002) notion of the informal learning practices of popular musicians in the classroom, advised that comingling a singular way of learning and teaching with a style of music "may lead to the unintended consequence of narrowing of musical possibilities rather than expanding them" (p. 3). Additionally,

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[13] Much of this section is excerpted from my chapter Contemporary/Popular Music Pedagogy: Connecting the Gig to the in the book *Conversation and Critique: A Pedagogy for Our Time* (2023).

Allsup suggested that "researchers must be careful not to make equivalent the notion of informal learning *ipso facto* with that of popular music" (p. 3) and asks if receiving "pedagogical inspiration from this mostly male, mostly white genre" (p.3) represents a step forward in developing a culturally responsive classroom.

Speaking directly to this confusion, Green (2016) stated, "popular music, once brought into any educational setting, does not necessarily entail any informal learning; and informal learning does not, of course, necessarily entail popular music education" (1:01). On this note, it must also be stressed that Green's interpretation of informal learning, in reference to the learning practices of popular musicians as depicted in her research, is but one account, one understanding of informal learning. Green (2002) clearly states that her research in *How Popular Musicians Learn* is "intended to provide **one** [emphasis added] study focusing on guitar-based popular and rock music" (p. 10), pointing out that her findings comprise "only one focussed understanding" while calling for "more research in cognate areas" (personal communication, June 17, 2022).

Taking advantage of Green's (2002) notion that formal and informal learning and teaching methods are not entirely siloed and do, in reality, sit side by side, popular musicians often employ approaches that one might find in a more formal school setting: private lessons, reading Western staff notation, and using method books to learn scales, arpeggios, and Western music theory. Additionally, popular musicians often take advantage of approaches that, increasingly, one *might* find in a school setting but that are employed with regularity in informal, out-of-school settings: peer learning, online tutorials, purposive listening, copying recordings, and collaborative composition (Snell, 2007). And while this ongoing confusion around what informal learning is and is not continues to impact the inclusion and conceptualization of informal learning practices as one of the foundational elements

of whatever a pedagogy(ies) of popular music might be, it is clear that popular musicians do, indeed, learn through and by an amalgam of informal and formal means (Cain, 2013; Cremata, 2017; Green, 2002, 2006; Hess, 2020; Holley, 2019; Jaffurs, 2004; Przybylski & Niknafs, 2015; Robinson, 2012). As noted previously, the professional musician~teachers in this study reside at the intersections of (and in the voluminous, overlapping spaces between) formal and informal learning, in-school and out-of-school music. Following Green's (2022) call for additional research, this current study presents an opportunity to explore additional accounts and understandings of these spaces and approaches.

Popular music does not necessarily need to be learned or taught in an informal manner alone, as there are multiple ways of engaging in popular music throughout the range of formal and informal contexts. It is the balance, a self-selected, often self-directed combination of approaches to learning—what Parkinson and Smith (2015) refer to as hybridized learning—that typifies the popular musician. Multiple voices are missing from the conversation around how popular musicians learn and teach, thereby situating this often misinterpreted, compartmentalized notion of how popular musicians—how all musicians—learn to create and perform music. One of the missing voices is that of the professional musician~teacher, a perspective centered in this exploration.

Vignette – Connecting the Gig to the Classroom

> *As the students meandered around the room, one of the vocalists began to play "Turntables" by Janelle Monáe over the PA system. The remaining vocalists continued setting up their microphones while bobbing their heads to the groove, humming the verse quietly, then erupting into harmony over the chorus. The bass player, Corbin, strolled through the door a few minutes after the bell sounded—nothing new there. Cupping his hands together as though*

in prayer, he mouthed "sorry" to other members of the band as he ambled to his spot beside the drums, the other members of the rhythm section shaking their heads in sarcastic jest. The rest of the band did what they do every day—tuned up their instruments, adjusted the drums, troubleshot why the keyboard amplifier wasn't working . . . again. The guitar player, Jamey, began playing along softly with the song playing on the PA, changing rhythms here and there to fit the groove. Perrin and the other vocalists took this as a cue to step back from their microphones to figure out who would sing the verses.

At five minutes after the bell, the producer walked out of their office and nodded to the band. They walked over to the keyboard player, Justin, and whispered something while pointing to the back of the amp. Justin shook his head, reached around to the back of the amp, and, miraculously, all was well with the world again. The producer approached the middle of the room and raised their hand—everyone stopped playing while "Turntables" continued in the background. The producer, who had been looking at the floor, began bobbing their head to the beat, looked up, and said, "Great tune! Can anyone speak to what it's about?" And with that, the band spent the next 15 minutes or so talking about the meaning of the lyrics, what they found interesting in the video, and how they might incorporate some of the imagery from the video into their gig next week. Afterward, the producer asked the band how they planned to approach the song. One of the horn players mentioned they saw a live version that included some cool hits and breaks. Heads nodded in agreement.

Corbin suggested the band focus on the original version before adding anything else to the song. Again, heads nodded in agreement while a few expressed, "Yeah, you're right." As if on cue, the vocalists all retreated into the studio so they could use the piano to pick out their harmonies while the horns filed out into another room so they could create a line. The drummer, Madi, plugged her phone into the PA so the rhythm section could listen to the tune and figure out their parts. They listened intently, jotting down notes here and there while trying to decipher the groove and chord changes. Justin took out his phone to see if he could find an online tutorial with the right chords while Jamey asked for some help writing out a chord chart. When the song

was over, the producer asked the drummer where she'd like to begin. "Well, at the top, I guess." Madi checked the tempo via an app on her phone, clicked her sticks together, and counted the band in with a resounding "1, 2, 1, 2, 3, 4."

The room filled with the sounds of soul while the producer sat off to the side, taking a moment just to enjoy the music. After another 20 minutes or so, one of the vocalists poked their head in with an excited, "You all ready?" The rhythm section, at first, kept playing as they were too into the song to stop. The vocalist looked over their shoulder to the other vocalists and nodded. The door flung open, and the vocalists ran to their mics, singing the chorus along with the rhythm section. Just then, another door opened and the horns, now aware the song was coming together, came into the room and began to add their line to the song. The producer gestured to the band to loop the chorus section, allowing the groove to settle. When the vocalists cued the verse, Jamey was so into the tune that he forgot to transition to the verse, which caused a domino effect in the rhythm section and the tune, rather abruptly, fell apart. Instead of jumping into the middle of the fray to identify and repair the issue, the producer maintained their perch in the corner of the room, listening closely to what the students were saying—how they were thinking through the song's collapse. After a few additional rounds of the "blame game," the producer walked over to Corbin and whispered something in his ear. "Hey, vocalists. What do you need from us to make sure that doesn't happen again?" The mood in the room lightened, and instead of an impending argument, Perrin goaded the band to "get your head out of the chart and join the rest of us." The students looked around at each in somewhat of a "what, me?" moment and then laughed a bit while nodding in agreement. The producer regained their corner of the room, and Madi again checked her metronome, clicked her sticks together, called out "top," and counted the band in with an even louder "1, 2, 1, 2, 3, 4."

Complications and Missed Connections

Practice to theory and back again. The disconnect between the practices of popular musicians, the researched understandings of these practices, and the

incorporation of these practices into the popular music learning environment, while narrowing, continues to be problematic at times. These tensions can often be traced back to three areas: 1) the relative nascency of the widespread incorporation of popular music into the classroom, 2) an unfamiliarity with the learning, creating, performing, and teaching practices of popular musicians due to a lack of research with and by popular musicians, and 3) the widespread exclusion of popular music in music teacher education programs due to issues of gatekeeping, Whiteness, and inexperience within academia.[14] Much like the concept of complex systems, these areas overlap and interact with each other, often in an antecedent-consequent relationship, i.e., the widespread exclusion of popular music in music teacher education programs is due, in part, to an unfamiliarity with the learning, creating, and teaching practices of popular musicians and a (over)reliance on traditional notions of music learning and teaching. While an exhaustive review of the literature detailing each of these points is beyond the scope of this discussion, it is vital to turn a critical lens on these areas of disconnect through the eyes of a professional musician~teacher~researcher in an effort to provide nuance and insight through the inclusion of the voices of those who are often (implicitly or explicitly) othered in these conversations.

As the integration of popular music into the classroom continues to be a relatively emergent form of music education, Folkestad (2006) states that an "important strand in this relationship between researchers and practitioners, and with the rest of the surrounding society, is the mutually shared need for a continuous dialogue" (p. 136) between the two areas, respectively, theory and practice. I

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[14] Although beyond the scope of this study, jazz education found itself in a similar, disconcerting situation when first widely implemented into secondary and university settings in the 1970s.

contend that a lack of dialogue between those who know (popular music practitioners) and those who wish to understand (teachers and researchers) has contributed to Mantie's (2013) assertion of a "lack of coherence and codification" in the field of popular music. Folkestad (2006), when discussing the concept of formal and informal ways of learning, cautions that the purview of music education, as a field of research, "is not to 'produce' teaching methods, but to deliver research results to the praxis field—results by means of which the professional teachers may plan, conduct and evaluate their music teaching" (p. 137). In other words, Folkestad recommends that research serve as a "reflection of the praxis field" as opposed to the reflection of itself. Practice to theory *and back again*, so to speak.

Folkestad's admonition dovetails with Bell's (2016) advice that music teachers partner with communities of popular musicians to critique ways of learning and teaching in popular music. Critiquing a lack of connection between theoretical conceptualizations and practical understandings, Bowman (2000) argues, "music education also needs to move away from 'the very disembodied kind of knowing which is . . . currently predominant in our educational institutions'" (p. 50). It is this disconnect, this "very disembodied kind of knowing," that the current inquiry seeks to address. Through understanding the learning and teaching practices of the professional musician~teacher, what Finney and Philpott (2010) characterize as a "lived as opposed to downloaded" (p. 11) experiences, this discussion stands to build a bridge between the two seemingly disparate areas of practice and research—a dialogical relationship where the experiences and practices of popular music(ians) can be explored and critiqued and, in doing so, move towards an embodied kind of knowing. Further, by cultivating a more symbiotic relationship between practice and theory, music education is afforded an opportunity to continually critique and assess the experiences and practices of the professional musician~teacher in the classroom

in the hopes of providing a safe, constructive learning space while steering clear of fostering a simulacrum, a ghost of the real thing under the guise of popular music (Green, 2002).

Popular music pedagogy. Developing an emerging area of music education in a thoughtful, critical manner takes time and effort. As Smith (2015) reminds us, "We are still trying to figure out exactly what popular music education is (in part because popular music never sits still), what purpose it serves, and what the best pedagogical models are and will be" (p. 44). This uncertainty around "best pedagogical models" brings an additional question to bear: Is there such a thing as best practices in teaching popular music? Over the past 15 years, one term, in particular, has condensed a possible collection of practices: popular music pedagogy.

The term *popular music pedagogy* was first used by Lebler (2007), who defined it as the adaptation of "traditional pedagogy through the creation of a scaffolded self-directed learning environment" (p. 193) within the context of a popular music program. Lebler's original definition seems to exemplify Opfer and Pedder's (2011) notion of the "blending and interaction of these various types of knowledge into a unique form" (p. 387) with Kruse's (2016, following Tobias, 2015a) heuristic of crossfading in-school and out-of-school music experiences while also taking into account Folkestad's (2006) perspective on the dependency of the learning environment. But despite the assumed importance of a defined popular music pedagogy, Mantie (2013) noted the term popular music pedagogy appears only *twice* in his literature review, illustrating the relative newness of the term.

Beyond the add-and-stir. I suggest that an emerging popular music pedagogy should include a diversity of knowledges, experiences, and ways of learning, creating, performing, and teaching popular music, blending these out-of-school ways of being into the in-school learning environment. Further, instead of

altering the contexts of popular music to fit within the construct of the school learning environment, I contend placing ways of learning and teaching popular music as the primary lens through which music education habits of practice are altered to accommodate popular music.

Focusing first on practices of popular musicians as a pedagogical approach, Lebler and Weston (2015), in their study of the changes made to the Bachelor of Popular Music degree at Griffiths University over a fifteen-year period, reiterate this idea of blending in "the learning characteristics of popular musicians . . . rather than merely insert[ing] popular music into existing pedagogical structures" (p. 125). On this point, Snell (2007, citing Bowman, 2000) cautions that simply adding popular music as an element to the current music education curricular model and teaching practices is not sufficient, as the authentic music practices of the popular musicians are often overshadowed by the ingrained learning and teaching habits found in schools (Heuser, 2015; Kratus, 2007; Williams, 2011). This "add and stir" approach (Morton, 1994)—that is, adding elements of popular music to an existing curriculum without employing a critical lens to investigate and interrogate their viability in the learning environment—is often used in the classroom by well-meaning teachers who are simply inexperienced with how to blend popular music into the student music experience. These misinformed approaches to popular music are often incorporated through the lens of any number of seemingly innocuous customs. For example, in elementary and secondary classrooms in the US, the range of musical genres deemed to be both appropriate and educative is often flattened to be, instead, myopic and insular (Kruse, 2015). This bias is often reflected through the centering of White-dominated styles of music such as Western art music, Americentric band music, and, in some popular music spaces, rock music at the expense of Black American musical styles such as R&B, soul, funk, and hip-hop.

And while the inclusion of popular music in the classroom might not be a panacea for a culturally relevant student music experience, Davis and Blair (2011, citing Green, 2002, 2005, 2006) suggest that incorporating the "genuine production and transmission practices utilized by popular musicians into our teaching strategies and approaches" will better "enable pre-service and in-service teachers to feel better prepared to teach popular music in the classroom" (p. 128). It is these "authentic musical processes inherent to the creation of popular music and therefore valued by popular musicians" (Davis & Blair, 2011, p. 128), as seen through the orientations and teaching practices of the professional musician~teacher, that the current inquiry explores.

One profession that might serve as a bridge of understanding between the professional musician and the professional teacher is that of the teaching artist. Rabkin (2013) defines a teaching artist as "artists who taught while also pursuing a serious artistic practice" (p. 507). Booth (2009) shrugs off this description, noting, "There is no consensus definition of teaching artist in the evolving field of arts education" (p. 3). Instead, Booth suggests that serve teaching artists as:

. . . the designated experts in the verbs of art. Their skills can support, guide, educate, and illuminate people's capacity to individually succeed in creating artistic meaning in our best artistic offerings. What teaching artists know and can do is essential . . . for leading the entire field toward a culturally relevant future. (p. 6)

Teaching artists possess a number of characteristics that mirror those of the professional musician~teacher, including:

1) the primary way of developing their practice—that is, learning to teach by teaching (Booth, 2009);

2) their "teaching strategies are aligned with what experts agree are the principles of good teaching and learning" (Rabkin, 2012, p. 12);

3) they create a learning environment that "make schools less like 'school' and more like studios and rehearsal halls" (p. 13); and

4) their perspectives on music and education often challenge traditional ways of thinking (Booth, 2009).

These characteristics, as often found in individuals who have not participated in a music teacher education program, further blur the lines between what qualifies an individual as a teacher. Graham and Zwirn (2010), while noting the "exceptional teaching qualities we observed among teaching artists" in their study, also caution that "being an artist does not mean that great pedagogy will follow" (p. 230). Further, Reinhert (2018), when speaking to the lack of teaching experience of professional musicians, notes "many performers and industry professionals fall short, especially upon their initial induction" (p. 208) into teaching.

That said, Rabkin (2012), in his study of over 3000 teaching artists based in the United States, suggested that teaching artists embody "a new kind of arts pedagogy" that differed from "conservatory traditions of patronage, professional training, and exclusive embrace of classical culture" (p. 7). More specifically, Rabkin found that teaching artists, while serious about the aesthetics of the music, also placed "critical exploration of the world, celebration of community values and traditions, weaving the arts into daily life, cultivation of imagination and creativity, and appreciation of the world's multiple cultures" (p. 7) at the forefront of their teaching practice. Additionally, Hall et al. (2007) indicated that teaching artists "tend to focus on the learner and what the learner has achieved," thereby giving learners a "greater degree of control over what they learn, the pace and sequencing of lessons, and the spaces in which they occur" (p. 607). These added elements of culture and

cultural relevancy are vital to the learning environment in the popular music classroom (Banfield, 2009).

The blending of culture into the popular music classroom. An additional attribute often raised when discussing the integration of popular music into the classroom is the cultural importance of the music. Davis and Blair (2011), continuing their discussion on the importance of the inclusion of popular music practices in the classroom, note that "popular music is pervasive in our culture and in the lives of our students. Its inclusion in music education curricula requires authentic approaches through collaborative informal learning processes" (p. 124). In addition to these authentic practices, Banfield (2009) stresses the learning environment should also take into account the "cultural codes" of the music as well, defined as "the meanings, ideas, and sounds . . . living patterns that tell the story of our lives and experiences" (pp. 49–50). Following this line of thought, Bowman (2004) suggests:

> An educational program that attempts to incorporate popular music without addressing its powerful cultural residences and contradictions—without situating it amidst issues of struggle, resistance, defiance, identity, power, and control—is an educational program that seeks to use popular music to achieve safe, pre-ordained ends, ignoring the very things that account for its popularity in the first place. If our intent in adding popular music studies to the curriculum is to maintain "what is," or to enable us simply to keep doing what we already do—to simply "add 'the popular' and stir"—we would probably do well to forgo the effort. (p. 30)

Styles of music that live outside the Western canon, and specifically popular music, are often added to existing music education structures in this add-and-stir fashion. Hess (2015) critiques this uninformed approach as a form of musical tourism. In other words, creating a situation where the student might gain a nominal

understanding of a particular genre of music but fails to fully account for how the chosen genre fits into the larger musical, cultural, societal, and historical picture. Moreover, Morton (1994) suggests using an add-and-stir approach

> . . . as a strategy to make music education more just (in an ethical sense), more relevant (in a pedagogical sense), or simply more musical (in an artistic sense) has demonstrated good intentions but little understanding of the realities of cultural reproduction within patriarchal institutions such as the education system. (p. 108)

An additional tension encountered when "simply adding popular music" to an existing curriculum is a misaligned focus on guitar-based rock bands, often at the expense of Black American popular music. Dyndahl and Nielson (2014) caution the centering of White-dominated genres in popular music spaces could invoke a "new ethnocentrism . . . where students devote themselves entirely to mono-ethnic, male-dominated rock music" (p.113). Conversely, Woody (2007) cautions an additional point of appropriation around the widely-used practice of creating arrangements of popular music for existing, conventional instrumentations found in ensemble-based music education, e.g., concert band, orchestra, choir, and jazz band, advising this practice can be equally problematic as these interpretations, unwittingly or not, often dilute the intent of the songwriter. Hall (1997) equates this appropriation to the "cultural strip-mining" of Black American popular music—taking favored, palatable elements of the "Black musical genius and aesthetic innovation" (p. 33) while "exploit[ing] Black cultural forms . . . also nullify[ing] the cultural meaning these forms provide African-Americans" (pp. 31–32). Bradley (2007) cautions this appropriation of othered cultures and genres of music is the *status quo* in our music education paradigm, noting:

The western musical canon predominates our curricula, while we continue to

argue whether popular music should have a place in what our students learn,

and which styles of popular music are "appropriate." Musical practices from

around the world remain marginalized as curricular add-ons, if acknowledged

at all. The results are visible when we take a serious reflexive look at who

participates, and who does not, in typical school music programs. (p. 134)

Further, Gellerstein (2021, citing Hess, 2018b), when assessing the current state of

popular music education and the implications of these add-and-stir approaches

coupled with teaching practices as implemented through a more traditional lens,

states:

Sadly, the cultural interests and notions of popular music that are frequently

centered in such content have often been bound to a similar notion of *best*

[emphasis his] that traditional methods expound. More to the point, the

brand of popular music instruction that has permeated music education

pedagogy and the instruments associated with it continue to correlate with

that which is popular with White youth. (pp. 7–8)

Gatekeeping in music education. Much of the responsibility for the current

situation—that is, the widespread exclusion of popular music in music teacher

education programs as a precursor to the resultant unfamiliarity with the learning,

creating, and teaching practices of popular musicians—falls on the shoulders of

university music programs which serve as gatekeepers to the students entering

these programs (Brewer, 2014; Clements, 2008). For the music education prospect,

they first need to pass an audition process—a process that Cremata (2019, citing

Kratus, 2015) asserts serves as a "barrier to postsecondary music education and

music teacher education" while also being "blatantly discriminatory" (p. 421)—before

being accepted into a university's music program. Only then can these potential

music teachers seek acceptance into the music teacher education program. When discussing acceptance into the university-based music teacher education program, Clements (2008) declares these programs serve

> . . . as an integral part of the reciprocal cycle of music teacher preparation— we only accept a portion of those for whom formal music education has 'worked', and only if their voice or instrument is needed in a particular ensemble or studio. It is completely the wrong way to go about selecting the next generation of [music] education hopefuls. (pp. 5–6)

Further, the manners and biases often supported and emboldened by music teacher education programs (Clements, 2008) persist after graduation via peer pressure enacted by the "'pedagogical band world'—a world comprising school and university band directors/teachers" (Mantie, 2012, p. 64) whose primary purpose is to induct "people into specific (usually Western classical) musical traditions, something that ensures their perpetuation as musical traditions" (p. 68). Additionally, these same attitudes, driven by these traditions, conventions, and habits of music education practice in relation to "school music" (Williams, 2011), hinder the acceptance and integration of any emerging styles of pedagogy or genres of music outside the conventional construct. Furthering this damning notion, Bowman (2004) suggested the primary task of secondary and university music programs is to serve in a curatorial role, "providing institutional support for musical activity that is no longer financially viable elsewhere" (p. 41).

Indeed, discussions around the pedagogical how of popular music rarely occur in pre-service music teacher education programs in the US, leaving these graduates ill-equipped to teach popular music through the lens of authentic popular music practices (Davis & Blair, 2001; Emmons, 2004; Hamilton & Vannatta-Hall, 2020; Sorenson, 2020; Springer, 2016; Springer & Gooding, 2013; Wang & Humphreys,

2009). Kruse (2015), when speaking to the lack of opportunities offered to study music outside the Western canon in a university music school, succinctly states, "a rather homogenous group of musicians enter these music education programs and have an even more homogenous experience during their teacher preparation" (p. 19). Along this line, Rickels et al. (2013) assert:

> The demographic, musical, and pedagogical homogeneity of the teaching force, as well as of the collegiate faculty and programs that prepare teachers, have a substantial responsibility for the resultant homogeneity and resistance to diversity seen in school music programs. (p. 37)

Thinking back to the problem of well-meaning teachers who are inexperienced in blending the authentic practices of popular music into the classroom, Springer (2016), in a study focusing on the perceptions of in-service teachers on the use of popular music in the classroom, found that 90% of the participants reported taking zero classes in popular music. This discrepancy was also found by Emmons (2004), who noted that "music teacher preparation courses address a very narrow range of literature from a small cultural perspective" (p. 159). And while the Springer study and associated literature demonstrate a lack of preparation and confidence in teaching popular music (Bell et al., 2019; Davis & Blair, 2011), this deficit does not correlate with a lack of desire or interest in including popular music in the classroom. Hamilton and Vannatta-Hall (2020), in their examination of popular music in pre-service music teacher training programs, noted that 76% of music teacher educators rate the inclusion of popular music in the K–12 classroom as very important to extremely important. Recalling the previous question of confidence around the use of popular music in the classroom, the same study indicated that just over 5% of music education graduates were highly confident with teaching popular music in the classroom. Correspondingly, Sorenson (2020) reported that several participants in

her study expressed a lack of knowledge of *how* to go about including popular music in the classroom. Finally, Blackwell et al. (2021), in their detailed study of the challenges and successes experienced when learning in a popular music-focused environment within the context of a pre-service music teacher education program, discuss the feelings of "insecurity, self-consciousness, and frustration [they experienced] in their initial teaching experiences, primarily due to the major differences they perceived between teaching informally and working in a traditional large ensemble" (p. 9). But despite the tensions experienced by the participants in the Blackwell study, they describe these experiences as offering a "new perspective on the musicianship needed to perform in these genres" (p. 11) while suggesting that "field experiences in which pre-service teachers can engage with the same students over an extended period of time provide invaluable opportunities" (p. 14).

A way ahead for popular music education. This representative literature demonstrates 1) a lack of coursework and preparation in popular music in pre-service music teacher education programs, resulting in 2) a lack of confidence in how to incorporate and teach popular music in the K–12 environment, but conversely, 3) an abundance of desire to better understand the *how* of incorporating popular music in the K–12 music classroom. Hamilton and Vannatta-Hall (2020) contend this "lack of popular music education propagates a systemic problem in the field of music teacher preparation" (p. 45). A probable basis for this systemic problem is summarized by Woody's (2007) assertion that, perhaps, the most significant obstacle facing popular music education and the ineffectiveness of music teacher preparation programs at the intersection of popular music education:

Perhaps the greatest obstacle to teaching these skills in schools is that many teachers, with respect to popular styles and vernacular music making, are limited to being passive consumers themselves (and consumers they are, as

their personal CD collections often include much more popular music than

what they teach on the job). It is not that they reject popular music. They are

not philosophically opposed to teaching the performance of popular music,

but they fear they wouldn't know the first thing about actually doing it. (p.

36)

This lack of experience in and with a genre of music, and the implications of

these deficiencies, are also evident in the field of jazz education (Holley, 2019).

Goecke (2016) argued that "Most curricular models of jazz education have not

provided the components necessary to understand adequately the ways in which

history, theory, performance, and culture intertwine through jazz" while also

illuminating "the ways in which racial disparities, institutionalized racism, and

Eurocentric educational frameworks predetermine the manner in which jazz is

conceived, discussed, and taught inside and outside of the academy" (p. 375). As

music educators learn how to better incorporate styles of music outside the

Eurocentric norm into the music classroom, the field of music education must

continue to critically question the "authenticity of secondary school music and its

relation to music outside school" as this disconnect "is at the heart of the problem of

contemporary music education" (Hargreaves et al., 2003, p. 156).

Suppose experienced popular music educators, due to a lack of engagement

in and dialogue with the field of music education, fail to hold these those enacting

these emerging ways of learning and teaching in popular music accountable to the

authentic principles of popular music. In that case, ways of approaching popular

music in these spaces could be eclipsed by a non-critical, tradition-palatable

approach to popular music that is disconnected from the creative practices of popular

musicians (Bell, 2016). Examples of these approaches might include learning songs

solely through Western notation-based sheet music in contrast to learning by ear,

the absence of a learner-centered approach where the director makes all decisions on repertoire, rehearsal, and performance while conducting the ensemble, and the nurturing of a learning environment that places the recreation of existing music and ways of learning and teaching music above the ways popular music is learned, created, and performed, among others.

The professional musician~teacher, given the reality and depth of their experience(s), knowledge(s), belief(s), and practices(s) honed both on the gig and in the classroom, can offer valuable insights to this greatest of obstacles. The deployment of the experiences and resulting practices of popular musician~teachers, these critical friends of popular music education (Colwell, 2005), are crucial to dismantling the systemic problem posed by Hamilton and Vannatta-Hall. One of the many benefits of exploring intersections of pedagogical and content knowledge, as exemplified in the professional musician~teacher, is the discovery of new ways of learning and doing (Allsup, 2015). This sense of exploration is the ethos of popular music and ought to be incorporated in both reflective and reflexive manners lest we run the risk of producing a *pedagogical modern band world*. To address this possible outcome, as well as the viability of popular music in K–12 settings as a sustainable educational initiative, Bell (2016) reminds us that music teacher education programs and teachers must "connect with communities of popular music makers to help us find our flaws and pick apart our pedagogies" (loc. 6061).

Our music ecosystem is interconnected in a rhizomatic manner (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), associated and interrelated through time, appropriation, place, and musical exchange. Some of these connections are quite obvious (i.e., samples of songs used as bed tracks in hip-hop to offer the listener an element of familiarity), while others, though deeply connected, are concealed just below the surface (i.e., the presence of clave in the music of New Orleans due to connections to the music

and people of Cuba). Music education needs popular musicians to serve as what McArton (2020, citing Wenger, 1998) terms brokers—those who "exist at the periphery of practices, occupying space both inside and out, channeling knowledge, experience, and skills between practices" (p. 7)—to help the profession better understand their wealth of content knowledge of popular music and how it can contribute to a well-rounded, transformative music education experience (Jorgensen, 2003).

By exploring and examining the teaching practices of popular musician~teachers and their lived experiences and orientations—the "interaction and intersection of knowledge, beliefs, practices, and experiences" (Opfer & Pedder, 2011, p. 388)—the intent of this study to offer a better understanding of how the professional musician~teacher approaches the popular music learning environment. In doing so, I hope to assist music educators in avoiding the production of a simulacrum of the practice of the popular musician in their classrooms (Green, 2008)—a classroom environment that might look like and sound like popular music but at its core, is just another version of our musical habits poorly concealed under the guise of inclusivity, learner-centeredness, and cultural relevancy.

CHAPTER 3

INQUIRY

Purpose and Research Puzzle

This narrative and multiple case study considers the stories of three professional musicians who, at some point in their careers, also became music teachers. By exploring how the orientations of these professional musician~teachers were cultivated through the diversity of experiences encountered both on and off the gig as well as in and out of classroom, this study investigates how their orientations impact and influence their approach to teaching popular music in school settings. Opfer and Pedder (2011) define a teacher's orientation as a complex system consisting of the "interaction and intersection of knowledge, beliefs, practices, and experiences" (p. 388) around learning and teaching based on their prior knowledge and experiences. Further, they suggest this orientation has an "extremely strong influence" (p. 389) on how individuals learn and teach. The application of orientation as a theoretical framework for this inquiry is presented in detail later in this chapter.

Based on this inquiry into the orientations and teaching practices of professional musicians who also teach popular music in secondary settings, the following research questions guided the inquiry and form the core of the research puzzle:

1) What are the individual orientations of professional musicians who also teach in popular music-focused learning spaces in secondary settings?

   a) Where and how did these individuals acquire their orientations during their time as student-musicians and professional musicians?

2) How and when do their orientations impact and influence their teaching practices?

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a) Without the support of a music teacher education program, how do these professional musician~teachers approach teaching popular music?

b) How did their orientations evolve to include their newfound experiences as they developed their teaching practice?

As the orientation of the professional musician~teacher is cultivated through the diversity of experiences encountered both on and off the gig as well as in and out of classroom, how might their orientations—perspectives and attitudes that have been shaped outside participation in an undergraduate music teacher education program—impact and influence how they approach the secondary learning environment focusing on popular music? And while Schmidt (1998) confirmed that both intra-and extra-musical experiences, understandings, and attitudes formed during high school and college play a role in how *pre-service* music teachers approach and conceptualize learning and teaching, there is little research examining the teaching practices of the professional musician~teacher in secondary school settings focusing on popular music.

Exploring the orientations and teaching practices of these three individuals will permit the examination of the interaction of the content knowledge (Shulman, 1986) gained during their time as student and professional musicians with "the nature of these teachers' pedagogical understanding of subject matter that is informed by their past and present experiences, rather than by a program of professional preparation" (Grossman, 1989, p. 192). Bernard (2012) suggests that individuals with experiences that lay outside the confines of a traditional music education model might be able to "think outside the box in terms of repertoire, musical activities, teaching strategies, and performance practices, bringing their unique musical experiences and perspectives to the ways that they structure their

classroom practice" (p. 6). More deeply, Hargreaves (1994) expresses the need for elevating the voices and lived experiences of teachers when asserting "teachers' voices have been curiously absent or been used as mere echoes for preferred and presumed theories of educational researchers" (p. 4).

With these thoughts in mind, this inquiry focuses on professional musician~teachers who 1) have not participated in an undergraduate music teacher education program, 2) may or may not have participated in conventional music ensembles (i.e., concert band, orchestra, and choir) or private lessons during their secondary school and university careers, and 3) have established themselves as professional musicians before entering the teaching profession. Considering this focus, I chose to approach the research puzzle through a narrative and multiple case study, allowing the voices of the professional musician~teachers to be placed at the forefront. Through presenting their (overlooked) voices, (counter)stories, and (outlier) perspectives on teaching in the popular music classroom, I hope to provide more space for "their voices in the conversations about music teaching and learning" (Robbins, 2014, p. 202).

This chapter provides a description of my inquiry process, including epistemological considerations for the study and its theoretical framework, as well as details surrounding participants, data generation and interpretation, trustworthiness, and my role as participant/translator in the study.

Researcher's Lens

Glesne (2016) acknowledges that one's research agenda might focus on a "topic about which you may know a great deal through study and personal experience" (p. 134) and, with it, all the assumptions and biases associated with a particular research interest. With this conundrum of reflexivity in mind, I

acknowledge that I came into this study: 1) having participated in a conventional secondary music experience as a trumpet player and son of a band director (my mother) and a college professor (my father), 2) having secured undergraduate and graduate degrees with a dual concentration in jazz and classical bass performance in a university music program, 3) with over 35 years of experience performing in a variety of in-school and out-of-school musical settings in a variety of musical genres, 4) with over 25 years of experience teaching (primarily in popular musics) at the secondary and university levels, and 5) with experiences and perspectives acquired within the milieu of a university music learning and teaching program as a doctoral student.

As bits of my story are woven throughout this document, I have tried to remain aware that the stories of participants might not necessarily align with my story. More deeply, it is essential that their stories be placed at the forefront, lest I become encumbered with my role in the study, lose sight of the participants, and devolve into an exercise in "self-indulgent navel-gazing" (Stauffer, 2014, p. 180). To remain reflexive and counterbalance my role, I strove to be "relentless in asking, 'What do you mean?'" (Glesne, 2016, p. 1340) when gathering participant experiences so that I might remain "alert to taking on the mind-set of a learner, not that of an expert" (p. 134). Although I found this stance to be quite challenging at times due to *my* experiences, in terms of *the participants'* lived experiences, I am most certainly a learner. Further, although I discovered varying amounts overlap between my experiences and those of the participants, their paths to teaching are not identical to mine. And while this narrative inquiry includes my perspectives throughout, the stories, voices, and biographical pasts of the participants are not mine. I cannot lay claim to *their* pasts. It would be antithetical to the narrative

inquiry process to insinuate the data and stories contained herein as "my study" with "my data" collected from "my participants" (Stauffer, 2014).

Stauffer (2014) notes that comprehending the stories of others through thinking in a narrative manner "may include telling one's own story to oneself, not simply as a matter of being reflective, but as a matter of understanding how the story unfolds and what one's own experiences of similar phenomena or events mean in one's own life" (pp. 171–172). As laid out in Chapter 1 of this document, writing my narrative, coupled with the current inquiry, helped me to not only understand, make meaning of, and translate the orientations of the participants, but also assisted in understanding the arc of my story "but not at the expense of the participants' voices, stories, and meanings" (Stauffer, 2014, p. 180).

Qualitative Inquiry

Qualitative research enables the researcher in their quest to make meaning of a phenomenon through the collection and analysis of lived experiences. Through asking questions focusing on the "how" and "why" of a particular phenomenon, qualitative researchers build knowledge that is "socially constructed, complex, and ever changing" (Glesne, 2006, p. 6). To this point, Glesne (2006) affirms:

> Most qualitative researchers adhere to the constructivist paradigm. This
> paradigm maintains that human beings construct their perceptions of the
> world, that no one perception is right or more real than another, and that
> these realities must be seen as wholes rather than divided into discrete
> variables that are analyzed separately. (p. 7)

To better understand these diverse realities, qualitative researchers engage in a fluid interpretation of how the participants construct their personal and professional realities. Qualitative inquiry is a fitting approach for this study as my overall intent is

to "empower participants to share their stories, hear their voices, and minimize the power relationships that often exist between a researcher and the participants in a study" (Creswell, 2013, p. 48) so their understandings might be shared with—and have an impact on—the field of music education. Robbins (2014, citing Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993), continues this attitude when confirming "if knowledge about teaching is 'fluid and socially constructed' then we have a great deal to learn from teachers' lived experiences" (p. 202).

Throughout this study, I pursued a foundation of qualitative inquiry by employing practitioner inquiry through a lens of narrative inquiry. Meyers (2017) affirms that data generated in qualitative research is "grounded in experience" and further, that qualitative research is "frequently written [by the researcher] in first-person narrative style, and concentrates on presenting stories, often in the words of the participants themselves" (p. 123). These first-person accounts support a thick, rich description (Geertz, 1973) of the participant's lived experiences, thus allowing the reader to:

> make decisions regarding transferability because the writer describes in detail the participants or setting under the study. With such detailed description, the researcher enables readers to transfer information to other settings to determine whether the findings can be transferred because of shared characteristics. (Creswell, 2007, p. 209)

And while I don't expect to realize transferability or generalizations around ways of learning and teaching popular music based on the diverse experiences of the participants, I absolutely believe their stories will provide valuable, often overlooked insight into how the professional musician~teacher approaches the popular music classroom.

Practitioner Inquiry. Centering the voice of the professional musician~teachers at the heart of this inquiry is of paramount importance, as the practice(s) of popular music is embodied in and through the practitioners of popular music. These practitioner~teachers—in their roles as a conduits between the content of popular music and the teaching of popular music—possess an intimate knowledge of the practices of popular music and provide an "important 'insider' perspective on teaching and learning" (Robbins, 2014, p. 187) from their respective positions as individuals. As demonstrated by the participants' autobiographical portraits in Chapter 4, my intent is to include them as co-researchers or, as Stauffer and Barrett (2021) imply, as "researcher co-conspirators in scholarship" (p. 2). By serving as co-conspirators in this study, and through engaging in counter-storytelling, that is, relating experiences that stand in "complication or contradiction of dominant narratives" (Alekna, 2021, citing Delgado & Stefancic, 2017), I examine the individual orientations and teaching practices of these professional musicians who have come into teaching popular music in a secondary school setting not through the traditional path of a music teacher education program, but via other avenues.

Through conducting this exploration *with* popular musicians in contrast to *on* popular musicians, I intend to reveal how these popular music practitioner~teachers, as individuals who are neglected or overlooked in the music education master narrative, approach learning and teaching in a popular music-focused learning space. By exploring the participants' "outlier-ness" (Thomas, 2011b, p. 5) within the traditional music education paradigm through counter-storytelling, I examine what makes their journeys valuable and viable experiences in light of the dominant, Euro-centric narrative of ensemble-based music education and music teacher education (Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Holley, 2019; Heuser, 2015; Kratus, 2007; Mantie & Tucker, 2012). Although popular musicians as popular music educators might be

considered outliers by convention, popular musicians most certainly come into teaching with a depth of content knowledge and related critical skills. Further, in my role as a participant/translator in this inquiry and as a performer~educator~researcher specializing in popular music, I believe this research has a "distinctly grassroots character" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 16)—that is, a popular music educator/researcher discovering how the orientations of other professional musician~teachers impacted their teaching practice.

With that, as there is not a one-size-meets-all definition of practitioner inquiry (Robbins, 2014, citing Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999a), I recognize I am approaching this inquiry not from a more traditional action research perspective (as I am no longer in the classroom full-time, and therefore, looking back on the evolution of my practice), but from the vantage point of a fellow outlier who also possesses a distinct insider perspective due to the depth of my experience as a musician, teacher, scholar, and fan of popular music. Robbins (2014) affirms that "practitioner inquiry not only challenges traditional views about the relationship of knowledge and practice and the roles of teachers in educational change" (p. 203), but that the stories of teachers have the "power to liberalize and reinvent notions of teaching, learning, and schooling [that] is located in neither the university nor the school but in the collaborative work of the two" (p. 284). This "dialogic relationship of inquiry and practice" (Robbins, 2014, p. 187) presents the defining quality of practitioner inquiry and is a centerpiece of this study.

Bell (2016) suggests that in order to better understand the practices of popular musicians and how their/our ways of practicing popular music might be incorporated into the classroom setting, music educators "need to connect with communities of popular music makers to help us find our flaws and pick apart our pedagogies" (loc. 6165). Music educators looking to explore the intersection of

popular music content and pedagogical practice could benefit greatly from the knowledges and experiences of these professional musician~teachers; individuals who represent the complex, blended nature of pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986). The dialogues contained herein—and the ongoing dialogue this inquiry intends to encourage—may assist teachers in more genuinely incorporating popular music into a learning space while ensuring the voices and experiences of popular musicians are included and portrayed in a genuine manner. More deeply, this exchange of ideas supports what Freire (1995) characterizes as an epistemological relationship, "an indispensable component of the process of both learning and knowing" (p. 379), between those who know and those who wish to know. This relationship represents a developing theory of knowledge around the learning and teaching practices of popular music that is embodied in the professional musician~teacher. Further, this exchange of cultural knowledge is vital to fostering a creative, authentic popular music experience in the modern music classroom.

By situating the counter-stories of the participants as a primary focal point of this inquiry, I examine the dialogical connection of popular music teaching as grounded in popular music practice. And in doing so, trouble this connection so that we might "listen for and look forward to more dissonance" (Robbins, 2014, p. 204) from popular music educators who are mindful of the gap between practice and research. By "dissonance," I'm referring to the differences between the creative practices of popular music and popular musicians in contrast to how popular music may be presented in some school, music teacher education, and professional development environments.

On that note, dissonance in music often relates to discomfort—something that doesn't quite sound or feel right. An example might be a young, inexperienced musician who hears a closed-voice jazz voicing as being "not right" while a more

experienced musician might revel in the dissonance, in the perceived discomfort of the clash of notes. Here, I would suggest that discomfort is often where learning and understanding of new ways takes place. What we might not understand at first, through immersion and absorption, reflection and modification—through living in the discomfort—we find ways to develop understandings. And perhaps, an appreciation and comprehension of the unknown becoming the known. Through this document, I hope to trigger a little discomfort in order to cultivate greater understandings around a variety of ways of learning and teaching of popular music.

Narrative Inquiry. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) explain, "Narrative and life go together and so the principal attraction of narrative as method is its capacity to render life experiences, both personal and social, in relevant and meaningful ways" (p. 10). Stauffer (2014) succinctly notes "a narrative is a story one tells of one's lived experience" (p. 165). In this exploration of the participants' orientations and teaching practices, the intent is to understand better the role of the "evolution of the artist-teacher" (McCarthy, 2007, p. 8) through narrative inquiry. My role as participant/translator fits within the context of narrative inquiry as one aspect of this method/approach is the centering of the voices of the participants (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Clandinin and Connelly (1994) note:

> Thus, we say that people by nature lead storied lives and tell stories of those lives, whereas narrative researchers describe such lives, collect and tell stories of them, and write narratives of experience. (p. 416)

Stauffer and Barrett (2009) suggest narrative inquiry and the stories within narrative studies can challenge, or counter, long-held, traditional views around learning, teaching, and the role(s) of the music teacher in the classroom. Through engaging in small acts of subversion (Kratus, 2014) through illuminating counter-

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stories that, perhaps, stand in contrast to the dominant music education paradigm, I hope to follow the invitation of Stauffer and Barrett (2009) when they noted:

> This collective interest in and turn towards narrative is consistent with the music education profession's move away from singular grand tales of music, music making, and music teaching and learning and towards consideration of multiple stories, multiple voices, and multiple meanings of music and musicking. The collective turn towards narrative in music education is also consistent with the profession's move towards embracing multiple means and multiple lenses for examining the new and recurring complexities of music in life and learning. (p. 19)

These "grand tales" Stauffer and Barrett allude to—the habits and traditions that are embedded within the foundations of school music (Williams, 2011)—are often perceived as a monolithic approach to music education. Bowman (2006) suggests narrative inquiry as a possible remedy to these habits, recommending this approach as a way to "restore some of the power and significance of which [music educators] have been deprived by off-the-rack, one-size-fits-all accounts" (p. 13). Through exploring the lived experiences of these outliers within music education and what they might have to offer, in this study I am to provide what Stauffer (2014, citing Barone, 2000c) describes as "an occasion for conspiracy," an opportunity to discover "a social reality that may have gone previously unnoticed" (p. 146) due to the dominant voices often encountered in the Euro-centric music education paradigm often encountered in the United States. Clandinin (2009, citing Barrett & Stauffer, 2009), when speaking to these unnoticed voices and realities, encourages the use of narrative inquiry to "trouble certainty" in music education. Sharing these stories offers the opportunity to center the voices and experiences of the often unnoticed,

discover ways of learning and teaching that are beyond our habits, and "highlight the relationship between what we do and who we are becoming" (McCarthy, 2007, p. 3).

That said, Stauffer (2014) noted there exists a "rather healthy debate about what narrative inquiry is and even what constitutes a narrative" (p. 164). And here, although I approached this exploration in the spirit of narrative inquiry, I readily admit that the path I've taken might be more appropriately described as including elements of narrative along with my own notions of how to best relate our stories. Here, Stauffer (2014) suggests this "blending and hybridization of perspectives within narrative scholarship adds even more complexity" (p. 176), and in this study, I believe, a more nuanced perspective to stories of popular musicians who teach. Additionally, I have chosen to take an approach more in line with Polkinghorne's (1995) notion of an "analysis of narrative," that is, considering the stories of the participants while focusing on the common elements between them. Here, I take heart in Stauffer's (2014) counsel that, "Regardless of approach, interpretive processes are neither ready-formed nor linear, but rather invented within the context of each study and comprised of multiple recursive moves between data, work in the field, literature and theory, and writing" (Stauffer, 2014, p. 179).

Research Design

Creswell (1998) establishes case study as "an exploration of a 'bounded system' or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context" (p. 61). Yin (2009) suggests that a case study method is appropriate when investigating "a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 18). In this study, I have combined narrative and multiple case study approach—that is, the

collection, analysis, translation, and description of the orientations (Opfer & Pedder, 2011) of the participants to interrogate how their individual orientations impacted and influenced their emerging teaching practice. The combination of narrative and multiple case study provides adequate structure while allowing for branching out in "exploratory ways to map areas of inquiry that are underdeveloped or unexamined" (Barrett, 2014, p. 130).

As the goal of this study is to better understand the background of more than one teacher (or case), a multiple-case study examining the diverse orientations and teaching practices of multiple teachers is appropriate. The cases in this study consist of three professional musicians who also became music teachers but did so without participating in a university-based undergraduate music teacher education program. Gray (2011) states that case study research "allows for close examination of individuals' life experiences to better understand the phenomena in question," while a study with multiple cases "allow[s] for a cross-examination of the participants' experiences with regard to the phenomena and the contexts in question" (p. 72). Stake (2005) describes the multiple-case study as:

A number of cases may be studied jointly in order to investigate a phenomenon, population, or general condition. . . . They are chosen because it is believed that understanding them will lead to better understanding, and perhaps better theorizing, about a still larger collection of cases. (pp. 445–446)

While a multiple-case approach will not necessarily allow for generalizability across the cases, it will allow for these "aspects of the lived experience of music teaching and learning [that] are often too nuanced, contextualized, and interdependent" (Barrett, 2014, p. 114) to be explored and interpreted on a case-by-case basis as well across the multiple cases. This study design will allow for a thick

and rich description (Geertz, 1973), as the design will allow me to examine both individual stories as well as similarities and differences across the cases. Through exploring the orientations and teaching practices of three professional musician~teachers, this research design will assist in exploring "multiple accounts of concrete, context-based knowledge, crucial in forming collective expertise and professional knowledge to inform teaching and learning" (Barrett, 2014, p. 120).

Theoretical Framework

For this inquiry, I applied Opfer and Pedder's (2011) notion of a teacher's orientation—that is, a complex system entailing the "interaction and intersection of knowledge, beliefs, practices, and experiences" (p. 388) around learning and teaching based on their biographical pasts—as a theoretical framework (Creswell, 2007). Opfer and Pedder (2011) utilize complexity theory—defined as a way of identifying "systems both within and across these different strands of research and the ways these systems intersect and recursively interact, resulting in the emergence of teacher professional learning" (p. 377)—as a basis for their interpretation of orientation. One example of a complex system might be the naturally occurring ecosystem of a river or lake that contains various elements that interact as part of a larger system (e.g., water, fish, plant life, pollution, humans, etc.). Although independent parts of the ecosystem, each element has an effect on the other elements and the system as a whole. Cooper et al. (2016) used complexity theory as a framework under the auspices of contextualizing teacher leaders' efforts to create change, thereby extending Opfer and Pedder's suggestion that "teacher learning is nested within complex systems that have varying levels of overlap and influence" (p. 89). It is the various elements, nested and contained within a complex system—defined by Mitchell and Newman (2002) as "a group or organization which

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is made up of many interacting parts" (p. 1)—that characterizes teacher learning and encapsulates the development of teacher learning as complex and consisting of multiple points of connection and interaction.

Conceptualizing one's orientation as containing "many interacting parts" (i.e., experiences, knowledge, beliefs, and practices) assists in understanding the complexity of how the facets that comprise an orientation interact and intermingle. More deeply, the interacting and intermingling of these facets has an enormous influence on one's orientation in relation to their teaching practice. Using Opfer and Pedder's notion of orientation as a framework for understanding the complexity of the relationships with an orientation will allow for the exploration of how the experiences, knowledges, beliefs, and practices of the participants impacted and influenced the developing teaching practices of these professional musician~teachers within the structures and constructs of music education.

That said, Opfer and Pedder's (2011) notion of a teacher's individual orientation is but one of the three areas they highlight within the complex system of teacher professional learning. Opfer and Pedder (2011) define these three areas as:

1) The individual teacher system [that] encompasses their prior experiences, their orientation to, and beliefs about, learning, their prior knowledge, and how these are enacted in their classroom practice;

2) School-level systems [that] involve the contexts of the school that support teaching and learning, the collective orientations and beliefs about learning, the collective practices or norms of practice that exist in the school, and the collective capacity to realize shared learning goals; and

3) Systems of the learning activities, tasks, and practices in which teachers take part. (p. 384)

While taking in to account all three areas as defined by Opfer and Pedder, this study focused on the orientation of the individual teacher and how their experiences, knowledges, beliefs, and practices impact and influence their teaching practice. That said, this study is somewhat limited by this focus, as Opfer and Pedder's (2011) notion of a teacher's orientation takes into account all three of these systems (i.e., the orientation of the individual teacher, the school, and professional learning spaces).

These four facets of an orientation—knowledges, beliefs, practices, and experiences—filtered through each other in a cyclical manner, has a bearing on who we are and how we act in any given situation. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines orientation as a "general or lasting direction of thought, inclination, or interest." It is in this "general direction" of thought, an amalgamation of elements—a complex system—that informs my thinking about orientation, or what Campbell, Thompson, and Barrett (2010) define as a "strong conceptual framework" (loc. 1566). Opfer and Pedder (2011) depict this amalgamation of elements as "interdependent and reciprocally influential" (p. 379). Cooper et al. (2016, citing Opfer & Pedder, 2011) suggest that the structures of these "nested systems" that help illuminate "the complex relationships between systems that promote and impede teacher learning and instructional change" (p. 90). Gess-Newsome (1999), when discussing these complex relationships in the context of pedagogical content knowledge, submits:

> Human beings are inherently complex. We have history, background experiences, emotions, knowledge and goals. We make assumptions, recognize tradition, make sense of information, invoke beliefs, and take action. In some cases, we recognize and can articulate the basis for our actions, in others we cannot, seeming to act on instinct. (p. 3)

Campbell, Thompson, and Barrett (2010, citing Feiman-Nemser, 1990a) discuss the concept of a personal orientation—an exploration of an emergent, ongoing process of "becoming" through reflecting on "past experiences and in present learning contexts, [the] analysis of beliefs" (loc. 1616) and, through this process, understanding and making sense of the roots of one's assumptions, beliefs, and values encompassing the act of teaching. This idea of one's "roots" constitutes a fundamental of one's orientation; the idea that the persona of an individual, their core ethic, can be distilled into one primary driving force that impacts and influences not only how we engage in ways of learning and teaching, but how one lives—an individual's core narrative. This process of "becoming"—of reflecting on and considering our biographical pasts, a past that composes the multiple facets of one's personal orientation—helps us in understanding ourselves and, for the purposes of this inquiry, to "[make] sense of the roles of teacher, student, subject matter, and context in the overall process of learning" (Campbell, Thompson, & Barrett, 2010, loc. 1511). Through understanding the orientations of the participants, I hope to identify not just their "observable behaviors, but the less directly visible beliefs and background experiences that inspired those behaviors" (Schmidt, 1998, p. 20). In other words, through conducting an exploration of the participants' individualized interminglings of experiences, knowledges, beliefs, and practices, I hope to illuminate the experiences that formed and informed their perspectives and attitudes, impacted their journey as professional musician~teachers, and ultimately, how their orientations inform and influence their approach to the popular music classroom.

Participants

Criteria. For this study, participants were selected by way of a combination of predetermined criteria, survey data, and micro-interviews. Initial criteria for participants include that they:

1) self-identify as a professional musician with consistent experiences in creating, producing, performing and/or recording popular music;

2) currently teach (or have taught) in the United States in a community or secondary popular music classroom for at last five years; and

3) do not possess an undergraduate degree from a music teacher education program.

These criteria targeted participants who most fit within the context of the study and who possess (plausibly) stories that are rich in content. In order to access this rich content, it was of paramount importance to identify musicians who have a variety of experiences, attitudes, identities, and proficiencies to provide a wide sampling of orientations and teaching practices. For example, it is plausible that a vocalist will have a different orientation, a different life path to teaching, and different ways of approaching learning and teaching in the popular music classroom when compared to a bass player predicated simply on their choice of instrument. Thinking back to the definition of popular music in Chapter 1 as being a "vast, multifarious, and fluid range of musical practices" (Bowman, 2004, p. 34), it was important that the professional musician~teachers in this inquiry reflect the diverse practices, settings, and identities often found in popular music and in the popular music-focused classroom. The three participants chosen for this study possess not only the criteria listed above, but also reflect a diversity and range of experiences that contributes richness to this study.

Survey. To begin the process of participant selection, I created a brief survey confirming potential participants' 1) depth of experiences creating and performing popular music, 2) range of experiences teaching popular music, and 3) lack of involvement in an undergraduate music teacher education program. The survey was distributed by way of:

1) Facebook pages that focus on popular music education, popular music research, and popular music practice including the Association for Popular Music Education, the Popular Music Education Special Research Interest Group of the National Association for Popular Music Education, the Popular Music Education Special Interest Group of the International Society for Music Education, the Popular and Commercial Music Educators, and the Popular and Commercial Music Voice Teachers pages;

2) my personal social media accounts (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter); and

3) targeted emails to individuals within my personal and professional network who might fit the criteria.

In an effort to locate "information-rich key informants" (Patton, 2002, p. 237), this distribution process also employed chain sampling by way of the interconnected networks found within these organizations, groups, and individuals through the reposting/sharing/tagging of social media content and the forwarding of emails to potential participants outside my immediate network. In total, sixteen individuals completed the survey.

Micro-interview. Once the survey phase was completed, I conducted micro-interviews with six potential participants who best fit the criteria to differentiate who might allow for maximum variation as it relates to the selection of popular

musician~teachers who have a variety of experiences, attitudes, and proficiencies, thereby opening the potential for exploring different orientations and teaching practices. These micro-interviews consisted of a short 20 to 25-minute semi-structured conversation with the intent of 1) confirming the potential participant's responses on the survey and 2) asking four to five questions that focused on the potential participant's background in music, how they came to be a teacher, and how they go about making connections between their in and out-of-school musical experiences as it relates to their teaching practices.

The process of locating participants though the brief survey, coupled with the micro-interviews, assisted me in making informed decisions with regard to participants, thereby achieving a maximum variation of sampling. Additionally, these micro-interviews allowed me to gauge the conversational flow, as well as whether or not the possible participants might be able to provide the rich stories that are essential to this inquiry. That said, throughout the entire process, I strove to remain cognizant of my biases so that I didn't simply select participants who have a similar path to teaching and/or similar attitudes towards the use of popular music in the classroom.

Sampling. Based on the data generated from the surveys and in coordination with the micro-interviews, I selected three primary participants and, additionally, one alternate participant in the event that any of the three primary participants elected not to participate or continue in the study. That said, I was able to complete the research with the three primary participants. Additional considerations included choosing participants who exhibited diverse paths to teaching and/or who possessed a range of attitudes towards the use of popular music in the classroom to allow for strong, content-rich stories to come forward. Glesne (2011) defines maximum variation sampling as "purposeful selection of cases from a wide range of variation"

(p. 45), while Creswell (2007) suggests employing maximum variation "as a sampling strategy to represent diverse cases" (p. 129). Employing maximum variation of participants potentially safeguards the study from accusations of "cherry-picking" of participants via convenience sampling to reach a conclusion regarding the teaching practices of popular musicians a priori.

On this note, as I began to sift through the initial survey data, I quickly realized I had some level of relationship with or prior knowledge of all but two respondents of the larger group of sixteen. These existing associations posed a challenge in terms of selecting participants while espousing to employ maximum variation. In the end, I chose the three participants based not on how I or others might view our prior knowledge of each other, but rather on the diversity of their experiences that has, I believe, led to the rich stories I hoped to achieve from the outset of this research. In an effort to provide anonymity to the participants, each participant chose their own pseudonym: Finn, Ashley, and Dean.

Data Generation

Barrett (2014) states the case study approach "employs multiple methods of data collection" including "fieldwork, observation, interviews, document analysis, and other items of material culture are commonly utilized" (p. 114). Data generation for this study consisted of four semi-structured interviews, one focus group, two class observations, video/audio recordings of interviews, transcripts of interviews, photographs of class observations, two participant vlogs, multiple text messages, and researcher memos. The various modalities of generated data, coupled with interpretation process, helped generate "overlapping data to provide a thick and rich description" (Tobias, 2014, p. 289, citing Geertz, 1973) of each participant's

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orientation, their teaching practice, and how the orientation of the individual might be situated within that of the collective.

I am purposefully using the term data *generation* in contrast to data collection as the participants in these stories were not necessarily fully aware of how their personal stories connect and intersect. The awareness and understanding of how their orientations influenced their teaching practices varied from participant to participant. Through engaging in a hybridized narrative and multiple case study process at every turn, and in the spirit of engaging in research *with* and not simply *on* these individuals in the research, I sought to engage in a collaborative research process so that the data generated might better illuminate the research puzzle at hand; framing and reframing the pieces of the puzzle, placing them into any number of combinations in an effort to reveal nuanced connections. These ways of generating and co-generating data with the participants, detailed throughout this document, included member checking of transcripts and observation notes, the inclusion of participant-authored portraits in Chapter 4, and accommodating the participants during interviews to allow the conversation to naturally drift to areas they deemed important to their stories.

Based on these interactions and the data generated, the task then fell to me to discern their orientations and to serve as a translator between the worlds of the professional musician and the professional educator. Here, I readily admit the participants, in their roles as professional musician~teacher~co-researchers, left little on the table that needed to be deciphered. I came into this research assuming I would act as a bridge between the two worlds of the popular musician and educator, but soon realized the participants served as connections (and connectors) between these worlds in their own right.

With this in mind, and when generating and later interpreting the stories of the participants, Lincoln and Guba (1985) remind researchers that data "are the constructions offered by or in the sources; data analysis leads to reconstruction of those constructions" (p. 332). In other words, their stories were not fully formed fruits where my only task was to harvest and then present them to delight of the reader. It remained my responsibility, through the methods detailed in this section, to *receive* the stories of the participants, and afterwards, translate as needed, make meaning of, and present the stories of the participants in a way that is comprehensible by the reader. Here, Nichols (2016), through her work focusing on the ethics of narrative inquiry, reminds researchers to continually seek a balance between the role of a researcher and the roles of the participant/co-researchers, allowing participants the leeway to choose both their depth of involvement and how they would prefer to relate their stories. On that note, Chapter 4 provides participant-authored portraits detailing background, experiences, and participation in music performance, teaching, and related areas. These narratives allowed me (and will allow the reader) the opportunity to get to know through their own voices.

Semi-structured interviews. According to Creswell (2007), the interview attempts to investigate the participants' experiences in terms of the phenomenon and the contexts or situations that have played a role in these experiences. With that, Stauffer (2014, citing Chase, 1995) cautions interviews should not devolve into an interrogation of the participant, suggesting instead to create "relational and conversational conditions that invite the participants' stories. Conversation rather than interrogation serves the narrative researcher well" (p. 178). With this stance in mind—that is, that I am engaging in semi-structured *conversations* with the participants and not formal, structured *interviews*—a semi-structured framework allowed me to approach the interactions both prepared with the questions and

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prompts designed to gather the generated data while allowing the conversation to flow naturally and for tangential experiences to come to the surface. To this point, Miranda (2002) suggests remaining open to spontaneous closure conversations— open dialogue that might occur outside the confines of the actual interview—as these moments often provide additional insights. In this study, these kinds of exchanges often occurred during text conversations, while walking to/from our chosen conversation spots, via email, or before/after our more structured conversations. In these instances, I jotted down notes to remind me what was discussed, often using these pre/post conversation exchanges as fodder to generate questions for a future conversation.

That said, while the participants and I engaged freely and openly in dialogue, the fact remains that I held a position of power insofar as my stance as the researcher for this project coupled with my depth of knowledge around the topics discussed. To counterbalance this position, while this document presents *my* research project, this project also represents *our* stories. While attempting to strike a balance between the researcher/researched, I tried to consider, much like the overlapping roles for the professional musician~teacher participants, the equally messy intersection of participant~researcher~co-researcher. In this regard, I relied heavily on peer conversations and researcher memos in an effort to mitigate my strongly held assumptions and biases while attempting not to stray from the research questions and focus.

In a study of that investigated degree perseverance among African Americans who transitioned from an undergraduate music program at a Historically Black College and University (HBCU) to a Predominantly White Institution (PWI), McCall (2015) used each of four interviews with each participant as an opportunity to delve into a different dimension/facet of the participants' experiences. For this study, I

facilitated scaffolded conversations in a similar fashion by focusing chronologically on each participant's journey while allowing for possible ancillary and connected experiences to enter the conversation. I conducted four interview conversations with each participant. Interview one considered a multitude of topics, allowing me the opportunity to better understand the overall arc of the participant's biographical past and present, thereby allowing me to tailor questions in future interviews. Interview two focused on the participant's musical experiences in secondary and university-level settings. Interview three focused on the participant's experiences as a professional musician and their journey into teaching. Finally, interview four focused on questions around the participant's teaching practice, how they interpret the impact of their experiences on their teaching, and allowed me to ask clarifying questions on both a micro and macro level as it related to their biographical past and its influence on their teaching practice.

Glesne (2011) describes the act of conducting multiple interviews as a means of ensuring trustworthiness and, further, to "help provide the participants time to think through their feelings, reactions, and beliefs" (p. 50). Due to pandemic-related travel restrictions, the first two interviews were conducted via Zoom. As travel restrictions eased, interviews three and four were conducted in each of the participants' locations: the Los Angeles metro area (Ashley), the New York City metro area (Dean), and the Memphis metro area (Finn). These travels enabled me the opportunity to build collegiality and trust while also offering a glimpse into their worlds.

Observations. Glesne (2011) suggests qualitative inquiry requires prolonged engagement through employing multiple interviews with and observations of the participants. Glesne (2011) also notes that participants might act differently when being observed in contrast to being interviewed. As the participants live in three

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different areas—the Los Angeles metro area, the New York City metro area, and the Memphis metro area—I traveled to and met with each participant in their location over the month of October 2022, spending 2–3 days with each participant. During this time, I was able to observe two classes each with participants Ashley and Dean but was not able to observe Finn as he had recently experienced health issues and, consequently, had left the classroom to focus on his well-being. On this note, maintain that Finn's absence from the classroom proper during the data generation process did not disqualify him from the study, as the bulk of my interactions with the participants focused on the immediate and distant pasts in a reflective manner.

Video. The first two interviews and the focus group were video and audio recorded via Zoom. Barrett (2014) suggests that video data is particularly useful as it provides a different perspective on participant interaction and engagement while Tobias (2014) notes video "provides context and nonverbal data ranging from facial reactions to gestures unavailable in audio recordings" (p. 290). Interviews three and four were not video recorded as the participant-chosen venues (i.e., a coffee shop, a public concourse, etc.) did not offer the most suitable environment to set up a camera and because non-participants would be walking through the shot. For observations, I decided to discreetly take pictures instead of video recording while also taking detailed notes of the class atmosphere, student and teacher demeanor, and other happenings in real time.

Participant vlogs. To obtain multimodal data, participants were asked to create, on a video recording app of their choice, a 3–5-minute video diary twice over the course of the study on a prompt that I provided. These vlogs served as additional points of contact and as bridges between interviews, thereby allowing the participants to speak freely and openly. This was achieved by sending a group text to the participants with the provided prompt, followed by the participants either sharing

their video with me through the share function of the video app or through emailing a video link.

Tobias (2014) suggests that "video diaries can be particularly beneficial for generating data related to musical engagement that researchers are unable to observe or participants' reflections beyond the context of interviews" (p. 296). These vlogs also served to expand the data generation beyond the confines of the scaffolded conversations, giving the participants time to reply to the questions as they saw fit and in a time frame and manner that fit their schedule. After completion,

Focus group. I moderated one focus group conversation with all three participants via Zoom. When watching the recorded video of the focus group conversation, I made explicit notes in the transcript when a participant nodded in agreement or disagreement, laughed, or reacted in a way that I believe illustrated context (ex. Finn's reply to a question prompted Ashely to nod in agreement). Similar to Conway, Eros, Hourigan, and Stanley (2007), the focus groups served as the final data generation device after all other data generation was complete.

Researcher memos. Over the course of the study, I found time to jot down ideas, thoughts, hunches, questions I could ask, questions I didn't think to have asked, etc., or what Creswell (2007) identifies as "descriptive and reflective notes" (p. 134). Tobias (2014, citing Derry, 2007) encourages researchers to timestamp their field notes to "assist in marking significant events or points of time that a researcher wants to remember when analyzing across data streams during analysis" (p. 294). Additionally, given my personal and professional expertise in the research topic, I also used memos to think~write~interpret through how I was approaching data generation and interpretation, always striving to maintain a neutral, balanced position in an effort to not taint the entire research process.

Interpretation

As noted previously, all interviews, focus group, observations, and participant vlogs were transcribed during the data generation process, with transcriptions often occurring the same day, if not within hours, of the interactions. Stauffer (2014) suggests that the term *interpretation*, as opposed to analysis, captures the essence of narrative inquiry as the narrative researcher receives the stories given to them followed by an interpretation or these stories. To that end, I use the term interpretation throughout this inquiry[15] when describing the analysis, study, examination, and exploration of the participants' stories.

Glesne (2011) suggests that data ~~analysis~~ interpretation occurs parallel to data ~~collection~~ generation, thereby allowing the researcher to reshape the study if needed. This ongoing generation/interpretation process allowed me to modify the questions and my approach to the process as a whole. Additionally, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that "data analysis in not a matter of data reduction, as in frequently claimed, but of *induction*" [italics mine] (p. 333). In other words, in my role as participant/translator, I intended to make observable both the visible and the more elusive details of the participants and their stories. Throughout this interpretation process, I highlighted, coded, recoded and added notes to the transcripts throughout using Word's comment tool, allowing both easy access to what I was thinking at the time of transcription and allowing me to think through and across cases.

Transcription & Coding. The first two interviews were transcribed using the cloud transcription function in Zoom, followed by light editing on my part as a number of words and phrases were mis-transcribed by Zoom. To alleviate this, I

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[15] Outside of cited quotes or where the use of the term interpretation alters the intent of a paraphrased quote.

copy and pasted the Zoom-generated transcript into a Word document and edited while following along with the video recording. For interviews three and four, as they were conducted in person, I took advantage of the Voice Memo app on my iPhone to record the conversation. I then uploaded an MP3 of the conversation into Soundtrap. After some exploration on my part, I came to the realization that using the transcription function in Soundtrap provided a more accurate transcription. Similar to the method described above, I copy and pasted the Soundtrap-generated transcript into a Word document and edited the transcript while following along with the sound recording on the Voice Memo app. The Voice Memo app allowed for the slowing down of the recording, granting me the ability to edit and re-transcribe in real time. During this time, I also highlighted quotes I found interesting, often writing researcher memos using the comment function in Word. This process allowed me the opportunity to continually immerse myself in the stories of the participants while ensuring an accurate transcription.

Individual transcriptions were saved to individual Word documents to allow for individual case interpretation. Additionally, I saved all collected data to a single Word document to more easily allow for cross-case interpretation. Glesne (2011) encourages qualitative researchers to employ coding to "discern themes, patterns, processes, and to make comparisons and build theoretical explanations" (p. 194) while Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggest researchers code data to better understand the various components that comprise the story.

Coding began while I edited and transcribed the individual conversations. As I read and re-read the transcriptions, I took advantage of open coding (Chase, 2005) to reveal emerging themes as the story interpretation dictates as opposed to coming into the inquiry with preset, a priori codes that might taint the inquiry process (Riessman, 1993). As noted above, coding consisted of using color-coding to convey

my thoughts (i.e., blue for a question I asked, red for a thought-provoking quote or thought, orange for a quotable, etc.). Additionally, I added hashtags to various thoughts or quotes, allowing for quick access via a word search (ex. #priorexperience). After receiving the portraits (included in Chapter 4) from the participants and drafting Chapters 5 and 6, I recoded the data as included in Chapters 4 and 5 in an effort to ensure I was able to accurately place the participants' stories in dialogue with the literature in a revised Chapter 6. Throughout this process, I did my best to remain careful not to lose sight of the participants or their stories. Stauffer (2014) cautions the "parsing and coding of stories" as a "reductionist treatment of narrative data that serves the researcher's interests only and may render the participants' meanings and even their stories invisible" (p. 178).

Narrative Interpretation. Creswell (2007) suggests narrative researchers "restory" or reorganize participant's stories to piece together their stories to make sense to both the researcher and the reader. I visualize this approach akin to a story board—a visual aid used by screen writers when plotting out a scene in relation to a script, ensuring the transitions and timing make sense to the viewer. As the chronological arc of the data generation was not a simple point A to point B (or, rather, date A to date B), placing the stories of the participants within the context distilled themes will help the reader (and helped the researcher) make sense of the arc of the participant's journeys.

Through the interpretation and translation of the events of the participant's lives, the act of writing assisted me in making sense of the participants' stories as the act of writing is, in and of itself, a method of interpretation (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). Finally, in an effort to engage in a co-researcher dynamic, and to ensure I was not misinterpreting the stories of the participants, I shared all

transcripts, observations, and drafts with the participants in an effort to gain valuable feedback and to engage in a reflexive stance through member checking.

Writing~Thinking~Interpretation. Sellers and Gough (2010) utilize the tilde (~) to establish a sense of "conjoining of co-implicated notions" (p. 2). In this inquiry, I am thinking of writing~thinking as two notions fused into one act and, additionally, ~interpretation as an outgrowth of writing and thinking. I have learned through the doctoral program this is the primary way I make sense of phenomena, and I feel this newfound skill contributed both my understanding of the phenomenon being studied as well as how I might convey this understanding to the reader and beyond through the making of meaning. Alekna (2021) suggests writing as interpretation entails that you "come back to your words, think deeply about what you are saying, and make sure that what you have said is what you mean" (p. 51). Through the act of restorying and creating participant portraits, I utilized the act of writing as a means of interpretation, critical thought, and engagement.

Cross-case interpretation. One of the advantages of employing a multiple-case approach is it allows the researcher to study multiple individual cases while providing the option of seeking out connections across these multiple cases (Stake, 2005). Further, a multiple case study design serves to strengthen data interpretation, as the inferences drawn from these diverse, multiple cases are more likely to present a clearer description of similarities and differences in the participant's stories and teaching practices when compared to analyzing a single case (Yin, 2009). Creswell (2007) defines cross-case analysis as a "thematic analysis across the cases" (p. 75) while Meyers (2017) suggests looking for both "commonalities and differences" (p. 138) across the participants' narratives. But even here I must be careful and take Stauffer's (2014) words to heart:

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If humans live storied lives, then any story one might tell or hear is not a

discrete unit that can be extracted and analyzed, but rather part of a

complex, continuous experiential and relational whole that must be

considered throughout the research process. (p. 171)

Trustworthiness

Creswell (2007) suggests a number of actions a researcher might take to

ensure trustworthiness and credibility in their research: prolonged engagement, peer

review or debriefing, acknowledging researcher bias, member checking, and thick,

rich description. Creswell (2007) goes on to recommend that "qualitative researchers

engage in at least two of these procedures in any given study" (p. 209). Additionally,

Glesne (2011) encourages multiple interviews to ensure trustworthiness while

Maxwell (2005) suggests researcher memos can serve a similar purpose. Detailed

explanations of how I engaged in these multiple areas follow. For this inquiry, I

engaged in all seven of the measures listed above.

Prolonged engagement. Glesne (2016) maintains, "Time observing,

participating, conversing, and building sound relationships all contribute to data that

are more trustworthy" (p. 153). Consistent, prolonged engagement with the

participants consisted of information gleaned through an initial survey, four

interviews (two on Zoom and two in person), two teaching observations (with the

exception of Finn), one focus group (via Zoom), participant vlogs, and various texts,

emails, and phone calls. While my initial intent was to gather all data in a virtual

format, I decided to travel to each of the participants' locations to meet with,

observe, and interview each participant in an effort to spend quality time with each

individual. These multiple interactions across these modalities (i.e., virtual and in

person) and settings over time allowed me to gather an informed, orthographic

perspective into the participants' experiences and professional lives. Data generation began with the initial survey (sent mid-July 2022) and ended with the final focus group (mid-November 2022).

Peer review. Throughout the process of data generation and interpretation I engaged in countless conversations with colleagues, peers, and faculty in an effort to question my methods and challenge my biases. Additionally, I sought out the advice of a number of music education colleagues with a background in qualitative research and popular music education to serve as peer reviewers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Both of these factors served as an "external check of the research process" (Creswell, 2007, p. 208).

Acknowledging researcher bias. Based on my thoughts as presented thus far, it should be apparent that I have a deep interest in this topic as the topic entails my own experiences that also connect with the participants' experiences. Merriam (2009) asserts "because the primary instrument in qualitative research is human, all observations and analyses are filtered through that human being's world view, values, and perspective" (p. 22). Throughout the entirety of the process, I did my best to remain aware of my own biases. Additionally, I engaged in "self-checking" through the aforementioned research memos and peer conversations with the intent of talking through my bias when it raised its ugly head.

Member checking. Creswell (2007) describes member checking as a request for "participants' viewpoints involving the accuracy of the information and the credibility of the interpretations made by the researcher" (p. 208). The process of providing transcriptions, draft/revised/final chapters, and narrative accounts to the participants permitted them the opportunity to review, amend, and approve the transcriptions and narratives. Members checking was achieved by granting the participants access to all interview transcripts, observation notes, focus group

transcripts, and in-process chapters. Additionally, participants provided their own portraits (included in Chapter 4 of this document) that I lightly edited for clarity. Even here, participants had the final say on how their story was presented and to ensure I was not misrepresenting their words or experiences.

Thick, rich description. According to Creswell (2013), a "thick description allows readers to make decisions regarding transferability because the writer describes in detail the participants or setting under study" (p. 252). Denzin (1989a) defines it as a description that "goes beyond the mere or bare reporting of an act (thin description), but describes and probes the intentions, motives, meanings, contexts, situations and circumstances of action" (p. 39). Through the use of narrative storytelling, re-arranging, and using a rich, thick description—as well as through engaging with the participant~co-researchers as authors of their own narrative portraits—my intent is to convey the lived experiences of the participants in vivid detail.

Multiple interviews. Glesne (2011) describes multiple interviews as an important way of warranting trustworthiness. The four semi-structured interviews/conversations engaged in helped to build a trusting relationship with the participants while allowing them time to think about their statements and to amend/clarify their accounts in subsequent interviews. This also allowed me time to reflect on the questions I asked as well as the questions I didn't think to ask at the time.

Researcher memos. Over the course of the study I jotted down ideas, thoughts, hunches, questions I could ask, questions I didn't think to ask, etc., what Creswell (2007) identifies as "descriptive and reflective notes" (p. 134). This was accomplished through a Google document I could access at any time on any device,

taking notes on the Notes app on my personal device(s), email drafts allowing me to think more deeply about an idea or thought, and through the occasional voice memo.

Reflexivity. Alekna (2021, citing Stauffer, 2014) maintains that "narrative inquirers are committed to reflexivity and trustworthiness as means for confirming a study's credibility" (p. 54). Glesne (2006) noted:

Reflexivity involves critical reflection on how researcher, research participants, setting, and phenomenon of interest interact and influence each other. This includes examining one's personal and theoretical commitments to see how they serve as resources for generating particular data, for behaving in particular way . . . and for developing particular interpretations. (p. 6)

My experiences as a performer, teacher, and fan of popular music dictate that I, most assuredly, came to this inquiry with biases. In light of these, I leaned on the measures listed above while remaining reflexive throughout the entirety of the process; all in an effort to share the participant's stories in a way that is compelling, energizing, and authentic.

Timeline

This study was conducted from July 2022, through May 2023. The dissertation proposal was defended in April 2022. As this study involved three adult participants, I submitted an institutional review board (IRB) application to the Office of Research Integrity at Arizona State University for study approval. Approval was granted in June 2022. Participant selection began in August 2022, in accordance with the criteria as outlined in the IRB document and the process listed in the participants section of this document. Data generation occurred from mid-July 2022 to mid-November 2022. Interviews were transcribed from September 2022 to December

2022, along with initial interpretation. The dissertation defense took place June

2023.

CHAPTER 4

(COUNTER?)STORIES

The following chapter consists of participant-authored portraits detailing their backgrounds, experiences, and participation in music learning, performance, teaching, and related areas. In line with the research questions and a narrative approach, these stories introduce the reader to each participant more deeply so the reader might better understand the biographical pasts of each individual. Their stories delve into a range of topics including their musical upbringing, in-school and out-of-school musical experiences from K–12 through college and into their performing career, development and evolution of their teaching practices, and how they incorporate their experiences, knowledge, beliefs, and practices into the classroom.

The individuals composed their portraits based on the prompt: "Present your journey from student musician to professional musician through to music educator." Additionally, I did not specify a format. Instead, I suggested participant authors could 1) create an audio recording, 2) author their portrait through writing, or 3) some variant thereof. With that, one participant chose to compose their narrative through writing, one participant chose to submit an MP3 audio file, and another created a video while narrating their biographical past. In all three cases, I edited their narratives in subtle manner with the intent of presenting their stories in their voices. In the case of the audio and video narratives, I used Soundtrap to transcribe the audio file. I then listened to the audio file using the Voice Memo app and corrected any transcription issues. Participants then checked their edited stories to ensure I did not misrepresent their intentions.

Ashley's Story

Researcher's note - I first met Ashley in 2018 when I traveled with student ensembles from my school in Colorado on a trip to southern California. I reached out to a colleague who directed a popular music program at a southern California high school and asked if we might be able to get our students together for a meet-and-greet and to play some music while we were in town. This was the program Ashley attended as a student and later served as an instructor. I only briefly met Ashley during this trip, but we kept in touch via social media after our visit.

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I am the product of two professional musicians who met while touring with Bobby Vinton. My mom was a classically trained piano player from North Dakota who spent her college years studying opera and classical piano. She then joined touring bands after college. She was playing in a hotel while on tour when Bobby Vinton walked in and asked her to audition for his band. She ended up playing with him for twelve years as his main keyboard player and background vocalist. Anywhere he went, she went! My mom then moved to Los Angeles because Bobby promised her she would have a career. And she did. So, North Dakota girl went full, full showbiz!

My dad is a jazz big band composer and arranger from southern California. He graduated from a local college and, afterward, toured with Quincy Jones and played with artists like Jackie DeShannon, The Four Tops, Helen Reddy, and many others. He eventually got a gig with Bobby Vinton's band, writing arrangements and playing second keyboard with my mom. It was a match made in heaven! My dad was also the jazz band director and a music professor at a local community college for 35 years.

I had a very musical childhood with musical greats always at the house. Looking back now, I realize just how interesting and unusual it was! My dad was

often doing projects with Steve Allen and Jack Sheldon, so they were always around the house, and I would end up singing on their demos and projects. Around this time, I also sang on a Schoolhouse Rock episode, but unfortunately, it never aired. On another recording project with Steve Allen (I was pretty young, I think I was four) he asked me, "So, are you a good girl?" And I said, "Yeah, right!" I guess I made Steve Allen really laugh, which brought my mom so much joy that I impressed a famous comedian with my delivery!

During elementary school, I really enjoyed my music classes. It was also around this time I remember attending Dad's big band concerts at a well-known local jazz club in southern California. My mom was the lead singer, but I would occasionally get called up to sing a song. I remember getting home so late at night and then going to school the next morning. At the time, I didn't really realize that wasn't normal! As I grew older, I continued singing with my dad's big band and, later on, with the college big band he directed. It wasn't until middle school that I truly realized my passion for music, and I auditioned for the middle school show choir. I made it, which was surprising because I didn't know how to dance at all. I then had to learn how to dance and sing at the same time very quickly!

It was in the show choir that I really learned how to be a leader. My teacher trusted me. She would ask me to be a section leader for parts that weren't even mine; she really trusted me. I learned a lot about singing harmony parts, how to learn music, and just being part of a group. And that's when I realized how much I loved being a part of a performance group! At that time, I also joined a local children's choir, which was an advanced children's chorus. I remember learning about things like blending and singing in different languages, and we would perform at festivals. Thinking back, I remember hearing a suspended chord for the first time,

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and it just blew my mind. It was a song called "Angels Carol," and every time we sang that song, I just could not wait for that suspended chord. It changed my life!

Around that time, my mom signed me up for private lessons with a well-known singing teacher in the area, and the instructor wanted me to work on show tunes. We were prepping for an audition for the high school music program, and she assumed I would be auditioning for musical theater. I didn't know any better at the time, so she had me sing "I Feel Pretty," which I was not thrilled about but embraced the experience. We also worked on a monologue. I had no idea what a monologue was at the time, but she asked me to read it anyway. She told me I sounded "blah, blah, blah"—exactly those words! And I remember thinking, "Wow, I never want to take a lesson from this woman again."

So, my mom pulled me out of lessons, and I told her I did not want to do musical theater. We looked at the catalog for a local performing arts high school and saw that there was a class in songwriting and recording. My dad always had recording setups at home, and my half-brother was also really into recording, so I dabbled in it a bit. We were using a Roland VS-1680, and I would borrow it, record stacked harmonies, and try to recreate things I did in choir. I was also doing some songwriting at the time, so I decided to audition for the performing arts high school music program, and I made it in!

While the program ended up being more about performing classic rock than songwriting and recording, I learned so much about styles of music I did not know about. I also fell in love with singing background vocals—I just loved it! I almost loved being in the background more than being in the limelight and just enjoyed the beauty and the fulfillment of singing with others and creating harmonies. I also learned more about being a leader because I was placed into so many leadership

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positions – I almost ended up taking over the vocal director position while still in high school!

While I was a sophomore in high school, I joined a swing band and started gigging locally. I did that all through high school. After graduation, I formed a vocal trio called The Swing Kittens. We sang in the style of the 1940s vocal group the Andrew Sisters. There were different iterations of The Swing Kittens, but the group was always made up of friends I had in high school. We're actually still together and we've been the same group of three since 2011.

After I graduated high school, I was hired by my high school to teach vocals and essentially keep doing what I was already doing. I also enrolled in the local community college. Thinking I wanted to pursue music, I took some music classes, joined the choir, and tried private lessons again. I learned more about singing in other languages and had to do a jury, but the main thing I learned was how to connect with the music while singing. Ironically, my college choir teacher was the husband of the director of the children's choir that I was in. He was hard on me and taught me a lot. Along the way, I learned that I could not commit to being a music major because I was already gigging and there were conflicts between my gigs and school performances. This caused some ripples in my relationship with my college choir teacher, so I decided to switch gears and major in communication studies while continuing to gig.

It turned out to be a good decision because I got an email from the leader of the Glenn Miller Band asking if The Swing Kittens would be interested in doing a 10-day tour of the Philippines and Thailand. We thought it was a spam email, but after checking to make sure it was legit, we found out it was for real. I was 20 years old at the time, and the youngest member of our group was 18. We ended up touring with

them off and on while I was in college, taking courses online while touring. Sometimes I even had to take a semester off due to our demanding tour schedule.

We ended up touring Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Hawaii, the Philippines, and Thailand with the Glenn Miller Band and the Billy Vaughn Orchestra. It was a really fun six years, and we did a lot, but touring was getting harder, and stability was sounding more intriguing. I was also taking on more responsibilities and more roles at the high school, where I was still working when I was off tour; they were very lenient with my touring schedule. I began teaching guitar and a pop voice class that I created. I learned so much throughout my experiences, I wanted to build a curriculum that encompassed all that I think that young vocalists should know about surviving in the industry.

Most recently, I completed my Master's in Education and received my teaching credential while balancing gigs of all kinds. I'm also running the entire popular music program at my high school while the director is out on maternity leave. I'm still working with The Swing Kittens and our alter ego, a band called ECLIPS3, where I play guitar and sing. We do music from the 1950s through today, focusing on vocal harmonies. I'm still working with different event and corporate bands in southern California, singing with original bands, and doing casual gigs at restaurants. I'm also a featured artist with various big bands such as Les Brown, Benny Goodman, and our local community big bands. I try to take any gigs that come my way that I can balance with my teaching schedule.

Looking back, I think I draw a lot of inspiration from all of my teachers. I learned so much from my dad, just watching him be so positive, drawing inspiration out of students, and his upbeat and fun nature. He always saw the good in everybody and what they were capable of—working with their strengths and helping them find their passions. He was always so encouraging and supportive, positive and

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patient. My grandma was also a teacher—a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature at a local college for many years. So, in a way, teaching runs in my family. I also learned so much from my middle school show choir director, who taught me how to be a leader and saw so much in me that I didn't see in myself. The same is true for my high school music director who believed in me far more than I could have ever believed in myself at the time. I definitely learned from every teacher and experience I had—both the good times and challenging times, but I certainly learned the most from my music teachers, and I hope to be able to pass along to my students what they gave to me.

Dean's Story

Researcher's note: I first met Dean at the Association for Popular Music Education conference held in Denver in 2017. We connected as bass players, as popular music educators, and as parents of neurodivergent kids. We continued to stay in touch through social media, and later we both attended the same conference again in 2019 in New York. In 2020, I approached Dean and asked if he would be interested in co-presenting a session at the 2021 APME conference on supporting neurodiverse student musicians in a popular music setting. Due to ongoing pandemic restrictions, we presented the session in an online format during the conference.

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My paternal grandmother believed in raising well-rounded children, so my father took piano lessons from a young age and later played cello in school. He never became a serious musician but enjoyed playing from the *Liberace Easy-Note* piano books for some time as an adult. In his later years, he took to the piano again. I think as he was trying to fight the first effects of dementia that would eventually take him from us.

My mother was raised by a hard-working single mom who scraped together what money she could to give her two daughters some exposure to the arts. My mom took piano lessons briefly as a young girl and was told, point-blank, by her teacher that she wasn't cut out for piano. Now at nearly 80, she's still a huge opera fan, especially Verdi operas.

I mention this to say I was brought into the world by people for whom music had a lifelong importance but who were not professionals or serious musicians. I was brought here by sincere music appreciators. I was brought here by fans. And I still think they are the most important group of people music has. They made a fan out of me. To this day, Mom delights in telling people that my first full sentence was "I like records."

With these parents, it figures that I was enrolled in piano lessons at six years old. I remember playing from the same series of Thompson's *Teaching Little Fingers to Play* that my father had learned from. The next-door neighbor gave me my first few lessons, and then I had several teachers in succession. I remember a particularly challenging teacher up the street who threw me into pieces by people with names like Kabalevsky, Shostakovich, and Bartok.

Somewhere in that general time frame, my dad bought me a record player and borrowed an armful of random albums from the local library – just stuff he thought maybe I'd like. I don't think he had any awareness of the artists, but it was pop/rock stuff current for about 1975–1980. Aerosmith's 1977 opus *Draw the Line* was in that bunch. I think it caught dad's eye because the cover was a Hirschfeld caricature of the band. From the very first chord of the title track (an A, I think, delivered with nastiness and gusto), I was hooked for life. I wanted to make those sounds.

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I quickly figured out on the piano that open perfect 5ths in my left hand mimicked the sound of the power chords I heard from the guitars on my Aerosmith records. I researched the artistic lineage and quickly became a fan of The Rolling Stones, Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple, etc. I wanted to make *that* kind of sound.

I put together my first band when I was 12-years old and enlisted my younger brother, my best friend, and his younger brother. I was a tyrannical leader who wrote all the music and taught it by rote to the others. My friend's younger brother was the "guitar player," but he only knew the easy fingerings for C and G7 out of the Mel Bay book. Often, he'd leave his guitar at my house, so I started figuring out how to play the guitar. I began by thinking, "OK, so the strings are tuned E, A, D, G, B, E, and each of these frets shortens the string and raises the pitch in progressive half steps. So, if I press my fingers in these certain places, the pitches become E's, B's, and a G#. An E Major chord." What an earth-shaking discovery! By the way, my undying gratitude goes to the piano teachers who didn't just assign pieces but also made me practice scales and arpeggios and learn some theory; that was a complete game-changer.

Soon I announced to my band that I was now the guitar player. By 14, I had purchased myself a used Les Paul copy and a small combo amp. I began working out all my Jimmy Page licks. My parents insisted I continue piano lessons and mandated daily practice. I was enrolled with a new teacher in my neighborhood. And she taught me something no one else ever had—how to practice. For years, I had been told what to practice and how long to practice, but never what correct practice looks like. My new teacher showed me how to pick apart and slow down difficult passages—how to stick with a tiny fragment of material until it falls into place. Best instruction I ever received in my whole life. I still pass her wisdom on practically every day.

In high school, I got a reputation for being a bit of a hotshot guitar player, which didn't hold the kind of social cache one might imagine because I was still a pudgy, awkward kid. But I did get the guitar chair in the stage band. I was also playing alto sax in the concert band, which I'd been playing since elementary school.

By the time I was 16, I had stumbled across the band Yes and was noticing the signature sound and creativity of bassist Chris Squire, so I started dabbling in the bass. Not long after, I was getting offers to join my friends' bands as a bass player. I realized quickly that the simple qualifications of owning a bass and knowing *something* about music were enough to afford me a lot of playing opportunities.

At 18 and 19, I was beginning to get paying gigs playing bass. But for whatever promise I may have shown as a musician, my parents did not see music as a viable career option. They convinced me to go to college and study communications instead. This fed my own self-doubt even as I continued in various music-making situations through college and eventually graduated with a degree in communications that I didn't want to use.

I kicked around town for a couple of years working minimum wage jobs and playing in local bands before deciding to move away, borrowing money to enroll in a Bachelor of Music program, and setting myself up for a career playing bass. Three years later I'd earned my degree *cum laude* and was feeding and housing myself as a freelance bass player in a great music city on the east coast.

In the big city, the gigs got better, the musicians I played alongside got better, and as a result, I got better and gained more experience. But by the time I was married, and my wife and I were looking for a house, it became apparent that even though we were both working, my bass-playing income was not bringing enough to the table for a down payment and mortgage. I began looking for a day gig in music.

Not too long into my search, I stumbled across a listing for "high school music teacher" that only required a music degree and the willingness to acquire an "alternate-route" certification. I interviewed and, to my amazement, they hired me. I was terrified.

This was a vo-tech school. There was no music program. The administration was trying to take the school in a new direction, and I had unwittingly become part of this effort. I was put in the recently closed masonry shop with an electronic keyboard, a drum set, a boom box, and almost no guidance. I was brought in halfway through the school year and immediately confronted with kids who had no reason to take me seriously. I woke up every morning and thought about quitting but decided to put it off. This was one of the few instances in my life where procrastination worked in my favor. At the same time, I was still playing gigs several nights a week. The combination of teaching during the day and gigging at night was exhausting.

My administration didn't appear to have any vision for what their newly-hired music teacher should do or what a music program should look like. I took this as an opportunity to identify interested kids and create a jazz-based ensemble that worked from combo charts, a small chorus that sang pop tunes, and a beginning guitar class. I have never sung in a chorus, and I've never had a guitar lesson in my life. I was faking it every day. Imposter syndrome was a constant companion.

Somehow, miraculously, the school district kept renewing my employment contract. At three years and one day, I earned tenure. Enrollment in band and chorus grew. The guitar class added sections. The school made renovations and built a music suite. The musical quality coming out of those ensembles kept improving. I kept learning more about how to teach—some by trial and error, some by observing colleagues, some by research. I kept playing gigs the whole time and bringing the

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experience from the bandstand into my teaching, especially about how to conduct oneself professionally. I began endorsing the most talented and ambitious students for county, regional, and state band/orchestra/chorus, even though our school never had an orchestra.

Outside the school day, I developed a slate of informal music opportunities—coffeehouses and benefit concerts loosely organized around a pop/rock format where I took less of a "teacher" role and became more of a "coach." Also, with the help of colleagues, I'd put on a yearly Broadway revue where I played bass and hired ringers on piano and drums. Along the way, I also became a dad. My son is now an engineering major in college who loves playing trumpet in the marching band and pep band and sometimes sends us little videos from his practice sessions.

I worked at that school, in a capacity I had never imagined I'd find myself, for seventeen-and-a-half years. The beginning of the end for me at that campus was my enrollment in a Master's in Education program. My district offers pretty good tuition reimbursement, and an advanced degree meant I could earn a better salary. While the money was my initial motivation, I got in touch with my own philosophy and opinions about music education in the process.

A few things became very clear as I chose the topic for my Master's thesis and began to formulate my research question. I had been troubled for years ever since my band and chorus got popular enough that I had to institute auditions to limit enrollment. I remembered my mother being told, as a young girl, that she just didn't have the aptitude for music. How many lives are completely changed for the worse in moments like that? I didn't want to keep being part of a system that selects some kids and excludes others from music.

I realized that high schools in general don't provide enough music opportunities for beginners. If you didn't start an instrument in elementary or middle

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school, high school is usually too late to begin. My beginning guitar classes were providing an avenue for students to have a second chance at school music, and maybe the world needed more of that.

After researching and writing my Master's thesis on "late beginners" in school music, which crystallized my convictions as an educator, my current job felt more uncomfortable than ever. I went to the district's assistant superintendent, who long ago had been the principal who hired me and told her I wanted to bring music to two high school campuses in the district that currently had no program.

In a second professional miracle, she put her support behind my proposal. My old campus got a new music teacher to take over my program as I moved into a new professional phase—music education with a non-exclusionary ethic, focusing on beginners. The new job, where I teach at one school in the mornings and another in the afternoons, aligns with my values much better. I teach beginning guitar at one campus and a dual-articulated college course in world music at the other. I still do informal pop/rock ensemble coaching after school, but on a much smaller scale and a strictly non-exclusionary basis.

It's now nearly 21 years into my career as a music teacher. It seems fitting that I write this on a day off when some of my colleagues are at professional development conferences. Tonight, tomorrow night, and the following night, I am playing gigs—four-hour continuous contracts on bass. I still enjoy it, the money is good, and I am treated well. I'll keep gigging as long as bandleaders will have me.

Teaching is another story. While playing music seems to have gotten so easy I could do it in my sleep (at least the gigs I usually play), teaching has never been easy. Maybe more predictable, but never easy. It's a demanding job with a lot of responsibility and challenges every day. We used to be treated better. When I was hired, I paid 1.5% of my gross pay into a health insurance plan which covered my

family. Now I pay upwards of $11k a year to keep my family insured. Further, my state's commitment to pension funding does not inspire confidence. Meanwhile, compensation has not kept pace with inflation. Even with my Master's degree, I make less now than I did in 2005 when adjusted for inflation. All of this while the job piles on more paperwork, more standardized testing, and more scrutiny from people who have never set foot in a classroom and don't understand the work we do.

I hate to say it, but I'm tired. I'm looking forward to retiring from teaching in just a few more years. As meaningful as the job is, and for as much as it has taught and enriched me, it was a long side trip in my professional journey. It was not the original plan. In another universe, I might have never met my wife, kept playing full-time, and gone on to a higher professional orbit as a player. I've watched a lot of my musician friends and colleagues do that over the years, and I have to admit, it looks fun! I don't regret my choices though. Besides being a dad to an incredible son (with my teaching career giving me the flexibility to make that possible), I'm happy to know I've made a difference, done meaningful work, and helped people.

Finn's Story

Researcher's note – I knew of Finn before I ever met him. We had a number of mutual friends on social media and in the musical world, and one of us friended the other; I really can't remember who initiated. When looking for presenters at the 2022 APME conference in Detroit, I reached out to Finn to see if he might be interested in presenting, and he wholeheartedly accepted the invitation, allowing us to finally connect in real life at the conference.

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So how did I go about becoming a professional musician? What was that journey like? I didn't think I would ever be a professional musician or anything like

that. In fact, I really love science and English, but eventually fell in love with music. I was very lucky to grow up in Memphis, TN, and to go to Ridgeway Elementary School. The school, at the time, had a general music course, and the class was all about learning some basic fundamentals of music and getting young people exposed to music. I learned on the recorder, the xylophone, some hand percussion, and we also did some singing. We also learned how to read music in treble and bass clef to read the recorder music as well as solfege. The course was taught by one teacher, Ms. Bledsoe.

In junior high, I went to another school that combined 7th grade through 12th grade, Ridgeway Junior-Senior High, which was just down the hill on the same campus as my elementary school. One of the reasons I joined the band was because my older cousin was in the high school band. Another reason was, when I was in elementary school, the middle and high school orchestra and band came down to do a demonstration so they could entice people to join the music programs. I remember the orchestra played "Star Wars," but it was all strings. At the time, I hadn't seen *Star Wars* yet, so it probably just didn't hit as hard. But the band played "Lion King" and, mentally, that hit very hard, and so I knew it was time to join the band.

When I joined the junior high band, the director, Mr. Sullivan, told us we had to pick our top three instruments, so I chose clarinet, trumpet, and percussion. Those were my three picks, but when Mr. Sullivan asked us to raise our hands to choose an instrument, he saw that I had pretty long arms. He just looked at me, pointed, and said, "You're going to play trombone." Since I had that general music background, I already knew how to read music, so I kind of had a leg up, and I excelled pretty quickly, I got first chair pretty quickly. Looking back, I was very happy that we didn't have a marching band, thank God! I often wonder if I would've stuck with music had we had a marching band. I did marching band in college, but

really only enjoyed it for the hang . . . not really the actual experience of marching band.

In high school, I had a new band director, Mr. Frigo. Ridgeway High School had a very robust music program. We had multiple choirs, advanced chamber, men's and women's choirs. We had AP Music Theory, and we also had a jazz band class, beginner, intermediate, and honor band, beginner, intermediate, and advanced orchestra. We also had a spring musical with a full pit orchestra made up of pros and students. It was an award-winning program . . . kind of insane looking back at it! I was playing trombone in the jazz band, and I also started playing euphonium in the concert band, which was great down the line because I knew trumpet/euphonium fingerings. I also played trombone with the orchestra periodically. On some of their concerts they would do a full orchestra thing, but for the most part, it was a string orchestra. That was a valuable experience. We played a lot of music, I mean, a lot of different kinds of music. We were playing top grade level music, and I enjoyed it a lot.

In the jazz band class, I was also around some monsters, and I didn't even know it. I was playing with an electric bass player named Brandon. He ended up playing with the Jacksons and the American Idol band. One day, I came into class, and he was playing the Charlie Parker standard "Donna Lee," and it was the first time I heard that tune. He was playing the Jaco Pastorius version—that was huge. I'm just old enough to remember going to Borders and to the record store to buy CDs, and I got a Jaco Pastorius album. That was one of my first jazz albums. And so, my earliest loves of music beyond popular music and things like that was jazz fusion, which, as a trombone player, what a terrible choice, right? I was not able to play most of the music that I loved, but I loved it nonetheless, and it got me hooked on music. One sort of behind-the-scenes thing is that my parents were TV junkies, and

they had the full cable TV package that included these music channels that all had their own genre—Afro-Cuban, disco, 70s, 80s, country, adult, alternative pop, current pop, rap, classic hip-hop, jazz, classical, new classical—and listening to those on a daily basis really opened up my ears a lot. Listening to all this music made me hungry to find and listen to even more music.

I wasn't taking lessons at the time, though, and that's important down the line. Early on, I didn't think of myself as just a trombone player. I was a musician. I also took AP Music Theory, and I joined the choir my senior year. Getting that experience was huge! It really brought in what it meant to be a musician. In all honesty, choir was kind of more fun, and perhaps it's just because I had been doing bands since 7th grade. By the time I was in choir, it was just something new, something different, and I loved choir. I also lucked out and got to perform in our Broadway pit a few times. We did *Les Mis*, and I got to meet some of the local pros and sit next to them on the gig. Our band director did this really cool thing where he would hire professional musicians and then augment the pit orchestra with our students. So, I got a lot of first-hand experience sitting next to professional musicians who I still play with today.

During my senior year, I auditioned for the musical and had a spoken role, a named role: I was Father Baptiste in *Kiss Me, Kate*. That was a great experience! Suddenly, I'm dancing and singing and acting and all that stuff, and it was just a huge experience. And also, I started getting into Broadway because every kid that does theater and enjoys it, you go through a Broadway phase. So right after high school I actually did *West Side Story* as an unnamed Shark at Harold Community Theater.

I had a lot of different directions I could go with music. After graduation, it was either going to be engineering or music, and I ended up going with music. I got

accepted into a few colleges, Northwestern, Cincinnati, Florida State, and University of Memphis. Ultimately, I went with U of M. Looking back, it spoke to the power of recruiting of the local college. They gave me an academic scholarship, and I was just very familiar with the school. I knew some of the music faculty since I had worked with them on a few things in high school. And so, I think comfort trumped adventure, and I went with the University of Memphis. I wish I hadn't now because . . . my experience at U of M wasn't terrible, but now that I've traveled more and understand how beneficial traveling is and getting out of your comfort zone can be, I do wish I went somewhere else. I ended up living at home to save money and, like I said, I think it would have been a really great experience to go somewhere else.

So, I go to the University of Memphis, and it turns out my playing fundamentals suck. They were like, "Oh wow, you're such a great musician, but you don't have your fundamentals together." So, I was not placed in any ensemble except for marching band. It was a huge blow to my ego to go from being first chair in all my high school ensembles to zero chair. I was feeling pretty dejected, and I just really needed to play. So, I said, "OK, that's fine," and I joined the second jazz band. And then I began asking around if there were any other ensembles I could join, and they said, "OK, you can be in the symphonic band on euphonium." I was like, "Cool! Great!" I just needed something.

Eventually, I just worked my way from the bottom to the top and, by the time I graduated, I was in all the top ensembles, first chair in most of them, and gained a wide range of experience from that. I ended up playing in the trombone choir, brass quartets, brass quintets, the marching band, I was the drum major, I was in the second jazz band, the first jazz band, and jazz combo. I was in every kind of ensemble that had a trombone, and it was amazing! I also really got into classical music and avant-garde jazz, kept following the fusion thing, and got into more

modern jazz. I liked Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers and Miles Davis a little bit, but that was really the only classic jazz I was listening to at the time. I did become very obsessed with looking for and finding new music. That's always been a thing. I also took every single music theory that was available. So, we're talking about four levels of aural theory, four levels of written theory, three levels of jazz theory, three levels of jazz improv, orchestral excerpts, I mean, I just took it all.

A major turning point was when I went to the University of North Texas for a trumpet/trombone camp my sophomore year. It was the time where I was like, "Oh, wait a minute, you *can* learn fundamentals via jazz." And it was really great. I mean, it was awesome! And that was where I started to learn how to practice on my own without a lot of self-direction. That was really the turning point, and when I came back for my junior and senior years, I was at the top of a lot of ensembles. I was also surrounded by some great graduate students who now all teach at major universities or joined military bands. Those people really, really helped me out, too.

One thing that I regret is that the University of Memphis did not, at the time, let any brass players major in jazz. It was a school where, in retrospect, none of the brass faculty were jazz musicians, except for maybe the trumpet professor. But even then, he was more oriented towards classical music. And this is the only negative thing I'll say, I think that's a big mistake. You *can* learn the fundamentals via jazz, but these people just didn't do that.

Around that time, the bass teacher at the university, who played in a pro Afro-Cuban band, invited me to join the band. The band followed the sort of Willie Colon style where it's two trombones, one saxophone, timbales, conguero, and then some vocals. In that band there was a lot of sight reading, and it was a brand new style of music to me. I think I was about 19 or 20 at the time, and that was my earliest professional experience. Around that same time, I started playing at St.

Timothy's Episcopalian, and that was my first regular church gig. I played

euphonium, got to sing in the choir, and also do these sort of descant things on

euphonium with another trumpet player. Then, and probably one of the more

formative things I experienced, I ended up playing at this local barhouse-club thing

called Molly Fontaines with a phenomenal singer named Brennan Villines. He played

piano and sang lot of pop songs with a band that was an electric bass, a drummer,

and then me on trombone. Really, we were just improvising around what he was

doing—some crazy jazz excursions, and also just some standard tunes like Elton

John, Rufus Wainwright . . . standard stuff, but we were making it our own.

Then I got my Master's degree at the Manhattan School of Music, but looking

back now, I shouldn't have. I wasn't ready for that, and even now I'm still working

on absorbing everything I learned. Although I love New York City and I'm grateful for

the experience and hearing so much jazz there, going to Manhattan School of Music

wasn't the best decision. But hey, I was what, 21 at the time, and I had no idea

what I was doing! I was decent at ensemble playing, but when it came to being a

jazz musician, I was one of the worst in the school. But I was in the world-famous

Afro Cuban ensemble, and I was in the top jazz band, mainly because I could read

and play the charts. And the people were good, and the encouragement I received

gave me a lifetime of things to work on. Also, I never really composed before and,

suddenly, I was having to compose two or three things a week. Whether it was an

exercise, patterns, a combo tune, small ensemble thing, there was lots of

composing, and it was high pressure. I was astounded by the level of my classmates,

and I didn't even realize, at the time, the caliber of people I was around. I didn't

really play a lot professionally in New York. I played a little bit, but not really a lot.

We're talking two or three gigs a month, because I just wasn't ready. I wasn't there.

But it was great as far as, like, life. I heard so much jazz. New York was my favorite city in the world . . . is *still* my favorite city in the world.

I also had my first experience playing brass band music around this time. I volunteered at a homeless shelter in the Lower East Side, and there was this Serbian drummer who asked, "Hey, do you want to come down and play in the band?" I did, and it was my earliest experience in playing brass band music. So formative in retrospect. Unfortunately, this was also when my first struggles with bipolar disorder began. I didn't realize it at the time, but it was going to be a challenge, a long-term challenge. Dealing with bipolar disorder, suddenly developing an alcohol addiction, having all sorts of suicidal thoughts, and being in this incredibly stressful environment was incredibly difficult, but I did graduate on time, and I made a lot of good friends at MSM. In addition to just not being ready for graduate school at conservatory, I also feel like I really did not maximize my time there because I was dealing with these undiagnosed mental health issues. But hey, I dealt with it, and hindsight is 20/20.

After I graduated, I moved back to Memphis, and even though I had all these issues, I was a big fish in a little pond. I just went to this major conservatory, and I had a lot of skills that a lot of people, especially on trombone, did not have. Very quickly, within the first year back, I was playing three to five gigs a weekend, every weekend, sometimes seven gigs in one week. There definitely weren't a lot of horn players in the popular or rock groups in the scene, so I filled that void. I sat in with everybody. I would go out every night and just sit in. Spoiler alert, thinking about bipolar disorder, maybe it wasn't a great idea to forgo sleep and hang out in bars all the time.

So, I ended up playing with something like eight to thirteen bands at that time. I made a name for myself very, very quickly for being entertaining on stage

and also being able to just kind of fit in with whatever group. I'm lucky that I had the university of the streets, you know, just playing gigs and sitting in. But also, I had this really great formal education, too. So, my life is kind of a combination of both, and I think they're both equally important.

Around this time, I started teaching at STAX Music Academy.[16] That really improved my arranging chops because now I'm having to write out all these soul songs, some rock songs, some David Bowie, some Queen, some Rolling Stones, Kendrick Lamar. Translating songs that didn't feature live instruments *to* live instruments greatly improved my arranging chops. I was listening to music much more deeply because I had to know the bass part, the guitar part, the piano part, the drum part, all this stuff. It's funny, although people know me as a trombone player, the thing I've taught the least in my entire career is the trombone. It was all guitar, bass, piano, drums, saxophones, and maybe a trumpet and trombone here and there. STAX Music Academy was great in that regard because teaching music makes you understand it in a deeper way. I learned a lot about this home style of soul music. I grew up in the 90s and 2000s and, like a lot of kids, I didn't want to listen to the music my parents did. Maybe I did passively since it was on all the time . . . when I was riding in the car with them, they played it on their radio stations. But now I was actually gaining a deeper appreciation for the music. And I will say that knowing the *context* of the music improved my musicianship.

During all this time, there's sort of a behind-the-scenes thing happening whereas I'm getting better and better as a musician, but I'm also getting worse and

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[16] Located on the site of the former STAX Records (the label that birthed the Southern Soul era of the 1960s featuring Otis Redding, The Staple Singers, Rufus Thomas, and Booker T and the MGs, among many others), the STAX Music Academy is the after-school program of the Soulsville Charter School.

worse mentally. Even though my career was going up, I had a nasty alcohol addiction. My bipolar disorder was going untreated, and from around the age of 27, I was really starting to burn bridges. Just showing up wasted, sleeping through gigs . . . not often, but enough. Eventually. I was either let go or asked to leave or was told, "Hey, we really think you should go to rehab, and you should just take that time." And suddenly, at the age of 27, I had to go to a treatment facility. It was the first time in a long time where I wasn't playing music. I didn't play music for about a year. I had to get my life back together, and so I quit drinking just to get a handle on bipolar disorder, and I entered a treatment facility, a mental health facility. When I came out, I did not play music. I didn't even want to go out and see live music. I was just so . . . so embarrassed. I'm really thankful to say that once I proved that I had my shit together, I was able to rejoin almost every band and rebuild almost every contact that I lost, which was just really powerful. I'm really grateful for that. And that was kind of the comeback for me.

And then my gig life ended up getting right back to where it was and rose to a lot of different heights. I was very lucky that I had friends and colleagues of every age, and I was back to playing a lot of gigs. After doing a lot of playing as a sideman for all sorts of music, I called six of my dearest friends and started a band called the Lucky 7 Brass Band. All of us had freelance careers playing with everybody, so we were able to get in the door sight unseen because people knew our names. I think being a band leader is a whole nother level of engagement, and I definitely have found that staying motivated and positive about music is actually a little more challenging when you're a band leader because you're dealing with a lot of behind-the-scenes issues; there's a lot more stress involved. It's been a lot, but I'm ultimately happy, and I'm feeling really good. As far as how it went from there to this . . . just a little bit of luck, right time, right place. And I think that all the skills

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and all the experiences, even the bullshit experiences, ultimately have added a vibe to my playing and have made me a better musician, a better teacher, and more humble and better person.

CHAPTER 5

A NARRATIVE MIXTAPE

The subtitle of this document is *A Narrative Mixtape*. What is a mixtape, and what does a mixtape have to do with these narratives? Stock (2010) defines a mixtape as a cassette tape containing a "conglomeration of songs compiled by a single individual" (p. 283). Rabakah (2013) adds that the songs comprising a mixtape "could be a deeply contemplated conceptual mix of a wide range of songs . . . that are lyrically linked by a specific motif or mood," or they could include a "randomly selected compilation" (p. 22).

In this chapter, I am thinking of the mixtape as a metaphor for the collected lived experiences provided by the professional musician~teachers in this study, with the narratives of the individuals serving as the various tracks found on a mixtape. The modern-day equivalent might be a playlist of songs one might curate via a music streaming service. The mixtape metaphor isn't entirely comprehensive, however; although I am compiling the various tracks with the intent of presenting them in a thematically linked manner, the participants' stories aren't presented in a consecutive manner. Rather, in order to realize the various themes and intersections found in their narratives, I organized various elements and snippets of their accounts, descriptions, retellings, and recollections into pieced-together rearrangements, seeking out the themes and lyrical links that provide connection from one individual to the next, one "track" to the next. Then, I compiled these newly-formed arrangements in a manner that is both true to the intent of the individual and, hopefully, coherent to the reader.

Throughout this chapter, I curate the rearrangements of these professional musician~teachers stories by placing them in a playlist of sequences, themes, and plots to reveal how their experiences on the gig and in the classroom influenced their

approach to teaching in the popular music classroom. By sharing the stories of their

pathways to the teaching and, further, through developing an understanding of how

the complex system of their orientations (e.g., their experiences, knowledges,

beliefs, and practices) impacted—and continues to impact—their teaching practice, I

hope to expand the current knowledge base in music education about how popular

musicians teach when they enter secondary music settings focusing on popular

music.

As I weave in and out of the participants' stories, I aim to engage in a

"textual choreography" (Nichols, 2016, p. 439), which involves balancing their

stories with my responsibilities as a co-researcher. This textual choreography

involves moving back and forth between participants' stories and themes and my

own wonderments and questions while being careful not to disturb the flow of the

stories. Sometimes I have interwoven my wonderments and questions within the

participants' stories. At other times, my wonderments and questions require a slight

pause in the flow. At these moments, and thinking back to the metaphor of a

mixtape, I hit the pause button, signposting these moments with "Pause" in the text.

On this note, and while I share a similar path into teaching and consequently possess

similar characteristics and experiences with the participants in this study, my intent

is to refrain from crowding out the voices I hope to amplify and to avoid

overtheorizing their experiences (Powell, 2020).

Finally, this chapter is not intended to be a point-by-point how-to on

incorporating popular music into music learning spaces. The ideas, notions, and

philosophies contained herein speak to *these* professional musician~teachers'

pedagogical approaches in the classroom, their guiding beliefs about how a music

learning space should be enacted, and how their orientations—molded and shaped in

both in-school and out-of-school settings throughout their lives—have impacted their

teaching practice. To wit, this discussion focuses less on *how* popular musicians teach, but rather delves into how these popular musician~teachers conceptualize their teaching practice and, more deeply, how they interpret their orientations and the ensuing impact these complex systems have on their teaching.

Considering the organization of this mixtape, I preface the journeys of these individuals by first presenting their initial search for stability in the music profession that led them into teaching, followed by a discussion of how these individuals conceptualized their identities as professional musicians *and* teachers. This exploration then delves into the participants' sense of *becoming* by illuminating the breadth and depth of their musical experiences from childhood into college and on into their emerging careers as professional musicians. Next, the focus turns to the participant's entrance into the classroom as new teachers and their efforts to develop their individual teaching styles. Afterward, the attention is placed on the participants' efforts to incorporate their experiences as professional musician~teachers into the learning space, followed by a discussion of ancillary aspects of teaching that, perhaps, the participants weren't quite prepared to negotiate. Finally, the discussion turns to consider some of the tensions these professional teacher~musicians faced as well as their plans for the future.

Falling into Teaching

How does one *become* a teacher? What factors guide the decision process when entering the teaching profession? Each of the participants in this study spent several years as a professional musician, and along the way found that they were growing tired, weary from playing gigs in every type of venue and in every style of music imaginable. Jazz, pop, bars, concert halls, classical, churches, dives, theatres, R&B, wedding gigs, corporate gigs . . . it didn't matter because they were doing *the*

thing they were meant to do. But, in reality, "trying to make it as a musician is hard unless you're in some high-end event company that pays well" (Ashley, November 11, 2022). And honestly, "even if you're doing well, there's still the problem of how do you get decent health coverage? How do you secure financing" and begin to think about purchasing a home? (Dean, August 2, 2022).

It's not that the excitement of being a professional musician had exited stage left; rather, these individuals craved some semblance of stability in their daily lives. In other words, a day gig. Their hope was that a "day gig with a steady paycheck—instead of this hand-to-mouth, waiting for the phone to ring kind of thing" (Dean, September 12, 2022)—might provide something resembling stability. And they wondered, "What kind of day gigs can I do to lock things down a little bit more?" (Dean, August 2, 2022). In search of that "something else," the participants adjusted expectations and definitions of what they thought their life paths might have been and ventured into unchartered waters.

Seeking out stability. Collectively, these individuals didn't specifically intend to take on teaching, but rather teaching seemed to be a mostly painless pivot into stability that "kind of just happened" (Finn, November 18, 2022). But the participants experienced some tensions around this new path: Had they failed as musicians and just needed a day gig to fall back on?

> Oh my gosh, people are gonna judge me, my musician friends. Which is hilarious because almost every musician teaches. But there's still, I think, this stigma in the music community that if they're teaching, it's like, "Oh, they couldn't make [a career as a professional musician]. (Finn, November 18, 2022)

As the participants ventured into teaching, however, they began to feel as though they were "making a difference"—as though they were "tapping into a

different side" of themselves (Finn, November 18, 2022). They were still gigging musicians, trying to find the "cool spot" (Ashley, November 18, 2022)—the balance between gigging and teaching that sometimes became an issue due to schedule conflicts, student/administration expectations, low pay as a teacher, and personal beliefs around education. But slowly, surely, they fell into teaching.

Falling into teaching took different routes for each of the participants. Ashley began transcribing, arranging, and teaching songs to her classmates while still in high school. After graduation, Ashley's former teachers asked her to serve as the vocal coach for the program. After initially being "thrown into it," Ashley eventually fell "in love with the process" of teaching, leading her to go "back to school and get more degrees" (Ashley, October 5, 2022) in an effort to better her teaching. Dean's path into classroom teaching was more a matter of being in the

> . . . right place at the right time. There was a school that needed a warm
>
> body. And I think I think I got the interview just because I showed up and
>
> proved I could fog a mirror. I really think that's all it was. I had a music
>
> performance degree and a pulse. That's it. (August 2, 2022)

Finn's fall into teaching began while pursuing a Master's degree in jazz performance at a well-known conservatory in New York City. At the time, the school offered an education outreach program that sent "anybody that was eligible to teach out into New York City area schools, so I ended up teaching [in the classroom] in Harlem and Washington Heights—which was awesome" (August 10, 2022). For the following two years, Finn taught around ten hours each week, working primarily with elementary and middle school students. After his time in New York, Finn returned to his hometown of Memphis where he initially volunteered to work with a jazz band at a local high school before being sought out and hired as a full-time teacher at the STAX Music Academy and Soulsville Charter School, an integrated in-school/after

school music program on the site of the legendary STAX Records facility in south Memphis. Finn noted that at the time:

> My name was out there as a performer. I had this jazz degree, a classical degree, but then I also had all this pop experience from my freelance career, and so I got hit up by STAX to join their team, and I did. And the very next year, I got contacted by the Memphis Music Initiative to come on as one of their pilot teaching artists, and then from there, the rest is history. (August 10, 2022)

Even though the participants were beginning to engage in the act of teaching in the context of school classrooms, they didn't necessarily view themselves as teachers, at least not at first. Ashley commented, "I never saw myself as a teacher. Everyone else saw it, but I didn't. So, people kept throwing me into these roles, and I just kind of kept doing it" (Ashley, October 5, 2022). This thread of "just keep doing it" runs throughout these individuals' stories. During the first few years of his teaching career, Dean recalled waking up every morning and thinking, "You know, I don't know if I'm going to stick it out. I might just quit. I might just quit today" (November 18, 2022). After a number of years, however, each of the participants landed in slightly different places regarding how they characterized their career paths, how they felt about teaching, whether or not teaching is or was the stable day gig they hoped it would be and, ultimately, how they perceived themselves as they became professional musician~teachers.

The Weight of Identity

In a keynote speech at the Music Education Technology conference, National Association for Music Education President Mackie Spradley (2020) noted:

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If someone asks you, "Who are you?" do you say, "I am the music educator from blah blah blah blah blah?" Do you say, "I'm a choral director," "I'm a band director," [or] "I'm an orchestra director?" How do you answer that question? How do you envision yourself? How do you see yourself? That's critical because how you see yourself is the way that you teach.

Throughout this inquiry, I came to understand that each of the individuals in this study views themselves through a both/and lens. That is, they are practicing professional musicians, *and* they are practicing professional educators. And while they view themselves through this both/and lens, they also consider themselves as somewhat of an oddity. When asked during a group conversation why they thought they had been invited to be part of this project, Ashley immediately responded, "I think because we're weird, probably?" (November 18, 2022). The feeling was mutual; we all nodded in agreement while laughing, perhaps somewhat nervously and knowingly. Finn captured the moment, responding, "Yeah, being a music teacher while also performing is just kind of a kookie lifestyle" (November 18, 2022). Once they moved into the classroom, how did these individuals come to characterize themselves as both professional musicians *and* teachers? And further, when and how did this this identity struggle reveal itself?

I never thought of myself as a teacher. How these participants perceive themselves—both in the past and the present—as professional musicians, as teachers, and as intertwined professional musician~teachers carries a weight, a tension that bleeds into multiple areas of their personal and professional lives. Dean pithily stated, "I'm a bass player who somehow accidentally became a high school teacher for 21 years" (November 18, 2022). Ashley, who had been teaching for over a decade at the time of this study, expressed this identity tension when stating:

It took a long time for me to make that switch [to thinking of myself as a teacher] and it's not until recently that I really considered that. It's a really interesting thing, how you identify and see yourself. It was *(pauses)* I never thought of myself as a teacher. That was never part of my thing until probably two or three years ago. Then I really embraced it. Because I fell into it, it wasn't, "I'm going to teach. This is my big dream." I just kind of was doing it. I didn't identify with it. . . I always felt weird saying, "I'm a teacher." (August 24, 2022)

Similar to Dean's self-identification as a bassist and a teacher, when asked about her profession earlier in her career, Ashley recalled she would have noted, "I'm a vocalist, *and* I work at a high school." Ashley expressed an expansion of her identity when noting, "because I fell into [teaching], it was hard for me to make that switch, I think, and now I identify with [teaching] almost more so than performing" (August 24, 2022). Later in this project, Ashley suggested that she viewed her teaching self more as a mentor and a "partner in learning, let's work on this together" (October 4, 2022).

Dean addressed the endpoint of his identity struggle when saying, "The teaching bug eventually got me, you know, it eventually got me" (November 18, 2022). Dean recalled going to the doctor's office and being given paperwork that included a line for "occupation." Dean stated, "It's been a long time now where it's very comfortable for me to just put 'teacher,' just 'teacher.' It was maybe a few years after [getting the job] that I started thinking of myself as a teacher" (November 18, 2022). Ashley conceded she "can't really put teacher yet" in the occupation line as she doesn't "know what I am, I really don't. I still live in that grey area of 'I don't know'" (November 18, 2022). The "identity crisis as a musician, because of the various gigs you end up doing," (November 18, 2022) and the

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multiple pivots from musician to arranger to songwriter to studio musician to private lesson instructor to touring musician to educator and back again troubled (and continue to trouble) Ashley in different ways and at different times. Speaking about this struggle, Ashley admitted:

> I'm really having a hard time thinking that I might have to flip [performing and teaching], that teaching will be first, and gigging will be second. And I'm struggling with that, going, "Oh, am I ready to give up the gig life a little bit more?" because you naturally, as a teacher, you do end up having to make some sacrifices, especially if you have performance groups. So that's something I'm *(pauses)* yeah, just finding, what *(pauses)* who I want to be as a musician/teacher. How they intersect can be tough, at least for me. (November 18, 2022)

In a string of memories that hit home during a group conversation, Finn recalled that in college he "definitely did not identify as a teacher" (November 18, 2022), as his chosen career path was not into education but performance. Finn plainly stated, "I was a trombone player" (August 10, 2022). Thinking back to the climate at his college, Finn remembered:

> Looking at music ed majors now, then, they clearly knew. I remember talking to my friends, and they were like, "Yeah, I'm going to college to become a music teacher." They identified as music teachers. It was the whole deal the whole time. And that was just not my case. (November 18, 2022)

Identity evolved differently for Finn, who noted that shortly after he began working at STAX, he began learning more about Eric Booth's concept of the teaching artist:

> When [Booth] started talking about what being a teaching artist really just means, it's not that you're a teacher who does art a little bit or an artist who

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does some teaching to get by, but it's one identity that really should feed each other. (November 18, 2022)

Shortly after that Finn realized, "Oh no, I'm a teaching artist! It was Eric Booth who really started talking about how it's not an either/or, it's a together. And so, I think I'll always identify as a teaching artist" (October 27, 2022).

Around the time Finn began to think of himself as a teaching artist, he also began to wrestle with his performance identity as not "just" a trombone player but as a musician skilled in any number of areas, allowing them to think about "music in a much broader sense than just the instrument" (November 18, 2022). This adjustment led Finn down a path he had no intention of following—working with young students in a school setting. "And it wasn't until recently that I actually fell in love with it. I think I felt like this is what I need to be doing" (October 5, 2022). Finn suggested during a group conversation that this both/and understanding of being a professional musician and a teacher—this togetherness—allows each identity to complement the other in a sort of symbiotic relationship. After hearing this, both Dean and Ashley nodded their heads in agreement. But even here, and throughout our individual and collective discussions, all three participants began to reveal additional tensions and struggles that would eventually alter their paths in ways that were, perhaps, unexpected by us all.

Hit the pause button. How did the participants—how do any of us—get to a point where we can definitively state, or at the very least feel comfortable and/or confident with, our identity? Who we are as musicians, as people? Thinking back to the research questions for this study, how do our orientations (i.e., the impact and influence of our accumulated experiences, knowledges, beliefs, and practices) lead to the construction of identity (or, at the very least, impact and influence one's identity) and, for the purposes of this study, how do the various facets of an orientation

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reveal themselves in the classroom? Exploring the totality of these individuals' biographical pasts—including experiences related to music and music learning in K–12 and higher education settings, both in- and out-of-school and into their career as professional musicians as well as experiences that lie outside music—might shed some light on these questions, further illuminating the participant's varied foundations in music and, ultimately, how these experiences influenced their lives as musicians and, perhaps, their teaching.

Early childhood and elementary experiences. All three participants took part in their school music programs at their respective schools to varying degrees. Additionally, they all grew up in what could be described as musical households. Music was present by way of listening to music on the radio, participating in private lessons as young children, and interestingly, in the case of Ashley, having parents who were well-known professional musicians. These early experiences in and with music and other facets of the participants' biographical pasts offer additional insight into their paths from young musician to professional musician to teacher. In order to better understand how the backgrounds of the three participants impacted their teaching practice (and when and how they leaned on these various facets of experience), this section of the mixtape focuses on the totality of their experiences in and with music, starting with their earliest musical memories.

Although all three participants engaged with music at an early age, Ashley had an especially musically rich upbringing given her parents' professions and status in the music industry. Ashley's parents wrote and performed music at their home, and a number of well-known musicians often visited Ashley's childhood home. Due in part to this extraordinary situation, Ashley had the opportunity to sing "professionally" at a "really young age" (August 24, 2022). When pressed for details Ashley replied:

Oh, like five or six. I would sing Christmas songs and stuff with [my father's] big band, and they'd have me up and sing "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," and Dad would throw in a big band chart and would have me up there and sing it. So yeah, very young. (August 24, 2022)

These early experiences were coupled with Ashley's participation in elementary music classes, an experience she recalled "really enjoying!" (November 7, 2022).

Similarly, Finn noted that he benefited from a "pretty robust pre-college [music] education" when remembering:

I didn't realize it at the time, but as early as kindergarten and maybe through 3rd or 4th grade, I had a general music class where we did the recorder, xylophone, things like that. I didn't understand how much of a gift that was at the time. But I kind of had, at least, a teaser on how to read music all the way back in early elementary school. (August 10, 2022)

As for Dean, at the age of six he began taking private piano lessons with a local instructor, focusing on standard repertoire, notation, scales, and arpeggios. Shortly after taking up the piano, and upon entering the 4th grade, Dean began playing alto saxophone in the elementary school band. He recalled that around the same time his father bought home a record player and "borrowed an armful of random albums from the local library—just stuff he thought maybe I'd like" (November 10, 2022). Dean began listening to the various albums, focusing on some songs and attempting to reconcile what he was hearing with the notes on the piano.

Middle and high school experiences. These early experiences continued for all three individuals through middle school. Interestingly, their paths began to both expand and diverge slightly when considering the type of experiences encountered and where they took place, i.e., in an in-school or out-of-school setting. Dean continued to take private piano lessons and play the saxophone in his school's

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concert band. Dean also recalled putting his first band together around the age of twelve. The band became the catalyst for learning guitar after the guitar player for the band left their instrument at Dean's home. Dean remembered:

> The guy I enlisted to play guitar knew, like, two chords, and [he] would leave his guitar at my house. So, I picked it up with the Mel Bay book and figured out, "OK, so the notes here are EADGBE, and each of these frets is a step, and I know what that means. So that means if I alter this pitch by putting my finger here, this pitch by putting [my finger] here, then I make an E major chord because I've got nothing but E's, B's, and G#'s. *(vocalizes strumming the guitar)* Oh wow, that sounds awesome!" (October 17, 2022)

Shortly thereafter, Dean announced that he was the new guitar player for the band. Dean described himself as a "tyrannical leader who wrote all the music and taught it by rote to the others" (November 10, 2022). Dean purchased his first guitar—a Les Paul copy—and soon began "working out all my Jimmy Page licks" (November 10, 2022).

Ashley recalled that she "truly realized my passion for music" during her middle school music experience (November 7, 2022). But this passion was almost nipped in the bud during a brief series of encounters with a private vocal teacher. Although Ashley had no desire to focus on show tunes, her instructor insisted on emphasizing musical theatre repertoire, including learning monologues. Ashley recalled:

> I didn't want to do that. She gave me a monologue to read, and I didn't know anything about monologue. She basically told me I sounded terrible, and I was like, "Oh, I didn't know!" So, I didn't take voice lessons very long in middle school because I didn't like the teacher. I did a few show tunes and that was enough. (August 24, 2022)

Fortunately, this bad experience didn't deter Ashley from continuing with music. Shortly thereafter, she auditioned for and was accepted into her middle school's show choir. Ashley remembered:

> It was in the show choir that I really learned how to be a leader. My teacher trusted me. She would ask me to be section leader for parts that weren't even mine. I learned a lot about singing harmony parts, how to learn music, and just being part of a group. And that's when I realized how much I loved being a part of a performance group! At that time, I also joined a local children's choir, which was an advanced children's chorus. (August 24, 2022)

Finn entered his middle school's band program in the seventh grade, choosing to play (or, realistically, being told he would play[17]) the trombone. In high school, Finn continued playing trombone while also picking up euphonium and, in his junior year, enrolled in both the jazz band and an Advanced Placement Music Theory course. Expanding on these courses during his senior year, Finn joined the choir and also participated in the school's musical theatre program.

Energized by the formation of his first band, Dean picked up the bass when he was around sixteen years old and quickly realized that the "minute [other musicians] find out you even own a bass, you get asked to be in everybody's band. So, it was instant, [with] plenty of opportunities to play. I ended up becoming everybody's bass player overnight" (August 2, 2022). Dean continued pursuing the saxophone, the guitar, and the bass both in and out of school. While playing saxophone in his high school concert band, he also earned the guitar chair in his high school's jazz band, later switching to the bass chair. Dean also began delving into

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[17] See Finn's portrait in Chapter 4 for an in-depth, somewhat humorous re-telling of how he "chose" the trombone.

music technology and recording after he acquired "a couple of Radio Shack tape decks" (August 2, 2022). Dean then began "doing sound on sound recordings of my own stuff, putting together my little bands, and teaching the neighbor kids how to play my stuff and dragging them to gigs and whatnot " (August 2, 2022).

In what might be described as a compilation of Finn and Dean's experiences, Ashley participated in an innovative high school music program focused solely on popular music. The program concentrated on individual musicians and/or bands, and young musicians spent their rehearsal time learning songs note-for-note as they prepared for a rather elaborate stage show consisting of extensive lighting, choreography, and multiple bands performing on the same bill. During Ashley's time as a student in the program, the director hired and then subsequently released a vocal coach. Ashley recalled some of the tensions experienced with the vocal coach:

> I couldn't quite see the skills to back up what [the vocal coach] said. And for me, that is a huge part of education where I think *(pauses)* it's really important that you are able to back up what you say with what you can do. And I don't think that's always the case. And I think this is one of the situations where she's trying to teach harmony parts that weren't quite right, and I was looking at it going, "I don't know if I agree with that." (October 4, 2022)

After the somewhat abrupt departure of the vocal coach, the program's director enlisted Ashley as a young-yet-seasoned vocalist, and she effectively took over as the program's vocal coach, a position she held from the time she was a senior in high school until present day.

Pause. Although all three individuals participated in their elementary and secondary school music programs—and in the cases of Dean and Ashley, coupled with out-of-school music making—each had a different blend of experiences ranging

from somewhat traditional, ensemble-based, school-based school groups to a popular music-focused program to forming their own groups outside of school. Thinking back (forward?) to the intent of this exploration, how might the experiences of the participants converge with, diverge from, and contribute to their individual orientations toward education and teaching? Where and how did these paths progress from high school graduation into college and on to the world of gigging? Further, when and how did teaching become a (more significant) part of these developing orientations?

College experiences. For the individuals in this study, college served as an extension of the pathways that, perhaps unknowingly, they had begun exploring during their earlier years participating in both in-school and out-of-school music. Although there are often more opportunities to perform music in college towns, and while the music scenes and networks found in these areas often offer an "in" for collegiate musicians, the participants related that it can be challenging to balance the responsibilities of the student musician~young music professional due to university course load, low gig pay, long hours, school commitments, and any number of barriers that exist. Due, in part, to these environments and barriers, their journeys as college musicians and emerging professional musicians often overlapped, creating an environment ripe with abundant opportunities, false starts, and varied perspectives of the university music experience.

Finn entered college to pursue a degree in music with the intent of being a performing professional musician. He took the required coursework to be a music performance major as well as additional theory, improvisation, and performance electives to experience all that his college of music had to offer, often leading to an overload of coursework. In terms of his playing, Finn quickly learned that his

trombone technique was lacking, to the point of being offered admission into only

one ensemble—the university's number two jazz band. Finn recalled:

> What it was, they told me *(pauses)* "You can hear the vibe, you can hear the
>
> musicality," but unfortunately, because of the technical issues I had, I wasn't
>
> able to execute. My technical issues were getting in the way of my ability to
>
> express myself . . . which is hard to hear at age 18, age 17. (October 27,
>
> 2022)

Not one to be easily discouraged, Finn approached other ensemble directors, asking

if he might be able to join in an effort to improve his technique and prove his worth

as a musician. Based on this early effort, Finn was, over time, invited to join several

other ensembles, broadening his notion of what music is and who a musician can be.

Finn recalled:

> If I could be in [the ensemble], I was placed in it. So, I ended up doing brass
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> quintet, jazz combos, and a popular music ensemble. I also played in a
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> symphonic orchestra, played in a wind ensemble, played in a big band,
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> playing solo repertoire, played in a trombone ensemble. So yeah, like
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> everything in college. (August 10, 2022)

That said, a point of tension arose when Finn decided to declare his major as

jazz performance, but because "most of the brass faculty didn't play jazz or at least

that wasn't their main thing" (August 10, 2022), Finn was compelled by the faculty

to major in classical trombone performance. Finn suggested this was one of the

shortcomings of his undergraduate experience and a large reason why he chose to

enroll in courses and ensembles beyond the requirements for his major.

While still a freshman in college, Finn was already being noticed on the local

scene, as the connections between the university/local music scene were quite

robust in Memphis. Having gone to high school in the same city where he attended

college, Finn was already familiar with several of the university faculty members due to his involvement in local honor bands. Finn related that soon after his arrival on campus

> . . . one of the teachers asked if I wanted to join a salsa band. So, my freshman year of college, I joined a [professional] salsa band. It was two trombones and sax, and that was amazing! That was with a faculty member and then some other older pros on the scene. (August 10, 2022)

Finn also recalled the "jam sessions put on by one of the older college undergrads" as a great training ground for all involved. Additionally, while in college, Finn took advantage of performing with a local big band comprised of local professionals and students by "going down there all the time" (August 10, 2022) to sit in with the band. Finn counted other opportunities during his time as an undergraduate, including performing with a local artist where they "would stretch the songs, kind of almost Robert Glasper style" (August 10, 2022), as vital to his musical growth.

After attaining his undergraduate degree in Memphis, Finn attended a well-known music conservatory in New York City. Finn recalled this experience as being "pretty disconnected" from his time in Memphis insofar as he transitioned from being a college undergraduate who was also performing professionally to being a graduate student who rarely performed. Finn recalled:

> I didn't do pretty much any of the [professional gigs] that I did when I was in Memphis. It was actually really, really interesting in that regard. So, once I got to New York, it was all jazz, just like "super jazz" all the time at one of THE jazz schools! So, of all the jazz nerds, these are like the super jazz nerds. (August 10, 2022)

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Although Ashley was encouraged to attend a local university with a renowned popular music program, she instead chose to attend the local community college, initially declaring a vocal music performance major. She enrolled in the conventional music theory and performances courses while also taking private vocal lessons and joining the choir. And while Ashley remembered her time in college as a great experience overall, she also had an experience that ultimately dissuaded her from pursuing a degree in music. Ashley shared:

> I had a gig the night of dress rehearsal for a choir concert. And the teacher was like, "I'm going to fail you if you don't come to this rehearsal," and I was like, "This doesn't make any sense; I'm gigging. I'm actually going out into the real world!" So just in that moment, I thought, "I can't do this. I can't study [music] full time because I know how music classes are. I'm going to be in one-unit classes all day long [and] I won't be able to do the gigs I'm already doing so *(pauses)* [it just seemed like] walking backward for me.
>
> (August 17, 2022)

After this experience, Ashley changed her major to communications while she continued to participate in a limited number of music courses, coach vocalists at her high school alma mater, and gig in the community.

Although Dean had established himself as a "hotshot guitar player" (November 10, 2022) and bassist during high school, he initially chose to forgo pursuing music in college and, instead, majored in communications. But after his junior year, Dean realized he most likely wouldn't use his communications degree and decided to take a year off from school to gather his thoughts and determine his next steps. Dean returned to college and completed his degree in communications, and then "kicked around town for a couple of years working minimum wage jobs and playing in local bands" (November 10, 2022). Dean recalled:

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But [music] didn't really connect for me until [I was] maybe 21 or 22. I locked myself in my parent's basement one summer and said, "I'm gonna learn this fingerboard 100%." I got to the point where now I understand the kind of technical level, I need in order to be able to play whatever I want to play on the instrument. So I learned all the fingerings of all the modes of the major scale. And I got, you know, just as literate and as technical as I could. (August 2, 2022)

This new connection to music led Dean to Temple University, where he pursued a second undergraduate degree, this time in jazz bass performance.

Pause. I wonder how their orientations as students and musicians—in both in and out-of-school environments—later revealed themselves in the classroom as they learned to become teachers. Did they rely on their observations as participants in the classroom, private lessons, and the rehearsal space when developing their teaching practice? And while the influence of prior experiences is commonplace for all teachers, an additional layer of influence, due to their chosen paths in music, involves the participants move from student musician to professional musician.

The college music experiences of the participants were malleable journeys that included a few side trips (and brief pauses) that ultimately set them on the path to becoming professional musicians. One of the benefits of pursuing music while in college (parallel with the notion of pursuing music *at* college) is the support offered by the local music community. As university music faculty are often embedded within these music networks, professors often encourage their students to participate in a variety of performance opportunities. This allows musicians the added prospect of performing at local venues while also supporting them in gaining valuable professional experience. While this encouragement wasn't evident in Ashley's college experience, all three participants took advantage of these off-campus opportunities

during their time in college. The participants also learned how to adjust and adapt within the construct of the college music department, providing valuable lessons in flexibility and openness as they transitioned into the next phase of their careers.

Experiences as a Professional Musician

During their time in college, the participants in this study performed in both on and off-campus settings. Dean and Ashley had begun playing gigs while still in high school, while Finn began playing out during college. These opportunities, both during high school and into college, on and off the school campus, allowed them to learn how to be musicians (and how to be musical) both within and outside the academy. During their transition from student musician to professional musician, how and when did they take advantage of the experiences, knowledges, beliefs, and practices encountered on the gig, thereby sowing the seeds for the journey as professional musicians and, ultimately, the seeds for their transformation as professional musician~teachers?

What's the job that needs to get done? Although Ashley experienced music as a profession at an early age through her family, her first experience as a music professional occurred in a rather happenstance manner. Ashley recalled:

> So, my brother was mixing an album for a big band, and one of the singers on the album was sick and didn't sound very good, so he was like, "Hey, let me just have my little sister record it." He sent [the recording] to me, not telling me what it was, and I thought it was just going to be a demo for someone to learn something because I had done that before. And turns out I ended up on the album. And so, then I ended up singing with the band, and I still do even now. Yeah, so that's that story, and so we're just doing private parties, weddings, corporate events. (August 17, 2022)

This singular, off-the-cuff experience effectively launched Ashley into the

professional world while only a sophomore in high school. After graduating from high

school, Ashley formed a vocal trio with some close friends. Soon after, the trio was

recommended through word of mouth to tour internationally with the Glenn Miller

Band, a celebrated legacy big band. At the age of 20, Ashley was able to experience

multiple tours of Japan, Thailand, Australia, New Zealand, and the Philippines, often

attending online classes at the community college when on tour and in-person when

off-tour.

   During and after these tours, Ashley continued to participate in any number

of gigs, including recording sessions, tribute acts, jazz casuals, various big bands,

Disneyland performances, cover bands, and any other performance opportunity that

came her way. But while taking these opportunities in stride, she didn't take them

for granted or rely on the reputation of her family to open doors. Ashley revealed:

> I guess just, you know, having my last name has, fortunately, opened a lot of
>
> doors. I'm lucky that my dad has a really good reputation, and he's not a
>
> jerk. If he was a jerk, it would have been a nightmare! Sometimes I wonder if
>
> I'm lucky that I had my foot in the door, but I also kept my foot in the door.
>
> If I wasn't actually delivering, then they could also say, "That's enough, thank
>
> you." You know? So [my family connections] provided a lot of opportunities,
>
> but I also work hard. (August 24, 2022)

Due, in part, to the multiple roles she realized in a variety of performance

environments, Ashley characterizes herself as being a "utility musician," that is, "the

person that people depend on, but not quite in the spotlight" (August 24, 2022).

Ashley continued:

> I've also never been one to market myself or try and make it as an *artist.* I
>
> don't think of myself like that at all. I'm more, "What's the job that needs to

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get done, and let me fill the role the best I can." And for those of us who are

hustling, "What's the need, and how can I fit in? How can I make it happen?"

So, a lot of times, that's knowing every background vocal part, or just

knowing a lot of lyrics, or being able to do a jazz set for the first hour, and

then pop for the next three hours, or whatever [the gig calls for]. (August 24,

2022)

Taking into consideration her penchant for flexibility and utility, and her willingness

(and the ability) to fill in whatever musical gap needs to be filled, Ashley related:

I think my story is unique in that *(pauses)* I really try to be a jack of all

trades [as a professional musician]. As far as styles go, I have to try to fool

everybody into thinking I'm a jazz singer, and also a pop singer, and you

know, I try to play that. I try to make myself as well-rounded as possible. So,

my song list is quite extensive, and I enjoy that. I think it's fun! It gets boring

if you only do one thing. (August 24, 2022)

Playing the outside. During his time in college and shortly after, Dean was

"already playing weddings and stuff, and some little jazz gigs here and there around

Philly" (September 12, 2022). After graduating college with a degree in jazz bass

performance, Dean was living the dream of being a professional musician, "just

playing gigs, mostly what in Philly they call playing the outside, you know, [what]

they call club dates in the New York City area" (September 12, 2022). But during

this time, Dean also experienced the downside of the dream. He recalled:

I was living hand to mouth, but I was *(pauses)* I was doing fine, you know,

and so I stuck around [Philadelphia] a year. I was playing a bunch of different

freelance gigs. I was learning by doing, but I just realized that there was

going to be a ceiling in Philadelphia. I just kind of got the feeling that I was

never gonna get to get to play the higher profile and more exciting gigs

unless I moved to New York. So, I made the decision to move to New York, moved to the Bronx, and started doing the same kind of freelancing there. I got into a lot more rock stuff, actually, in New York. I got into the club dates—what they call playing weddings and Bar Mitzvahs and corporate events in New York City—so I got into that, and I fell in with [a booking] agency. I've been working for them 23 years now. And they put me on a lot of *(pauses)* they keep me really busy. (August 2, 2022)

Pause. How did the experiences that these participants encountered, the knowledges they developed, the beliefs they acquired, and the practices they engaged in during their time as student and professional musicians find their way into the classroom and their teaching styles? Through experiencing a diverse number of musical learning, teaching, and performance environments, the participants began to explicitly understand how to prepare for the gig and remain flexible to the context(s) of the gig. And, in doing so, whether consciously or unconsciously, the participants began to acquire orientations that impacted who they would eventually become as teachers. After these individuals fell into teaching, how did their orientations as learners and musicians impact and influence their approaches as teachers, and how did their orientations continue to evolve—as they developed their teaching practices? How did they learn (and how do they continue to learn) about the act of teaching, working with students, coming to terms with the constructs of working within a school, and discovering how they fit (and where they might not fit) in the modern-day music classroom? In short, how did they learn to teach by teaching?

Learning to Teach by Teaching

How did the participants, who continued in their roles as gigging musicians, navigate their way into and through the classroom and, perhaps, what tensions and freedoms did they encounter as they learned to teach? While learning how to teach through engaging in the act of teaching is a relatively recognized conception in education research (Campbell, Thompson, & Barrett, 2010; Grossman, 1989), the participants in this study began teaching in school settings having not participated in an undergraduate music teacher education program. Dean gained his alternative teaching certification prior to entering the classroom and later pursued his Master's degree in education. Ashley, on the other hand, began teaching without a teaching certification, and later gained both her alternative teaching and career and technical education certifications during her pursuit of a Master's degree in education. Finn did not participate in an alternative teaching certification program but did earn a Master's degree in jazz performance during the course of his first classroom teaching experience. Dean, in particular, was quite blasé when talking about the content of the certification program he experienced, suggesting:

> It was all basic. There was no music education content there at all. It was Gardner's intelligences. It was classroom management. It was the standard boilerplate stuff that you would get at any education program of any discipline. Graduated. Got my standard certification. End of story. (August 2, 2022)

While the journey into teaching is often wrought with new understandings of the learning environment, for these individuals, a number of added tensions existed due to non-participation in an undergraduate music teacher education program. Some of these tensions, including never having taught as a student teacher under the guidance of a mentor teacher, resulted in the participants feeling unprepared—

under-trained and under-supported—when they began teaching. From curriculum development to classroom management and assessment to working with colleagues, they were, quite literally, tossed into the classroom. Dean captures the overall sentiment when he remembered:

> When I was first hired, I wasn't really being supervised at all. I was being hired into a building by administrators who just needed a body. They needed somebody to fill that position, and they had no idea what to tell me to do or any vision for the position. (November 18, 2022)

Ashley had a somewhat similar entry into the classroom, but she was able to begin teaching in a very familiar environment—the high school she attended. The director of the popular music program at the school didn't *officially* ask if Ashley was interested in teaching as much as they insinuated—in a hopeful "please stay because we need and trust you" sort of way—that Ashley should continue to serve as the vocal coach at the high school while pursuing her degree in communications at the local community college. Ashley recalled:

> I got thrown into it. [The director] was like, "Hey, so you're gonna stay here and keep teaching, *right*?" and I was like, "Sure!" So, then he just kind of pulled me on board, and I never left; I felt such an allegiance to the program and felt like I'd been there, from the start of it really. I still feel an allegiance to [the program]. (August 17, 2022)

As noted previously, Finn took advantage of an educational outreach program spearheaded by the conservatory he attended in New York City. After signing up to be a teacher in Harlem and Washington Heights, Finn recalled, "There was no training involved at all. I mean, there was really zero training. It was just, 'Show up, here you go, good luck, do what you do'" (September 21, 2022). This experience must have sparked something in Finn, as while he continued his time at the

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conservatory, he also applied to and was accepted into the Master's in Education program at The Teacher's College at Columbia University. That said, after not receiving sufficient financial aid to attend, and having accumulated significant college debt during his pursuit of a Master's degree in jazz performance at the New York City-based conservatory, Finn instead returned to Memphis, forgoing the pursuit of a second Master's degree. After arriving back in Memphis, Finn quickly jumped back into the gig scene, forgoing any teaching responsibilities other than occasionally working with a local high school jazz band as a guest artist while also giving private lessons.

        Show up and teach. How does a professional musician take on the mantle of becoming a teacher, too? What does the arc from professional musician to professional musician~teacher look like? The lack of initial training and supervision described previously was the participants' first introduction to being a teacher. Even in Finn's outreach teaching in Harlem during his graduate studies, there was "no training" at all; the only expectation was to "show up and teach" (September 21, 2022). "Show up and teach" became deeply embedded for Finn, who commented, "As long as your boss is saying, 'You're doing a good job,' why would you question it?" (Finn, September 21, 2022). Thinking back to his time in New York, Finn mentioned that he would have benefitted from connecting with a local professional educator/mentor, but that the conservatory failed to nurture those connections between the students and the local music education community. Focusing on this disconnect, Finn recalled that although that "at this conservatory, there's not even a music education program. It was an outreach program. So yeah, there was no one to look up to" (September 21, 2022).

        Dean, in particular, experienced a decisive lack of supervision coupled with questionable resources, including the nonexistence of clear direction regarding or

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access to the content he was expected to teach. After being hired mid-semester due to the previous music teacher having vacated the position, Dean remembered:

> I was astonished to experience almost no supervision, and it took me not too long to really figure out where that was coming from. They showed me, "Okay, here's where you're going to be teaching" and they didn't really have any equipment. They had a boom box, a cruddy drum set, and a Yamaha keyboard with no weighted action or anything like that. This was a vocational-technical school, which was kind of, at that time, turning over from a traditional vo-tech school into kind of a technical school, but a more academically focused one. So they put me in the recently shut down masonry shop. So it's all this stuff, all the old whiteboards, old supplies, and stuff from decades *(pauses)* just kind of thrown in this room, these dusty old textbooks over in the corner with some title like *Bricks and You* or something like that *(pauses and laughs)* and some tables and chairs *(pauses):*

>> Administrator: Okay, you'll teach in here. You'll be fine.
>>
>> Dean: What am I teaching?
>>
>> Administrator: Oh, it's called VPA-Visual and Performing Arts.
>>
>> Dean: Is there a curriculum?
>>
>> Administrator: Oh, no, no, no curriculum.

> So I'm pulling the entire thing out of my behind. I had never taught a classroom before, so I was terrified. I was terrified! (September 12, 2022)

Dean suggested that the absence of supervision was due, in part, to the administration's lack of experience in understanding music curriculum and supervising music classes. He remembered, "Gosh! [The administrators] don't know what to tell me. They just needed to check the box that there's music [in the classroom]" (September 12, 2022). But Dean shared that the upside of not having

anyone tell you what to teach (however terrifying the venture might be) is the freedom to develop content and to teach that content as he saw fit. Dean encapsulated this feeling when recalling:

So [the administrators] don't know what to tell me to do *(pauses)* on the one hand, it's terrifying. And on the other hand, it's really liberating because it means I can wield this power and this autonomy. Just because no one else is around to supervise me, I could really shape this program into what I think it ought to be. It was an exciting and a scary time. (September 12, 2022)

Start with what you know. Although the participants didn't necessarily receive sufficient help and support in their first year or two of teaching, that doesn't mean they didn't seek help and support. Dean sought out the *only* other music teacher in the district, asking simply, "Where do I start with this?" In response, Dean's colleague suggested a simple, "Start with what you know" (November 18, 2022). Dean offered this has been his guiding principle—both for himself and the students—ever since, to start with what you know and to learn and grow from that point onward, taking in all that you know—and all that you continue to learn—to continue to grow as a learner and teacher. This turn towards "what you know" prompted Dean to pitch the idea of starting a small jazz combo, a beginning guitar class, and a chorus (even though Dean was not a vocalist) to begin in his second year of teaching. Somewhat to Dean's surprise, all three courses were approved by his administration. In Ashley's first year of teaching after making the transition from student vocal coach to faculty vocal coach after graduation, she continued to lean into her strengths, coaching vocalists part-time in the after-school program, maintaining what she had done since high school through transcribing and arranging vocal harmony parts note-for-note to closely match what she heard on recordings

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and then helping the student vocalists learn these parts through rote and/or recorded tracks.

After returning to Memphis from New York and focusing on performing for three years, Finn secured a position at STAX Music Academy/Soulsville Charter School teaching a middle school pop band. Finn recalled his first year teaching at STAX as being "awful" (November 18, 2022). Finn anticipated working with the middle school pop band and, much like Ashley, being able to lean into his own musical strengths as a base of knowledge. Unfortunately, Finn soon realized the students didn't have access to the instruments they needed to begin rehearsals. That said, Finn recalled the experience as a "blessing," remembering:

> So I was hired to teach a band class to middle schoolers, about 30 middle schoolers per, across four different classes. And from August to December, we didn't have instruments. And so, suddenly, I had to get in touch and into music in a different way because it really became a general music class. And so all those skills and stuff [I had] of performing [music] really didn't matter that much. And so it was really interesting to have that trial by fire. So a lot of improvising, a lot of discovering that you can teach music without the instrument. (November 18, 2022)

In direct contradiction to Finn's lack of supervision and coaching during his time teaching in New York, during his time at STAX, Finn was observed and received consistent feedback from experienced teachers and administrators at the school. Finn also mentioned attending some of weekly staff trainings offered at the school, recalling:

> All the teachers from Soulsville would sit down and watch a video of the teacher of the week, and the team leads pointed out, "Did you see how they did this? Did you notice how they do that?" And so that first year of my for-

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real teaching, I ended up getting that training, and from there, once I was

exposed to those different models [of teaching], I started looking for it myself

and started thinking about those things myself. (September 21, 2022)

These opportunities to understand and critique the teaching practices of others

placed Finn on the path of reflecting on his teaching and wondering how he might

improve his practice.

Reflecting on the gig. Finn's participation in the weekly staff trainings

offered at STAX set him on a path toward a questioning and critical reflection of his

teaching. In contrast to Finn's developing criticality, Dean quipped he

. . . started out teaching the way we were taught, right? So the idea is I'm

the sage on the stage. I'm the authority. I'm kind of God here or supposedly,

you know. At least, that was my impression of what teachers did. (October

19, 2022)

Similar to Finn, however, Dean soon realized there had to be other ways of learning

and teaching, other ways of blending his various experiences. Dean recounted:

And I think it didn't take all that long to realize, "Hey, wait a minute. If I bring

more of my own experience from spending time in all those rehearsal studios

on 30th St.—all that stuff, all the fun stuff I did, where I would just get

together with my friends, and we [would] play—if I can bring some of that

into this space, I can get more of these kids authentically with me and share

the objective." So that was a process of starting out trying to be God and

trying to be sage on the stage and realizing, you know, this doesn't fit, and it

doesn't feel good. (October 19, 2022)

Ashley related a similar perspective when thinking back to her early teaching

practice:

I think I almost didn't know any better. I started teaching [while still in high
school] before I went through all my formal teaching. I was hired on as a
master teacher, but I didn't really know the *super-teachery* (motions scare
quotes) things to do. I just was teaching based on what I knew, which was
my gigging life, not realizing that a lot of teachers don't know what [the
gigging life] is. (November 18, 2022).

Pause. While all teachers have identifiable, interrelated ways of teaching,
every teacher also has their own unique approach to the classroom. When looking
into the teaching styles of these individuals, what characteristics might come to the
surface that represent a thread common to this group and, perhaps, through to other
music teachers with both similar and dissimilar paths into teaching? Early on in their
tenure as teachers in school settings, the participants began to seek out ways to
incorporate their experiences on the gig with their new and existing experiences in
the classroom. Whether through critical reflection, dumb luck, or some combination
thereof, how did these individuals craft their approach to teaching? While none of
these participants in this study yet considered themselves to be "teachers" early in
their careers, as they maintained their identities as professional musicians, the
participants expanded their roles in teaching. As they continued teaching, bit by bit,
day by day, they realized that they were teaching full-time, and gradually, they
realized they just might be teachers, too.

Teaching styles. To learn more about how these individuals viewed
themselves as teachers, I asked, "How would you describe your teaching style
and/or your philosophy of teaching in five words/phrases?" This question obligates
the individual to reflect on who they *believe* themselves to be as a teacher while also
providing insight into how their orientations impact their teaching practices.
Additionally, understanding what they believe about themselves allows the

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opportunity to connect their thoughts with actions observed in the classroom and data generated during the interview/conversation process. In other words, how do their descriptions of themselves relate to their actions in as teachers?

Dean: Hook and crook. When asked how he might describe his teaching style, Dean proclaimed himself to be a "comfort zone stretcher," "cheerleader," "encourager," "motivator," and "mediator." He also added "diplomat," explaining this quality as "getting together and let's see if we can have a meeting of the minds between two musicians who maybe aren't agreeing or seeing things the same way" (October 17, 2022). Dean focused on the role of cheerleader while discussing ways to encourage and motivate students in the classroom. He stated:

> Praise is a lot more important than criticism. These kids are in high school all
> day, and most of their classes are, "OK, so who knows about . . . ," and
> you're tentative about raising your hand because you don't want to be the
> guy who has the wrong answer. So, there has to be this whole dismantling
> and recreating of [the music classroom] as a place where we make mistakes;
> we make them loud and proud and strong and wrong and *(pauses)*
> unschooling the tentativeness that the rest of academic life tends to make out
> of high school is kind of a big job. So the minute they're doing something
> even remotely right, "Yeah, that's freaking awesome!" And once you
> cheerlead them up to a certain point, it's like, "OK, now we've got it. Good,
> let's see if we can make it even better." And then you start helping them
> refine it a little bit more, but first and foremost as a cheerleader, it's praise,
> praise, praise, praise, praise and get them *(pauses)* make them believe that
> they can, that they can rise to that challenge. That's the first order of
> business. (October 17, 2022)

When asked if this approach has changed over the years, Dean replied:

Not really. Not really, no. In fact, it's even more. If you've got to spend a

whole nine months with a group of kids, you got to make them want to be

there, first and foremost, or else the rest of the year is not going to go well.

So I make that a priority. (October 17, 2022)

Nurturing a positive student experience is the foundation of Dean's teaching

style; everything else emanates from this base of encouragement and belonging.

Dean's thoughts around education, briefly alluded to with his "unschooling"

comment, coupled with his experiences in education and in his roles as a professional

musician and teacher, collided and combined in shaping his orientation around

making the encouragement of the student a priority.

Thinking back to his early struggles in the classroom, Dean remembered

picking up a number of his teaching habits by "hook and crook" (September 12,

2022). He also recalled the freedom he had to develop the ways and content he

taught and his overall career path. Dean stated:

I was really fortunate to be able to shape the program in such a way that a

lot of the traditional stuff *(pauses)* the traditional band/orchestra/choir stuff

didn't apply or didn't apply in necessarily quite the same way. I was really

fortunate [in that] I was able to shape my own career. No one tossed me in

[to the classroom] and said, "OK, you're doing marching band." (September

12, 2022)

But with this freedom also came with some difficulties in adjusting to the act of

teaching. Dean mentioned that early in his career he had a "tough time" finding ways

to give closure to lessons, as he was advised by his supervisor to "have some kind of

closure to kind of tie things up at the end, and to this day, I don't know if that really

makes a whole lot of sense" (September 12, 2022). To remedy this, Dean allows

time at the end of each class to provide students the opportunity to ask questions

pertaining their interests, to explore a new song or "whatever students' curiosities are taking them" (October 17, 2022).

Dean also commented on seeking out ways not to be viewed as an "adversary" by the students through "figuring out ways to sort of get on their side [and to] show kids that I'm in their corner" (September 12, 2022). Dean takes this student perspective into account in his approach when creating a welcoming classroom environment. When discussing how he incorporates these student perspectives, which also revealed Dean's deeply-held opinions around education, he asserted:

> While we're here for 41 minutes, let's have as much fun as we can. Let's make the best of it, and let's learn something along the way. Let's make this a place where, OK, so at least the enthusiasm is you're making noise on the instrument. That's great! I love the enthusiasm! I'll try to quiet everyone, and it takes longer, but at least it'll be 41 minutes where they're not being policed, you know, because I really, I just *(pauses)* I hate that. (October 17, 2022)

How does Dean's teaching style and foundation of encouragement translate into how he connects and engages with students? When referencing the high school students he teaches, Dean declared that his "whole thing is about teaching older beginners and about how older beginners don't have enough opportunities" (October 19, 2022) in school music. This attitude, coupled with Dean's foundation of encouragement, led him to "tailor my instruction" (October 17, 2022) when working with students of any age and ability. When working with high school beginners, Dean recalled his own early learning experiences, from piano lessons and school-based concert and jazz bands to forming his own rock bands outside of school. Dean hopes that connecting his diverse musical experiences to what he chooses to do as a

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teacher "leads to more curiosity" for the students. Further, Dean suggested that student curiosity enables him an expanded ability to meet the students where they are ability-wise. Describing how he might help a student grow from the point of what they know to the point of realizing what they're hoping to accomplish, Dean might suggest, "'But now you've got this song under your fingers. If you change this, this, and that, you've almost got this other song.' So I can kind of help build that curiosity to want to know more" (October 17, 2022). Yet even here, Dean admits the "range of how much [the students] struggle is going to be wildly, wildly different" (October 19, 2022). When faced with varying abilities, Dean seeks out ways to differentiate the content through suggesting simplified voicings and/or songs that might be more approachable.

Dean's foundation of nurturing and encouraging also helps foster a learner-centered atmosphere where students "take ownership of the information and skills to ultimately use it for what they want to do and what their objectives are" (October 12, 2022). Dean continued:

> Ideally, education is in service of a student's objective. So what that means, for me, is I have to be ready to listen to what those kinds of aspirations might be and be willing to go off script, go out of order, find different ways to engage, to make it meaningful, and make it something that that aligns with what a student's goals would be. I'm taking things that maybe they already know and helping them put it in the service of what they want to accomplish. (October 12, 2022)

Dean suggested this orientation toward centering the students and *their* learning process shifts the power dynamic away from "my class" to "our class." To find out what the student already knows, and as a way to include student choice from the first day of school and to create a sense of a shared learning space, Dean hands out

a survey on the first day of class. Dean began this strategy in his first full year of

teaching when he asked the school's English teachers if they'd be willing to hand out

a survey to the student body, which enabled Dean

> . . . to get a picture of what musical interest looked like for that particular
>
> population. Then I can sit down and go, "How do I make this into some kind
>
> of a program that's going to be attractive enough that I'm going to bring
>
> people in?" (October 17, 2022)

Dean explained his reasoning as:

> Just to get an idea of what kind of musical background, what kind of music
>
> they listen to, and things like that. It's putting the student's aspirations first
>
> and making it my problem to align it with the curriculum or the educational
>
> agenda I need to follow. (October 12, 2022)

Placing the students' aspirations front and center often implies relegating the

teacher's objectives (and modifying their roles) to a lesser standing within the

classroom structure. Dean suggested that although this relegation is not necessarily

the case in his experience, the norms of the secondary music ensemble—such as a

director-centered approach and a lack of student choice—can be challenging when

first disrupted, and further, that a learner-centered environment can often be

perceived as chaotic. Dean noted that:

> The dichotomy between what observers are ready to see is sage on the stage,
>
> where we find it more effective to be guide on the side a lot of the time. I had
>
> to explain this to some people; chaos can be on topic. "Chaos" and "on topic"
>
> are not diametrically opposed. Chaos can be good chaos if chaos is on topic.
>
> (August 2, 2022)

> This perceived chaos can take the shape of atypical instrumentations, a lack

of curricular materials that consider these situations, and the often-shifting

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roles/responsibilities of the classroom hierarchy. During my time in Dean's classroom, chaos showed up in a somewhat unexpected manner. Shortly after a fire alarm sent the entire student body out into a cold, October morning, Dean and I re-entered the classroom, waiting for the rest of the students to make their back into the building. One by one, students slowing entered the room. I noticed one student, in particular, with a backpack on one arm, baby in a travel bassinet on the other. No one seemed to acknowledge or be concerned with the smallest member of the class. Students continued to stroll into the room, grabbed their guitars from the storage area, and assumed their seats—some taking a moment to tune, others focusing on their phones, and others simply staring at the floor. After checking with a student who was not playing (as they had recently suffered a sports injury), Dean began class by asking students to form the chord shapes they had learned the previous day. At this moment, a guitar that had been precariously propped on a chair came crashing to the ground, causing Dean to exert a pained face and exclaim, "Oooooooo," but then move on to work with the next student.

Shortly thereafter, the baby began crying, prompting the new father to quickly grab their child and exit the room to calm them. Again, Dean simply continued with class, casting a knowing nod towards the nervous young father as he left the room while continuing to walk about the class, spending time briefly with each student to offer encouragement and suggestions for improvement. As the young father and child re-entered the room, I realized that the baby was not a baby, but rather an automated prop used to instruct students on the nuts and bolts of caring for a child. The young "father," after consoling their "baby" and rocking them back to "sleep," took a few moments toward the end of class to pull out an electric guitar, plug into an amplifier, and begin playing a Green Day song. After playing for a few moments, the student put his guitar away, picked up his backpack and "baby,"

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nodded to Dean, and quickly exited the classroom into what I assume was another chaos-filled day escorting his fake baby around the school.

Dean's role in the classroom in this and other situations—and how he orchestrates and finds ways to choreograph chaos—is further depicted when relating the process of choosing music for an upcoming concert:

At first, it was just, "OK, who do we got? What can we play? What can we do? How do I take whatever ramshackle band of talent we have and find some kind of common denominator—a tune, a budget, a set list we can bang through?" And then, as that got more sophisticated, [the students and I] started being able to put some plans in place where we would take the existing musical personalities we knew were coming back. We'd get their input. "What songs do you want to play?" We would figure out, "OK, so I think Joe is up for bass on this one, and I think Sophia will be great on drums for this one, and I think . . ." We make some of those kinds of decisions and start slotting some people in. Can we make this work? Well, *of course* we can. (October 19, 2022)

Ashley: Letting the students guide the ship. When asked how she might describe her teaching, Ashley began by stating, "These are things I would like to think I am, that I hope I am. Encouraging (pause). Playful (pause). These are not teaching words, per se (pause). This is hard!" (October 4, 2022). Ashley's expression of "These are not teaching words, per se" speaks volumes to her teaching style and offers a glimpse into what she believes to be essential traits to bring into her teaching. Throughout our conversations, Ashley sometimes discussed terms she considered "super-typical teaching things" (October 5, 2022) and approaches such as social-emotional learning, constructivism, culturally relevant teaching, and student-centered learning—terms she had first encountered during her time in pursuing her

Master's degree. But during our conversations, Ashley more often considered ways of connecting with students using words such as care, love, feeling, and hope.

After giving Ashley time to ponder, I asked, "If someone were to walk into the classroom, how might they describe . . . " And before I could finish my thought, Ashley burst out, "Energetic. Energetic, definitely!" Ashley continued:

> I think what I'm trying to say, without knowing how to say it is, I like to meet the students where they are. Encouraging, but in a way that's, "Let's help you figure out your goals and how to reach them [because] your goals are going to be different than someone else's." But my hope is that I can help you figure out what you want to learn, how you want to get there; *your* goals. And if anything, to be more confident. That is the number one thing with performing. It's scary! Meet them where they are. Understanding. And believe it or not, patient. It blows my mind because I don't think of myself as a patient person. (October 4, 2022)

On being patient, Ashley revealed that she chose "patience" as a descriptor because former students had written notes after participating in her courses, thanking Ashley for her care, understanding, and patience in the classroom.

So how do the descriptions of encouraging, playful, understanding, and patient play out in Ashley's teaching? Throughout our conversations, Ashley discussed finding ways of offering students "the space to grow as human beings and allowing them to have ownership of their learning and their environment" (October 5, 2022). This orientation manifests in the classroom through presenting opportunities for students to "choose their own journey" (October 5, 2022). For example, in the vocal artistry course Ashley created—a class open to anyone from first-time singers to lead vocalists who participate in the school's award-winning after-school popular music program—Ashley makes room for students to choose

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what type or style of evaluation they prefer, expanding to whatever possibilities the student might imagine in demonstrating their understanding in the course. This might take on the form of performing with an accompanying guitarist or a karaoke track, choosing to present "three facts about the song and then [earning] extra credit to perform it" (October 5, 2022), or allowing students to use lyric sheets if they find it difficult to remember the words to a song. While these examples might be somewhat commonplace in the modern-day differentiated music classroom, these various types of structures and paths exist throughout the course and Ashley's approach to teaching.

When thinking back to nurturing connections with students, Ashley mentioned:

> I always felt like I just wanted to connect [with students] and get to know them, learn about their interests, and work the curriculum around the songs that they like because, why not? As long as we're learning, why not get them excited about what we're learning? I want to be able to tie in what they want to learn about. (August 17, 2022)

This desire for connection and inclusion leads to another word Ashley used when responding to the question, "What is continuing to influence you and impacting you as a teacher?" Ashley immediately exclaimed:

> Oh my gosh, compassion. Just the value of compassion in the classroom and to your fellow teachers. Oh, my God, that's 90% of it. I feel like I'm working overtime to make sure that that remains constant. In talking to the kids [asking], "How are you doing?" [offering] positive encouragement, and noticing things and saying, "Hey, you've really worked on that!" (October 5, 2022)

In the classroom space, this compassion might play out in many ways. Ashley related:

> We had some students who were terrified [of singing in front of others] and came to me on the first day crying, "I don't know what I'm doing. I don't know why I signed up for this!" And I was, like, "Okay, all I can do is make this comfortable [for you]." (October 5, 2022)

Ashley strives to be "an understanding teacher who allows students to explore new opportunities" (November 18, 2022) and situations, taking into account her experiences both in and out of the classroom and, more recently, before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Ashley elaborated on this point:

> I think patience and understanding, especially now after COVID, we've got kids who are damaged; there's so much damage, everyone is fragile. Music is so healing, and the more we can remember to keep that at the forefront of our teaching, I find it helpful and more beneficial for the kids, too. And yeah, patience and understanding, and positivity and encouragement. (November 18, 2022)

Ashley's own experiences during her time in school, specifically with her vocal private lesson instructor in middle school, her vocal coach in high school, and her college choir director, may have led to the student-centric approach at the core of Ashley's teaching. But Ashley recalled first struggling in this approach as she was transitioning from the role of *student* vocal coach to *teacher* vocal coach. As a reminder, this transition occurred at the same high school she attended, with many of the same friends, peers, and teachers turned colleagues present, sometimes leading to an odd dynamic in the classroom. Ashley remembered:

> Well, I started so young; I started right after high school. The peer teacher transition was tough for three years because those kids already knew me.

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And so we were friends, but I also teach [them] and, luckily, it worked out

pretty okay. But times were different then. [The class] was looser, and it was

more playful and less structured than it is now. So we could just be like,

"Let's go work on the song." You know, and it was a little more chill [in the

past]. (October 5, 2022)

After Ashley had been teaching for a number of years, she decided to pursue

a Master's in Education. During this time, she also secured her Career and Technical

Education and her California Teacher's certifications in the hopes of increasing her

course load and expanding her position at the school. In contrast to how Dean felt

about his experience with the alternative certification process, Ashley expressed:

The credentialing program was really good! I learned so much about

classroom management. The biggest thing I learned, and what I actually

ended up writing my research proposal on at the end, was social-emotional

learning and how music is naturally social and emotional, like emotionally

rich, and how that's such a unique thing and why it's so important [for

students]. (August 17, 2022)

Ashley suggested one of the benefits of pursuing both her Master's degree

and additional certifications after having taught for several years was the opportunity

and ability to theorize her practice—that is, reflecting and critiquing what she had

learned about teaching through engaging in the act of teaching, affording her the

opportunity to identify the connections between theory and practice. Through

reflection and critique, Ashley mentioned the additional supports offered through the

process of pursuing a Master's degree:

This kind of gave me the confidence and the guidance to do that and be like,

yes, [this approach in the classroom is] a good idea. Make sure you tie into

[the student's] interests and learn how to deal with different kinds of

learners—things they need, accommodations. [For example,] I had three

special ed[ucation] kids in my voice class last year. I had never experienced

that before, so that was a whole new thing. And I feel like it worked out, with

the timing of school, that, "Hey, this is actually helping me a lot, learning how

to accommodate and give these kids what they need." (August 17, 2022)

These unrecognized connections had long existed in Ashley's teaching

practice, but she hesitated to name or label them, as the bulk of her teaching style

was founded in her pre-existing understanding of teaching through past experiences

as a student and teacher. After pursuing various professional development paths, the

connections between practice and theory continued to reveal themselves. On this

revelation, Ashley stated, "a lot of the things that I was naturally feeling I could kind

of articulate better because I had a [more developed] understanding of it" (August

17, 2022). In other words, Ashley began connecting what she did in the classroom

with the "super-typical teaching" (October 5, 2022) language often used in academia

to describe classroom practices.

Although Ashley struggled early in her teaching with student/teacher roles,

she soon became aware that "putting [students] at the forefront of creating what

they want their learning environment to look like" (October 5, 2022) was

foundational to her teaching practice. When discussing why she chose to teach music

in this manner, Ashley conveyed:

Music is probably the most unique subject in school and the arts in general

because social-emotional learning is naturally embedded in the core nature of

[music] and in its content. And because of that, music education allows for

helping students learn important life skills along with the process of learning

the content. Some of these life skills are empathy, learning how to work with

others, and caring for others. In my classroom, students get to watch each

other perform and feel what it feels like to be on either side [of the microphone]. Leadership skills, giving students the opportunity to explore what it feels like to be a leader, to learn to make a plan, to learn to facilitate a rehearsal, or make a guideline for their group on how they're going to work on a particular project. Learning to prepare for a gig or a performance, setting their own goals, and learning these things that tie into real-world situations and gigging. And the teacher's role in all of this is more of a facilitative role, creating the framework for students to succeed, taking on these roles, and being there [to assist and support] if things start to fall off the rails. But, in this kind of situation, it's beneficial to let the students guide the ship and set the tone for how they want that classroom to look and allow them to be in control as it makes sense in the classroom. (October 5, 2022)

Finn: Jedi pedagogy. When asked how he might describe his teaching style, Finn, without missing a beat, burst out, "Joy and rigor. That's it. Joy and rigor. Ultimately, [the student] should be enjoying it, but also there should be a fair amount of challenge in it. Yeah, so just joy and rigor" (October 28, 2022). At this point in the conversation, as Finn conveyed a definitive "that's it," we focused on what forms joy and rigor might take in the classroom. When pressing this standpoint, Finn suggested a balance of the two perspectives is always necessary, as too much of one or the other might not, in true Goldilocks manner, be "just right." Speaking directly to striking this balance, Finn continued:

So what I found is you're not gonna have a lot of joy in what you do if it's not challenging. And then, inversely, if it's too hard, you're also not gonna enjoy it. And so it kind of has to be in balance. And I think that's a really hard thing to strike. (October 28, 2022)

This perspective of joy, rigor, enjoyment, and balance is a constant in Finn's life. As noted previously, Finn views himself not as a teacher but rather as a teaching artist, with "one [combined] identity and that really should feed each other" (November 18, 2022). This balance is indispensable in multiple elements of his life as, of the three participants in this study, Finn gigs most often.

Finn remembered struggling with the notion of balance when first entering the classroom. This balance centered around when to use a diagnose/remedy approach in contrast to providing space and opportunity for "the learner to figure stuff out for themselves" (October 27, 2022). Finn recalled:

I want to just be, "We're gonna do this, we're gonna do that, you're going to do this and then that, and then you'll be good to go," and it's like slow your roll! Use questions to allow the young person to learn themselves. Educate. A good educator is going to know to do that. You know that that's a part of it, right? Because it's that critical thinking skill. It's that check for understanding. (October 27, 2022)

When Finn began teaching at the STAX Music Academy, he was involved in teaching several different music classes, including middle school pop ensemble, music theory, and private trombone lessons, while also providing support through arranging, working with the jazz band, and working with the high school pop ensemble. Located on the site of the former STAX Records (the label that birthed the Southern Soul era of the 1960s featuring Otis Redding, The Staple Singers, Rufus Thomas, and Booker T and the MGs, among many others), the STAX Music Academy is the after-school program of the Soulsville Charter School. The music of STAX, Memphis, and the Civil Rights Movement grounds much of the curriculum in both the in-school and after-school programs. In terms of the pedagogical mindset Finn encountered at STAX, the music ensembles at the school often focused their

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rehearsals toward an upcoming performance or recording, confusing the well-worn debate of whether or not the purpose of an education in music should be based more on the process of musical learning or the product of the musical performance. When finding a way to function—to teach in this confusing middle space of competing goals—Finn recalled altering his approach to match the goals of the learning environment while, at the same time, integrating music and performance skills that are endemic to soul music and performing in general when Finn stated:

> I oriented my thinking around the performance [as] we're building towards a performance and establishing that on day one, we are building towards a performance and/or recording. And then, it was my job to make *that* the vehicle where the learning happened. So it's really an orientation thing. It's kind of like if you're playing in a professional symphony *or* you're playing in a community band, right? That's going to be a different mindset. [Both ensembles] could have the same conductor, but it would be strange if a professional symphony conductor approached a community band in the exact same way. It's just a different framing of what this is about. (October 28, 2022)

These various roles and, perhaps, the competing goals found in this situation gave,

Finn pause when thinking back to attaining this "tough balance" of approaches, abilities, joy, and rigor in the classroom. He mused, "What *is* the ultimate goal of this classroom? And I think that's always a big, Big, BIG[18] question in a lot of different . . . is it about process or product?" (October 28, 2022). When

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[18] At this point in the conversation, Finn extended his hands and separates them farther apart with each successive "big," while at the same time, raising the volume of his voice with each successive "big."

discussing further his approach in this learning environment and considering the question of product or process and the ultimate objectives of education, Finn suggested:

Well, a lot of times, there's a lot of competing goals, right? So a lot of times the teacher is gonna probably have some goals or some ideas of some things [to consider in the class]. There's a level of, "All right, am I going to let the students dictate the goals, or am I going to present some goals and then allow the students to temper those goals?" But then, oftentimes, there's also an administrative goal, where they're like, "No, they need to be winning national championships in jazz. That's what we want." (October 28, 2022)

Here, Finn definitively stated his thoughts on music education in general when asserting, "It's not about winning trophies. I know a lot of people would disagree with that" (October 28, 2022). Instead, Finn focuses on locating the "common thread" between the student's, teacher's, and school's goals and seeks ways to link all three perspectives in a joyful yet rigorous environment. Finn elaborated:

It goes back to the conundrum of competing goals, right? Competing goals. And then, as the educator, you're going to have the hard task of finding the common thread, right? Because sometimes you might have students that are like, "Actually, I'm just here to have fun." And, I think for a teacher, you have to decide if that's OK with you, you know? But then, going back to joy and rigor, there's a pushing and pulling element [of these competing goals], so it just goes back to deciding what am I gonna do? Just deciding what the goals are. (October 28, 2022)

Taking these sometimes-opposing goals and the learners' varying abilities into account, Finn restated he has to be "super flexible" in the classroom, suggesting if the students "encounter a challenge and [are] having an issue, you might have to,

on the spot, design an exercise and be able to verbalize [the problem and how to remedy the problem]" (October 28, 2022). In another situation calling for flexibility, Finn submitted:

> Or maybe suddenly your class time is cut short, and you have to figure out how to maximize [the class time you have left]. Sometimes the answer is, "All right, let's just play." Sometimes that's the answer, right? Because, once again, there needs to be joy in it. If you are trying to cram an hour lesson that's suddenly been truncated to twenty minutes and you're cracking the whip real hard trying to get everything going, that might not be fun. But, once again, you've got to gauge that. And that goes with the experience of teaching—that's that experience. A good teacher or a teacher with more experience, they're probably going to be able to gauge where their team is, and that always makes the best leaders anyway, right? A leader knows when to push their team, and bad leaders sometimes push them too hard, and they're demoralized, and then they don't want to do anything. So, you've just got to strike that balance. But you've got to be flexible in teaching all the time. (October 28, 2022)

Thinking back to the discussion on the weight of identity, Finn, who had previously identified as a trombone player, recounted that he "really started thinking about music in a much broader sense than just the instrument" (November 18, 2022). As noted previously, Finn, when recalling his first year at STAX, found himself in a situation where the middle school band was without instruments for the first five months of school, forcing Finn to rethink how to approach an instrumental music ensemble sans instruments from both a pedagogical and a professional perspective. Finn recounted that "all those skills and stuff of performing really didn't matter that much" during those five months, but recounted the experience as a "blessing," as it

served as a catalyst to Finn learning to think about—and learn to teach—music beyond an instrument-specific mindset.

This recognition caused Finn to realize a flexibility of identity that supports his work as both a musician and a teacher. Finn testified, "Wait a minute, I'm a musician, not a trombone player!" (November 18, 2022). Recalling Mackie Spradley's assertion that "How you see yourself is the way that you teach," this pivot allowed Finn to expand his world—and the emerging musical worlds of his students—beyond a simple "I'm this" or "I'm that" into a much broader view of the musical world and his (and the student's) place in this expanded world. Finn recounted:

> I think for me, [when] working with young people, I found that trying to
> teach them that they're a musician really opens them up to the learning
> process, and they don't sort of stress out about mastering the instrument as
> much.[19] (November 18, 2022)

When considering this holistic musical approach to his life and teaching, coupled with the notion of goals and objectives in the classroom, on the stage, and in life, Finn tends to "always try to be the person that leans into the positive with the objective of, 'If you're having a good time doing this, then that's the ultimate goal'" (October 28, 2022). When speaking specifically to how this might play out when working with music students, Finn stated:

> I think my role [when teaching] is to "Oh, you should try it this way a little
> bit. Can you maybe try it this way, and let's see how that feels?" You know
> what I mean? I tend to lean into that area naturally, but I try not to focus on

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[19] An additional note of interest, this account was made during a focus group with the collective and, after Finn's statement, both Dean and Ashley smiled and nodded their heads in agreement. The ensuing conversation is discussed in context later in this chapter, providing deeper insight into why Dean and Ashley seemingly agreed and how this plays into their teaching practices.

what's wrong. I try to focus on what's right and then just sort of nudge a little

bit and be like, "Oh, that was really good." (October 28, 2022)

Due, in part, to the part music plays in the lives of students at STAX, a

number of students continue to pursue music beyond their time in high school on a

recreational or professional basis. When asking Finn how he approached supporting

those students looking to take the next step as musicians, Finn suggested his "role in

the classroom is just to help them realize whatever they're trying to do" (October 28,

2022) before taking a somewhat unexpected turn in our conversation. Here, it's

important to understand that Finn is a self-described "pretty big nerd on Star Wars"

(October 27, 2022). And when answering the question about how to best support

students, Finn blasted off into an analogy centering on how Jedi masters and their

young apprentices (the Padawan) learn and work together in a manner Finn

somewhat jokingly referred to as Jedi Pedagogy. His stream-of-conscious analogy

offers a brilliant insight into how Finn approaches balance, joy, and rigor both in and

out of the classroom:

> The whole deal with the Jedi that I love about their teaching method is that
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> the first step is typically identifying some latent ability. That's usually always
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> the first step in most of the tales. And then the second step is finding a
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> teacher who's going to be best for that young Jedi. The best fit. And that
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> individual relationship still comes from a larger agreed-upon pedagogy. But
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> then also what do they do, the University of the Streets, the Padawan. Once
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> you become a true Padawan, you're out in the world. You're on missions.
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> You're not just learning or sparring and all that stuff. You're gonna come with
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> me to this planet, and we're going to fight these stormtroopers together.
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> Even though you're not a Jedi master yet, you're going to get this experiential
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> learning. But that final step, when the Padawan becomes a master, is, "OK,

you've done that." But guess what? Luke still practices on his own, you know? And I think that that final step is kind of the heart of what I think a good education is. You want that talent identification in music, especially if somebody says they want to be the first step, which is usually when the lesson teachers say, "Let me hear you play something, [let me] see what you can do." And then, if they're a good teacher, they tailor their pedagogy to *that* person. You give them performance opportunities, and then eventually, you might even start getting them gigs so they can actually be learning with you in real-time, and then eventually, [the former students] go off on their own. The problem with universities, I find, and even high school at that level, is when [the students] go off on their own, they don't have that thing that will make them sit at a Jedi temple on their own and hone in and sharpen their skills. That's that crucial stuff! I need to have a long-term career as a musician. You gotta eventually get to, I don't want to say master level, but you gotta get to that level without anyone telling you what to do. You're gonna go practice for hours. So always, I always think about the Jedi. And that's it. (October 27, 2022)

Pause. Although each of the participants entered teaching through various paths, all three struggled with, reflected on, and worked through developing a teaching practice as they became professional musician~teachers. This both/and perspective, while affording the participants a flexible mindset in their approaches to teaching in a school setting, also generated difficulties. Paramount among these difficulties, and primary to intent of this inquiry, is how these individuals were able to coalesce the knowledge of the content of popular music with a knowledge of how to teach that content within the context of the music classroom.

Although the participants in this study approach the act of teaching in diverse ways, the common thread that weaves throughout these individuals is their experience as professional musicians. And even here, they possess a variety of experiences both on and off the gig, in-school and out-of-school. They are not monolithic in their experiences nor how they individually approach the act of teaching. But how do these experiences—and specifically, the knowledges, experiences, beliefs, and practices developed on the gig—permeate their teaching practice and reveal themselves in their teaching practices?

Bringing the Gig into the Classroom

When looking toward the research question asking how the orientations of these individuals impacted and influenced their teaching practices, in what manners did their experiences as professional musicians manifest in the classroom? Further, and recalling Mackie Spradley's suggestion that "How you see yourself is the way you teach," I wonder if this might be extended—and how one's perceived identity and role(s) in the classroom might leave an impression—to also reveal *what* these individuals teach? In other words, as these individuals view themselves as both popular musicians *and* teachers, how do their entangled identities influence the content they choose teach and how they go about teaching that content? This question is essential to this exploration of *these* stories, as Dean affirms the professional musician~teacher as being "a rare breed. I don't think that the music education profession knows just how important the perspective of people like ours might potentially be" (August 2, 2022).

On this point, Finn concurs that, due to the diversity and depth of experiences professional musician~teachers possess, they have a "deep pedagogical knowledge" (October 27, 2022) of engaging with, conversing in, and creating through music in a

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multitude of ways in addition to the ability to convey these manners in the context of the learning environment. Extending this thought, Ashley suggests the integration of a lifetime of experiences on the gig, coupled with a reflective teaching practice, can be "to the students' benefit that we can share these things with them" (November 18, 2022). Ashley continued, "It's one thing to share the content knowledge" (November 18, 2022) when working with young musicians, but it's an entirely different matter when that knowledge is supported by years of experience on the gig and in the classroom, when "you are able to back up what you say and with what you can do" (October 4, 2022). Finn expands on this perspective when he suggested the professional musician~teacher as

> . . . somebody that's actively doing the art form itself. And that's just a very different sort of perspective on music. There's just going to be a different kind of teaching. I don't want to say better or worse than a traditional classroom teacher, and I don't want to say that a traditional classroom teacher isn't also playing in a symphony or something like that. But, oftentimes, we know the demands of being a professional teacher. They're not going to have as much time to cultivate [their playing] career. It's just going to bring a different perspective into the classroom. (October 28, 2022)

While this professional-musician-first variation on the path into teaching might, as Ashley suggested previously, make this group of individuals a little "weird" (November 18, 2022), what learning opportunities and perspectives around the learning and teaching of popular music might these individuals provide? How might understanding these perspectives expand beliefs around the ways learning, creating, and teaching are enacted in the modern music classroom and, more deeply, extend the conventional view of who can and can't teach music? Perhaps these "weird"

perspectives on music education and teaching are precisely what should be more regularly explored.

Connecting through knowledge. What knowledge did these professional musician~teachers gain on the gig through struggle, understanding, and habit? How and when do these individuals then integrate these elements into the classroom? What expertise is gained—both by the teacher and the learner—through the overlapping implementation of these skills and understandings of the gig into the classroom space?

When creating the curriculum for her vocal artistry course, Ashley mentioned, "I just try and teach them all the knowledge that I have of the gig. And so, it's just fun to go through these things with them. It's just a fun class" (August 17, 2022). When referencing "all the knowledge," Ashley provides a veritable laundry list of musical, business, and people skills she integrates into the classroom with the intent of imparting these skills to the students, Ashley noted:

> We learn about taking care of your voice and how to not overuse it. We learn about things like vocal range [since] some kids have never gone through a choir and don't know like what a soprano or what an alto is or a baritone or a bass, so we talk about that. We talk about different kinds of situations where you're singing background vocals and maybe doing some basic choreography along with the background vocals and what it's like to just work as a team and put together a song or show or singing harmonies, learning how to hear harmonies, learning how to sing solo, how to move, how to get comfortable moving, and being a front person. (October 5, 2022)

Dean suggested the skills, knowledges, and experiences learned by "being continually conversant with the material . . . and continuing to gig helps keep me sharp and helps keep my classroom cred[ibility]" (September 12, 2022). Finn

suggested that his personal struggles with learning translated well into the classroom, as he was able to recognize "what worked and didn't work" (October 27, 2022) in a real-world setting before finding ways to apply concepts to the classroom. To shed light on this application, Finn recounted a story where he was hired to play on a recording session. The arranger for the session was a well-known, highly respected musician, and while looking over the arranger's charts, Finn noticed a number of techniques he found both intriguing and highly practical. Finn soon integrated these into his skill set, and further began using them in the context of the classroom. This transference of newfound skills from the professional music space to the classroom learning space served to deepen the student experience while also extending the connections between the two, often siloed spaces of music and school music. The participants also discussed how they incorporate these extended connections into the learning space through having students write their own charts and stepping in to support when needed. Ashley recounted:

> We have [the students] write chord charts and stuff the first couple of weeks of rehearsal, so they have to do that themselves. For the vocal stuff, I do a lot of it, and then I have some more advanced students help [when needed]. (August 24, 2022)

Finn continued this line of thought—that is, translating and modifying skills learned on the gig into teachable content in the classroom—when he discussed how he goes about learning songs, followed by modeling that process for and with students. He recalled learning a Bruno Mars tune:

> I got to learn the chords and stuff on keys, learn it on bass. And it really helped me teach because I was like, "Oh, this is a tricky key change. How am I remembering how to move through the changes? What are the tricks that I'm using to teach myself?" I think the more important thing is not only did it

help me teach the notes better because I knew them, it helps me help

[students] troubleshoot, and I was able to help teach them how to practice.

[By outlining] here's the methods I'm going through to learn and memorize,

we're really getting beyond the music and just getting into how to practice

and how to get better on your own. (November 18, 2022)

Finn's retelling of teaching students "how to practice" is an important point.

During a focus group conversation, the participants agreed that their ultimate role,

exemplified by Finn's depiction of Jedi Pedagogy, was offering an experiential

learning space where the students learn with the teachers "in real-time" with the

hope they "eventually go off on their own" (October 27, 2022). This opportunity for

the student to develop confidence, agency, autonomy, and ownership of their

learning process was further explained by Finn when he stated:

One of the tricks to getting better is once you don't have a teacher, you have

to figure out how to set your own practice schedule. Yet to figure out how to

do what works for you, you have to figure out how to identify where your

deficiencies are on your own. You have to do all that stuff. (October 27, 2022)

Supporting students as they develop the essential habit of critiquing their own

abilities—as opposed to relying on a teacher to diagnose and remedy their

shortcomings—is a transferable skill and one part of the realization process when

becoming a reflective individual no matter their path in life. Following this thread,

and speaking specifically to the context of modeling this reflective ability as a

professional musician, Ashley added she felt as though:

Practice strategies are what we, as professionals, do [on a daily basis]. This is

something we've had to learn naturally. No one's probably ever really taught

us. And it's something that we can pass along. When I'm learning music, I

start really early. I listen to it in my car for days and months. I think [the

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process of learning and sharing the process with students is] important to

learn to relate to the students and connect and show that you are a human as

a teacher. (November 18, 2022)

Dean wholeheartedly agreed when he declared, "And nobody knows how to practice

better than us. We are practicers. That's what we do" (November 18, 2022).

Through reflecting on their approach to the classroom space and modeling the skills

and manners they learned on the gig, the intent of these professional

musician~teachers is to convey the skills gained through the diversity of their

experiences to the students, with the hope the students will begin to realize their

agency and artistic voice in multiple situations, both musical and non-musical.

An additional way of learning how to employ these musical and organizational

skills in the rehearsal and performance process is by providing multiple opportunities

for the students to perform in both in-school and out-of-school venues. This real-

world training ground allows students to use their newfound abilities to critique,

troubleshoot, and improvise solutions in real time and, at the same time, learn that

the profession of music is sometimes as much about people skills as it is about

musical skills. Ashley recalled how students learned how to approach two very

different performance situations when she stated:

Now that we've got more kids, they're doing more gigs. Now we're having to

play restaurants. They were used to doing the big main stage productions,

but your restaurant gig is totally different. So it's fun to get them to think

about how to arrange something for a smaller configuration, or you know,

[make the switch to being] wallpaper music. (October 5, 2022).

Finn promoted the benefits of these performance experiences when he noted:

You can have a jam session all day, every day at school, and you can be

killing it. I mean, seriously, you're doing a great job! But once you play in

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front of an audience, that's kind of when you really start to figure out what

works and what doesn't work. (October 27, 2022)

And while these opportunities serve as a testing ground for musical skills, they also

serve as a way to learn the ins and outs of the gig: promoting the performance,

planning the set, working with sound system issues, dealing with venue

management, working the crowd, and taking requests. As a vocalist and front

person, Ashley has been, quite literally, front and center for most of her professional

career. To translate those experiences into the classroom, Ashley recalled:

So I basically took everything that I have struggled with and learned on my

journey as professional singer, and I tried to give it to [the students]. And if

they decide to gig or do anything in the future, they're not totally green and

clueless, right? So they have some foundational knowledge of "This is how

you build a setlist? And this is how you talk to a crowd? Okay, I understand."

You kind of need to do that, because some people don't even know that that's

part of it, right? You get to a gig, and you're like, they're all looking at me,

like, what do I do? So luckily, we're doing some more gigs now, whether it's

at a restaurant or a street fair, where they can learn those skills and learn

that not everything is a million-dollar set. (October 5, 2022)

Ashley continued with some sage advice when recommending:

And I think, if anything, we should teach them for the real world, to be

prepared for anything; to be calm, to be easy to work with *(pauses)*, that's it

in a nutshell. "You're the best player" is not going to get the gig. It's going to

be the guy who's the easiest to get along with. (October 5, 2022)

Ashley's brief admission of "if they decide to gig," when referencing why the

participants work to impart these skills in the classroom, is an important one, as

while the overall intent is to impart these skills and develop student independence,

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that doesn't necessarily equate to employing these skills and independence *as a professional musician*. Dean adroitly speaks to this mindset when discussing one of the primary purposes of translating the gig to the classroom when he stated:

> And it's [these imparted skills that is] something that you can extrapolate to any [profession], and that's why it's really important because I'm not turning out professional musicians. I'm hopefully turning out people who are successful, happy, and productive in the world. And that kind of skill translates to any environment, anywhere, doesn't matter. (October 17, 2022)

Connecting through experience. It's worth reiterating, as noted by Dean, that the intent of bringing the skills and knowledges learned on the gig into learning space is not necessarily under the guise of "turning out professional musicians" but instead in the hopes of "turning out people who are successful and happy and productive in the world" (October 17, 2022). In other words, part of the rationale for integrating these intra- and extra-musical elements into the classroom is two-fold: to offer students who simply enjoy music the opportunity to experience music and develop life skills while also providing an apprenticeship, of sorts, for those students interested in the possibility of pursuing music as a profession or hobby.

But how and when did these professional musician~teachers decide, consciously or not, to bring their professional world into their teaching world? Dean recalled:

> It didn't take all that long to realize, "Hey, wait a minute. If I bring more of my own experience from spending time in all those rehearsal studios and all those, you know, all the fun stuff I did, where I would just get together with my friends and play. Yeah, if I can bring some of that into this space, I can get more of these kids authentically with me and share the objective with me." (October 19, 2022)

Finn shared Dean's assertion of employing their experiences as a way to connect with and better teach students through the tools learned on the gig when he recounted:

> And so I tend to find from experience, just playing out in the world, that I've had to solve problems in multiple ways. And when I'm in the classroom, I have a lot more tools on ways to learn things. You know what I mean? So I think the biggest way I tend to find that I can help students is I can identify different ways to teach the same concept. (October 27, 2022)

Similarly, Ashley recalled she, too, was "teaching based on what I knew, which was my gigging life, not realizing that a lot of teachers don't know what that is" (November 18, 2022). Ashley suggested that sharing her on-the-gig experiences in the classroom not only made sense given the context of the classroom but that it was "fun to be able to share those experiences with them" (November 18, 2022). Another way the participants connect the gig to the classroom is by bringing guest artists to work with the students, thereby injecting additional perspectives into the classroom. Similar to Dean's assertion of these experiences providing "classroom cred," Ashley indicated that modeling and sharing her experiences on the gig—and bringing their professional colleagues into the learning spaces—offered a "sense of respect from the kids because they're like, 'oh, they're actually out there doing it, and it's valid'" (November 18, 2022). Ashley further explained the student perception of credibility via experience when she mentioned:

> I recently joined a new company where I was learning a bunch of new songs. And [the students have] been along with me on my journey of like, "OK, she's learning all these new songs." And it's like a level up as a teacher to be able to share that and teach those things to them. It's one thing to share the content knowledge—yes, we know how to play our scales, we sing our scales,

we know how to do this—but also what are you going to do when you have a

gig? How do you talk to people? I mean, how do you not be a jerk? I think

that's the number one thing to teach that they don't teach you in music

school. Yeah, if you're a jerk, you're not going to get the gig, you know?

(November 18, 2022)

Dean suggested this credibility helps him when connecting with, and relating to, the

students and the music *they* enjoy when he stated:

I think that continuing to work professionally as a bassist in popular music, in

the commercial music realm, has been really great because when I walk into

my guitar class, I can immediately relate, because I get the kid on day one

who says, "Oh, can you play Thunder Struck by AC/DC?" I was like, "Oh,

that's all about pull-offs! Check this out," and they go, "Wow!" And then

they're gonna listen to me. (September 12, 2022)

Finn leans into this notion of credibility via experience when relating a time

when his student's band happened to be on the same performance bill, allowing

Finn's students to see him model the outcomes of struggle, experience, and practice.

Finn shared:

One of the big things at STAX is performing; it's not just playing the notes,

it's performing. The [professional] band I play in, we're performers, and you

see how the audience reacts [to] that energy. The funniest moment . . . we

had to play a private party, and the STAX Music Academy was also playing,

and we were [playing] before [the students]. And I remember going up to

them and saying, "I'm not your teacher [tonight] because I'm not assigned to

[your performance]; I gotta focus on [my performance]." And I also told

them, "You're gonna see me full-on perform. So don't be shocked or surprised

or anything." They got to actually see, "Ooooh, *this* is actually performing!"

You know, it's funny, after that, the kids gave me respect. (October 27, 2022)

This connection to the gigging world, ways of learning and teaching in popular music, and how to practice efficiently and deeply—coupled with the credibility provided by their experiences—affords the participants in this study additional avenues of connection with students while taking the student's goals into account. Finn lovingly brings this idea into focus when he considered the *why* of bringing these experiences into the classroom setting:

> I think the biggest goal of any teacher is I want them to become self-teachers. Because you're not going to have a teacher forever, you know? And what we all know for sure is the people that have a successful career in any field are the people that can self-motivate and self-direct their own learning. (October 27, 2022)

Connection through struggle. Throughout our time together, the participants in this study continually touched on the ideas of fun, joy, compassion, patience, encouragement, and understanding as foundational elements of their approach to the learning environment. Perhaps these terms are not the archetypal "edu-terms" (Dean, October 17, 2022) often encountered in scholarly music education spaces, but nevertheless, all words these professional musician~teachers *chose* to self-describe the qualities they believe they seek to enact—as well as traits they hope to portray—in the classroom.

One of the ways the participants in this study were able to address the traits they hope to portray in the classroom was by engaging in the struggle of learning *with* the student. The concept of struggle is, while at times uncomfortable and unsettling, *de rigueur* for professional musicians. Stepping back from the role of expert and into the role of the learner is a perspective often encountered on the gig.

This struggle in learning might take any number of forms, including playing a tune during a gig that might be unfamiliar or entirely unknown, thereby necessitating the need to learn the tune in the moment or being asked to sing backup on a song when you don't necessarily identify as a vocalist. In the classroom, this struggle in learning might resemble playing a student-selected song with the class that is unknown to the teacher or taking up an unfamiliar instrument. Dean suggests this struggle— taking on the role of the learner and struggling *with* the students—"made me instantly a better musician because it forced me to consider" (October 19, 2022) the perspective(s) of the students. Finn echoes this belief when stating:

> What I've discovered is struggling alongside the student really helps you relate with the student. It really helps the students become more comfortable because they were like, "Here's this person that clearly has a reputation to uphold, and they don't care; they're just trying to learn." (November 18, 2022)

Pause. Despite all these experiences on the gig, the move into teaching didn't come without struggles, tensions, and more than a bit of "hook and crook," on-the-job learning for the professional musician~teachers in this study. Throughout our conversations, these individuals reflected on their approach to teaching, steps they took to modify their approach, and how they continue to reflect on and alter their teaching practice. Here, I wonder if a parallel from the notion of critiquing one's musical practice could be made to the new teacher learning to reflect on and modify their teaching practice without the guidance of a supervising mentor. In other words, these professional musicians came into teaching possessing the skills needed to reflect, critique, and modify their musical practice that was then extended into their developing teaching practices. That said, while none came into teaching with their "eyes wide open," they all recall being unprepared, if not wholly shocked, by the

prevalence of extra duties and responsibilities when speaking of the administrative tasks wrapped into teaching.

Learning *About* Teaching by Teaching

While integrating a lifetime of experiences on the gig into the classroom may offer an abundance of real-world learning opportunities to students, these professional musician~teachers' pivot into teaching—this becoming—also presented challenges and obstacles. Having experienced education primarily from the outside perspective of the student, these professional musicians were now very much inside the classroom, experiencing and coming to understand the internal, often unseen language and manners of being a classroom teacher. Some of these challenges focused on the structures of the classroom (e.g., classroom management, working with a diversity of learners, creating and pacing content, etc.), while other, perhaps unexpected tensions came from the need to modify their expectations about teaching when considering grading, scheduling, administrative tasks, and other areas. While these concepts and tasks are commonplace within the systems of a school, they were relatively unfamiliar to the participants at the onset of their teaching careers, obliging them to both understand and learn how to function within these systems in real-time, and ultimately, modifying their orientations.

Thinking to the research questions and considering how these professional musician~teachers approached the act of teaching popular music without having participated in a university music teacher education program—a program where the structures of the classroom are often discussed and deliberated, how did these unfamiliar systems of the school impact their ability and their desire to teach? Further, and focusing on the research question centering the evolution of the participants' orientations due to their newfound experiences in the classroom, how

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did these structures of school influence and, perhaps, result in conflict within the learning space and within the professional musician~teacher's sense of self?

The friction created by this conflict is common with early-career teachers (and some would argue all teachers, no matter their tenure). These structures of the classroom, as previously mentioned, are often discussed, critiqued, and reimagined during the course of a music teacher education program. But outside the construct of these programs, how did the professional musician~teachers in this study understand the various tasks adjacent to the act of teaching while simultaneously learning how to navigate and implement these tasks? Finn summed up this experience when noting, "Oh, I forgot how much extra stuff you have to do as a teacher. It's not just teaching the class, you know?" (September 21, 2022). And while the individuals' struggles with the various elements of teaching—the act of teaching as well as the "extra stuff"—are peppered throughout this chapter, the purpose of this section is to bring some of these potential pitfalls to the forefront of the conversation, highlighting the possible struggles of a new teacher in the classroom, as well as the possibility of unintended outcomes and consequences as a result of these pitfalls.

Expectations of the students. When asking the participants to reflect on their struggles when they first entered the classroom, the participants all noted the need to switch from the expectations of the gig in contrast to the expectations of the classroom. Specifically, what are the expectations when it comes to the student's musical abilities, and how do those abilities manifest in the classroom? Thinking back to Finn's balance of joy and rigor, the notion of rigor for the professional musician~teacher can be problematic when shifted to the school learning space. Dean spoke to the locus of this problem when relating the expectations of the professional musician who comes

. . . from a place where everyone's going to show up and know what they're doing. The bandleader is going to count it off, and we're going to show up on the downbeat, and we're going to play exactly what [the music is] supposed to be. So the thing I had to learn quickly was no, [the classroom] is not that. [The classroom] has got to be sloppy, and it's got to be fun, and I have to be a person who makes it a safe place to make mistakes. (October 17, 2022)

In other words, the expectation of the professional musician is to possess a sufficient skill set(s) for whatever performance situation (i.e., writing, arranging, touring, producing, recording, etc.) in which one might find themself. Finn related (and Dean and Ashley concurred during a group discussion) the tensions this mindset created, as well as the need to adjust these expectations in the learning environment. This tension centered around student ability levels—ability levels that ran the gamut from beginning musician to budding professional—and how to navigate and teach within that wide berth of abilities. Similar to other music teachers, Finn recalled struggling with this "wide skill gap" among students while, at the same time, finding ways to motivate students to continue to improve throughout their time in school and beyond. Finn remembers dealing with this "tough balance" early on when he recalled:

So you got to figure out as a teacher, all right, how am I going to teach all of these kids at the same time and make sure they all stay motivated and don't want to go home and just punch themselves in the face—it's a huge challenge. (October 28, 2022)

This push and pull of the participant's expectations and mindsets—professional musician and teacher—prompted Dean to "monitor myself a lot" (October 17, 2022) to ensure the balance of the learning space. Finn suggested one of the challenges of being a teacher is that "you can't just assume [the students]

know" (October 28, 2022) how to competently perform at an anticipated level, much less a professional level. This tension caused the participants to rethink how they approached the classroom, their role(s) in the classroom, and their thoughts around the purposes of the classroom or, as Dean stated, "Appropriately adjusting my standards for what's a finished or a rehearsed piece of music" (October 17, 2022). Both Finn and Ashley echoed this adjustment, suggesting they needed to be more patient in the classroom and more aware of the various levels of student ability. That said, this course correction was less of an adjustment for Ashley, as she was teaching in the same high school program she participated in, allowing more of a gradual shift from student-to-student vocal coach, teacher vocal coach working with peers, to teacher vocal coach working with students.

Dean further described the tension between the two identities of professional musician and music teacher when he noted, "So, how sloppy do I let [the rehearsal and performance process] be so that everyone's having fun, the music's getting made, everyone's learning, and I can still stand it" (October 17, 2022). When expressing one approach to alleviating this tension—to being able to tolerate the messiness—Finn described the pacing of content as one strategy he attempted to implement early on. He noted:

> I think pacing is difficult at first and figuring out how to prescribe solutions to problems. Because until you engage with a variety of learners, interface with a variety of obstacles, or try to remove their obstacles *(Finn shrugged their shoulders, indicating uncertainty in these situations).* As a professional musician, I think one of the challenges of being a teaching artist is you can't just assume people know stuff. And so what I see with a lot of teachers and what I saw in myself early on is, well, why can't you hit that note? (October 28, 2022)

This failure to recall the learning process and the struggles encountered when learning music had to be remembered by each individual as a journey they, too, confronted in their own musical learning. This realization caused the participants to pause and reflect back on their experiences as a young, learning musician, obliging them to empathize with the students. Finn continued:

> You have to break down and say, "OK, what are the possible reasons that this student is having trouble playing this one note?" and then through teaching and encountering this problem over and over again, you say, "Well, let's try this." If you're in a long-term teaching situation, what that means is you have to design a curriculum and an engagement strategy that makes sure you're addressing all of the potential challenges in equal measure, which is much harder in a group setting, right? (October 28, 2022)

Organizing the rehearsal process. As mentioned by Dean, the perspective of the professional musician, when attending a rehearsal, performance, or recording session, is to "show up on the downbeat, and to play exactly what [the music is] supposed to be" (October 17, 2022). Similar to the adjustments in expectations when working with student musicians, the professional musician~teachers in this study found they also needed to alter their approach to the rehearsal process. These modifications not only took place when considering the rehearsal, but also the various manners of the classroom, i.e., classroom management, student motivation, and assessment for/of learning. Dean recalled this adjustment as "a constant process of reading the room and reading all the different personalities in the room" (October 17, 2022) to keep the rehearsal from devolving into too much chaos.

Speaking to this potential for chaos, Dean further described this situation as "how much wildness do I let happen over here versus how much attention to detail" (October 17, 2022) is allowed (or tolerated?) in the learning space. Ashley suggested

she realizes this balance through "always making adjustments or spending more time" with particular students, with the amount of one-on-one time dependent upon their levels of ability, engagement, and focus while also remaining "flexible for whatever they throw at you" (October 4, 2022). This constant back and forth, although experienced by these individuals during their time as students in school music ensembles, was itself a (re)learning process for these new teachers and calls back to the search of a balance of fun and learning, joy and rigor.

Shadow work. An additional area of tension stressed (both literally and figuratively) by the participants revolved around the "shell shock" (Finn, September 21, 2022) suffered due to the amount of non-teaching tasks they were required to complete. These professional musician~teachers simply wanted to teach music but soon realized the act of teaching is only one aspect of the job of a teacher in the classroom. Finn pithily described the viewpoint when declaring it all to be too much:

> Yeah, it is, especially with the level of meetings. It's a lot of meetings, and I think sometimes it's good, but a lot of times it's not. It's just a balance. I just don't think education is really balanced field right now. Constant emails! To the point where you know, and it's just emails about everything. Oh, there's a glee club. Oh, there's a skateboard club. Here's this interest meeting. What about this? Did you connect with this? And then there's a Slack that everybody's on. And so I came up with a term in education, but there's a kind of work called shadow work, and I'm realizing shadow work is really what I think is driving the burnout. (September 21, 2022)

Dean noted these never-ending, additive tasks amount to a "death by 1000 cuts" (October 17, 2022), while Finn astutely observed, "What's the quote, 'The punishment for good work is more work,' and I think teachers are the biggest victims of that" (September 21, 2022).

Tensions and Struggles in Music Education

Although the intent of this chapter is to present the narratives of these individuals' stories unto themselves, these stories do not exist in a vacuum outside the music education sphere. As noted throughout, these stories overlap with experiences often encountered in, perhaps, more conventional music education spaces. The realization of these intersections is not intended as a point of validation for these professional musician~teachers, but rather simply as a point of reference for existing stories and ways of learning and teaching. With that, while the aim is to present these stories in opposition to the traditional paradigm, these depictions should not be considered oppositional, but rather simply as voices of other individuals who have participated in the music education paradigm at varying levels of depth, consistency, and time.

That said, when expressing opinions of their experiences in music education, these professional musician~teachers often surfaced viewpoints around exclusion, the myopic focus of music education, and the pervasive attitudes questioning the perceived educational and musical value of some musics—and some musical experiences—at the expense of others. And while the sentiments expressed by the participants don't necessarily fall neatly under any single research question, similar to the previous section presenting the struggles these individuals encountered in their journey, these thoughts most certainly provide insight into how their experiences as professional musician~teachers—and the additional dissonances these experiences created—altered their orientations and their evolution as teachers.

Barriers, silos, and attitudes. When discussing the more traditional path to teaching through a university-based music teacher education program, Dean acknowledged that while "the curriculum of the music education degree is, on the whole, a good thing"—and goes so far as to suggest he "suffered from not having the

background" (August 2, 2022) in such a program—there continues to exist a number of barriers to becoming a teacher. When thinking of who attends music teaching education programs—and who is encouraged to attend, and further, who is allowed entry into such a program—it's interesting to note that while the participants in this study participated in a variety of in-school and out-of-school musical settings throughout their childhood, none of the participants elected to pursue music education as an undergraduate area of concentration.

That said, the decision not to pursue a degree in music education is understandable, as all three intended to pursue music performance full-time, with their fall into teaching coming about later for several reasons. As mentioned previously, Ashley related she chose not to study music in college full time as she knew "how music classes are" (August 17, 2022), intimating the biased, Western-focused strands often found in schools of music—and the attitudes often associated in these programs—turned her off from studying music in college. This perception was further addressed when Finn related his desire to major in jazz performance, but due to the reluctance and inexperience with jazz amongst the music faculty, was redirected: "Oh, you have to major in classical" (August 10, 2022). This imposition towards the will of student caused Dean to remark, "If the whole objective [of music education] is to regenerate itself, then what are we doing? Why are we doing this?" (August 2, 2022).

Thinking back to his own experiences with the compartmentalization often found in schools of music in contrast to the overlapping skills often needed in the recording studio, on the gig, and in the classroom, Finn theorized:

It feels like all three of the big branches of music *(pauses)* either you do the performer/composer thing, you do the music production/business thing, or you do the music education thing. And none of those three things used to talk

about the other! But the reality of now is basically all three have to do a little bit of everything, right? Because as a teacher, you're going to have to arrange some music and prepare your own lessons. You're doing digital stuff and recording student projects. If you're a producer, you need to know how to actually play some of the parts. How are you going to speak to the musician when they're coming in [to a recording session]? Are you actually going to tweak their sounds? And then, if you're a performer, everyone's recording their own YouTube videos. And then, of course, you're gonna teach. And so it's funny that they're still separate, but the reality is, usually, you have to do a little bit of all three on some level to make ends meet. (September 21, 2022)

This sense of "why are we doing this?" in the context of the broader music education paradigm, permeated our conversations as a consistent undertone; the labeling of "other"—or rather of being "othered"—emerged as a point of tension amongst the participants. Dean recounted a situation that, while a common occurrence in school music, caused him to question the whole objective of music education:

I had gotten to the point where we had some high-achieving kids. They were taking private lessons on, you know, maybe clarinet or trumpet, or what have you, and they wanted to try out for the state and regional and county band. I would have to go to these director's meetings and endorse these kids for these ensembles and stuff, and it's this straightforward competitive thing where it's, "How clean are your scales?" And I would sit in these director's meetings with these music educators who came up absolutely through the traditional *(pauses)*, and I would sit there, and I think these are not my people. Not only are these not my people, but they're operating on an

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antiquated view of what music is even about *(pauses)* what music education

is even about; it's still got holdovers from a century ago. (August 2, 2022)

Dean continued by asserting these objectives constitute a "hidden curriculum" of

school music, triggering him to state the competitive nature of music education,

coupled with the "ironclad requirements" of who can and can't pursue music in

secondary and college situations, "Just feel so *(pauses)* not about music" (October

19, 2022). Recalling his criticism of the often encountered focus on the competitive

aspects of school music, Finn affirmed, "I think also you have to remind yourself

what this is all about. It's not about winning trophies. I know a lot of people would

disagree with that" (October 28, 2022).

When focusing the view back towards the inclusion of popular music in the

classroom and how these perceptions impact his approach to the classroom

environment, Dean contended that what "upsets me the most" about current music

education practices is that these practices are "exclusionary by design" (September

12, 2022). He lamented:

When you combine that with the elective model of coursework in most high

schools, enrollment tapers off to about twenty percent by ninth grade. And for

a lot of music educators, my guess is they're fine with that because they only

want to work with the cream of the crop. They only want to work with the

students who articulate beautifully, they read nicely, and they play the

literature you hand out to them, and they that's what they want. But if you're

someone who wants to think, [who] believes, as I think we do, that music is

for everybody, then why are we not doing more to teach music to everybody?

And so I've been fortunate to be in a district that's been receptive to this, to

kind of my concept of it, and I've been doing things my whole career to try to

bring music to everybody. (September 12, 2022)

This realization of what Dean perceived as the exclusionary practices of school music was one of the determining factors in his decision to concentrate on older, beginning learners. In focusing on this population of students, Dean hopes to connect with students who "for whatever reason were shut out of school music" (August 2, 2022). Of further interest, although not expressly stated as an objective of her class, Ashley makes a concerted effort to accept both experienced and beginner students to her courses. This open-door policy allows more students to engage in music who, perhaps, would not have been encouraged—while also recalling Dean's beliefs addressing the lack of entrance points into music for older beginners—to participate in a school music experience.

Reflecting and adapting. The tensions and struggles faced by these professional musician~teachers during their time as students and teachers within the music education ecosystem caused them to question, "What am I even bringing to the table here?" (Dean, November 18, 2022). This questioning compelled the participants to reflect on and critique how they might improve their teaching practice while learning about and acclimating to the structures and grammars (Tyack & Tobin, 1994) often found within the music classroom, including room configuration, the division of students in repertoire and/or instrument-based ensembles, and the process of grading a creative endeavor.

For Dean, this questioning led him to pursue a Master's in Education. Recalling a time during graduate school, Dean affirmed that "by the time I was getting into reflective practice and teaching, I kind of I caught the [teaching] bug" (August 2, 2022). And although this inspiration came after he began to pursue his Master's degree, Dean remembered this move not as a strategy to "move over on the salary guide," but as a meaningful, purposeful move to better his teaching. It was during this time that Dean began also began to "reflect on my own upbringing

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as a musician" while seeking out additional paths to professional learning. Dean recalled:

> When I became aware of APME [Association for Popular Music Education], it was, "Oh, these are a bunch of people like me, who came into the field, who had no choice but to draw on their own personal, informal experience." (August 2, 2022)

Shortly after that, a colleague suggested Dean look into the work of music scholar Lucy Green. When he discussed his interest in Green's research, Dean recalled:

> I was reading all these stories, and it was like I was reading about my childhood. I was reading about my experiences when I read that Lucy Green stuff. There's this kind of informal, sort of organically generated way of learning music, and then there was also this formal thing I got through private [instruction]. (August 2, 2022)

More recently, Dean suggested to his administration to use the process of this current study "to reflect on my practice, which is important. We need to do that, really" (October 19, 2022). This mindset continues the reflective process Dean continuously engaged in throughout his career as a professional musician and into his tenure in teaching, seeking out ways to consider, critique, and adapt.

Although Ashley referred to herself as a "mentor" and "not the teacher" in our conversations, she arguably possesses a deep expertise in teaching despite being the youngest of the participants. Despite this (or perhaps, because of this?), she continued to seek opportunities to learn and grow as a teacher, as manifested by her pursuit of a Master's in Education and securing both her Career and Technical Education and California Teacher's certifications. Ashley credits the time in the dual Master's/certification program as essential to her continued development while also, as mentioned earlier, offering her the opportunity to develop a better understanding

of learning and teaching, many aspects of which she was already employing in the classroom.

When asked about her plans for future professional development, Ashley discusses her desire to "be more involved" and to "be at the cutting edge" (August 24, 2022) of popular music education. To accomplish this, she recently became involved with music education organizations and conferences in California and, much like Dean, with the Association for Popular Music Education where Ashley has been invited to serve as a clinician at an upcoming conference.

In contrast to Dean and Ashley, Finn already had a Master's in Jazz Performance when he began teaching. In search of growth, Finn explored other areas of development outside academia, eventually leading to his association with the Lincoln Center Institute and his mentorship with Eric Booth, a well-known scholar/practitioner of teaching artistry. Finn described this elevation of his conceptual understanding of teaching, while nodding to his firmly held belief of moving beyond the dependence on a teacher to stimulate and sustain growth:

> Once that happened, once I got introduced to the Lincoln Center way and the field of teaching artistry, that's when I was kind of on autopilot as far as researching how to do this, thinking about inquiry styles, learning styles, engagement activities, and stuff like that, thinking about curriculum. But once I got exposed to the world [of teaching artistry], then no one really had to tell me to go and do those things; I'm just gonna go do those things. (September 21, 2022)

Through the lens of the self-identified teaching artist, Finn was able to describe what he believes to be some of the potential difficulties of the professional musician who becomes a teacher, suggesting that these individuals "might not have that same professional acumen that an educator has" (October 27, 2022) due to different paths

taken into teaching. Finn continued when pondering, "But at the end of the day, I wonder how much more effective I could have been had I had some specific training" (October 27, 2022). But here, Finn pauses for a moment before stating, "But that's kind of like a double-edged sword, right? Because that means they're not trapped mentally into existing models" (October 27, 2022) when thinking about the constructs of teaching. Here, Finn related this "specific training" or the lack thereof as the double-edged sword (as both sides of the blade present advantages and disadvantages in the classroom) while suggesting "they" (the professional musician who also becomes a teacher) might be less beholden to tradition and the way(s) teaching has been approached in the conventional music classroom. This pondering is not presented as an either/or scenario—where one way of teaching is better than another—but simply as *another* viable path to teaching. Finn again pauses for a moment before relating the current discussion to basketball:

> OK, let's say there's this professional league, we know as the NBA, right? A lot of those people have been groomed and trained through very methodical, regimented systems to learn how to play the game. I mean, you think about people like Shane Battier, you think about somebody like a Desmond Bane, even in a more modern sense, and they're known to be technicians, they're known to be amazing at the fundamentals [of basketball]. And there's a certain amount of professionalism in that regard. They're not traveling [and] they know how to do very nuanced things that, maybe, your average street baller doesn't know how to do. You know what I'm saying? And then, once again, it doesn't mean that one is necessarily better than the other, but the league kind of changed the rules for somebody that was very obviously a street baller, right? They literally changed the rules for Allen Iverson. He really opened up what you could do, but players were furious at him when he

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came in because here's this street baller, and they're like, "He is obviously

carrying, he's obviously traveling!" but people make concessions. But

[Iverson] changed. He innovated. He innovated the game in a way that, had

he maybe gone through a more regimented system, he probably wouldn't

play like that, you know? So there's that highly individualized thing. They may

be used to more unexpected challenges [in a game]. And so, when I think of

the word professional [when discussing teaching], it's not so much a level

thing, it's more of a pedagogical name, OK? It means that you've gone

through, maybe you've gone through a more tried and true pedagogical

method in order to do this thing. (October 27, 2022)

The path forward. Throughout our time together, our conversations focused

on the distant and not-so-distant biographical pasts related to *becoming* a teacher,

the more recent understandings that continued to impact and influence their

teaching practices and, ultimately, their thoughts on continuing to remain in the

teaching profession. As one might expect, memories of the strain of pandemic on

learning and teaching were fresh on the minds of these individuals, most certainly

leaving impressions on them individually and, arguably, anyone involved in education

over the past few years. To conclude our time together, I asked, "Do you plan to

continue teaching?"

Dean, the most senior of the participants, paused before he declared, "Well,

I'm gonna definitely keep playing. But as far as [teaching], I'm not really sure"

(October 17, 2022). After mentioning he was fully vested in his pension plan, Dean

acknowledged he was coming up on the twenty-five-year mark in education required

by their state to retire with both a pension and health care. Recalling the early

mornings of the past two decades and lamenting an "educational policy [that] has

gotten worse and worse" and the seemingly insurmountable workload through a

"death by 1000 cuts," (October 17, 2022), Dean looked toward his impending departure from teaching and admitted, "I won't be an indentured servant anymore, which is what I am right now, because I need this gig for the health care" (October 17, 2022).

In our final time together, Ashley revealed she was at a crossroads when debating her path forward. Ashley noted:

I spent all this time and money to get my Master's and my credential. I did it! I'm ready to be a teacher. And now, I'm sitting here making my piddly hourly rate that I've been making for years and years and years, and I'm holding a Master's degree, and at the same time, I'm getting these high-paying gigs on the weekends. And I'm like, "Why is life doing this to me right now? What are you trying to tell me, universe?" I don't understand what I'm supposed to be doing right now. I love it. We'll see what happens. (October 5, 2022)

This sense of optimism and wonderment was prevalent throughout our conversations. Since then, Ashley was hired full-time by her school, allowing her to expand her role and commitment even more. Ashley is no longer "not the teacher."

Like the other participants in this study, Finn had recently become involved with the Association for Popular Music Education, culminating in receiving invitations to present on his experiences in popular music education at conferences in 2022 and 2023. Closer to home, Finn reminisced on the past decade-plus of teaching, conceding, "I really don't think I can do this forever. It's too much. I think I finally hit that itch where I was like *(pauses)* I discovered I'm not a lifer *(pauses)* I don't think I'm a lifer" (September 21, 2022). He continued:

It wasn't so much that I don't like teaching anymore. But looking back, I just couldn't *(pauses)* I couldn't be what the kids needed anymore. [The students] need somebody that's there. They need somebody that's *all* there, that has

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the patience. And I just didn't have it anymore, or at least for a while. It was just time, and I knew that if I stayed, it would not be a good experience for them . . . I guess I'm temporarily retired from teaching. That's where I am right now. (November 18, 2022)

CHAPTER 6

AND YOU MAY ASK YOURSELF . . .

I came into this study with a number of questions, hunches, presumptions, and perhaps more than a modest investment in the topic at hand. Specifically, 1) how the orientations (i.e., experiences, knowledges, beliefs, and practices) of professional musician~teachers impact their approaches to teaching in learning spaces focusing on popular music, and 2) what the field of music education might gain from understanding how the authentic practices of popular musicians can be enacted in learning spaces focusing on popular music. After spending the bulk of time during my doctoral studies exploring and critically engaging in this topic and neighboring areas, I admit that while I believe now even more firmly in building connections to the musical world outside the walls of the classroom, I tender this study with even more questions, more wonderments to pursue. These questions and wonderments have found their way to the surface throughout this document, at times displaying my partialities while also encouraging my continuing journey of wandering the field of music education and wondering what questions I might stumble upon (Allsup, 2016).

While wondering how the orientations of the professional musician~teachers involved with this study impacted their approach to teaching popular music is undoubtedly important, the natural step beyond this realization would be to focus on what we might learn from their stories, and further how these understandings might have an impact on emerging teaching practices both in and out of popular music-focused learning spaces. Specifically, considering *how* and *when* these professional musician~teachers leaned into their lived experiences as they developed their approaches to teaching popular music affords the prospect of considering additional ways of learning and teaching music beyond, perhaps, more traditional manners.

Moreover, this consideration is connected to the core narrative around *who* can be a music teacher, and further what skills and competencies might be beneficial in the path to becoming a music teacher.

The stories of these individuals contain elements of beauty, messiness, discovery, fear, and chaos. Their paths are not simple journeys from points A to B, but rather twist and turn, move from side to side, and forward and backward. Similar to the stories of the participants' biographical pasts and their subsequent paths into teaching in secondary learning environments, this discussion of their stories is not entirely linear. To guide the reader through the twists and turns of this discussion, I have added signposts throughout, directing the reader through various routes and possible intersections. With this in mind, in this final chapter, I place the narratives of the three participants, my story, the relevant literature, and my thoughts and questions concerning these areas into dialogue with each other and, perhaps, add a provocation or two along the way.

Why these Stories?

Throughout this inquiry, the participants and I shared our journeys into becoming professional musician~teachers as counter-stories—that is, stories that stand in "complication or contradiction of dominant narratives" (Alekna, 2021, citing Delgado & Stefancic, 2017)—to the conventional pathways of the music educator. That said, the stories of *these* particular individuals—their stories, their narratives, their lived experiences, their truths—do not necessarily articulate the experiences of other professional musician~teachers. Going forward, I invite the reader to see something of themselves in the participants—a relatable moment, a similar approach, a noticeable thought—and, in doing so, "contemplate experiences in the past, present, and/or future from a fresh vantage point" (Hendricks, 2021, p. 61). I

anticipate this contemplation could, perhaps, encourage the reconceptualization of "the ways in which we think about music engagement, music education, and inquiry in music education" (Barrett & Stauffer, 2009, p. 1). More deeply, I hope exploring these stories will afford the opportunity to hit the pause button, encouraging us all, as we continually reflect, to ask, "How can we do this differently?" "Is this where we want to be?" "So now what?" and, paraphrasing the words of David Byrne (1980), to consider, "Well, how *did* we get here?"

The "here" speaks specifically to current state of teaching and classroom practices focusing on popular music and, more deeply, who is *allowed* to serve as a teacher in music education spaces. As a catalyst for reflection, I ask: How is music education, as a field of study and practice, moving towards an understanding of the practices of popular music? As noted in the research literature, the vast majority of teachers who participate in university-based music teacher education programs have an insufficient understanding of or preparation in ways of learning, creating, and teaching popular music (Emmons, 2004; Hamilton & Vannatta-Hall, 2020; Springer & Gooding, 2013). Heuser (2015) contends this lack of understanding and preparation often results in classroom and teaching practices that are mired in "deeply ingrained beliefs and expectations having little to do with the educational needs or musical interests of young people" (p. 221). Further, this milieu—a theoretical knowledge that lacks a practical understanding—could foster a teaching practice where one "merely inserts popular music into existing pedagogical structures" (Lebler & Weston, 2015, p. 125), possibly creating an add-and-stir proposition, cautioned by Morton (1994) as

> . . . a strategy to make music education more just (in an ethical sense), more relevant (in a pedagogical sense), or simply more musical (in an artistic sense) [that] demonstrates good intentions but little understanding of the

realities of cultural reproduction within patriarchal institutions such as the education system. (p. 108)

The question to contemplate is: Are popular music teaching practices based on theoretical understandings of ways of learning and teaching in popular music *in addition to* the practical applications of the authentic learning, creating, and performing practices of popular musicians? Or, conversely, are popular music teaching practices based in "the very disembodied kind of knowing which is . . . currently predominant in our educational institutions?" (Bowman, 2000, p. 50), with the result being the modification and decontextualization of the practices of popular music with the hopes they might fit within the constructs of the school music learning environment?

When looking toward who is permitted to teach in these learning spaces, the professional teacher~musicians who comprise this study possess a number of characteristics that, arguably, make them a "rare breed" (Dean, August 2, 2022). Their uncommon standing in the world of music education is regularly displayed by a profession that often frowns on the professional musician~teacher's lack of participation in an undergraduate music teacher education program while simultaneously downplaying, or worse, ignoring their depth of knowledge in the field of music. Dean addressed this depth of knowledge, and specifically, his understanding of the connections between music and school music, when he commented, "I don't think the music education profession knows just how important the perspectives of people like ours might potentially be" (August 2, 2022). Without these valuable perspectives, Bell (2016) asserts that popular music in school settings will continue to become further isolated from the creative practices of popular musicians. These practices, and their isolated inverses, could include:

1) learning songs by ear in contrast to learning songs solely through sheet music;

2) collaborating and exploring with fellow musicians in the rehearsal and performance in contrast to having a director diagnose and remedy musical problems; and

3) allowing a song to naturally ebb and flow into new sections in contrast to adhering exclusively to the music on the printed page, among many others.

This contrarian modification of the practices of popular music within the context of traditional music rehearsal strategies might lead to what Green (2002) describes as a simulacrum—that is, adding elements of popular music to the classroom in a manner that is antithetical to popular music practices. Following Green, I too, fear the ways popular music are often added into the school learning environment could devolve into something that might resemble popular music, but in actuality is simply a ghost of the real thing.

Understandably, music education organizations, well-meaning teachers, and corporate entities continue to explore various methods of operationalizing popular music to fit within the paradigmatic structures of music education (Allsup, 2008) through the use of method books, structured curricula, ensemble competition, and director-centered practices. These efforts to codify popular music education run the risk of fostering a simulacrum of popular music through altering the "musical processes inherent to the creation of popular music and therefore valued by popular musicians" (Davis & Blair, 2011, p. 128). To avoid this codification and potential simulacrum, how might teachers employing popular music in a school environment take advantage of processes that, arguably, more closely approximate the

multifaceted learning environments of popular musicians and the multitude of ways they learn, create, and perform?

I suggest using the stories of these professional musician~teachers as a frame of reference when approaching ways of learning, creating, and teaching popular music in school and research settings, thereby offering insight into deepening the connections between the gig and the music classroom (Bernard, 2012). Through considering the intimate knowledge and insider perspectives of these individuals, music education stands to realize more robust connections between the content knowledge of the professional musician with the pedagogical knowledge of the classroom teacher that is embodied in the complex identity of these professional musician~teachers (Shulman, 1986). This current inquiry provides the opportunity to recognize and explore the connections and intersections of the knowledge these individuals gained, the beliefs they developed, and the practices they cultivated in their experiences as professional musicians. And further, to consider how these various ways of understanding and being influenced their approach to teaching popular music and their search for ways to incorporate their orientations into learning environments focusing on popular music.

Why these Questions?

To assist in investigating these connections, I examined the biographical pasts and teaching practices of these three participants, individuals who came into teaching popular music in a secondary school setting not through the traditional path of an undergraduate music teacher education program but via other avenues. Opfer and Pedder (2011) define a teacher's orientation as the "interaction and intersection of knowledge, beliefs, practices, and experiences" (p. 388) around learning and teaching based on their prior knowledge and experiences. Further, they suggest

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one's orientation has an "extremely strong influence" (p. 389) on how individuals learn and teach. Following this line of thought, in this study I place an additional focus on the content these individuals gained from their variety of experiences and then incorporated into their teaching practices.

If we think of the facets of one's orientation (e.g., knowledge, beliefs, practices, and experiences) not as siloed elements, but rather as interactive ingredients that possess "varying levels of overlap and influence" (Opfer & Pedder, 2011, p. 89), we begin to understand how the totality of one's complex, biographical past contributes to one's orientation in and out of the classroom. The use of orientations as a theoretical framework lends itself well to the current inquiry, as the research questions aim to comprehend the "varying levels of overlap and influence" that shape an orientation and contribute to a developed teaching practice for the professional musician~teacher participants. Based on this exploration of the orientations and teaching practices of these professional musicians who also became teachers in secondary settings focusing on popular music, the following questions guided this study:

1) What are the individual orientations of professional musicians who also teach in popular music-focused learning spaces in secondary school settings?

a) Where and how did these individuals acquire their orientations during their time as students and professional musicians?

2) How do these professional musician~teachers approach teaching popular music in popular music-focused learning spaces in secondary school settings?

a) How are their orientations evident in their teaching practices?

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b) How did their orientations evolve to include their newfound experiences as they developed their teaching practice?

Exploring the orientations and teaching practices of the participants in this study will support the examination of "the nature of these teachers' pedagogical understanding of subject matter that is informed by their past and present experiences, rather than by a program of professional preparation" (Grossman, 1989, p. 192). Further, as the orientation of the popular musician~teacher is cultivated through the diversity of experiences encountered both on and off the gig, in and out of the classroom, how might these perspectives and attitudes impact and influence their approach to teaching popular music? These questions allow for the discovery and critique of new ways of learning and teaching, affording the opportunity "to map areas of inquiry that are underdeveloped or unexamined" (Barrett, 2014, p. 130) and, ultimately, allowing for an expansion of our "pedagogical toolkit" (Allsup, 2015, p. 86).

What Can We Learn from These Stories?

As noted throughout Chapter 5, several threads and themes connect and intersect the stories of the participants in this study. By investigating these themes through the lens of Opfer and Pedder's (2011) orientations framework, and by placing these themes in dialogue with the relevant literature, I hope to realize a better understanding of these professional musician~teachers' approaches to the popular music learning space and how their orientations impacted their teaching practice. Specifically, I anticipate this dialogue will assist in expanding the definition of who can be a music educator (Bernard, 2012; Bradley, 2007), and further what a well-rounded, culturally relevant music education might entail when incorporating elements of popular music practice into the popular music-focused learning

environment (Clements, 2008; Martin, 2018). By tracing (and retracing) the paths between the various facets that comprise their orientation (i.e., experiences, knowledges, beliefs, and practices), I explore how the experiences of these individuals generated knowledge of popular music, thereby engendering beliefs considering the intersections of music education and popular music that, in turn, produced a viable, flexible teaching practice. And further, I explore how these four facets filter through each other in a cyclical manner, creating a never-ending cycle of influence, thereby impacting how these individuals teach, what content they teach and, indeed, who they believe themselves to be.

What's Experience Got to Do with It? Dewey (1933/1998) suggested three types of experiences that foster various outcomes in learning: educative (i.e., experiences that impact learning in a positive manner), mis-educative (i.e., experiences that impede future learning), and non-educative (i.e., experiences that leave the learner unchanged). Schmidt (2010, citing Dewey, 1933/1998, 1938/1963) suggests that "'educative' experiences foster the development of attitudes, concepts, and skills that facilitate further learning in new situations" (p. 143). Experiences, in all their forms, offer points of reference and reflection that allow individuals to think back, think about, and think through how they might approach an event. Experiences, filtered through and impacted by prior knowledges, beliefs, and practices, assist an individual in making sense of the world.

For the professional musician~teachers in this study, their experiences as students, professional musicians, and teachers impacted their decisions about what constituted constructive learning and, indeed, what represents good teaching (Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Schmidt, 1998) and, more deeply, influenced their orientations. All three participants in this study engaged in music from an early age and continued to be involved in music—albeit in varying degrees and depths—through their

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elementary, secondary, and college years and up to the present day. The variety of their experiences in music both solidified their emerging understanding of the culture of school music while also affording them opportunities to engage in music beyond the school, offering them an insider's perspective of a number of various learning environments (Robbins, 2014).

Flexibility. The variety of experiences brings to light an essential factor in the orientations of the participants; their involvement in an assortment of musical settings permitted these individuals to gain a flexible, diverse understanding of music, how to learn and teach music and, by extension, what an education in music might entail. Ashley, who characterizes her musical self as a "utility musician" and a "jack of all trades," noted, "I'm more, 'What's the job that needs to get done, and let me fill the role the best I can.' And for those of us who are hustling, 'What's the need, and how can I fit in?' How can I make it happen?" (August 24, 2022). This notion of being a jack of all trades first occurred early in Ashely's life, as she recalled growing up in a household with professional musicians as parents, leading to a rather remarkable upbringing where she routinely interacted and performed with a number of well-known musicians throughout her childhood and into adulthood. These early experiences in music, and the imprint of growing up in a household full of professional musicians, revealed themselves in Ashely's orientation as a utility musician—the daughter of professional musicians who wore a number of hats both on and off the stage.

Dean, on the other hand, suggested he was "brought into the world by people for whom music had a lifelong importance but who were not professionals or serious musicians" (November 10, 2022). His varied musical upbringing consisted of private piano lessons beginning at the age of six, listening to an "armful of random albums from the local library," taking up the saxophone in the school concert band at eleven,

followed by teaching himself the guitar and the bass. Finn's diverse experiences in the general music classroom, and later performing on both the trombone and the euphonium in a number of ensembles, taking part in choir, and acting in the musical during high school sent him on a path that led Finn to consider himself an all-inclusive musician and performer. Finn captures this orientation when noting, "Early on, I didn't think of myself as just a trombone player. I was a musician" (January 16, 2023).

Isbell and Stanley (2018) refer to musicians who are "adept at navigating multiple ways of making music, who inhabit multiple formal and informal musical worlds and who can switch gears depending on where, what, and with whom they are performing" as "code-switchers" (p. 147). This flexibility, this ability to switch roles is fundamental in understanding how the professional musician~teachers in this study move through the world. Specifically, these individuals are both comfortable and adept in adapting themselves to fit within a given musical situation, thereby allowing for a diversification of their portfolio of experiences and, by extension, their ability to lean into these various experiences when the situation calls.

The variety of experiences of these participants also brings to light the affordances of lived experiences in contrast to downloaded experiences (Finney & Philpott, 2010)—that is, practical experiences that are tangible, lived, and participatory in contrast to hypothetical experiences that are read about, watched, or imaginary. For the participants in this study, their in-person, lived experiences offered them a flexibility in thought as well as knowledge and memories of events and situations to lean on when needed. This diversity of experiences is central in light of Bernard's (2012) prompt that the experiences of individuals who have understandings outside the conventional school music paradigm (Kratus, 2007;

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Williams, 2011) might offer valuable, unconventional perspectives and attitudes when reimagining transformative music education experiences.

Relying on experiences in teaching. Given these individuals did not participate in an undergraduate music teacher education program, how might their experiences (or lack thereof) in these programs serve as both liberating and limiting factors in the learning space? Findings suggest the perspectives, attitudes, and beliefs gained outside the construct of an undergraduate teacher education program (Bernard, 2012; Grossman, 1989) enabled these professional musicians to engage in an out-of-the-box interpretation of the music learning space. Some of these interpretations include a focus on the importance of a generative learning process over the completion of a final product, connecting the learning space to the greater musical community by engaging guest artists from the community to work with students in both in- and out-of-school settings, and providing multiple performance opportunities in various venues and band configurations, enabling the students to critique, troubleshoot, and improvise solutions in the moment in both an individual and a collaborative manner.

Conversely, this lack of specified training in an undergraduate music teacher education program sometimes served as a detriment to the participants as they entered the classroom without a theoretical or practical understanding of constructs of the classroom beyond their own experiences. For example, all three participants entered teaching with only a rudimentary understanding of classroom management and assessment practices, as well as a nascent pedagogical knowledge. And while the development of their teaching practice is discussed throughout, following Schmidt (1998), I suggest that similar to teachers who participated in an undergraduate music teacher education program, the participants in this study

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constructed their understandings of "good teaching" from a "variety of experiences" (p. 19) gained both on and off the gig, in and out of the classroom.

By relying predominantly on their experiences, the participants learned to teach by trial and error, a process that was initially based on their existing impressions of the classroom (Lortie, 1975) which, in turn, presented obstacles to the participants. Finn addressed this when he mused about "how much more effective I could have been [as a classroom teacher] had I had some specific training" (October 27, 2022). Grossman (1989) suggests that leaning solely on experiences when learning to teach, coupled with the lack of participation in an undergraduate teacher education program, might lead to difficulties when entering teaching.

Dean experienced some of these difficulties upon entering teaching for the first time, as he recalled, "I had never taught a classroom before, so I was terrified. I was terrified" (September 12, 2022). Ashley commented on being "thrown" into the classroom (October 5, 2022), while Finn remembered there "there was no training involved at all" (September 21, 2022) in his first teaching position. This shortage of preparation in the act of classroom teaching, coupled with a lack of supervision during their initial entry into teaching, left the participants in this study with a greater probability of experiencing pedagogical pitfalls—that is, "learning things that are inappropriate in any teaching situation and that will be reinforced by further unanalyzed experience on the job" (Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1985, p. 63). And while "teaching without a net" might lead to both potentially positive and negative teaching practices and learning environments, there's no denying that a number of new teachers enter the classroom with some sense of anxiety (expressed by Dean as a sense of terror), no matter one's previous experience.

To counteract the occurrence of new teacher pitfalls, Dean engaged in a reflective attitude that included "monitoring myself a lot" (October 17, 2022) while also "appropriately adjusting my standards for what's a finished or a rehearsed piece of music" (October 17, 2022). Further, an overreliance on their experiences as professional musicians caused the participants to reevaluate their experiences, temper their conceptualization of student ability and the pace of learning, and modify how to present the content they understood on the gig within the construct of the classroom and, in doing so expanded their emerging pedagogical content knowledge.

Outliers. When thinking back to their experiences as young student-musicians, college students, and teachers, the participants expressed an underlying sense of exclusion. Dean expressed this uneasiness when he recalled a meeting he attended of local band directors who were discussing the selection of students for honors ensembles. After becoming frustrated with what he perceived to be a focus on technique at the expense of creative musicality, Dean recognized, "These are not my people" (August 2, 2022). Clements (2008) suggests the sentiment felt by Dean and the other participants—this sense of being the outlier in music education—is often reified by institutions of higher learning and, more specifically, by music teacher education and professional development programs that habitually preserve a traditional approach to the modern-day music classroom. Hines (2020), reflecting on impact of this reification, recommends that an epistemological critique of music education might result in insights about how the current music education paradigm "may be inclusive and normal to some, and exclusionary and discriminatory to others" (p. 312).

Brewer (2014, citing Hargreaves & Marshall, 2003), when discussing the preservation of convention and the resultant culture regularly encountered in university schools of music, referenced the dissonance these environments often

create for young student musician/teachers. In this study, Finn illustrated this dissonance when he related how he was not allowed to pursue a jazz performance degree due to a lack of jazz skills within the brass performance faculty. Instead, Finn was instructed, "Oh, you have to major in classical" (August 10, 2022), effectively thieving any agency Finn had to engage in one area of study over another. This situation forced Finn to take an extreme overload of courses and ensembles during his undergraduate tenure as he pursued his interest in jazz performance. Similarly, when Ashley experienced a rehearsal conflict during her time in college, she stated her discontent with the inflexible attitudes encountered in university schools of music, stating she chose not to continue studying music because she "know[s] how music classes are" (August 17, 2022). The weight of these frustrations led the participants in this study to question themselves as professional musicians and as teachers, directly impacting their approach to both how and what they taught.

Nonetheless, these individuals' experiences in both in-school and out-of-school musical settings afforded them the ability to think back to what they learned and the insights they gleaned in a diversity of musical situations and apply those knowledges/insights in their teaching. By engaging in acts of crossfading (Kruse, 2016, following Tobias, 2015a)—that is, a blending of in-school and out-of-school experiences and ways of learning and teaching—in the classroom, the participants developed a flexible stance characteristic of a hybrid pedagogy. This blending and inventing of pedagogy is similar to what Robinson (2012) found in their study of the professional musician engaged in teaching one-on-one lessons. Robinson notes that the one-on-one environment "may encourage a certain freedom to create original pedagogy, particularly for instruments and musical styles for which little or no established syllabus material or grade exams exist" (p. 368). In the current study, without established guidelines and little initial administrative support, these

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professional musician~teachers were afforded the freedom to create a school music learning environments that embodied a hybridized blend of ways of learning and teaching popular music.

What about Knowledge? Campbell and Thompson (2014, citing Schmidt, 1998) equate "music teachers' prior knowledge and experiences" with the idea of "experienced-based understandings [that] act as a foundation upon which pre-service teachers build, store, revise, reject, and refine their knowledge about teaching" (p. 457). This characterization certainly falls in line with the textbook definition of knowledge as consisting of "information, understanding, or skill that you get from experience or education" (Britannica, n.d.).

The concept of multiple forms of knowledge is central to understanding the research questions of this inquiry. While knowledge can be conceptualized as an overlapping, complex system of various ways of knowing and understanding, Kincheloe (2004), speaking specifically to the knowledges essential to teaching, suggests the "educational knowledge base involves the recognition of different types of knowledges of education" (p. 52), while asking, "What types of knowledges should professional educators possess?" (p. 50). Burnard (2016), commenting on music teacher education, extends this conceptualization, suggesting that "knowledge in school music needs to be replaced by a pluralistic perspective on music knowledges" (p. 98). The following discussion of the various knowledges these professional musician~teachers acquired through their experiences assumes this pluralistic mindset.

Knowledge that and knowledge how. Finney (2023) addresses a prevalence of *knowing that* throughout music education. According to Finney, *knowing that* is when one knows a particular concept, term, or skill "that" is applicable to a musical

situation. For example, an individual might *know that* the process of songwriting entails:

    1) creating a chord progression over the various sections of a tune;

    2) composing a melody over those chords; and

    3) writing lyrics to complement the whole.

These actions stand in contrast to *knowing how*, understood as the practical knowledge provided by the experience with and hands-on use of a concept, term, or skill. Finney (2023) defines *knowing how* as "really useful knowledge, musical knowledge experienced." This "musical knowledge experienced" could take on the process of *knowing how* to:

    1) create a chord progression over the various sections of a tune;

    2) compose a melody over those chords; and

    3) write lyrics to complement the whole.

Although the two lists are the same, the experiential knowledge is different. Together, these two types of knowledge offer the individual the critical skill of knowing *that* various options exist within a musical situation while also knowing *how* to engage in a musical situation. In other words, knowledge *that* tends to be descriptive and theoretical while knowledge *how* offers the individual a practical understanding what works and what doesn't work in a given musical situation. That said, what Finney defines as "really useful knowledge" isn't really useful to teachers at all if teachers are unable to convey the understandings gleaned from knowledge *how* within the context of the classroom.

    The professional musician~teachers in this study displayed a blend of knowledge that and knowledge how, with respect to *doing* popular music derived from their gigging and teaching experiences that, in turn, contributed to their teaching orientations. Dean suggested the knowledge acquired by "being continually

conversant with the material . . . and continuing to gig" (September 12, 2022) supported the growth of his teaching practice and students' growth, too. Ashley suggested that the deep knowledge and understanding of the content of popular music gained through a lifetime of experiences on and off the gig allowed her and other professional musician~teachers to "back up what they have to say" (October 4, 2022). Similarly, Dean suggested that experience-based knowledge affords a credibility, of sorts, in the classroom (September 12, 2022). That said, these professional musician~teachers sometimes struggled with knowledge *how,* particularly in the early years of their teaching careers, due to *lack* of experiential knowledge in teaching contexts. This lack of knowledge *how* to teach could also be described as a shortage of a realized pedagogical knowledge, what Shulman (1986) describes as a knowledge that "embodies aspects of content most germane to its teachability" (p. 6).

Nonetheless, the breadth and depth of the participants' knowledges in the areas of creating, performing, and teaching popular music stand in contrast to a "very disembodied kind of knowing" (Bowman, 2000, p. 50)—that is, a sort of knowledge that is lacking any sort of an experienced learning and understanding. Isbell and Stanley (2018) assert a similar position when critiquing "the real-world/school-world disconnect [that] arguably remains ensconced in music educational practice" (p. 145). In popular music learning spaces, this disconnect might be revealed when a teacher attempts to facilitate the inner workings of a soundcheck, recording session, or a live performance without having experienced these situations themselves. In other words, in this hypothetical situation, the teacher in may rely more on knowledge *that* than knowledge *how.* In this study, these professional musician~teachers were able to blend and pivot back and forth between knowledge *that* and knowledge *how* of popular music practice, gained from

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their performing experiences. This ability to blend and pivot, they believed, benefitted their students. But how does the blending of these knowledges manifest in one's teaching practice?

    Blending knowledges in the classroom. The trails of these individuals' experiences generated both knowing that and knowing how in the practices of popular music as described through the incorporation of these experiences into their teaching practices. For example, when Finn discussed the elements of a recording session, he relied on his experiences in and knowledge of working in a recording studio, including "how to actually play some of the parts. How are you going to speak to the musician, and how do you tweak their sounds?" (September 21, 2022). Finn believed that his experience was beneficial to the student experience. Further, Finn extended the potential value of his experiences to student learning and career pathways when noting that "recording is part of the [music] ecosystem" (October 28, 2022), indicating practical knowledge of the recording process is no longer an ancillary skill, but an expected one. Along similar lines of thinking, Ashely works to convey her knowledge of the gig, assisting students with the "foundational knowledge" of "How do you build a setlist?" "How do you talk to a crowd?" and "How do you engage the crowd?" (October 25, 2022).

    Even though the participants possessed a depth of knowledge that and knowledge how of popular music, when initially entering the classroom space, the participants relied on their observed understanding of the music classroom (Lortie, 1975). In other words, the participants relied on their understandings of how a music classroom was organized and how music was taught based on their personal experiences in as students. These understandings track with the notion that professional musicians with established careers who then choose to pursue a career in teaching often neglect their on-the-gig experiences, instead opting to teach in a

manner that was, perhaps, more familiar to them based on their own experiences as a student (Green, 2022; Robinson, 2012). At least, initially.

After growing frustrated with the lack of supervision as a new teacher, and after consulting with another music teacher in the district, Dean was advised to simply "start with what you know" (November 18, 2022). And within the first couple of years of classroom teaching—slowly at first, and then, later, with more momentum—each of the participants began seeking out ways to incorporate the knowledge and understandings from their time as professional musicians into their teaching practice. Solidifying this point, Dean recalled:

> It didn't take all that long to realize, "Hey, wait a minute. If I bring more of my own experience from spending time in all those rehearsal studios and all those, you know, all the fun stuff I did, where I would just get together with my friends and play. Yeah, if I can bring some of that into this space, I can get more of these kids authentically with me and share the objective with me." (October 19, 2022)

In a similar manner, Ashley voiced how she was "teaching based on what I knew, which was my gigging life, not realizing that a lot of teachers don't know what that is" (November 18, 2022). Of interest here is to note is that the "gigging life" Ashley spoke of was modeled by Ashley's secondary teachers, so the idea that music teachers aren't necessarily also performing professional musicians was a somewhat unfamiliar concept to Ashley. In other words, Ashley's music teachers habitually brought their gig experiences into the classroom, constantly and consistently engaging in a crossfading that blended in- and out-of-school ways of learning and teaching music. Later in her own teaching, when deciding what content-specific knowledge to include in the learning environment, Ashley related she would "try and teach [the students] all the knowledge that I have of the gig" (August 17, 2022).

This knowledge might be in the form of knowing that the frontperson in a band is often responsible for engaging with the crowd in addition to knowledge of how to engage by way of stage banter, joking, eye contact, and/or sharing the background of a song.

Finn suggested that knowledge gained as a professional musician~teacher, that is, "somebody that's actively doing the art form itself," is a specific kind of experienced-based knowledge that supports teaching practice and offers a "very different sort of perspective on music. There's just going to be a different kind of teaching" (October 28, 2022). Finn related that "bringing your personal experience into the classroom and using that to teach" is a "big part" (October 28, 2022) of his teaching philosophy. Finn blended this knowledge in popular music with teaching strategies that included student choice, experiential learning, and asking "questions to help students foster their own thoughts about the music" (October 28, 2022). Finn suggested that by cultivating a collaborative space where the students co-learn with the teachers "in real-time" that he the hoped these learning experiences would empower the students "eventually go off on their own" (October 27, 2022).

This blend of experienced-based content knowledge, coupled with a developing pedagogical knowledge and a reflective attitude towards their practice, allowed the participants in this study both the expertise and the flexibility to begin connecting the classroom to the gig. Nilsson (2008) suggests this "practical experience emerges as an essential ingredient in understanding how to apply instructional strategies in real classroom situations" (p. 1284), thereby blending practical and content knowledge with a developing knowledge of how to relate these understandings in the learning space.

Seeking knowledge. An additional area of interest is how the participant's learned to teach within the context of the school construct and, additionally, how

they sought out opportunities to improve their teaching practices. In addition to a teacher's individual orientation, Opfer and Pedder (2011) note the impact of additional influences on a teacher's orientation. One of these influences speaks to the "systems of the learning activities, tasks, and practices in which teachers take part" (p. 384) as well as the "interplay of individuals, communities of teachers, and specific contexts in trying to understand and improve teacher learning" (p. 385) these activities represent. In other words, the opportunities for professional learning that teachers engage in that impact their individual orientations. For the participants, these activities presented themselves in three areas: 1) seeking out assistance from colleagues, 2) pursuing advanced degrees and certifications, and 3) engaging in reflection, research, and participation in music education conferences.

Although Finn recalled receiving little administrative support during his initial foray into teaching in New York, during his time at the Soulsville Charter School, he was observed by and offered feedback from supervising faculty. In addition, Finn attended weekly staff trainings where the faculty would watch a video of the teacher of the week. During these staff trainings, the team leads often pointed out, "Did you see how they did this? Did you notice how they do that?" (September 21, 2022). Finn recalled these reflective moments as being instrumental in improving his teaching practice as well as whetting his appetite for seeking additional learning opportunities, remembering, "once I was exposed to those different models [of teaching], I started looking for it myself and started thinking about those things myself" (September 21, 2022). This reflective stance revealed itself through seeking out additional learning opportunities including Finn's association with Eric Booth and his concept of the teaching artist, and later, Finn's engagement with other popular music educators through his involvement with the Association for Popular Music Education. This thirst for learning, and the effect this has on one's learning, is noted

by Opfer and Pedder (2011) when they state: "As teachers learn, new knowledge emerges from the interaction of the teacher learning systems, and this new knowledge then recursively influences future learning and also what is to be known about teaching" (Opfer & Pedder, p. 388). This search for and emergence of knowledge was (and is) present in all three participants through their varied paths into teaching.

For Dean, this search began with the pursuit of an alternate certification in teaching. Dean recalled attending the certification program on a part-time basis while teaching full-time, noting the course "was all basic" with "no music education content at all" (August 2, 2022). When seeking support, Dean sought out the only other music teacher in the district for advice, being told to simply "start with what you know" (November 18, 2022) as a base of knowledge. This prompted Dean to lean on his observations and understandings of other teachers and classroom structures during his time as a student (Lortie, 1975). After a number of years, and when pondering his path in teaching, Dean asked himself, "Well, where do I want to go next?" (August 2, 2022). This pivot resulted in Dean's enrollment into a Master's of Education program, which he remembered as being the catalyst for "getting into reflective practice and teaching. This isn't just me moving over on the salary guide, there's something meaningful about this" (August 2, 2022). This revelation inspired Dean to begin researching the work of Lucy Green and, similar to Finn, eventually engaging with the community of learners he found in the Association for Popular Music Education, a group he described as "a bunch of people like me, who came into the field, who really had no choice but to draw on their own personal, informal experience" (August 2, 2022).

For Ashley, one of the "systems of the learning activities, tasks, and practices in which teachers take part" (Opfer & Pedder, 2011, p. 384), revealed itself through

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her decision to pursue a Master's in Education degree. Ashley suggested one of the benefits of pursuing her Master's degree after having taught for several years was the realization of how her teaching practice linked to the relevant research, allowing Ashley the opportunity to reflect, critique, and improve her teaching practice. Ashley recalled, "This kind of gave me the confidence and the guidance to do that and be like, yes, [this approach in the classroom is] a good idea" (August 17, 2022). During this time, Ashley also secured her Career and Technical Education certification as well as her California Teacher Certification in the hopes of increasing her course load and expanding her position at the school, thereby offering additional frameworks that guided her teaching and, ultimately, impacting her individual orientation. In an effort to continue seeking out opportunities to learn, Ashley noted, "The goal for the future is to be more involved [and to] be at the cutting edge" (October 3, 2022) of popular music education. These efforts, and similar to both Finn and Dean, led Ashley to become involved with the Association for Popular Music Education, too.

Through engagement in the varied learning environments found in graduate school, music education conferences, and in-school professional development opportunities, the participants' experiences in furthering their own learning impacted their teaching practice while also modifying their individual orientations. Opfer and Pedder (2011) anticipated this transition, noting, "As teachers change, their orientation to learning systems also changes" (p. 389). As the bulk of these experiences focused on how to improve their teaching practice, these teachers were able to move away from a trial-and-error approach towards a deeper development of their pedagogical knowledge, that is "the general elements regarding teaching, classroom organisation, and management; instructional models and strategies; and classroom communication" (Nilsson, 2008, p. 1284). This deeper understanding of

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how to convey their depth of content knowledge revealed itself through the further development of their pedagogical content knowledge.

Pedagogical content knowledge. Speaking to various areas of knowledge, Opfer and Pedder (2011, citing Shulman, 1986) suggest a specific type of knowledge endemic to teaching that consists of "separate but interacting domains of knowledge needed for teaching" and, further, the "blending and interaction of these various types of knowledge into a unique form is thought of as pedagogical content knowledge" (p. 387). Gess-Newsome (1999), discussing the blending and interaction in the context of pedagogical content knowledge, submits that teachers have "history, background experiences, emotions, knowledge and goals" that enable them to "make assumptions, recognize tradition, make sense of information, invoke beliefs, and take action" (p. 3) in the classroom. All these notions are similar to Shulman's (1986) framework of pedagogical content knowledge, described as "the ways of representing and formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others" (p. 9).

The participants in this study entered teaching with a wealth of content and subject knowledge, including expertise in arranging, recording, performing, touring, and the music industry, among others. Ashley recounted the benefits she gained through participation in her high school's popular music program, leading her to build a curriculum "that encompassed all that I think that young vocalists should know about surviving in the industry" (November 10, 2022). That said, the participants in this study also came into teaching with a decisive lack of teaching experience and pedagogical knowledge, as evinced by Dean's sense of terror when he first entered teaching. When developing his sense of pedagogical content knowledge, Dean confessed:

I kept learning more about how to teach—some by trial and error, some by observing colleagues, some by research. I kept playing gigs the whole time and bringing the experience from the bandstand into my teaching, especially about how to conduct oneself professionally. (November 7, 2022)

For the professional musician~teachers in this study, their lack of experience as teachers, coupled with a lack of supervision—as might be the case for any new teacher—could have been a formula for potential failure. The individuals in this study, however, leaned into their past experiences and knowledges as reflective musicians to seek out ways to improve their teaching practice. Finn relates this move towards questioning his practice through critical reflection when he "started looking for [professional development] myself and started thinking about those [models of teaching] myself" (September 21, 2022).

This process of constant reflective discovery about teaching allowed the participants continual opportunities to consider their performing and teaching selves (and the knowledges inherent to each identity), at times complicating the question of when their orientations as former students and professional musicians impacted their teaching practice and when their orientations as developing teachers impacted their teaching practice. Shulman (1986) speaks directly to the complexity of teacher knowledge and teacher orientations when asking:

What are the sources of teacher knowledge? What does a teacher know, and when did he or she come to know it? How is new knowledge acquired, old knowledge retrieved, and both combined to form a new knowledge base? (p. 5)

By engaging in this reflective process, the participants maintained a fluid position and perspective where their performing and teaching selves continued to blend and interact, embodying the professional musician~teacher; two complex

identities—and the knowledge inherent to those identities—wrapped into one. This fluid position makes it exceedingly difficult—if not impossible—to separate one identity from the other. And truthfully, I have no interest in attempting to dissect their organic orientations as their constant state of reflection/reflexion is one of the traits that drew me to the topic at hand.

Through modeling the skills the participants learned on the gig, and by applying a hybridized, constructivist pedagogy (as highlighted by Finn's Jedi Pedagogy) the general approach used by the participants is to convey the skills and knowledges gained through the diversity of their experiences to their students, with the hope the students will begin to realize their agency and artistic voice in multiple performance situations. For example, while working with her vocal studies class, Ashley took the opportunity to explain to students how she systematically learned a song for an upcoming gig through analyzing the song form, followed by the learning chorus, verses, and finally, the entire song. Ashley then walked students through a similar exercise using a song the students chose to learn, and in doing so, combined her understanding of the content and how she went about learning the content to modeling and facilitating the process with the students.

Along a similar line, Finn suggested that it was the knowledge of content gained through the diversity of his experiences, combined with a sense of reflection and understanding, that eventually revealed itself as a "deep pedagogical knowledge" (October 27, 2022)—that is, ways of engaging with, conversing in, and creating through music in a multitude of ways in the context of the learning space based on his experiences as a practicing professional musician. For example, when Finn's students chose a particular song to learn, Finn chose to learn all the parts of the song (i.e., bass, keyboards, horns, vocals, etc.) before helping the students learn the song. Similar to Ashley's facilitation process, the process of learning how the

song was constructed and how the various instruments that comprised the song interacted, Finn was able not only gauge where his students might experience points of tension when learning the song, but this process of learning also enabled Finn the ability to model how to practice as well as the role of each instrument in support of the student's learning process. Further, this connection through struggle allowed Finn to understand possible tensions and pinch points in the process, thereby assisting Finn in determining how to facilitate learning a song during the course of a rehearsal. Finn also noted this process of

> . . . struggling alongside the student really helps you relate with the student.
> It really helps the students become more comfortable because they were like,
> "Here's this person that clearly has a reputation to uphold." And they don't
> care; they're just trying to learn.(November 18, 2022)

Illuminating this understanding, Dean suggested that taking on the role of the learner and struggling with the students "made me instantly a better musician because it forced me to consider" (October 19, 2022) the perspective(s) of the students.

One of the many benefits of exploring the intersections of the pedagogical and content knowledge of the professional musician~teacher is the discovery of new ways of learning and doing (Allsup, 2015). Unfortunately, Gess-Newsome (1999) suggests that although pedagogical content knowledge represents a unique knowledge held by teachers, that "identifying instances of pedagogical content knowledge is not an easy task" due to the "fuzzy boundaries" (p. 10) between the various types of knowledge necessitated by the teacher in the learning space. That said, in the participants, I was able to observe the blending and interaction as described by Opfer and Pedder, as the professional musician~teacher exists and excels at the intersections of in-school and out-of-school knowledge, performing and

teaching, content and pedagogical knowledge. This blending took any number of forms, including:

1) Finn's student-centered approach to the rehearsal process through providing the space for the students to choose what songs they would like to focus on and in what manner(s) they would like to rehearse those songs and, in the process, decentering himself as the sole source of knowledge in the learning space;

2) Dean's approach to learning and teaching tunes through the use of a variety of notational styles, including Western staff notation, tablature, Nashville numbers, chord charts, lead sheet, and lyric sheets;

3) Ashley's seeking out ways to impart flexibility in the learning space through offering a variety of performance options, i.e., solo or with accompaniment, live or recorded, acoustic or with a PA system, etc., thereby providing an atmosphere that not only includes choice, but also provide an opportunity for students to think critically about the various options and their possible advantages and disadvantages; and

4) All three professional musician~teachers blending their roles as utility musicians into the learning space, further extending this notion of flexibility through modeling these practices and, in doing so, nurturing a collaborative, co-learning space (Allsup, 2003) where traditional roles and hierarchies of teacher/student become malleable.

Barrett (2014) suggests the intersections of these malleable in-school and out-of-school experiences and knowledges are vital to understanding the

. . . aspects of the lived experience of music teaching and learning [that] are often too nuanced, contextualized, and interdependent to be reduced to discrete variables. The dynamic intersections of subject matter, learners,

teacher, and educational milieu are vital to our professional understanding.

(p. 114)

Due to the breadth and depth of experiences and knowledges the professional musician~teachers in this study embody, the field of music education could be afforded the benefit of realizing both of these knowledges—content and pedagogical, as well as the blending of these two unique knowledges—within these individuals. By exploring the intersections of the orientation of these professional musician~teachers—that is, their experiences, knowledges, beliefs, and practices— alongside their content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge that, and knowledge how, this study explores nuanced ways of learning and doing as well as the complex nature of the professional musician~teacher. By employing Opfer and Pedder's (2011) lens of orientation as a theoretical framework, the stories of the participants serve to illuminate the complex system of multiple experiences, knowledges, beliefs, and practices gained through a multitude of in-school and out-of-school experiences and how their orientations contributed to their pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1976), and further the "complexity-like understanding of the role of knowledge in teacher learning" (Opfer & Pedder, 2011, p. 388, citing Gess-Newsome, 1999).

Much like the plural experiences, beliefs, and practices, a pluralistic sense of knowledges (Burnard, 2016; Kincheloe, 2004) enables me to conceptualize these various understandings under the umbrella of knowledges. And further, this understanding acknowledges the notion of how pedagogical content knowledge is not a single entity, but a collaborative, organic knowing of how to best support students in their learning process through the incorporation of content, and further, how to convey that content within the context of the learning space. In other words, and exemplified by the previous examples, a blending of knowledge that, knowledge

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how, and knowledge of the means needed to convey these understandings and content within in the context of the learning space.

Opfer and Pedder, when constructing the foundation of their framework of orientation, considered these "different forms of knowledge [that] are synthesized in the learning processes (subject, pedagogy, and context knowledge are identified by Gess-Newsome, 1999) into a unique form of knowledge" (Opfer & Pedder, p. 388). And while the experiences of these professional musician~teachers served to develop and expand their pluralistic knowledges of the practices of popular music, how did these particular facets of their orientation (e.g., experience and knowledge), and the contexts in which they were learned (i.e., in and out-of-school) come to impact and influence their beliefs around how to convey these understandings in the classroom setting?

What about Beliefs? Thompson (2007) suggests that while a study of the beliefs of a teacher can be "messy," she encourages this exploration, noting a teacher's beliefs and actions cannot be separated. Further, Thompson states this examination can amount to "the single most important construct in educational research" as one's beliefs around teaching speak directly to "roles of teachers and students, music and talent, motivation, classroom management, and the milieu of teaching" (p. 30). Freire (1970) commented that teachers' pedagogical decisions are based, in part, on their deeply held perspectives, beliefs, and ideologies. We bring these beliefs into our teaching spaces and, coupled with the other facets of our orientation, enact them at every moment in the classroom. And while I would argue this holds true for all teachers, comprehending that this particular collective of professional musician~teachers possess beliefs that are directly connected to the skills, expertise, and knowings they developed due to their unique positions and biographical pasts helps provide insight into how the participants teach.

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Thinking back to the notion of flexibility with the participants in this study—flexibility in identity, musical settings, and practice—I wonder how their beliefs might have been cultivated, shaped and influenced by and through their lived experiences. Ashley enacted one of her strongly held beliefs by focusing on the assets—that is, the prior knowledge and understandings of music—the students brought into the learning space. She stated "as long as we're learning, why not get them excited about what we're learning? I want to be able to tie in what they want to learn about" (August 17, 2022).

As the field of music education continues to grow in our understanding and implementation of how to bridge a student's in-school and out-of-school musical self, the participants in this study sought out opportunities to a nurture a constructivist, co-learning space through including student voice and choice into these spaces. Bringing the student's prior knowledges, understandings, and interests into the classroom experience is what Ladson-Billings (2014) suggests is "the secret behind culturally relevant pedagogy: the ability to link principles of learning with deep understanding of (and appreciation for) [the] culture" (pp. 76–77) of the student.

Thompson (2007) suggests that our beliefs sit at the crossroads of our orientation, acting as an unconscious filter through which all our experiences pass. Our beliefs about, our images of, our prior knowledges in, and our understandings around teaching are "deeply rooted" in our "individual and personal educational histories and contexts" (Campbell, Thompson, & Barrett, 2012, p. 78). Opfer and Pedder (2011) note the orientations—our individual and personal educational histories and contexts—we bring "to teaching and learning are not easily altered" (p. 389). Further, the interaction of beliefs and experiences cannot be circumvented due to the depth of their embeddedness in our self. Much like a complex ecosystem, (for example, an ecosystem such as a river or lake where the various independent

elements of the system, e.g., water, fish, plant life, pollution, humans, etc., impact the ecosystem as a whole), it would be impossible to negate any single element of the complex system that comprises an individual without considering the impact on the whole. For the teacher, this ecosystem might consist of their colleagues, administration, parents, students, politics, funding, geographical location, individual orientations, etc., with each of these facets interacting with each other. Cooper et al. (2016) suggest it is this complex system that both "promotes and impedes the development of a teaching practice" (p. 90), fostering elements of a teaching practice that could lead to good teaching (Schmidt, 1998) but also potentially leading to the possibility of pedagogical pitfalls (Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1985).

Disrupting the system. With this in mind, the totality of educative, mis-educative, and non-educative experiences (Dewey, 1933/1998) of these professional musician~teachers, coupled with their prior and developing knowledges, fostered the belief systems of the participants in this study. Their biographical pasts not only fashioned their beliefs, but also found their way into the woven fabric of their individual identities. Part of this fabric can be found in beliefs fostered through their participation (and non-participation) in in-school and out-of-school musical situations. Similar to what Heuser (2015) described, the participants expressed being part of an educational culture that holds "deeply ingrained beliefs and expectations having little to do with the educational needs or musical interests of young people" (p. 221). As the participants were a direct outcome of these ingrained beliefs—both the positive and negative aspects of school music—it makes sense they would seek out ways to, consciously or unconsciously, disrupt the system that often marginalized them.

Although Dean had multiple opportunities to experience music while in elementary and secondary school through piano lessons, playing saxophone in the

concert band, and playing guitar and bass in both in and out-of-school bands, he lamented that "high schools, in general, don't provide enough music opportunities for beginners. If you didn't start an instrument in elementary or middle school, high school is usually too late to begin" (October 17, 2022). This strongly held belief led to him pursue research during his Master's degree into "late beginners," which Dean noted "crystallized my convictions as an educator" (November 10, 2022). Ultimately, Dean's belief in a "music education with a non-exclusionary ethic, focusing on beginners" (November 10, 2022) led him to leave his initial teaching position and to propose a new, beginner-focused program at a district high school that did not have a music program. Fittingly, this school focuses on learners with cognitive and neurological disabilities, affording Dean the opportunity to provide "an avenue for students to have a second chance at school music" (October 17, 2022).

Dean's beliefs around offering a "second chance" in school music fall in line with Darrow's (2015) assertion that students with disabilities are often treated unequally in school music settings. For Dean, his foundation of creating an inclusive environment for beginners followed him as he engaged in "dismantling and recreating of [the music classroom] as a place where we make mistakes" (October 17, 2022). With this disruption in mind, Hines (2020) suggests that "creating a more equitable and emancipatory educational process is to develop a praxis that affirms the lives of our marginalized students" (p. 314) and, in doing so, developing an "education [that] is in service of a student's objective" (Dean, October 17, 2022). For Dean, his "deeply rooted" beliefs are founded in developing what he believed to be a more inclusive music learning space for all students no matter their level of cognitive or musical ability.

How might these incidents of othering and exclusion in school music—those experienced while the participants were student musicians as well as those

experienced after they entered the classroom as a teacher—impact how these individuals approach the act of teaching? As noted previously, although their feelings of marginalization might present as an ancillary topic, this sentiment simmered just below the surface throughout our discussions. These, perhaps, wounded beliefs— shaped through their experiences of being othered, from working with inept, uncaring teachers, from being told "no," from being thrown into the classroom with little support—influenced their approach as they developed their teaching practice. Some of these negative influences surfaced in our conversations through positive means, including Ashley's focus on compassion, Dean's efforts to avoid being seen as an educational "adversary," and Finn's attention to "lean in the positive."

These negative beliefs were tempered by what might be described as more affirming beliefs, such as exploring the blending of Finn's concept of "joy and rigor," incorporating his diverse experiences into the learning space, and finding others who shared similar convictions and attitudes. Dean sums up the tension felt in the middle of these two areas when noting, "If you're someone who believes, as I think we do, that music is for everybody, then why are we not doing more to teach music to everybody?" (September 12, 2022). This sense of seeking out manners of expansion and inclusion in music education while simultaneously leaning on their biographical pasts was an essential element of their individual journeys into teaching.

(Mis)beliefs and (mis)understandings. Through living and teaching in the spaces between the gig and classroom, these professional musician~teachers sought out ways to create an inclusive learning space that took into account their beliefs about what music education might entail. Addressing this space, Thompson (2007) suggests "teachers' beliefs and teachers' actions in classrooms cannot be separated" (p. 30). These connections played out in the classroom as, while learning to teach through the act of teaching, these professional musician~teachers also engaged in

learning to incorporate their understandings—their beliefs—of what good teaching might entail (Schmidt, 1998). As the participants in this study did not participate in an undergraduate music teacher education program, their (mis)beliefs of what good teaching might necessitate were, for the most part, based on their (mis)understandings of their observed experiences as students in the classroom (Lortie, 1975). In other words, they were, at least initially, engaging in the act of teaching in a manner they believed to be authentic to the music classroom based on their experiences (and the beliefs these experiences nurtured) as student-musicians. But as they moved away from their "impression of what teachers did" (Dean, October 19, 2022) to what they hoped to become, the participants in this study began to find ways to "tailor their instruction" (Dean, October 17, 2022), seeking the spaces between their (mis)understandings and (mis)beliefs of the role of the teacher, the role of the student, and the role of education itself. Throughout this reflective, searching process, the participants began enacting their systems of beliefs through their teaching and, in turn, modified how they viewed themselves as developing teachers. This reflective stance is in line with Opfer and Pedder's (2011) description of the cyclical nature of a teacher's orientation when they note, "Changes in beliefs lead to changes in practice that bring changes in student learning that bring further changes in practice that result in additional changes in belief and so on" (p. 395).

    <u>Beliefs in identity.</u> But how do our beliefs influence our identity? When thinking of the complexity encountered in one's identity, I wonder if a particular identity takes precedence over another. Are we made up of separate, compartmentalized identities or, similar to the various ingredients in a baking recipe, have our various identities been fully incorporated, folded into one another to the point where singular ingredients are, perhaps, no longer recognizable and, in the

end, form a greater whole? Hines (2020, citing Crenshaw, 1991) extends the use of the concept of intersectionality—coined by Crenshaw as a way to critique societal structures in their failures to protect Black women—in identity as a "way of understanding the social paradigms that help construct our unique human experiences" (p. 314). Hines suggests that "human experiences are not constructed on one aspect of our identity" (p. 314), but rather that our identity is an aggregate of overlapping, intersecting elements. Finn recounted how the intersections of his complex identity as a teaching artist "really should feed each other" (November 18, 2022), suggesting these identities do, indeed, interact and influence each other. Ashley related her experience of having "this identity crisis as a musician" (November 18, 2022), conveying she never thought of herself as a teacher and that the ensuing struggle of identifying as a teacher *and* a musician was initially difficult before accepting (and appreciating) her composite identity. Similarly, Dean, at first, wrestled with the idea of being a teacher before acknowledging himself as "a bass player who somehow accidentally became a high school teacher" (November 18, 2022), further illustrating the density of a complex identity.

The ambiguity of these both/and identities and the pivot into the previously unconsidered area of teaching, coupled with the aforementioned frustrations and beliefs around school music, suggest the participants grappled, at least initially, with the addition of an identity in teaching and how their beliefs might be realized in these spaces. As noted in Chapter 1, I, too, had no desire or intent to be a teacher as both my parents were teachers. My desire—my focus—was solely on being a professional musician. Even when moving into teaching, I was able to retain (at least, initially) my professional musician identity as I was performing more often than teaching, allowing me the flexibility to move back and forth between the two as I saw fit. But as teaching slowly took up more of my schedule (and began offering

the stability of a steady paycheck), I began to consider, "Am I a teacher, too?" This addition of the simple word "too" is also important, as we took on additional roles (teacher, mentor, advocate) while continuing to perform music. For us, being a professional musician or being a teacher was never an either/or proposition, but rather *is* very much a condition of both/and. Further, and similar to the participants as a collective whole, I also found myself naturally combining these multiple identities as I continued teaching (Brewer, 2014; Isbell, 2008), but also seeking out—sometimes consciously, sometimes not—ways to incorporate the various orientations (e.g., experiences, knowledges, beliefs, and practices) gained in these identities into my teaching practice. This incorporation will be discussed throughout this chapter.

When navigating the worlds of music performance and education, and despite perhaps, the divisive attitudes and environments encountered throughout their music education tenures, the participants eventually fell into a compound identity inclusive of the term "teacher" and their other personal and professional characteristics, e.g., mentor, trombone player, facilitator, bass player, vocalist, arranger, artist, etc. Hargreaves and Marshall (2003) suggest these "identities in music" revolve around the "ways in which people view themselves in relation to the social and cultural roles existing within music" (p. 264) and is completely common amongst musicians. These multiple identities are often referred by the term *portfolio musician* (Lebler, 2007; Reinhert, 2022; Teague & Smith, 2015), that is, a musician whose career consists of a number of diverse responsibilities that orbit the core of the musician identity, i.e., musician, arranger, marketer, composer, engineer, educator, etc. Wright (2016) furthers this notion of a "messy," multifaceted identity when suggesting that popular musicians lead a diverse, intersectional existence that cannot be distilled into a this or that position. Isbell and Stanley (2018) extend this overlap when employing the

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concept of code-switching to musicians who are "adept at navigating multiple musical worlds" (p. 145), allowing these individuals the advantage of incorporating their comprehensive experiences when navigating any number of musical situations. Ashley embodies this notion of code-switching when she recalled:

> I'm more, "What's the job that needs to get done, and let me fill the role the best I can." And for those of us who are hustling, "What's the need, and how can I fit in. How can I make it happen?" So, a lot of times, that's knowing every background vocal part, or just knowing a lot of lyrics, or being able to do a jazz set for the first hour, and then pop for the next three hours, or whatever [the gig calls for]. (August 24, 2022)

In developing their "multi-musical identities as musicians and educators" (McArton, 2020, p. 13), the participants in this study were able to discover a comfortable middle ground, allowing them to live, learn, and grow as the multifaceted professional musician~teacher. In this middle ground, these professional musician~teachers were able to blend their experiences, knowledges, and beliefs into their developing teaching practices. Our teaching practice is an outward expression of what we believe teaching to be and who we believe ourselves to be—who we "hope" to be in the classroom (Ashley, October 4, 2022). This sense of a teacher's hope is articulated by Campbell, Thompson, and Barrett (2010) when noting:

> We believe that the focus on teacher-as-learner, and the emphasis on reflection on past experience to make sense of the present and to develop understandings for future action as teachers are at the core of becoming the teacher you envision when you think of an ideal music educator. (loc. 1616)

Our identity in practice is a physical and philosophical manifestation of our orientation to learning and teaching that encompasses the skills, methods, and

expertise we employ in our teaching. This complex identity encompasses who the participants believed themselves to be as musicians and as educators and, further, how they believed they should approach teaching. In other words, and reflecting back to Spradley (2020), their beliefs impacted how these professional musician~teachers saw themselves, with the outcome being their beliefs laced their way into their teaching practice and, ultimately, into the learning environment. As noted, and similar to the other facets of one's orientation and the cyclical manner in which they interact, our practices are based on and filtered through our beliefs, knowledges, and experiences. Our practice is the union of what we know and what we have yet to know. It is defined by both the why and how of our approach to teaching.

What about Practices? The term practice is often employed as a catch-all descriptor of how something is enacted, e.g., musical practices, traditional practices, instructional practices, teaching practices, democratic practices, best practices, etc. The Oxford Dictionary (n.d.) offers two definitions including:

1) "the actual application or use of an idea, belief, or method, as opposed to theories relating to it; and

2) the customary, habitual, or expected procedure or way of doing of something."

The second definition, in particular, seems apt for this inquiry given that many of the ways music is taught may fall into habits of practice or a pedagogical *status quo* that extends into the structures of the traditional ensemble itself (Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Kratus, 2007; Mantie & Tucker, 2012). To this point, Heuser (2015) states, "Although there is evolution in the field of music education, instructional practices within large ensembles seem to remain, with few exceptions, static" (p. 228). This observation sets the stage for the current discussion while simultaneously

reaffirming the attitudes and barriers that the professional musician~teachers in this study experienced throughout their teaching careers as well as the ways of teaching with which they were, perhaps, expected to align. These expectations came from a number of directions including administrators, peers, parents, the community and, perhaps, even students who were more familiar with a more conventional, director-centered construct where the instructor makes the majority of creative and managerial decisions.

Making this shift from the "what is" of conventional ways of learning and teaching in music to the "what if" of other pedagogical possibilities is difficult, as Thompson (2007) contends that our beliefs around teaching are "held implicitly" while also being "resistant to change" (p. 32). Rickels (2013) suggests that the prevailing "pedagogical homogeneity" in music education falls on the shoulders of music teacher education programs and the "resultant resistance to diversity seen in school music programs" (p. 37). Similarly, Brewer (2014) suggests the "demographic, musical, and pedagogical homogeneity of the teaching force, as well as of the collegiate faculty and programs that prepare teachers, have a substantial responsibility for the resultant homogeneity and resistance to diversity seen in school music programs" (p. 37). With these pedagogical and curricular constraints in place, is it any wonder discussion centering ways of learning and teaching in popular music rarely occur in undergraduate music teacher education programs in the US, leaving graduates of these programs ill-equipped to teach popular music through the lens of authentic popular music practices (Emmons, 2004; Hamilton & Vannatta-Hall, 2020; Springer & Gooding, 2013; Wang & Humphreys, 2009).

Understanding the entrenched and often pessimistic attitudes towards music and teaching styles that exist outside of the conventional music education paradigm is essential to understanding why the professional musician~teachers in this study

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often felt othered in teaching spaces and, for the purposes of this section, how this marginalization might have impacted their approaches to teaching and further influenced their orientations. Through exploring the teaching practices of these professional musician~teachers and how they move between the gig and the classroom, we might be better able to comprehend their orientations as revealed through their varied approaches to teaching and, in doing so, "to incorporate the genuine production and transmission practices" (Davis & Blair, 2011, p. 128) utilized by popular musicians into our teaching strategies and approaches. In other words, by examining the participants' teaching practices, what might we learn about their orientations, and further, how they engaged in the "authentic musical processes inherent to the creation of popular music and therefore valued by popular musicians" (Davis & Blair, 2001, p. 128), including collaboration, improvisation, flexibility, and a blended concept of knowledge that and knowledge how, among others, in the classroom? To aid in this examination of the participants teaching practices, the discussion will focus on four areas, including their similarities with teaching artists, how the participants learned to teach through trial and error, how the participant's adapted to the chaos and tensions often found in the learning environment and, finally, how they realized flexibility in their teaching practices.

       Teaching artistry. While looking at the practices of these professional musician~teachers in light of their experiences, knowledges, and beliefs, a perspective that might offer some additional insight into the current inquiry is the field of teaching artistry. Finn specifically stated that he identified as a teaching artist, describing his perspective as, "It's not that you're a teacher who does art a little bit [of art] or an artist who does some teaching to get by, but it's one identity that really should feed each other" (November 18, 2022). This overlap of and flexibility in their identities further displays how these entangled elements of Finn's

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life influenced each other while also falling in line with Rabkin's (2013) definition of a teaching artist as "artists who taught while also pursuing a serious artistic practice" (p. 507).

By engaging in these acts of crossfading (Kruse, 2016, following Tobias, 2015a)—by modeling and conveying skills and practices endemic to popular music as acquired through their experiences—the participants in this study took advantage of the freedom they were afforded as they developed teaching practices that contain elements found on the real-world gig (e.g., songwriting, learning by ear, engaging the audience, collaboration, choreography, working with recording and live sound equipment, etc.) while taking into account the constructs of the school music environment. Ashley suggested her understanding of these real-world experiences is key, as "it's one thing to share the content knowledge" (November 18, 2022) when working with young musicians, but it's an entirely different matter when that knowledge is supported by years of experience on the gig and in the classroom; when "you are able to back up what you say and with what you can do" (October 4, 2022). These understandings call back Finney's (2023) notion of knowledge that and knowledge how insofar as the participants came into the teaching space with a keenly developed sense of popular music practice based on the totality of their diverse experiences. As noted by Ashley, these diverse experiences enabled the participants to lean into their multifaceted biographical pasts, affording them the prospect of incorporating their content expertise into the learning space. Speaking to this expertise, Finn suggested this allowed the participants to enter the teaching with a refined sense of "what worked and didn't work" (October 27, 2022) in a real-world musical setting before seeking out ways to apply these concepts withing the context of the music classroom.

Trial and error. That said, this notion of learning to teach and develop

curriculum through trial and error, with little to no experience as a classroom music

teacher and with an absence of supervision or guidance (as experienced by the

participants) could certainly be problematic. As noted previously, Grossman (1989)

suggests that without this guidance, newly minted teachers experienced difficulties in

reconceptualizing a known discipline as a school subject and, further, developing

ways to make the subject accessible to students. An additional possible difficulty for

the developing teacher is what Lortie (1975) terms the "apprenticeship of

observation," that is, developing a teaching practice based on classroom practices as

observed, (mis)remembered, and (mis)interpreted as a student. That said, as all

teachers were once themselves students, Campbell and Thompson (2014, citing

Stegman, 1996, 2007) suggest a "strong link" between a teacher's prior experiences

with learning and teaching and how they enact those experiences with and

observations of teaching in the classroom, thereby impacting a teacher's pedagogical

knowledge. Further, Grossman (1989) suggests that teachers develop pedagogical

content knowledge while learning to teach.

Dean illustrates this possibility when he recalled that he "started out teaching

the way we were taught, right? So the idea is I'm the sage on the stage. I'm the

authority. I'm kind of God here or supposedly. At least, that was my impression of

what teachers did" (October 19, 2022). Finn reiterated this stance when he

discussed his first in-school teaching position in Harlem, recalling how he was told to

"show up" and "do what you do" (September 21, 2022). In other words, the

participants in this study were instructed to teach in whatever way they saw fit, as

the expectation of their supervisors, despite having no prior training or experience

with classroom teaching, was that the participants could, in fact, teach. Ashley, too,

had a similar experience when reflecting on her initial approach to teaching, noting,

"I think I almost didn't know any better. I just was teaching based on what I knew" (November 18, 2022).

Here, we see additional overlap between the two areas of professional and teaching practices while highlighting the potential pitfalls of relying on personal experiences alone in the learning space. Finn touched on this notion when he expressed that, specifically due to a lack of specialized training, that teaching artists "might not have that same professional acumen that an educator has" (October 27, 2022). These pedagogical shortcomings, based on "the nature of these teachers' pedagogical understanding of subject matter that is informed by their past and present experiences" (Grossman, 1989, p. 192), often lead to what Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann (1985) describe as pitfalls—that is, "ways of teaching that are inappropriate in any teaching situation and that will be reinforced by further unanalyzed experience on the job" (p. 63). Dean experienced this lack of "unanalyzed experience," at least initially, when recalling he was "astonished to experience almost no supervision" (September 12, 2022).

I can relate all too well to a lack of supervision, guidance, and a developed understanding of how to teach when I first entered the classroom. For the entirety of the time in my first teaching position, I was rarely observed, and even then, the observer was *always* someone with little to no understanding of how the music classroom functioned beyond, perhaps, their memories and retained understandings of how a music classroom *should* be organized given their orientations. My supervisor often described the class environment as "chaotic, but energized" while noting that "learning was most certainly occurring" (SH, personal letter), but providing little actionable insight into how I might improve my teaching practice and, by extension, the student musical experience.

Teaching with the tensions. But Dean suggested this chaos, often discovered in music learning spaces focusing on creative and more informal learning practices (Blackwell et al., 2022; Davis & Blair, 2011) are not "diametrically opposed" to an educative learning environment, further stating that "chaos can be good, chaos can be on topic" (August 2, 2022). To this point, Tobias (2016) submits that "teaching and learning in hybrid classrooms may be messy at times and misinterpreted as chaotic by those more familiar or comfortable with linear and highly sequenced classes" (p. 116).

In Dean's case, this "classroom as audience" perspective—the impressions left by a lifetime of observations as a student—served as both an impediment to and a crucible of his developing teaching practices. And while all the participants were obligated to learn how to teach by "hook and crook" (Dean, September 12, 2022), this situation also afforded them the "freedom" to experiment with their teaching practices. Further, and thinking back to the previous discussion of identity, this setting also allowed the participants to discover their occupational identity—that is, "the process by which a person learns to adopt, develop, and display the actions and role behaviors typical of and unique to a particular profession" (Merton, 1957, as cited in Isbell, 2006, p. 30).

In addition to a teacher's individual orientation, Opfer and Pedder (2011) note the impact of additional influences on a teacher's orientation as defined by:

> School-level systems [that] involve the contexts of the school that support teaching and learning, the collective orientations and beliefs about learning, the collective practices or norms of practice that exist in the school, and the collective capacity to realize shared learning goals. (p. 384)

While the focus of this study is on the individual orientations of the participants, is would be remiss to suggest their experiences, knowledges, beliefs, and practices

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were not impacted by these additional areas. In the case of these school-level systems, all three participants discussed learning about the act of teaching by teaching themselves while also recognizing and enacting the grammars of the school environment—that is, the "regular structures and rules that organize the work of instruction" (Tyack & Tobin, 1994, p. 454). Not only were the participants in this study learning to teach through a try and try again mentality, but they were also learning *about* teaching while coming to terms with the various ancillary tasks a teacher engages in outside the act of instruction. Finn captured the tension these structures created when discussing the amount of "shadow work" (September 21, 2022) he engaged in outside the act of teaching while Dean referred to the added administrative burdens as a "death by 1000 cuts" (October 17, 2022).

While the argument could be made that these administrative tasks supports the teacher and, ultimately, the student and their classroom experience, these teachers indicated they came into teaching completely unaware of the amount of non-teaching work that went into teaching, thereby impacting their individual orientations. This dissonance modified their understandings of teaching and, specifically, began to modify their system of beliefs around what they thought the teaching profession entailed. Dean speaks to this dissonance when criticizing the absurdity of the pervasiveness of shadow work, grumbling, "[Administrators are] taking this deal we signed on for, and [each year] they make it a little bit worse, a little bit worse, a little bit worse" (October 17, 2022). But despite these misgivings, these professional musicians chose to teach and continue to teach; at least, for the time being.

Flexibility in practice. Here, I wonder how the participants in this study managed to function in these sometimes chaotic environments. Further, I wonder if the flexibility granted through their experiences in and with a variety of musical

contexts and situations served as a benefit in these environments. Due to their participation in school music ensembles and the traditional authoritarian, director-centered construct often employed in these settings (Kratus, 2007; Heuser, 2015), the participants were well aware of the habitual practices, the "customary, habitual, or expected procedure or way of doing of something" (Oxford Dictionary, n.d.), often encountered in ensemble-based music education spaces. Additionally, their participation in and observations of (Lortie, 1975) these ensembles granted the participants an awareness of the implied expectations of the manners in which these types of ensembles are often taught. In other words, due to their participation in school-based music ensembles in both secondary and university settings (i.e., choir, concert band, jazz band, etc.) the participants were aware of how "linear and highly sequenced" school music ensembles were managed. Further, due to their participation in any number of non-school-based musical situations (i.e., club dates, casual gigs, national and international tours, flight dates, etc.) they were well-versed in how out-of-school music situations typically do not operate in a similarly structured manner. These distinct, yet often overlapping experiences granted the participants the flexibility to move between the various manners and ways encountered in these situations, affording them the opportunity to employ their "pedagogical tool kit" (Allsup, 2015, p. 86), as well as the methods inherent to these situations, within the context of a school music learning space (Wright, 2016). Further, this flexibility allowed participants to further "tailor their instruction" (Dean, October 17, 2022) while reflecting on their pasts and seeking out opportunities to inject elements of their real-world expertise into the learning experience. One example might be the participants' ability move beyond what Bowman (2006) described as an "off-the-rack, one-size-fits-all account" (p. 13) when teaching. In other words, while the participants', at times, followed a more-or-less defined arc

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through the process of engaging the students in learning music, the participants sense of flexibility also allowed them to teach without the need of a defined lesson plan or curriculum, allowing them the ability, as Finn mentioned, to be "super flexible" (October 28, 2022) in the classroom. Ashley revealed she made an effort to be "flexible for whatever [the students] throw at you" through "always making adjustments or spending more time" (October 4, 2022) with particular students on a concept or skill.

But, as we began to self-critique our teaching practice, each of the participants cultivated an individual "life-long process of constructing and refining from diverse sources, personal definitions of 'good' teaching, [and] developing ever greater congruence" (Schmidt, 2010, p. 39) between what we observed as (believed to be?) good teaching and what we hoped our teaching might resemble. Speaking to this cultivation in a manner that draws distinct similarities to the participants of this study, Robinson (2012) determined that the popular musicians in their study were not solely re-creating their out-of-school learning practices, nor were they simply teaching how they were taught. Instead, these individuals were

> . . . creating their own idiosyncratic teaching strategies, drawing on those elements of their own learning histories which they valued, and supplementing these with aspects of musical learning which they felt they had missed out on; in short, they were attempting to teach as they would have wanted to be taught themselves. (p. ii)

And while cultivating a teaching practice founded in a "reflection on past experiences and in present learning contexts, analysis of beliefs, understanding the roots of your assumptions about teaching" (Campbell, Thompson, & Barrett, 2010, loc. 1616) is certainly not a novel concept, it is of interest to note that this foundation of an understanding of teaching holds true of the participants in this

study as well. And similar to the abundance of research focusing on music teacher education, what might we learn from these individuals and the fertile overlap of their experiences, knowledges, beliefs, and practices?

<u>Pause.</u> Opfer and Pedder (2011) note that a teacher's pedagogical content knowledge is acquired through the "blending and interaction of these various types of knowledge into a unique form" (p. 387) while Grossman (1998) suggest teachers also gain pedagogical content knowledge through the act of teaching. Exploring the orientations of the professional musician~teachers in this study offers a different perspective on the notion of pedagogical content knowledge and how the blended knowledge of the professional musician~teacher might apply to the popular music classroom. Barrett (2014) suggests the intersections of in-school and out-of-school experiences and knowledges are vital to understanding the "aspects of the lived experience of music teaching and learning [that] are often too nuanced, contextualized, and interdependent to be reduced to discrete variables" (p. 114). Developing a comprehension of the "deep pedagogical knowledge" (Finn, October 27, 2022) of the participants affords the opportunity to better understand the nuanced manners of learning and teaching popular music that does not necessarily lie within the confines of more conventional ways of teaching music.

But what about formal/informal? One area of interest often perceived as the Rosetta Stone of popular music education is the use of formal and informal learning and teaching strategies within school settings. While the participants in this study experienced music in both formal and informal modalities, both in and out-of-school, there was a distinct lack of discussion amongst the participants in this study on this topic, at least insofar as their experiences in music. In fact, the terms formal and informal—when referring to music learning and teaching—were only used once by one of the participants throughout the entirety of our conversations. Dean

recounted his introduction to the term after having read Green's (2002) book, *How Popular Musicians Teach*, well into his teaching career and after receiving a recommendation from a colleague in higher education. Otherwise, none of the three professional musician~teachers in this study referred to their learning and/or teaching styles as formal/informal in the manner often espoused by the music education community.

Here, I submit the knowledge that a concept or edu-term exists does not necessarily correlate with the capacity to engage in or represent the characterization of that concept. In the cases of the participants of this study, their stories provide abundant evidence that they participated and engaged in any number of musical settings inclusive of formal and informal ways of learning, regardless of how they (or the field of music education) might have labeled these experiences. Green's (2002) suggests that "formal music education and informal music learning have for centuries been sitting side by side, with little communication between them" (p. 216). However, these professional musician~teachers seemingly possess a comfortable relationship with the overlap of learning, creating, and teaching in both formal and informal spaces and the messiness that might ensue. Speaking to a range of formal and informal learning situations as represented by Folkestad's (2006) heuristic of a continuum, Bell (2016) suggests that "popular musicians are as eclectic as the music they produce," and further, that "popular musicians cannot be divided into a dichotomy (informal/formal), nor contained within a continuum (informal-formal); such models are not nearly messy enough" (loc. 6063). The orientations of the participants and their teaching approaches cannot be easily placed into an either/or, formal/informal dichotomy, rather their orientations demonstrate a both/and stance—a mixtape of intra- and extra-musical experiences that have shaped (and continue to shape) the participants in this study as professional musician~teachers.

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Further, the both/and position of the participants is consistent with how they spent the bulk of their careers existing in the spaces between the two often-conceptualized poles of formal-informal learning and teaching, shifting back and forth along the arc as needed. Parkinson and Smith (2015) refer to these hybridized learning practices as inclusive of formal and informal practices, while Smith and Shafighian (2013) encourage music educators "to be aware of the hybridized learning practices engaged in by popular and contemporary musicians, and the necessary flux (conceptually and in practice) of constructs such as formal, non-formal and informal learning experiences" (p. 264).

For Finn, this hybridity might take the form of taking unconventional elements or techniques (i.e., the use of blended notations, an unusual microphone set up, or the use of everyday non-musical items in the recording process[20]) learned during the course of a gig or recording session and incorporating those within the context of the classroom learning space, thereby deepening the connections between school music and music in the professional world. Similarly, Ashley regularly implements ways of learning songs by ear and a variety of notation styles into the classroom that she uses when preparing for her own gigs, thereby inviting students to join the journey, and helping them understand the process of preparation for—and the skills essential to—a professional gig and their benefit to the learning experience.

It is the flexibility that permits the professional musician~teachers in this study to be conversant in multiple musical ways, moving deftly back and forth along the arc of learning, creating, recording, performing, and teaching practices. Although they initially struggled with realizing their orientations in the context of the learning

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[20] In one of the many recording studios where Finn records, there is an old, wooden cola bottle case that was used to tap out the beat in the intro of Al Green's "Love and Happiness."

space, the participants found ways to move back and forth between the often divergent worlds of music and school music, seeking out the intersections between the two. This flexibility in identity, practice, and expertise afforded the participants the opportunity of learning how to teach within the construct of the school while concurrently weaving their orientations into their teaching practice.

Pause. Campbell, Thompson, and Barrett (2010, citing Feiman-Nemser, 1990a) discuss the concept of a personal orientation for early career teachers in terms of an exploration of an emergent, ongoing process of "becoming" through reflecting on "past experiences and in present learning contexts, [the] analysis of beliefs" (loc. 1616) and, through this process, understanding and making sense of the roots of one's assumptions, beliefs, and values encompassing the act of teaching. Further, Campbell and Thompson (2014) suggest these "experienced-based understandings act as a foundation upon which pre-service teachers build, store, revise, reject, and refine their knowledge about teaching" (p. 457). This complex foundation is not confined to pre-service teachers, as these "experienced-based understandings" continue to grow, expand, and change through a teacher's career as they gain new experiences, beliefs, and knowledges, thereby continually influencing their approach to teaching. Expanding this concept to Opfer and Pedder's (2011) description of an orientation as comprised of prior experiences, knowledges, beliefs, and practices and the ways in which these facets interconnect is a similar complex system. In the case of the professional musician~teachers in this study, their orientations evolved from multiple sources and continually influenced how they approached the act of teaching and who they believed themselves to be both in and out of the classroom, on and off the gig.

Bearing in mind the research questions, I fear that if the reader is looking for specific answers, a linear path depicting a directed journey from one question to the

next, then they are bound to be disappointed. There are no definitive answers here. There is no absolute recipe for success in popular music learning and teaching. There is not a designed curriculum that encapsulates "the authentic musical processes inherent to the creation of popular music and therefore valued by popular musicians" (Davis & Blair, 2011, p. 128). Further, providing a linear "how-to" approach would, in my estimation, be antithetical to how these popular musicians—how all popular musicians—learn, create, perform, critique, record, produce, and teach popular music. Instead, the multiple, overlapping points of contact among the experiences, knowledges, beliefs, and practices nurtured each of the three individuals in this study as they crafted their hybridized approaches to the popular music classroom. Further, the overlapping points of contact found in their orientations continue to exert influence on these professional musician~teachers as they continually develop their teaching practices.

That said, there are most certainly overarching themes that weave through the participants' approaches to teaching in the popular music-focused learning environment. These include:

1) These professional musician~teachers learned to teach by engaging in the act of teaching and, often through a process of trial and error, they developed a unique blend of content and pedagogical knowledge. While the participants, at first, were hesitant to enact their experiences as professional musicians in the classroom learning space, they eventually found a balance between the two, allowing them the flexibility to connect the skills, understandings, and attitudes learned both in and out of the classroom, on and off the gig, into their continually developing teaching practice;

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2) Their teaching practices included nurturing a co-learning, democratic environment through the inclusion of student voice and choice; disrupting the traditional hierarchy found in the classroom through a sharing of responsibilities, roles, and learning objectives; and the ability to adapt to and excel in a non-linear environment often found in less formal music learning spaces due to various levels of student engagement and ability as well as a lack of consistent instrumentation;

3) The participants, who were entirely comfortable and secure in critiquing their practices (and being critiqued) as professional musicians, found ways to focus these evaluative skills towards their teaching practices, and sought out ways to develop and improve their pedagogy. These self-assessment skills came into play early in their teaching careers due to their own desire to improve their teaching practices given their own lack of teaching/pedagogical preparation, a noticeable lack of administrative supervision or support, and a general deficiency of understanding of/appreciation for ways of learning and teaching music outside the band, orchestra, choir ensemble construct among peers and administrators;

4) The participants found ways to blend their experiences, knowledges, beliefs, and practices gained through their professional musician lives and their teaching lives into a hybridized pedagogy that reflected their biographical pasts while also taking into account student needs and potential outcomes. Further, the overlapping facets of their orientations continue to exert influence on these professional musician~teachers as they develop and modify their practices. In other words, these

professional musician~teachers curated (and continue to cultivate) a

pedagogical blend of what they knew and what they have yet to know.

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, I have more questions now than when I began this journey. That said, as the intent of this exploration is to expand conversation and critique in the field of popular music education and adjacent areas, I present these stories and the writing in this document as catalysts to conversations, knowing full well these discussions may not resolve the questions posed. In providing spaces for reflection, conversation, and critique, I am reminded of Stauffer's (2014) affirmation that "narrative writing places faith in the reader, leaving open spaces for the reader to engage with the text and the story, to wonder and to question" (p. 180).

My hope is these stories affect a pause, a prolonged moment to reflect on the "Well, how did *we* get *here*?" when referencing popular music education and how ways of learning and teaching popular music are approached (and how these approaches are continually modified) in the classroom. Given the relative nascency of popular music education (Mantie, 2013), this growing community continues to seek out ways to develop, critique, and (re)construct ways of learning and teaching in themselves and in the field (Smith, 2015). Through asking questions that are not often asked—and including the voices of those who are not often included—we might discover ways of learning and teaching that are beyond, but as Green (2002) noted, adjacent to our traditions and habits in order to "highlight the relationship between what we do and who we are becoming" (McCarthy, 2007, p. 3). The flexibility of the pathways that the participants in this study took in developing their pedagogical approaches—the chaos and messiness as depicted in the stories of their biographical pasts—frames this never-ending progression of becoming.

Where Does this Highway Go To?

As portrayed throughout this document, the stories of these popular musician~teachers, and developing a comprehension of their orientations as displayed through their stories, help support connections between the theoretical understandings and the practical applications of their orientations, thereby fostering a continuing, critical cycle of dialogue and influence between the two often conflicting areas of theory and practice. Folkestad (2006) encourages a "mutually shared need for a continuous dialogue," depicting the connection between theory and practice as a "relationship between the researchers and practitioners and with the rest of the surrounding society" (p. 136). Ladson-Billings (2014) furthers this notion when asserting:

> Thus, pedagogical theory and practice can and should operate in a symbiotic relationship. If we are to help novice teachers become good and experienced teachers to become better, we need theoretical propositions about pedagogy that help them understand, reflect on, and improve their philosophy and teaching practice. (p. 83)

Specifically, the implications derived from this study are that by blending formal and informal learning situations, knowledge that and knowledge how, pedagogical and content knowledge, and in-school and out-of-school musical environments, the field of music education stands to realize the antithesis of an "off-the-rack, one-size-fits-all" (Bowman, 2006, p. 13) music education experience. Through exploring the stories of the professional musician~teachers in this study, and reviewing how they incorporated their lived experiences into these learning environments, what might those who "fear they wouldn't know the first thing about actually doing" (Woody, 2007, p. 36) popular music in the classroom gain through exploring the stories of the individuals in this study, including how they blended their

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lived professional musician experiences into their teaching practices and into the popular music-focused learning space?

Hines (2020) stresses, "If music educators wish to understand and create change within our field, we must provide a space for voices to be heard" (p. 323) that exist outside the conventional music education paradigm. When addressing the role of cultural competencies in popular music education, Hines further suggests that "our foundational pedagogical understandings should first come from. . . community members" (p. 323). This point is critical, for as Bernard (2012) suggests, individuals with experiences outside the boundaries of a traditional music education model might be able to "think outside the box in terms of repertoire, musical activities, teaching strategies, and performance practices, bringing their unique musical experiences and perspectives to the ways that they structure their classroom practice" (p. 6). The popular musician~teachers in this study—in their dual role as knowledgeable authorities of popular music practices *and* ways of learning and teaching popular music—possess a unique pedagogical content knowledge, thereby providing an "important 'insider' perspective on teaching and learning" (Robbins, 2014, p. 187) that warrants to be explored, critiqued, and implemented.

To provide deeper connections with popular musicians and the practices of popular music, it is essential that music teacher education programs, music education organizations, and professional development providers connect with communities of those who possess knowledge that as well as knowledge how. The professional musician~teachers in this study fit this description, as the participants possess pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986) centering popular music insofar as "how subject matter was transformed from the knowledge of the teacher into the content of instruction" (p. 3). Reinforcing the need for partnerships, McArton (2020, citing Wenger, 1998) suggests the use of "brokers"—those who "exist at the

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periphery of practices, occupying space both inside and out, channeling knowledge, experience, and skills between practices" (p. 7)—to help the profession better understand the wealth of pedagogical content knowledge embodied in the professional musician~teacher. Engaging more deeply with the culture bearers of popular music can contribute to developing a well-rounded, transformative music education experience.

While many of my wanderings and wonderings in this study do not lead to definitive conclusions, I offer some recommendations in the following sections—first, from a broad perspective of the field and, second, on the complex system that is K–12 and university music education. By offering these recommendations, I intend to guide the reader through areas of importance while simultaneously leaving room for the reader to reflect on the power of these stories (Stauffer, 2014) and, perhaps, to wander and wonder a bit, too.

Simulacrum no more. As music education organizations, well-meaning teachers, music teacher education programs, and corporate entities, in an effort to codify ways of learning and teaching popular music, explore various methods of operationalizing popular music to fit within the paradigmatic structures and core narratives of music education, how might the stories of these popular musician~teachers impact the trajectory of their thinking about popular music education?

First, I would suggest that individuals, schools, and organizations critically reflect on what we know and what we have yet to know. Well-meaning teaching does not necessarily equate with a critical, thoughtful delivery of content. This well-meaning approach might resemble presenting popular music content that is solely based on a theoretical, decontextualized understanding in contrast to a blended, experience-based understanding of knowledge that and knowledge how. As noted by

Hamilton and Vannatta-Hall (2020), the "confidence level and the preparation required to implement popular music in the classroom are consistently low and are frequently mentioned [by current music teachers] as the reasons why popular music is not utilized in the classroom" (p. 45). This lack of preparation, coupled with a minimal understanding of ways of learning and teaching musics outside the traditional ensemble-based music education paradigm (i.e., band, orchestra, choir) often sets up the inexperienced teacher for failure in areas that lie outside this conventional model. Unfortunately, many music education programs continue to wallow in the myopic mindset of fostering the "'pedagogical band world'—a world comprising school and university band directors/teachers" (Mantie, 2012, p. 64). Further, and when speaking to this preservation of convention, Mantie (2012) states that the peer pressure often experienced in pre-service and in-service music education settings is not only pervasive, but also the sole purpose is to pressure "people into specific (usually Western classical) musical traditions, something that ensures their perpetuation as musical traditions" (p. 68). By interrogating who we believe we are as teachers and as a profession (Spradley, 2020), and further coming to terms with the areas that might be lacking in our base of knowledge and foundations of our teaching practice, we can be honest with ourselves about the areas—our comprehension, our pedagogies, our attitudes—that we need to reflect on, rediscover, and rethink. In other words, start from the position of what we know and work towards a position of what we have yet know.

Secondly, I advise seeking out ways to connect with popular music by connecting with popular musicians and then actually cultivating and nurturing those connections in substantial ways. Bell (2016) asserts that music education, as a field and as a practice, should seek out ways to connect with those who have intimate

knowledge and understanding of the multitude of ways musicians create, record, and perform popular music. As a starting point, I suggest this engagement could include:

1) Connecting with local musicians and inviting them to work and perform with the school community *and* compensating them accordingly;

2) Engaging in professional learning opportunities exploring songwriting, studio recording, beatmaking, and live performance;

3) Joining and becoming active in professional organizations such as the Association for Popular Music Education[21] or the National Association for Music Education's Council for Innovations; and

4) Seeking out experienced professional musician~teachers to serve as mentors and guides for pre-service and in-service teachers as well as teacher educators.

Through understanding the learning and teaching practices of the professional musician~teacher, what Finney and Philpott (2010) characterize as "lived as opposed to downloaded" (p. 11) experiences, the teaching, research, teacher education, and professional learning communities could expand to examine and explore ways to incorporate the practices of popular musicians while, at the same time, inviting popular musicians to serve as guides and critical friends to provide nuance and support to the field of music education. Further, by engaging in and with popular music and popular musicians, music educators—at all levels of education—stand to expand beyond the stereotypical narrative of the ensemble music director as the sage on the stage and the purveyor of all musical knowledge in the classroom. Further,

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[21] Here, I note my bias for the Association for Popular Music Education as I am currently serving as President for the 2023-2025 term.

The cycle of music education. Although we might gain and even change, as individuals and as a profession, from this this inquiry focused on the lived experiences of three professional musician~teachers, a number of barriers to incorporation and inclusion stand in the way of change. The most obvious of these is the cycle of convention within the profession. As noted at the beginning of this inquiry, the conventional path of the pre-service music educator typically follows a circular journey from 1) participation in conventional school-based ensembles, 2) on to the study of the repertoire and techniques needed to conduct these types of ensembles, and 3) through to the newly-minted music educator often acquiring a position teaching in a program centering this paradigm.

University and secondary music programs, in their role of "guarding the curriculum" (Aliferis, 1991), preserve ways of (re)producing the music and cultural norms of Western art music. One of the gatekeeping methods regularly employed at both the secondary and university levels is the reification of these norms through the styles of music offered, the corresponding instruments and vocal classifications allowed in these programs, as well as the audition procedures that predominantly center Western ways of reproducing music. In other words, the preservation of an institutional requirement that music students must possess the ability to play a traditional concert band/orchestral instrument or sing in a particular style while maintaining a strict adherence to standards that privilege Euro-centric ways of musicking (Bradley, 2007; Gellerstein, 2021; Hines, 2020). Unfortunately, the cycle of music education rarely looks beyond the current music-ensemble-as-education model (Mantie, 2012) focused predominantly on offerings in band, orchestra, choir, and jazz (Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Heuser, 2015; Kratus, 2007; Williams, 2011) typically found in secondary and university settings across the United States. Further, the secondary school habit of following the lead of the university music

ensemble programs has nurtured a music education environment that often implicitly or explicitly marginalizes styles of music (and musicians) that exist outside of the school music milieu (Williams, 2011). This sense of othering by the "pedagogical band world" (Mantie, 2012, p. 64) was expressed by the participants of this study a number of times throughout our discussions. In order to affect changes in the music education cycle and resultant attitudes and biases this environment often nurture through reification, there exists a need for a reconceptualization of the music education cycle in K–12 and university music education. Due to the connectedness of K–12 and university music programs, I offer the following suggestions for the field of music as a whole.

Representation of music traditions. The stories of the participants repeatedly run counter to the dominant narrative often found among music teachers at the secondary level: an "off-the-rack, one-size-fits-all account" (Bowman, 2006, p. 13) based on experiences in Euro- and Ameri-centric ways of learning, teaching, and recreating existing music. Speaking to this one-size-fits-all perspective, Martignetti et al. (2013) state that music education has "perpetuated a dominant ideology of music education that emphasizes certain aspects of the Western European approach to music and minimizes or largely ignores other genres and approaches to making music" (p. 20). And although roughly 24% of students participate in a secondary music experience (Elpus & Abril, 2019), historically, this number decreases over time due to attrition. Through understanding and valuing the stories of these professional musician~teachers, how might we foster musical opportunities that could center these "other genres and approaches to making music? Additionally, how might these varied musical opportunities open doors to a greater number of students in terms of their initial and continued involvement in school-based music ensembles?

Looking towards ways of learning and teaching music that are outside of the western art music tradition allows us to begin to cultivate music education experiences that encompass opportunities in any number of musical possibilities, thereby allowing a greater number of students (and potential teachers) the benefit of seeing their cultures in the classroom (Shaw, 2016). And while no one should expect the inclusion of popular music in the classroom to be a panacea for a culturally relevant student music experience, thereby leading to a dramatic increase in student engagement, I suggest that increasing the diversity of music traditions (and the manners endemic to these traditions) offered in secondary and university learning spaces might, over time, lead to an increase in the diversity of students participating in music at school. Incorporating popular music more deeply and authentically into K–12 and university learning and teaching spaces is but one way of representing musical traditions inclusive of, and beyond, the band/choir/orchestra paradigm that is, both currently and historically, dominant in United States music education spaces.

This shift in offerings could have a dramatic effect on who participates in music in school, extending the possibility of who teaches music in school and, in doing so, altering the definition and landscape of school music (Williams, 2011). By leaning into the experiences of these professional musician~teachers as portrayed through their stories, what expanded opportunities might be realized, thereby making a music education experience accessible to more students and, perhaps, more future teachers?

Blended knowledges of teachers. The central aim of this inquiry is to develop a better understanding of how the experiences of these professional musician~teachers impacted and influenced their teaching practice and to consider how insights derived from the study might extend to the music teaching profession. More specifically, I recommended that teachers seeking to incorporate popular music

into the school learning experience seek out ways to gain experiences in and with popular music by cultivating a blend of knowledge that and also knowledge how. As noted previously, both knowledge that and knowledge how could be generated through experiencing any number of paths of engagement including connecting with communities of popular musicians, engaging with popular music practices, and seeking out professional development opportunities that center the blending of content and pedagogical knowledges under the umbrella of practices inherent to popular music. While the knowledge gained from these experiences could, most certainly, be generated through engaging as an amateur or professional musician, and while these experiences could prove invaluable to cultivating a deeper understanding of popular music practices, this engagement does not lead to absolute understanding. Ashley expressed this notion best when suggesting "it's one thing to share the content knowledge" (November 18, 2022), but to develop additional understandings granted through a blended knowledge that and knowledge how is essential in fostering an authentic learning experience in popular music.

I further suggest this blend of knowledge that and knowledge how applies to teachers new to popular music as well as popular musicians new to teaching. As depicted by the stories of the participants in this study, they discovered their knowledge how, while certainly granting them an expertise of content, was insufficient when entering teaching. Reinhert (2018) cautions that professional musicians, on the whole, do not possess a great deal of teaching experience, and when "faced with actually creating effective spaces for students to learn, as well as the planning, bureaucracy, and administrative duties that often coincide" with being a teacher, "many performers and industry professionals fall short, especially upon their initial induction into the system" (p. 208).

Being aware of what we know and what we have yet to know offers the

opportunity to blend areas of "separate but interacting domains of knowledge needed

for teaching" (Opfer & Pedder, 2011, p. 387, citing Shulman, 1986) and to foster a

more robust pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986) among teachers

inexperienced in popular music and popular musicians inexperienced in teaching. For

teachers who are inexperienced in popular music, I suggest exploring ways (as

outlined previously) to interact with popular music and popular musicians in an effort

to better understand the content that might be transferable from the professional

music space to the classroom learning space. This exploration could result in the

teacher inexperienced with popular music discovering educative and generative ways

of including popular music in the learning space while deploying their pedagogical

knowledge to explore ways of communicating this content to the student. In terms of

the popular musician moving into teaching, I recommend the inverse—that is,

developing an understanding of pedagogical approach(es) through research,

professional development, and peer learning/supervision that are necessary to

communicating the content of popular music while also critiquing the content insofar

as fit within the learning environment.

Cultivating opportunities. Recalling the idea of the conventional path of the

music teacher and the cyclical nature of music education paradigm, how might

additional opportunities and additional paths to becoming a music teacher be

realized? Admission requirements of the university-based music teacher education

program are dominated by prerequisites based on the Western perspective (Kruse,

2015). Cremata (2019, citing Kratus, 2015) goes so far as to admonish these

"barriers to postsecondary music education and music teacher education" as being

"blatantly discriminatory" (p. 421), resulting in the disenfranchisement of

prospective music teachers and performers (Kladder, 2021). Bradley (2007) asserts

these conditions have implications for who participates—and who does not—in typical school music environments and, by extension, music teacher education programs. In this study, Dean recognized this situation when declaring what "upsets me the most" about the current music education paradigm is that it is "exclusionary by design" (September 25, 2022).

How can university-based music programs (taking into account the multiple departments, (pre)requisites, accreditation organizations, and politics inherent to these institutions) modify their entrance exams, course work, studio requirements, ensemble requirements, and embedded attitudes towards musics beyond the Western European canon and make these programs, particularly music teacher education programs, accessible to students outside the traditional pathways? When examining the changing orientations of these institutions, Opfer and Pedder (2011) suggest that "creating systems, supports, and norms that encourage both individual and organizational learning and getting the balance right between internal and external sources of learning are difficult for most schools" (p. 392).

By disrupting the cycle, accepting a more diverse range of musicians into university schools of music—by creating entrance points for prospective teachers and performers who possess orientations that often exist outside the canon—music education can begin to bridge the gap between in-school and out-of-school music (Rodriguez, 2004). The participants of this study, as they all participated in their secondary school music programs, were able to navigate these barriers. But what about prospective musicians and teachers who, perhaps, lack the ability or skills necessary to plot a course through these barriers? Following Brewer (2014), and looking toward the university school of music as a complex system in and of itself, I also advocate that "universities revisit admission and certification practices to capitalize on the unique performing and teaching potential of such students" (p. 25),

and in doing so, move away from the exclusionary barriers so often found in these institutions.

On this note, when speaking of the cyclical nature of music education and the complex ecosystem of influence as depicted in the conventional music teacher/performer path from secondary school music and into university-based school music, it helps to circle back to briefly discuss music in secondary settings, as many of the barriers and exclusionary practices encountered in the university setting trickle down the secondary music environment. Any attempt to disrupt the cycle of the secondary/university music program might flounder if only one recommendation is implemented, as these systems possess overlapping areas of influence.

For example, while adding a beatmaking course to a high school curriculum is admirable and could be, arguably, culturally relevant and musically educative for the students in the course, what is the path of the student is they become inspired through their participation in the course and decide they want to follow this path into the university? Unfortunately, currently only a very small number of university music programs willing (and who also possess the faculty and facility infrastructures) to support such a student. Demonstrating the influence of university music programs on and over secondary programs, Hendricks (2021) states, "When a narrow group of music education gatekeepers define standards and measures of 'musicianship' and 'quality' and then controls access to opportunities to meet those narrow criteria, individuals who might demonstrate musicianship in other ways are inherently marginalized" (p. 66). But once the gates have opened, how might the university music teacher education program, in particular, support these students?

Educating music teachers. When looking towards the ecosystem of educating pre-service and in-service music teachers, the impetus for change falls not just on the shoulders of university-based music teacher education programs, but also

to state, national, and international music education organizations or other professional development organizations to initiate and sustain change. When creating the infrastructure to support musicians who are not necessarily rooted in the school music paradigm as well as musicians who might have been reared in a popular music culture *and* are also looking for additional opportunities for musical and pedagogical engagement, I suggest looking to previous recommendations. Specifically, by nurturing a culture where all music and musicians are valued and considered viable to the music ecosystem, the cycle of music education might experience a renewal of generative possibilities that exist beyond—and inclusive of—the current model. This cycle neither starts nor ends with teacher education; all facets of the music education experience function in an associated manner, with each facet impacting the other and the whole. Opfer and Pedder (2011) address this cycle of change when suggesting that "learning in one system must affect and be enacted and supported in another system. As a result, 'effective' teacher learning requires multiple and cyclic movements between the systems of influence in teachers' worlds" (p. 386). Opfer and Pedder (2011) continue to suggest the role of teacher education has in affecting change might be more strongly enacted outside of the university-based teacher education program, as "a change in teachers' learning orientations appears easier to accomplish in in-service rather than preservice teacher learning" (p. 390).

That said, when focusing a critical eye towards the traditional methods and methodologies of music education, it becomes painfully apparent there has been little change in pedagogies or ensemble structures in at least the last 50 years (Heuser, 2015; Kratus, 2007; Williams, 2011) or even as Jorgensen (2003) suggests, in the last 100 years. Brewer (2014) echoes this state of affairs when declaring the "the contents of music teacher preparation curricula and pathways to teacher certification have remained relatively narrow and unchanged" (p. 37) and, in

doing so, continue to nurture and reify a Euro-centric, large-ensemble focused cycle of music education. Bernard (2012) suggests, "Thinking deeply about this situation raises important questions for the profession—questions about the pathways to a career in music education [and]about the relationship between musical background and music teaching" (p. 2).

The question of the biographical pasts and resulting orientations is front and center in this inquiry, as noted by Finn when he mused, "I wonder how much more effective I could have been had I had some specific training" (October 27, 2022). Although Finn has a deep background in school music, he still experienced significant barriers in college. Given the embedded forms of these barriers, how might the experiences and cultures of musics and musicians found outside the Euro-centric paradigm find a place within school music? How and where might pre-service and in-service teachers—both those with and without experience in school music—find opportunities to experience a variety of styles of learning and teaching embedded within these cultures? Following Kaschub and Smith (2014), I recommend building relationships with musicians—including those who serve in the role of professional musician~teacher—who have the capacity to offer an expert perspective on the practices of learning, creating, performing, and teaching in popular music. Through engaging with these communities of popular musicians, the field of music education could seek out opportunities for these individuals to share their knowledge and to serve as critical friends of popular music education (Colwell, 2005) and ways of learning and teaching in popular music (Bell, 2016). These relationships, I suggest, will not only serve as connections points between practice and theory, but could also generate additional understandings, research, and coursework in an area where music teacher education is suffering a shortage (Springer & Gooding, 2013).

Additionally, as a growing number of secondary and university music programs seek out ways to include popular music in their course offerings, following Cremata (2019), I recommend that music teacher education programs seek out these programs in order to provide placement experiences that are inclusive of emerging understandings of learning and teaching popular music. While partnering with secondary schools that offer popular music might provide validation for these teacher education programs, more importantly, these partnerships could "provide a meaningful environment for pre-service teachers to experience popular music education as students and teachers" (Blackwell et al., 2022, p. 13) as, currently very few undergraduate music teacher education programs offer these types of placement experiences. Following this line of possibility, and based on this expansion of the music education cycle, might allow for the further inclusion of popular music into school music programs, thereby addressing questions around the marketability of a music education degree when looking towards the prospect of a job as a music teacher (Conway, 2002).

When looking toward in-service teachers and their continued professional development, I recommend reviewing learning opportunities noted throughout this chapter. By connecting with communities of popular musicians, by going into the spaces they occupy and by inviting them into school spaces, teachers can help facilitate conduits between the in-school and out-of-school ways of producing and performing music, benefiting the continued development of the teacher as well as the student. Knowledge and understanding, sharing experiences and contexts, should not only inform pedagogical approaches in the popular music-focused learning environments but should also resemble the diversity of those who interact and engage with popular music no matter the context or construct (Dean, 2019; Fleet, 2017; Hess, 2020; Holley, 2019). Further, as demonstrated by the participants in

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this study, connecting with one's own musicianship through learning additional ways of learning and teaching provides the opportunity for the teacher to become a learner once again.

In summary, implications for these reflections on practices and ways of learning and teaching with popular music include: 1) critical observation of how popular music is learned and facilitated in the modern-day music classroom, and 2) finding diverse of ways in which the experiences of professional musicians might be integrated into music learning and research spaces, 3) rethinking of how popular music is approached in secondary schools and universities, and 4) reconceptualizing how the act of teaching popular music is conducted in university music teacher education programs.

What are areas for future exploration? The narratives of the professional musician~teachers featured in this study and the expanded understandings their stories provide offer a strong foundation to inform suggestions and recommendations when cultivating a popular music-focused learning space. While the suggestions found throughout this section, for the most part, pertain to a macro view of popular music education, I encourage our ever-growing community to continue to explore the connections between practice and theory, learning and teaching, while keeping in mind both the authentic practices of popular music(ians) (Davis & Blair, 2011) and ways that the lived experiences of professional musician~teachers might be realized in teaching practice.

In following this path, I suggest the following areas of exploration, including:

1) research with a larger pool of participants focusing on the pedagogical content knowledge of professional musician~teachers and how their portfolio of expertise can be deployed in classrooms and scholarly spaces;

2) research exploring pre-service and in-service opportunities that allow for developing a better theoretical and practical understanding of the authentic practice of popular music and popular musicians;

3) investigating how actionable steps (inclusive of the recommendations included in this study) can be implemented in all areas of the music education cycle in an effort to support teachers, no matter their paths to teaching; and

4) research contrasting and comparing, in terms of their approaches to teaching, of popular music educators who participated in a university-based music teacher education program with those who did not participate in such a program.

So Now What?

Throughout this study, I have presented the stories of professional musician~teachers not only in the context of what they have to offer the field of music education but also in the context of a critique of the music education paradigm. What intrigues me is not only the familiarity I find with the participants in this study, insofar as the similarities in our stories, but our mutual sense of outlier-ness (Barrett, 2014). Although we have been musicians for as long as we can remember, although we have played at some of the highest levels of the musical profession, and although we are regarded as leaders in the field of popular music education, we often continue to find ourselves (and our perspectives) on the outside of the music education paradigm looking in.

As noted in Chapter 1, my mother was my band director. Due, in part, to having been raised in a traditional music education model, I have a profound sense of respect and heartfelt appreciation for the profession. I also believe we can do

better in so many areas as, despite being a "band kid" from my early childhood, I continue to feel as though there might not be a place for me in music education. To remedy this situation for myself and others, I have chosen to focus on the perspectives of these individuals and our journeys into the classroom, how we approach teaching in popular music-focused settings, and how the totality of our lived experiences affords us a depth of a blended content and pedagogical knowledge. My hope is that these counter-stories "disrupt the mainstream narratives in [their] own ways " and, by doing so, assist us "to envision a field that is more equitable, empowering, and full of possibility" (Hendricks, 2021, p. 69). Stauffer (2012), when discussing the changing stories of music teachers at the MayDay Colloquium 24, proposed:

> If we want change, we need to start telling different stories. We have a professional responsibility to help them know that they are not alone and to help them make these stories of music education present in the educational imaginary.

I hope the field of music education has the capacity to allow—and I choose the word "allow" purposefully because of the hierarchal and traditional power it manifests—perspectives that lie outside the traditional music education imagery to take root within music education. I maintain there's room for a variety of perspectives in nurturing a both/and music learning environment, to foster an environment where no one feels alone or marginalized, and where all feel as though they are welcome to participate and reap the benefits a transformative music education experience has to offer.

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APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL

EXEMPTION GRANTED

Evan Tobias
MDT: Music
-
Evan.Tobias@asu.edu

Dear Evan Tobias:

On 5/27/2022 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	How Popular Musicians Teach; A narrative mixtape
Investigator:	Evan Tobias
IRB ID:	STUDY00015921
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• Diss IRB.pdf, Category: IRB Protocol; • Diss research consent form.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • S Holley Interview protocols.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • S Holley Social Media Recruitment script.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials; • S Holley Survey Questions.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (2) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation on 5/27/2022.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).