

PERSPECTIVES OF STUDENTS WHO IDENTIFY AS FEMALE AND WOMEN IN
SECONDARY JAZZ ENSEMBLES

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this case study was to explore the perspectives of secondary-level students who identify as women and female on the musical and social aspects of participating in school jazz ensembles. The research questions were: 1) What reasons do students, who identify as women, female, and gender expansive cite for their decisions to join and continue to participate jazz ensembles? What reasons do they cite for not continuing past their secondary education? 2) In what ways do jazz educators support students' participation and musical growth in the ensemble, and how do they consider students' gender identities in their instruction and personal interactions?

The district selected exhibited equitable representation of female and women students. Three teacher participants and five student participants took part in interviews that revealed three categories: community influences, aspects of learning environments in jazz band, and plans to pursue jazz in the future. While participants did not believe gender played a role in the workings of this district, gender influenced all categories to some extent. The data revealed that peer to peer mentorship between middle school and high school students encouraged female and women students to participate in jazz band throughout their secondary education. Student participants showed hesitation around improvisation with no extra support received from teacher participants and a lack of female role models. Having summer jazz camps and events such as Jazz Girls Day for female and women students may foster this peer to peer mentorship as well as provide a safe space to explore improvisation.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF THE PURPOSE

Women have been historically underrepresented in the jazz community, both in school and professional settings.¹ There are many struggles that women musicians have encountered and documented ranging from feeling the need to out-perform their male counterparts to fears of sexual harassment or assault.² Women musicians and all-women bands, while outnumbered by male musicians, were an active part of the growth and creation of jazz. When World War II approached, women musicians were in forefront of the jazz community. These women were seen as a temporary replacement for men, even though they contributed to the jazz scene long before WWII.³ On top of being seen as temporary, they were expected to wear beautiful dresses and heels, have their hair and make-up done, and appear vibrant and cheerful, all while playing at a high level. Women would travel through the night to make gigs in different states, only days apart, in addition to having to worry all the extra appearance standards.⁴ Some women even believed that losing their physical attractiveness and youth would mean the end of their career as

¹ Natalie L. Boeyink, "A Descriptive Study of Collegiate Female Jazz Instrumentalists." (Doctorate in Music Education diss., Indiana University, 2015); Tia Fuller. *Opinion | Tia Fuller: Jazz Has a Sexism Problem. I'm Using My Saxophone (and Grammy Nod) to Fight Back.* NBCNews.com.; Vickie Willies. 2008. "Be-in-Tween the Spa]Ces: The Location of Women and Subversion in Jazz." *The Journal of American Culture* 31 (3) (09): 293-301

² Tia Fuller. *Opinion | Tia Fuller: Jazz Has a Sexism Problem. I'm Using My Saxophone (and Grammy Nod) to Fight Back.* NBCNews.com.; Cat Hope. "Why Is There so Little Space for Women in Jazz Music?" *The Conversation*, December 6, 2018. <http://theconversation.com/why-is-there-so-little-space-for-women-in-jazz-music-79181>.

³ Sherrie Tucker, 2000. *Swing Shift: "All-Girl" Bands of the 1940's*, chapter 1. Durham: Duke University Press.

⁴ Sherrie Tucker, 2000. *Swing Shift: "All-Girl" Bands of the 1940's*, chapter 1. Durham: Duke University Press.

a jazz musician.⁵ These expectations are still a sad reality of today's working women jazz musicians.

Many women throughout the early beginnings of jazz moved their skills overseas to combat the sexism that they experienced in the United States.⁶ If these women were able to endure the hardships in the United States, they would find themselves in the background of famous male jazz musicians. Lil Hardin Armstrong, who became the wife of famed trumpeter Louis Armstrong, was a member of King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band.⁷ She was a part of the force that brought Louis Armstrong into the limelight by serving as his co-composer and manager.⁸ Once her relationship with Armstrong ended, she left music believing that she would never get the same support in the industry as her male counterparts.⁹

Many other women fell victim to society's sexism in the jazz world. Some women fought back, even if their voices were muffled. Peggy Gilbert, a saxophonist from Sioux City, Iowa, fought back to a 1938 article in *Downbeat* titled, "Why Women Musicians Are Inferior."¹⁰ Her retort was printed in full saying, "A woman has to be a thousand times more talented, has to have a thousand times more initiative even to be recognized as the peer of the least successful man."¹¹

Recently, more women jazz artists have begun voicing their struggles publicly via social media and other internet platforms. One example is award winning saxophonist, Tia Fuller, who

⁵ Sherrie Tucker, 2000. *Swing Shift: "All-Girl" Bands of the 1940's*, chapter 1. Durham: Duke University Press.

⁶ Giovanni Russonello, "10 Women in Jazz Who Never Got Their Due," *The New York Times* (*The New York Times*, April 22, 2020), <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/22/arts/music/women-jazz-musicians.html>.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

spoke about her personal experiences in this male-dominated field. She stated that while women are more visible in jazz settings than in the past, the field is far from equitable in representation, professional development, and recognition to their contributions to the growth of the art form.¹² She recounted when she had felt extreme sexism in her career. Often, as with most women jazz musicians, she was the only woman on stage or in the room.¹³ She remembered getting cut off at a jam session in New York City. This was a turning point for her. She vowed, from that moment on, that was the “last time [she] let a man play over [her] like that again.”¹⁴

Organizations such as “We Have A Voice Collective” was created to represent a variety of ethnic, racial, and gender identities. “The Women in Jazz Organization” was also created in recent years to promote, encourage, and protect women in the jazz community. The “We Have A Voice Collective”, which Tia Fuller is a core member, is a group of 14 musicians, performers, scholars, and thinkers who strive to bring awareness to issues of inequity and create initiatives that enrich the performing arts community.¹⁵ They provide resources for artists to inform them on issues, such as assault, mental health and gender and racial bias within the performing arts community.¹⁶

The organization also created a code of conduct that other musicians and organizations can adopt for their personal mission. The mission statement of this code of conduct is as follows:

¹² Tia Fuller, "Opinion | Tia Fuller: Jazz Has a Sexism Problem. I'm Using My Saxophone (and Grammy Nod) to Fight Back." NBCNews.com.

¹³ Tia Fuller. *Opinion | Tia Fuller: Jazz Has a Sexism Problem. I'm Using My Saxophone (and Grammy Nod) to Fight Back.* NBCNews.com.; Cat Hope. “Why Is There so Little Space for Women in Jazz Music?” *The Conversation*, December 6, 2018. <http://theconversation.com/why-is-there-so-little-space-for-women-in-jazz-music-79181>.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ “WHO WE ARE,” WE HAVE VOICE, July 11, 2018, <https://too-many.org/who-we-are-2/>.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

This code promotes zero tolerance for harassment of any kind, including but not limited to sexual harassment and bullying. The commitments and definitions herein promote the creation and strengthening of safe(r) spaces that uphold the equitable treatment of all people regardless of their various identities and positionalities, including gender identity, race, age, ability, ethnicity, culture, immigration status, sexual orientation and identity, class position and economic background, and religious belief and affiliation.¹⁷

Groups and organizations such as the Hyde Park Jazz Festival in Chicago; Chamber Music America in New York; Perth International Jazz Festival in Australia; and others from all around the world have adopted this code of conduct.¹⁸

The Women in Jazz Organization, founded by saxophonist Roxy Coss, strives to address many of the issues that women and non-binary musicians face in the jazz world.¹⁹ One of their big goals is to bring younger women and more experienced women together through a mentorship program.²⁰ I have personally been involved with this organization as a mentee, connecting with jazz musicians all over the country. This creates a community, one sometimes absent in the jazz world, that may help young artists feel less alone. Relatively new organizations such as this and the We Have A Voice Collective are some of the forces helping shift the social dynamics in the jazz world.

According to Willies, the US jazz community is still heavily influenced by masculine language. The language of jazz has largely been the property of men. Jazz musicians often

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ “About WIJO,” WIJO, accessed January 9, 2021, <http://wearewijo.org/about/>.

²⁰ Ibid.

interchange “talk” and “play” in terms of their musical expression. Jazz musicians “talk” through their instrument and create a story through improvisation.²¹ With so many male musicians dominating the jazz scene, the jazz “language” often excludes women instrumentalists.²² Jazz continues to rely on the contributions of male instrumentalists while women’s contributions, such as historical impact on the art form’s development and visualization in a performance setting, are systematically underrepresented.²³ In 2017, Giovanni Russonello spoke on how women jazz artists were having a growth in recognized accomplishments in the field despite the pitfalls they face daily. One example he mentions is Esperanza Spaulding. A prolific bassist, composer, and singer, she broadcasted her composing and recording an entire album in 77 hours in order to push her limits and to show fans and fellow artists her artistic process. Russonello points out that she was often the only woman in the room and how the recording industry is one of the most male-dominated spaces in the music industry.²⁴

Russonello goes on to speak about how accomplished women jazz artists struggled in their early years. Camille Thurman, a tenor saxophonist, spoke on how she almost did not pursue a career in music. While in high school, she “endured sabotage from male classmates and a shrugging response from teachers.”²⁵ She stated that these male students and teacher’s responses

²¹ Vickie Willies. 2008. "Be-in-Tween the Spa]Ces: The Location of Women and Subversion in Jazz." *The Journal of American Culture* 31 (3) (09): 300

²² Ibid.

²³ Vickie Willies. 2008. "Be-in-Tween the Spa]Ces: The Location of Women and Subversion in Jazz." *The Journal of American Culture* 31 (3) (09): 300; Tia Fuller. *Opinion | Tia Fuller: Jazz Has a Sexism Problem. I'm Using My Saxophone (and Grammy Nod) to Fight Back*. NBCNews.com.; Cat Hope. “Why Is There so Little Space for Women in Jazz Music?” *The Conversation*, December 6, 2018. <http://theconversation.com/why-is-there-so-little-space-for-women-in-jazz-music-79181>.

²⁴ Giovanni Russonello, “For Women in Jazz, a Year of Reckoning and Recognition,” *The New York Times* (The New York Times, December 1, 2017), <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/01/arts/music/year-in-jazz-women-musicians.html>.

²⁵ Ibid.

to them made it really hard for the women musicians in the band. Many of them quit altogether.²⁶ Luckily, Camille Thurman was not one who quit. She is now the first woman musician in 30 years to have a season contract (2018-2019) with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra under the direction of Wynton Marsalis.²⁷ The notion that women are underrepresented in jazz, particularly as instrumentalists, seems to be widely acknowledged and accepted in popular online media and within US jazz communities, and several music scholars have explored this phenomena in research studies as well.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Many women jazz artists talk about their beginnings of their journey with jazz.²⁸ These women are well into their career and are often citing situations in their early development that could have potentially ended their journey. Dealing with hurtful comments from peers and educators, it would have been very easy to give up on jazz. Being someone who is currently working through the hardships of being a freelance woman in the jazz community, I am always saddened to hear stories of young women wanting to quit.

In my experience, I have heard personal testaments from young women students who struggle to find their place in the jazz world. At a recent international conference, I attended a panel discussion that talked about the lack of women bassists in the music industry, with an emphasis on orchestral playing. A bit into the discussion, a young girl asked to speak. She said

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Camille Thurman, "B I O," camillethurman, <https://www.camillethurmanmusic.com/bio>.

²⁸ Camille Thurman, "B I O," camillethurman, <https://www.camillethurmanmusic.com/bio>.; Tia Fuller. *Opinion | Tia Fuller: Jazz Has a Sexism Problem. I'm Using My Saxophone (and Grammy Nod) to Fight Back*. NBCNews.com.; Cat Hope. "Why Is There so Little Space for Women in Jazz Music?" *The Conversation*, December 6, 2018. <http://theconversation.com/why-is-there-so-little-space-for-women-in-jazz-music-79181>.

Ibid.

she really wanted to play jazz bass but was bullied by her peers and did not feel supported by her teachers. Because of this, she decided to focus on orchestral playing where she felt much more welcomed because of the number of women in the entire orchestra. Another similar story was spoken at a jazz panel where many young women in high school spoke of having no support. They often wondered if continuing on was even worth it, with tears in their eyes.

I was very fortunate to not ever feel that my gender identity affected my jazz playing early on. I felt that my jazz education was very inclusive and supportive, while also very demanding. It was not until I was older that I saw and felt how women in this field were typically treated. If I did not have an opportunity to build confidence through a few supportive educators, I am unsure as to if I would have continued after my first year of college. The school district I started in now has more young women participating in the jazz ensembles than during my time there over 10 years ago. During my time, there were around five non-male students between two big bands of roughly 32 students. Now the program consists of about 18 non-male students out of 32. What is causing this surge of women, females, or persons who identify as gender expansive to take on this art form in this particular district when the odds may be against them?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this case study was to explore the perspectives of secondary-level students who identify as women and female on the musical and social aspects of participating in school jazz ensembles. Examining aspects that influenced these students in which their decisions to enroll and persist in jazz ensembles may help current and future educators increase female enrollment in their programs. Specific research questions are:

1. What reasons do students, who identify as women, female, and gender expansive cite for their decisions to join and continue to participate jazz ensembles? What reasons do they cite for not continuing past their secondary education?

2. In what ways do jazz educators support students' participation and musical growth in the ensemble, and how do they consider students' gender identities in their instruction or personal interactions?

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

PERSPECTIVES OF WOMEN AND JAZZ

Women in Early Jazz

Although women instrumentalists have been historically underrepresented, they have been an active and vital part of the jazz community since its creation. There have been “all girl bands”, long before their popularity during World War II, and working women jazz musicians in everyday settings.²⁹ During World War II, women musicians were expected to “fill in” for the men that were drafted for the war. They were seen as a temporary fix while the men were away.³⁰ There are many accounts of these musicians stating that they were expected to go beyond that of their male counterparts, inappropriate sexual expectations, coupled with the stigma of being “loose women.”³¹ While a lot of the musicians claimed to be “good girls” during this era, there are accounts of the “name of an European abortionist that women musicians told each other about, just in case.”³² These issues were something unique to these women’s experiences during this time while the men in the field were able to focus more on their musicianship.

Oftentimes, women are compared to men as a “compliment”.³³ Women are often compared to male jazz musicians when speaking of their contributions instead letting their successes speak for themselves. Men or males often set the standard for what is considered successful. An article in 1938 issue of *Downbeat*, an unnamed female drummer was compared to

²⁹ Sherrie Tucker, 2000. *Swing Shift: “All-Girl” Bands of the 1940’s*, chapter 1. Durham: Duke University Press.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid. (p65)

³³ Sarah Caissie Provost, “Bringing Something New: Female Jazz Instrumentalists’ Use of Imitation and Masculinity,” *Jazz Perspectives* 10, no. 2-3 (2017): pp. 141-157, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17494060.2018.1>

Gene Krupa, a male musician, by saying the band had a “Gene Krupa in women’s clothes.”³⁴ Omitting this drummer’s name and substituting with Gene Krupa’s may have been intended to be a compliment but diminished the skill and credibility of the female drummer. Although there seems to be fewer of these instances currently, women musicians may still face unrealistic expectations in collegiate and professional ensembles in comparison to their male counterparts. The impractical expectations may influence their attitudes and proclivities for continuing their jazz education or careers. With so much anecdotal evidence of the struggle of women in jazz, researchers have sought to find common experiences, what may be holding younger students back, and how future educations can help encourage and promote women in jazz.

Attitudes of Women in the Jazz Education Setting

Rizzi, through a case study, interviewed eleven working female jazz musicians to gain insight on any themes that appeared to have contributed to their jazz education and, in turn, helped them continue on in the field. Using a cross-case analysis of the themes, important results that emerged in these interviews were: the need for mentoring; personal and professional qualities of the teachers; private instruction; musicians in the family; and the role of self-teaching.³⁵ Rizzi used literature for effective teaching methods and literature available on women in jazz to form her semi-structured interview questions.

There were some unexpected results that came from the interviews. One was the notable amount of self-teaching that was present in the data. It was used in different ways between the participants. In some of the cases, self-teaching was an outcome of an effective teaching style in private lessons and these musicians had gained tools to be able to continue their growth without

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Marguerite Claire Rizzi, “The Education of Women Jazz Musicians: Insights into Effective Teaching,” 2000.

the assistance of an instructor.³⁶ All of these participants also noted that playing opportunities were critical in their early stages of their education.³⁷

Surprisingly, there was no real effect of an “all-female” educational system within jazz.³⁸ Rizzi noted that research in education, outside of jazz education, points to “all-female” classroom settings providing benefits for female students. Many educators and musicians within the jazz community talked about having “all-girl” jazz bands as an excellent way to have young women stay in jazz. This was not prevalent in Rizzi’s findings. Interestingly, the three women in this study who attended “all-girl” schools said that this environment had little effect on their career as a jazz musician.³⁹ Participants cited private instruction and playing opportunities as influences on their jazz education. Rizzi was able to gathering insightful information from current women jazz musicians. Unfortunately, there is still a lack of women in high level jazz performance settings. This leaves researchers wondering: Why are there not more women in jazz?

Women Jazz Musicians in Colligate and Professional Settings

Wehr examined tokenism (being the sole representative of a group), stereotype threat (fear of confirming a negative stereotype), and self-efficacy (personal judgement of ability) theories within the answers provided in the journal, *Jazz Changes*, to the single question, “Why aren’t there more women in jazz education?”⁴⁰ The text that was analyzed included “all editorial

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Erin Wehr, "Understanding the Experiences of Women in Jazz: A Suggested Model." *International Journal of Music Education* 34, no. 4 (2016): 472-87 doi:10.1177/0255761415619392.

contributions and responses of males and females” that answered the question.⁴¹ Wehr analyzed participants’ answers — their gender unknown or a consideration of the study — by coding their various responses. Wehr developed a theoretical model explaining why female jazz musicians might be discouraged from continuing in the jazz profession past high school.⁴² Three themes with coinciding codes arose from the theoretical model: tokenism, stereotype threat, and self-efficacy. Wehr generated a model that demonstrated that the three theories — tokenism, stereotype threat, and low self-efficacy — all contributed to the overall female musicians’ negative experiences in jazz education.⁴³

Wehr’s model illustrated that women who experience tokenism — being one of the few female musicians in jazz’s male dominated space — impacted the extent to which they fear stereotyping. Stereotype threat is the fear of conforming to a negative stereotype, and associating oneself with that stereotype.⁴⁴ This could lead to lower self-efficacy for playing in jazz ensembles, leading to “jazz avoidance.”⁴⁵ She concluded that fostering positive experiences to improve self-efficacy would help combat tokenism and stereotype threats. Wehr suggests focusing on high school students because jazz is commonly a part of mainstream high school band programs. They suggest creating jazz combos by personality or gender may allow students to feel more comfortable in their environment and explore jazz improvisation more confidently.⁴⁶ Other studies conducted with female or women college jazz instrumentalists have provided similar findings.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid

In a mixed method study, Boeyink examined sexism as a potential factor of low enrollment of female jazz instrumentalists in collegiate jazz degree programs.⁴⁷ A survey was administered to 40 female jazz majors, undergraduate and graduate, who were from various colleges throughout the U.S., as well as female jazz musicians who had been out of academia or five years or less.⁴⁸ Boeyink collected qualitative data from four individual interviews, to extract participants' experiences as female jazz instrumentalists, their self-efficacy in jazz performance, their attitudes towards improvisation and the jazz field, and common personality traits valued among female jazz instrumentalists.⁴⁹ Boeyink found that female respondents reported themselves to be moderately confident and competent at improvisation. They were concerned of embarrassment over making mistakes when improvising a solo even though peer approval was not that important.⁵⁰ Some of the top personality traits that the female participants valued within themselves included being reliable, independent, imaginative, task-oriented, and outgoing.⁵¹

Boeyink's individual interviews revealed two themes: unique elements of the "jazzwoman's" experience and improvisation.⁵² Within the "unique elements" theme, there were sub-themes that described the "jazzwoman's" experience. Sexual harassment, external expectations, reception, and negative comments were some of these themes that emerged. Boeyink notes that one of the participants spoke of how "her sex and physical appearance were assets regardless of how she played."⁵³ Other female participants in the study cited that they had

⁴⁷ Natalie L. Boeyink, "A Descriptive Study of Collegiate Female Jazz Instrumentalists." (Doctorate in Music Education diss., Indiana University, 2015)

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

never had a female instructor or any female role models to look up to in their own practice which tended to discourage them.⁵⁴

While Boeyink focused on the female jazz musicians' perspective in the jazz setting, McKeage surveyed both male and female college students enrolled in music degree programs of any kind seeking to determine trends associated specifically with gender identity.⁵⁵ Students from fifteen college music programs participated in the survey (n=628), in which 44% of participants were men, 56% were women, 67% of the total were music performance majors, and 43% were music education majors. Students' ages ranged from 20 to 63.⁵⁶ McKeage sought to examine relationships between gender and participation in college instrumental jazz ensembles and differences in attitudes towards jazz based on gender.⁵⁷ The survey results indicated that more women than men had never played jazz before. For the women who had, there was a much larger drop off rate when they started college with only 43% continuing jazz in a college setting.⁵⁸ When it came to role models, there were conflicting results. The results collected demonstrated that role models were not a major predictor of participation. This was surprising due to past literature that stated "gender-specific role models" influenced career decisions.⁵⁹ A major predictor of participation in jazz ensembles was the participant's primary instrument and its

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Kathleen M. McKeage, "Gender and Participation in High School and College Instrumental Jazz Ensembles.", *Journal of Research in Music Education* 52, no. 4 (2004): 343-56. doi:10.1177/002242940405200406.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid. (p. 353)

presences or absence in traditional jazz ensembles.⁶⁰ More women also indicated that their future in music would not include participation in jazz.⁶¹

While McKeage and Boeyink focused on students at a college level, Wehr-Flowers measured confidence, anxiety, and attitude towards jazz improvisation over a much wider age range.⁶² Wehr-Flowers distributed a survey to members of jazz ensembles ranging from middle school to community jazz programs. The survey included a modified measure, the Fennema-Sherman Mathematics Attitude Scales, which tested confidence, anxiety, and attitude toward math and language. Wehr-Flowers adapted this to jazz ensemble members' confidence, anxiety, and attitudes toward jazz participation.⁶³ Of the total 137 respondents, there were 83 males and 54 females. Because gender differences have been examined in mathematics, Wehr-Flowers found it fitting to adapt the questionnaire from measuring gender differences in math to jazz, both traditionally male dominated fields.⁶⁴ Types of questions included statements such as, "I am sure I could do advanced work in jazz improvisation", "I get a sinking feeling when I think of trying to improvise jazz", and "If I could improvise in jazz really well, I would try and hide it."⁶⁵ Results showed that women, over a wide age range, consistently scored significantly lower on confidence ratings for improvisation, were more anxious about improvisation, and had poorer attitudes about improvisation than men.⁶⁶ Wehr-Flowers stated that this is an important mindset

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Erin Wehr-Flowers, "Differences between Male and Female Students Confidence, Anxiety, and Attitude toward Learning Jazz Improvisation." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 54, no. 4 (November 7, 2006): 337-49. doi:10.2307/4139755.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.(p342-345)

⁶⁶ Ibid.

to fix. An education in jazz studies is becoming more necessary for a career in music education.⁶⁷

If women are being affected by anxiety and confidence, they are limiting themselves in their education and career opportunities.⁶⁸

These foundational studies provided findings that indicated that women instrumentalists in jazz ensembles are significantly more anxious about improvising, less confident about improvising, less likely to participate in jazz ensembles, and unable to see how jazz could play into their music career.⁶⁹ If female and women students are less likely to be in jazz ensembles, these feelings may develop early on in their careers within middle or high school jazz ensembles.

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN GENDER AND POPULAR MUSIC EDUCATION

The ways in which popular music and jazz music are taught consists of similar practices. Both jazz and popular music is typically learned through immersing oneself in recordings and culture.⁷⁰ Popular music, outside that of Western classical music, can give insight to different cultures and styles, which many educators agreed was important for children.⁷¹ It could also appeal to different learning styles. Abramo conducted a study that investigated how boys and girls differed in their experiences in a popular music ensemble, or rock band. The 15 students (6

⁶⁷ Ibid.(p346)

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Erin Wehr-Flowers, "Differences between Male and Female Students Confidence, Anxiety, and Attitude toward Learning Jazz Improvisation." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 54, no. 4 (November 7, 2006): 337-49. doi:10.2307/4139755.; Kathleen M. McKeage, "Gender and Participation in High School and College Instrumental Jazz Ensembles.", *Journal of Research in Music Education* 52, no. 4 (2004): 343-56. doi:10.1177/002242940405200406.; Natalie L. Boeyink, "A Descriptive Study of Collegiate Female Jazz Instrumentalists." (Doctorate in Music Education diss., Indiana University, 2015)

⁷⁰ Joseph Michael Abramo, "Gender Differences of Popular Music Production in Secondary Schools." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 59, no. 1 (2011): 21-43

⁷¹ Lucy Green, "Popular Music Education in and for Itself, and for 'Other' Music: Current Research in the Classroom." *International Journal of Music Education* 24, no. 2 (2006): 101-18.

males and 9 females) were broken up into five groups.⁷² These five groups were created by the participants. The breakdown of the groups was: a group with four males, a group with four females, a group with three females and one male, and a group of two females.⁷³ These participants all attended the same school. Most were a part of other music ensembles at the schools, and all participants composed and rehearsed the songs together.

Abramo noted that there were clear differences in how the all-male, all-female, and mix-gendered ensembles functioned. The results demonstrated that the boys “conversed through musical gestures rather than words” which had been seen in research as the “classic” popular music practice.⁷⁴ These groups contained a clear leader that facilitated most of the rehearsal.⁷⁵ The girls, on the other hand, viewed their process more as a collaboration and communicated more in dialogue rather than with musical gestures.⁷⁶ When the groups were mix-gendered, there was a struggle to collaborate musically. The girls’ opinions and thoughts were often ignored by the boys in the group which caused the girls to become more passive and “retreat” in rehearsals.⁷⁷ Abramo suggested that students’ gender identities influenced their learning process when it comes to popular music. It was the job of the educator to mediate and demonstrate the benefits of the different practices such as speaking through dialogue or musical gestures.⁷⁸

The differences within popular music instruction are important when looking at research in jazz education. There is not much research comparing *how* persons with different gender

⁷² Joseph Michael Abramo, “Gender Differences of Popular Music Production in Secondary Schools.”

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

identities learn jazz music or the approaches that work best for all individuals. There is a combination of theoretical and demonstration, a large emphasis on aural teaching, and the development of student leadership is important to jazz instruction.⁷⁹ Examining how these students learn could lead to a more comprehensive view of jazz education.

SECONDARY SCHOOL MUSIC ENSEMBLE DEMOGRAPHICS IN THE UNITED STATES

Within the U.S., students who identify as female are shown to participate as much as, or more than, students who identify as male in secondary music ensembles as a whole. In a study by Elpus, data collected by the National Center for Education Statistics was analyzed to show the participation rates in choir, orchestra, and band of male and female students over time from 1982 to 2009. Elpus found that female students were statistically more likely to enroll in the traditional music ensembles — choir, orchestra, and band — than males, and that more females students were enrolled in all three types of ensembles across the U.S. between 1982 and 2009, with one exception in 2009 where there was a slight increase in male enrollment over female enrollment in band.⁸⁰ It is important to note that this study examined ensembles holistically and did not disaggregate ensembles by type. Therefore, enrollment data for marching band, concert band, and jazz band were compiled together.

While Elpus examined the number of male and female students in secondary ensembles, demographics, such as gender identity, have been explored for influencing students' decisions to join and continue in band. For example, Corenblum and Marshall created a model indicating

⁷⁹ Chad West, "What Research Reveals About School Jazz Education." *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 33, no. 2 (2014): 34–40

⁸⁰ Kenneth Elpus, "National Estimates of Male and Female Enrolment in American High School Choirs, Bands and Orchestras." *Music Education Research* 17, no. 1 (September 14, 2014): 88–102. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2014.972923>.

students' intentions for continuing to participate in high school band.⁸¹ They recruited 253 students in 9th grade, of which 59% identified as female, from a school in Canada. Students answered several items on a questionnaire measuring potential reasons for enrolling and continuing in band ensembles. Socioeconomic status (SES), perceptions of the teacher, and influential individuals, such as parents or peers, were among the main predictors of a student continuing to participate in school bands; gender identity was not a significant predictor.⁸² Similarly, Kinny created a theoretical model of non-music associated predictors of urban middle school students' band participation.⁸³ The sample population was a school district located in a Midwestern metropolitan area where 19.2% of the population was under poverty lines.⁸⁴ Findings demonstrated that SES was not a predictor of sixth grade students' choices to initially enroll in band but can affect retention.⁸⁵ Unlike Corenblum and Marshall, who did not find gender identity to be a significant predictor of band participation, Kinny found that eighth grade females were twice as likely to join band.⁸⁶

What characteristics about jazz ensembles or playing instruments in jazz ensembles might be structurally different than concert bands? To what extent may females be less likely to join and continue in instrumental jazz groups? There could be some association with the

⁸¹ Barry Corenblum and Eric Marshall, "The Band Played On: Predicting Students' Intentions to Continue Studying Music." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 46, no. 1 (April 1998): 128–40. doi:10.2307/3345765.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Daryl W. Kinney, "Selected Nonmusic Predictors of Urban Students' Decisions to Enroll and Persist in Middle School Band Programs." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 57, no. 4 (2009): 334–50. doi:10.1177/0022429409350086.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

instruments in jazz ensembles and their societal associations with gender.⁸⁷ The traditional instrumentation of a jazz band consists of the following instruments: trumpet, trombone, saxophones (alto, tenor and baritone), bass, piano, drums, and guitar. In multiple studies, respondents, ranging from elementary students to parents to music majors, consistently identified these instruments as “masculine.”⁸⁸ Perhaps these masculine gender associations with instruments typically found in secondary school jazz bands are related to the underrepresentation of female jazz musicians in secondary schools and beyond. However, it is important to note that no extant research exists about gender association with instruments that specifically target jazz musicians at any age level.

The empirical evidence indicating that students who identify as women or female are either equitably represented or overrepresented in traditional secondary-level school ensembles within North America⁸⁹ calls into question the underrepresentation of women and female participants in jazz ensembles. There is limited research looking specifically at secondary male and female students’ reasons for continuing in jazz band or their personal jazz education path. The studies provided earlier with Boeyink and McKeage focused on college level female and women musicians and professionals’ viewpoints. Other research related to jazz education focused primarily on providing pedagogical implications for jazz educators, finding ways to

⁸⁷ H. F. Abeles and S. Y. Porter, “The sex-stereotyping of musical instruments”, *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 1978, 26, 65-75.; Philip A. Griswold and Denise A. Chrobak, "Sex-role Associations of Music Instruments and Occupations by Gender and Major." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 29, no. 1 (1981): 57-62. doi:10.2307/3344680.; Judith K. Delzell and David A. Leppa, "Gender Association of Musical Instruments and Preferences of Fourth-Grade Students for Selected Instruments." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 40, no. 2 (August 24, 1992): 93. doi:10.2307/3345559.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Kenneth Elpus, “National Estimates of Male and Female Enrolment in American High School Choirs, Bands and Orchestras.” *Music Education Research* 17, no. 1 (September 14, 2014): 88–102. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2014.972923>.

incorporate jazz in general music education, and improving the growing jazz education market such as methodology and jazz technique resources.⁹⁰ There is limited research examining the perspectives of secondary students who identify as women or female on their jazz education. Furthermore, as research on gender identities moves beyond the traditional gender binary, there is a need to include participants who do not identify as male/men. Eliciting secondary-level students' perceptions of their participation in jazz ensembles may reveal some insight into whether non-male jazz participants may have different experiences than males/men that might either promote or discourage their participation beyond high school.

⁹⁰ Matthew Eric Warner, "Paradox, Problem, and Potential in Secondary School Jazz Education." Order No. 3581112, Boston University, 2014.; Laura Ferguson, "Putting It Together: Integrating Jazz Education in the Elementary General Music Classroom." *Music Educators Journal* 90, no. 3 (January 2004): 28–33.; Chad Lee West, "Teaching Middle School Jazz: An Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods Study," (Doctor of Philosophy diss., University of Michigan) 2011.

CHAPTER THREE: METHOD

PROJECT DESIGN

The design of this project was a single case study in which I aimed to gain the perspectives of secondary school students who identify as female and women, as well as their educators, regarding their current jazz band program. Originally, this project sought to also gain the perspectives of students who identify as non-binary, transgender, and gender expansive. The student participants who decided to be a part of the study all identified as female or women. Creswell defines a case study as a “qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a *case*) or multiple bounded systems over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information, and reports a case description and case-based themes.”⁹¹ The three types of case studies are: single instrumental case study, multiple case study, and the intrinsic case study. The most appropriate for this study was the single case study design in which I focused on an issue or concern—non-male perspective and participation in jazz ensembles—bounded by one case—a school district’s jazz program—to illustrate this issue.⁹²

Students who were enrolled in a single jazz program that historically had been recognized as having equitable gender representation, at least in terms of how students present or perform their gender identities, elicited some common themes and ideas. This district was selected for this study because of the high success the high school program has achieved. The high school band is very decorated with awards and achievements from all over the country. Other bands, that I have seen, with the same level of success, tend to have far fewer female students in their program. The insight that was gained may enable educators to better support

⁹¹ John W Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* . 2nd ed. Thousands Oaks, CA : Sage Publications, Inc. , 2007 (p. 73)

⁹² Ibid. (p74)

female students in their jazz programs. Thus, the focus on the students and teachers' perspectives in one program as a single case is an appropriate design for this investigation.

DISTRICT AND SCHOOL SETTINGS

School Sites

The school district site for this study was located in a Midwestern town with a population of about 37,336 residents. In 2019, the average household income was \$43,651 and had a poverty rate of 24.13%. The most common occupations of the town were production occupations. The top three ethnicities represented in this area are those who identify as white (63%), Hispanic or Latino (20%), and Black or African American (13%). The high school in the district reported having a total student body of 1,749 students, with 50% being female, 39% identifying as white, 34% as Hispanic or Latino, 22% Black or African American, and 1% Asian. The graduating senior class ranged between 375 and 425 students each year.

The school district consists of six grade schools, four middle schools, and one high school. The district was then split into two areas: east and west. Each side contains three grade schools and two middle schools. Once students complete middle school, they all converged at the high school. The grade schools consist of pre-K to third grade, the middle schools were grades four to eight, and the high school consists of grades nine through twelve. The instruments for band and orchestra were introduced to students around fourth and fifth grade. This district maintained a very strong arts presence with an orchestra, theater, choir, band, and jazz band programs. All of these groups and ensembles have separate directors, and students were able to be involved in multiple groups.

All of the departments within the high school performing arts program have achieved some level of success. The high school orchestra traveled to New York City to compete in

competitions and played for school homecoming events in addition to the typical concert cycle. The choir and theater groups competed and performed all across the country. The theater program was also invited to go to Scotland to be a part of an international festival.

MUSIC PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Middle School Band Programs

Within this district, two middle school programs are directed by two different directors. The east side of the district has about 60 students in the program between grades five to eight. This part of the district has two concert ensembles and one jazz band. The top of the concert ensembles meets before school begins at 7 am on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. The lower concert ensemble meets during the school day. The jazz band meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 7am. Students who wish to be in jazz band must be a part of the top concert ensemble. In this jazz band, there are sixteen female students. Students also participate in marching local parades such as the Memorial Day Parade.

The west side of the district has an even split between male and female students within the program. This program combines the concert ensemble and jazz band during the same rehearsal time. This band performs both concert band music and jazz band music within the same performances. Much like the east band, this program marches in local parades that are often combined with the high school band program.

High School Band Program

The band program at this high school consisted of various ensembles: a wind ensemble, concert band, jazz band I and II, and jazz combos. All of the ensembles, except for the jazz combos, met during the school day and were taken for a letter grade. The combos met at an arranged times agreed upon by students. This meant that these meetings occurred after school or

during their lunch hour. This program did not have a marching band. The program, instead, had a year-round pep band that played at the sporting events. This allowed for more focus year-round on the jazz band. The only time students participated in a marching band was for parades, homecoming, and Memorial Day. Other than those events, the band stayed in the bleachers to build up excitement for sporting events.

The concert band was the lower of the two performing large ensembles; the wind ensemble, the top band, required students to audition. These ensembles hosted a yearly Halloween concert, one of the most attended concerts for the ensembles. The students all picked costume themes to dress up and played popular and movie music. These groups attended competitions in the Midwest and around the country. The most extravagant competition that took place every couple years was a festival in Disney World. At this competition, the group had placed in the top three schools multiple times over the years.

High School Jazz Band Description

Students' participation in the jazz program was based on auditions. This had changed over the last few years as the program had grown more competitive. In the 2020-2021 school year, there will be a third ensemble added to support the large number of incoming freshmen from the middle school programs. Each year, the program continues to grow. By performing at many competitions and festivals, this jazz program gained recognition throughout the country. According to their director, they averaged about 30 performances during the school year. When attending these festivals, they typically scored very high and received countless trophies and awards. Both the first and second bands consistently scored first place in their respective categories. A past saxophone section received many special awards due to their hard work and their nearly all-female section.

Some students in the jazz bands were not a part of the wind ensemble or the concert band. The bass players were often a part of the orchestra program where they were able to learn more about their particular instrument. The students who were not a part of the other ensembles were still required to audition for placement in the jazz bands. Typically, students were a part of both a concert group and a jazz band. All student participants in this study were a part of both groups.

One of their most impressive accomplishments was having been invited to a prestigious high school jazz band competition in New York City almost every year for the last decade. The Essentially Ellington competition is a high school competition that focuses on the music of Duke Ellington. This competition was one of the main focuses of this group and took up a majority of their rehearsal time every year. The competition required recordings to be submitted to allow access to the competition. Students spent multiple days and nights in high pressure recording situations in the hopes of being accepted.

When it came to the gender makeup of the high school groups, the director was able to provide some information. In the director's perspective, the overall band program consisted of 56 students; 30 male and 26 female. Between the two jazz ensembles, there were about 18 female students out of approximately 38 students in the two big bands. This had grown exponentially over the last few years.

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Sampling

“Criterion sampling” works well when all individuals studied represent people who have experienced a certain phenomenon.⁹³ In this case, the student participants were part of the minority group of female students in jazz ensembles. This gives female students a different experience. To avoid any mis-gendering of students, I read the recruitment script to all of the students which allowed them to self-identify based on the criteria I presented in the script. This sampling process was also out of convenience because I already had established a close relationship with the directors.

Participants in this study included both secondary jazz ensemble students and their educators. There were five students and three educators that participated in interviews. Interviewing educators was essential to understanding the case—female student perspectives in secondary jazz ensembles—since they likely had a large influence on students’ viewpoints. Their teaching philosophies were a great asset in understanding the jazz program as whole, the expectations that were placed on the students, and if there were specific efforts to support non-male students.

The following criteria was presented to the students: 1) students who identified as female, girl, woman, or gender expansive (including nonbinary, transgender, gender-fluid, or gender non-conforming identities); 2) students who were currently enrolled in jazz band at their school; 3) students who were primarily instrumentalists in the ensemble (not vocalists); and 4) to the best of their knowledge, the students were able to be comfortable speaking with an adult researcher

⁹³ John W Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. 2nd ed. Thousands Oaks, CA : Sage Publications, Inc., 2007. (128)

about their experiences in jazz band, both in individual and group interview settings with other student participants. As stated earlier, there were no students that identified as non-binary. The data reflected the perspectives of students who identified as female or woman.

Creswell stated that there should not be more than four or five participants for a single case study.⁹⁴ However, I examined a single program that required three different perspectives – educators, middle school students, and high school students – and, consequently, chose to expand upon Creswell’s recommended number of participants. This was to ensure more equitable representation of participant perspectives in this study. This large sample would have a greater potential for data to inform themes from within each perspective and across the three participant groups.

This sample of participants could be seen as an outlier case⁹⁵ or an extreme case.⁹⁶ An outlier case is a sample that is different “from the norm.”⁹⁷ This sample represented an outlier in terms of the equitable representation of students who presented as females/women or males/men within the school district’s jazz ensemble programs. Similar in definition, Creswell states that an extreme, or deviant, case is a “highly unusual manifestation of the phenomena of interest”.⁹⁸ This school district had been recognized at national festivals for its large number of female students. At the Essentially Ellington Competition in New York City, the high school jazz band received an “Outstanding Saxophone Section” award and was recognized for having almost all-female saxophone section. There was an extra distinction for one of the saxophonists for her incredible

⁹⁴ Ibid.(p.128)

⁹⁵ Gary Thomas, *How to Do Your Case Study*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles CA, etc.: Sage, 2016. (p. 99)

⁹⁶ John W Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. 2nd ed. Thousands Oaks, CA : Sage Publications, Inc., 2007. (p.127)

⁹⁷ Gary Thomas, *How to Do Your Case Study*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles CA, etc.: Sage, 2016. (p. 99)

⁹⁸ John W Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. 2nd ed. Thousands Oaks, CA : Sage Publications, Inc., 2007. (p.127)

leadership skills and influence on the saxophone section. The program had consistently placed first at many Midwestern jazz festivals and competitions over the last 10 years. Using cases that are “unusual,” such as this school district’s jazz program, could represent diverse thoughts and provide a richer understanding of what is going on at the program and the phenomena that it is exhibiting.⁹⁹

RESEARCHER RELATIONSHIP TO THE DISTRICT

I was a student in this district for all of my secondary education. I was a student of two of the three teachers that were interviewed in this study. Mrs. H taught orchestra during my time in middle school where she was my first music instructor. She introduced me to violin in the fourth grade and instilled a love for the fun in music. She encouraged me to explore multiple activities. This resulted in me switching to cello in the sixth grade. She also supported my exploration of playing double bass in the small jazz group. This small jazz group met outside of school hours and was directed by a presently retired band director. I had brief encounters with the other middle school educator, Mr. T, during my middle school and high school career.

When I got to high school, I auditioned at the end of my freshman year for the jazz band on electric bass. I was placed in the top jazz band due to the need of bass players. I had little to no experience with jazz music. Mr. J encouraged and supported me. I was able to be a part of the top band as well as join the jazz combo where I was able to gig around the city and build important foundational jazz skills.

I was a part of the band and jazz band for the last three years of high school. Despite having personal connections and memories of these educators, I clarified ahead of time my potential biases and endeavored to set those biases aside when interviewing participants and

⁹⁹ Ibid. (129)

analyzing the data. As a way to ensure this bias did not play a fundamental role in how I viewed the data, I also had a peer reviewer and my research advisor who reviewed all codes and categories. These reviewers continuously questioned my interpretations of data in relation to my personal experience as a student in the district. During my first year of playing in the jazz band, we made it to the Essentially Ellington Competition. This is when the program really grew in their notability and skill level. I saw and experienced the growth of the program and how, from my time there, the number of female students grew exponentially. This is what sparked my interest in working with this program to see what has developed since my time there. During the process of the study, I aimed to set aside my own biases with the district in order to collect and analyze the data as objectively as possible.

DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND VALIDATION STRATEGIES

IRB and Recruitment

Once I gained IRB approval, I met with the school district representative and the educators to map out the best plan for recruiting students. It was agreed that I would visit the two middle school concert bands which included all of the students that were participating in jazz band. Another day was spent going to the high school to recruit students from the first and second jazz band. Two weeks after this meeting and gaining the consent of the educators, I met with the students to read the approved recruitment script. I visited three different locations – two middle schools and one high school – and recruited potential participants from four different ensembles. Once I finished the reading of the script, I left the consent and assent forms for students to take if they were interested.

To recruit the teachers for this study, I sent an email to each of the teachers to describe the purpose and the process of the project. All three responded promptly with interest in being a

part of this study. This sample was that of convenience. I either was a student or worked with the teachers in the past which allowed me to contact them far easier than that of other school districts I had considered. The teacher participant interviews took place in mid-February 2020. I met each participant at their place of teaching where we conducted an hour-long interview. Mrs. H, one of the middle school teachers, was the first teacher to participate in an interview. Her interview took place outside of her middle school band room. There were some interruptions during the process due to last-minute duties assigned to her. Mr. T was the second middle school teacher and Mr. J was the high school teacher. They held their interviews in their band rooms during their normal prep-time. Each participant eagerly answered questions and gave insight into their personal teaching philosophies and their program.

All five high school participant interviews took place on March 9th, 2020 in the Mr. J's office to ensure privacy for the interviews. The students who returned their consent forms all identified as female or woman. There were no students who identified as gender expansive or non-binary who returned forms. The interviews were done during a rehearsal time for the second band and, due to a modified schedule, a study hall that was taking place during the first band's rehearsal time. The five participants and I met for about 20 to 30 minutes each.

The middle school participant interviews and group interviews that were scheduled for the study were, unfortunately, canceled due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. The middle school interviews were originally scheduled around March 20th, 2020. The nationwide lockdown started just five days before these scheduled interviews. There was a possibility of doing Zoom interviews for these participants but I believed this might have compromised privacy and broken IRB protocol. Once the district shut down for the remainder of the semester, the decision was

made to omit the remainder of the interviews. I felt the five high school interviews and the three teacher interviews still provided a well-rounded view of the program.

Interview Question Construction

Semi-structured individual interviews with the five high school participants and the three teachers constituted the data collected for the study. Semi-structured interviews allow researchers to examine very broad “issues” with the possibility of follow up questions.¹⁰⁰ Semi-structured interviews allow participants to answer more “truthfully” without much influence from the researcher. Thomas also stated that unstructured interviews might be the best way to achieve more in-depth answers from the interviewees.¹⁰¹ Since all of the interviewees were high school students, using semi-structured interview protocols allowed me to initiate dialogue but left room for participants to answer in the way that fit their personal viewpoint.

The interviews for both the students and teachers were constructed from previous research studies on female membership in school jazz band programs. To compose the student interview questions, I looked at Wehr-Flowers’s study that measured confidence, anxiety, and attitude towards jazz improvisation in a wide range of ages.¹⁰² While this was a quantitative design, it showed that women participants were more likely to be anxious about improvisation, less confident, and have poorer attitudes surrounding the topic than men.¹⁰³ The findings of the study informed questions in the semi-structured interviews for educator participants regarding potential ways that they supported female students, particularly with regard to feeling more

¹⁰⁰ Gary Thomas, *How to Do Your Case Study*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles CA, etc.: Sage, 2016. (p. 190)

¹⁰¹ Ibid. (p. 190)

¹⁰² Erin Wehr-Flowers, "Differences between Male and Female Students Confidence, Anxiety, and Attitude toward Learning Jazz Improvisation." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 54, no. 4 (November 7, 2006)

¹⁰³ Ibid.

comfortable taking improvised solos. I had very broad questions such as their favorite and least favorite aspects of jazz band participation. These questions led us to talking about what other parts of jazz band they are a part of, i.e., small ensembles, camps, lessons, and so on, and allowed for more organic conversations.

The individual teacher interviews focused primarily on articulating their teaching philosophies to see what sort of culture they promoted in their jazz ensembles and if they were intentionally doing anything to support or nurture female students. I composed these questions based on findings in past research and anecdotal stories about female experiences in their early jazz education. For example, saxophonist Camille Thurman talked about feeling discriminated against by both her peers and teachers.¹⁰⁴ This prompted me to ask the educators if there was anything they did to help female students. Questions such as: “When it comes to leadership roles in the band, how are those assigned? Do you have female, women, or non-binary students asking to participate in these roles?” were asked to determine similarities or differences in pedagogical strategies that support female students. Much like the nature of the student interviews, these questions initiated dialogue between myself and the participant.

The interviews with the high school student participants took place on March 9th, 2020. I attended both of the jazz band rehearsals in which the interviews took place. Two of the five participants were a part of the second band. They were allowed to leave rehearsal for the interview that took place in the director’s office. The other three student participants were a part of the top band. On this day, there was a special study hall hour in place of their regular rehearsal. These student interviews were conducted during this study hall.

¹⁰⁴ Camille Thurman, “B I O,” [camillethurman](https://www.camillethurmanmusic.com/bio), <https://www.camillethurmanmusic.com/bio>.

When the students were ready for their interview, they came into the room. Once they were settled, the participants selected their names for the study. I confirmed that they were consenting to being recorded and proceeded with the interview questions. The interview questions can be found in Appendix A and the interview transcripts in Appendix B. The similar process was taken with the educators. Instead of them selecting their own name, I use the first initial of either the instrument they played or their primary genre of music that they performed.

Data Analysis

Once the interview process was complete, the interviews were transcribed. Each of the teacher interviews were roughly one hour in length and the student interviews ranged from 20 to 30 minutes. While I was transcribing these interviews, I paid attention to what the participants were saying and examining any similarities to take note of before going back and looking closer.

Laying out the interview transcripts, I examined broader categories that stood out. Creswell warns that predetermined coding schemes can limit the potential of the data to inform or provide support for other findings that are not initially intended, but important to articulate.¹⁰⁵ When examining this first level of analysis I did my best to keep that warning in mind. The initial categories that were present in the student participants interviews were: community influences, aspects of learning environments in jazz band, and plans to pursue jazz in the future. These categories emerged as big ideas in the participant interviews. After these initial large categories were identified, I reviewed all data sources again and applied open-coding to assign specific words or phrases to data without using any predetermined codes from previous research. “Community” was often spoken of when students were asked about their reasons for joining jazz

¹⁰⁵ John W Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* . 2nd ed. Thousands Oaks, CA : Sage Publications, Inc., 2007.

band. The student participants' data, whenever they talked about their peers in their interview, were assigned the "community" code. At first, I used this code when peers were being talked of positively. When I reviewed interviews again, I realized that sometimes "community" was not always a positive aspect. This led to another level of coding where community became a category and "negative interactions" and "positive interactions" became codes in the "community" category. This resulted in the realization that "community" can have both a positive and negative meaning based on each participant.

The category of "aspects of learning environments in jazz band" contained data that was about codes such as improvisation, student run summer camps, and the use of clinicians. This included data from both the student and teacher participants' interviews. For example, the teaching philosophies and methods of the teachers were influential on students' perspectives of their jazz education. Student role model codes were placed in this category as well. The summer camp that was student run fostered a learning space for middle school students that encouraged them to participate in jazz by working closely with high school peers.

The third category that emerged from the data was "plans to pursue jazz in the future". Examples of codes that were placed in this category ranged from participants' reasons for playing, or not playing, jazz in college, their gender in relationship to their jazz experience past high school, and the teachers' perspectives of the differences in students participation based on gender. This level of analysis worked well with the goal of this project by illuminating categories and codes from the individual experiences and the context of those experiences.¹⁰⁶

Interestingly, gender played a role in all categories to some degree. I had originally thought of forming a category that contained data related to gender and its influence on the

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. (p. 153)

perceptions of the student and teachers. Once the second and third rounds of coding were complete, I felt it necessary to keep codes related to gender within the categories for which they applied. For example, teachers spoke on de-gendering instruments when recruiting grade school students to the program. Instead of placing this data with other data pertaining to gender, I felt it was best to keep it in the “community” category. Gender, instead, was a phenomena that appeared across all of these categories.

Creswell recommends some examples to help gain further insight into the data such as examining silences within the interviews, interpreting metaphors, or analyzing double-entendres.¹⁰⁷ These particular instances were transcribed from interviews and served an integral role in data analysis. For example, when the participants were asked why they were not involved in a small jazz group, there was hesitation in most of their answers. Teacher participants spoke on how they treated students of different genders equally but later made comments that could be interrupted differently. Looking at these small nuances in their answers shed light on each participant’s unique experiences.

Data Validation

Data triangulation was achieved through attaining two different perspectives: high school students and educators. Essentially, I looked at the same topic — female participation in secondary jazz ensembles — from multiple viewpoints which added to the complexity and richness of the data.¹⁰⁸ A problem can only be understood when looked at from multiple points of view.¹⁰⁹ If I were to only examine the viewpoint of one high school student who had been in jazz band for two years, their perspective may be completely different from a student who had been

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. (p. 154)

¹⁰⁸ Gary Thomas, *How to Do Your Case Study*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles CA, etc.: Sage, 2016. (p. 67)

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. (p.67)

in jazz band for all four years of high school. Students who played trombone might have had a different viewpoint than students who played the drums. Examining the differences of perspectives in high school students and their teachers would add a broader understanding of the program.

Once the interviews were transcribed and coded, I had participants check their transcripts for accuracy of statements (i.e., member checking). Member checking is a crucial part of data validation because it allows the participants to elaborate or “provide alternative language” to their collected data.¹¹⁰ This does not mean that the data from the initial interview will be inherently changed or edited, but it allows the participants to provide clarity and have an active role in creating a more accurate narrative.

Creswell recommends “external audits” to validate data by having someone unrelated to the study examine the data, checking for accuracy within “both the process and the product”.¹¹¹ I enlisted another female jazz musician at the DMA level to audit the data and my coding schemes and categories which provided the opportunity for alternative interpretations and potential re-coding of some data. This led to the revision of the findings. This person was not connected to the study but shares similar experiences that allowed them to look at the data with a deeper level of understanding. I also had my coding schemes and categories reviewed and questioned by my research director. During this process, the categories and codes were reshaped and presented the data clearly.

¹¹⁰ John W Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. 2nd ed. Thousands Oaks, CA : Sage Publications, Inc. , 2007. (p. 208-209)

¹¹¹ John W Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. 2nd ed. Thousands Oaks, CA : Sage Publications, Inc. , 2007. (p. 208-209)

The next chapter takes a look at these participants and their unique perspectives on their experiences in the jazz program as well as the thoughts and philosophies of the teachers of the programs. All participants were open to exploring this popular topic and discussing ideas that helped shed some light on the research at hand. Hearing the stories of five female students and three educators resulted in some surprising findings and answers to the research questions.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to address the following questions: 1) What reasons do students, who identify as women or female, cite for their decisions to join and continue to participate in jazz ensembles? What reasons do they cite for not continuing past their secondary education? 2) In what ways do jazz educators support students' participation and musical growth in the ensemble, and how do they consider students' gender identities in their instruction and personal interactions?

SCHOOL AND TEACHER PROFILES

The participants consisted of five students and three educators. The school district was divided into four middle schools and one high school. Mrs. H instructed the two middle schools on the west side of the district while Mr. T instructed the two middle schools on the east side. Mr. J directed the high school band where students from all middle schools converge in 9th grade. The jazz bands contained a mix of students from both the east and west side of the school district.

The west and east sides had very different constructions when it came to the jazz bands. The west side had both the jazz band and the concert band during the same hour, alternating what days they worked on jazz music, concert music, or theoretical concepts. On Thursdays, Mrs. H dedicated rehearsal time to music theory to aid with improvisation on the jazz charts. Mrs. H, who had been directing jazz band at the west side middle school for 8 years after being the orchestra director, wanted all students to be able to experience jazz and gain appreciation for all music. The west side middle schools combined the jazz band concerts and the concert band concerts into one. The main goal for Mrs. H was for all students to be exposed to different music and, at the core, have fun. Mr. T and the east side middle schools took a different approach.

Mr. T, who had been teaching jazz band for 17 years in the district, held a high standard for students wishing to be a part of jazz band. The top groups, the jazz band and concert band, assembled at one of the east side middle schools at 7am, or zero credit hour. The beginner bands, on the other hand, met during the day and worked on basic concepts to prepare them for the higher-level bands. If students wished to be in jazz band, they were required to be in concert band. Meaning that these students were at school every day at 7am. Students were then bussed back to their prospective middle school before their first class.

The east side middle school bands worked very closely with the high school. They often played before the high school concerts, as well as at town events. Mr. T openly admitted to being as tough as he can on these students without crossing the line. He held a high standard for all these students so when they got to high school, they would be ready for the intense program.

Mr. J had been teaching at the high school for 20 years and, before that, he taught at one of the middle schools for about 5 years. An active educator in this district for 25 years resulted in the jazz band growing tremendously. This band traveled all over the country performing and competing in some of the most prestigious high school level festivals. The jazz program, at the time of this interview, consisted of two big bands and one small group with plans of starting a third big band in Fall 2021. The bands met every day, one at 7am and the other at 8am. On top of the bands being a “for-credit” class, both bands required students to audition. Mr. J instructs a jazz improvisation class that is open to students as well as AP Music Theory. The program also contained two to three concert bands within the high school along with pep band, all of which the jazz band students were involved in.

When it came to performances, the bands did not play any concerts at the high school. All of their performances were out in the community or at competitions and festivals. Mr. J

estimated that each band played between 30 and 40 concerts during the entire school year and into the summer. They regularly went on trips to New Orleans and New York City for competitions and performances.

STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

Karen was the youngest of the participants in this study. She, a tenor saxophone player, had been playing in jazz band since 7th grade and was a freshman at the time of the interview. She was upbeat and cheerful during the interview and open to the questions presented. Still relatively new to jazz music, she did not have strong opinions about her likes and dislikes of being in jazz band, but had a sense of excitement and dedication towards improving her skills. She even committed time outside of normal rehearsal to join a jazz small group. As a freshman, she had not thought about how jazz might play a role in her life past high school.

Saoirse was a high school senior trombone player whose love for the history and culture of jazz was conveyed thoughtfully. She had been a part of jazz band since middle school. Her curiosity led her to playing the trombone as she was drawn to the “sounds” of the low instruments. While jazz was extremely fascinating, Saoirse brought up multiple times how she never gave jazz enough time to really pursue it beyond high school. As an active dancer, a writer for the local and school newspapers, and a future environmental science major, jazz was something that never made her list of priorities outside of the busy schedule the band already had. She planned on being a lifetime supporter and consumer but was not sure if, or when, performing jazz will be an active part of her life.

Tiffany, a junior at the time of this interview, had been playing trumpet since the fifth grade. She wanted to play it much earlier but, because her “lungs were not developed,” she started piano at a much younger age until she was ready for trumpet. While she will not be

studying trumpet or jazz in college, she plans on continuing to play on the side and currently takes every opportunity she can to better her trumpet skills. She was taking lessons, went to jazz camps over the summer, and found ways to enrich herself with music. Her early exposure to jazz music was primarily to have fun, and she cited this as a reason for why she kept playing. She expressed that students from other middle schools, with different directors, had a much different experience from her. While she expressed all the love and drive to play jazz, there was an underlying tone of self-doubt in certain aspects of her jazz education. For example, during rehearsals with her trumpet section, she expressed negative encounters and tensions with peers that were exacerbated due to a disability that affected her trumpet playing. She did her best to continue with the program.

Annabelle was the only interviewed participant that planned on studying music at the college level. She explained that majoring in Music Education and finding all the opportunities she could to play jazz while teaching music at the K-12 level was her goal. As a senior trumpet player, she took extra steps to improving her skills. She acknowledged that hard work and dedication will allow her to keep growing. She attended summer camps, was taking lessons during her high school career, and was featured in musical works in the jazz band.

Sara was a senior alto saxophone player and the lead alto in the top high school jazz band. Her journey with music started in middle school where she had been a clarinetist. After being exposed to the jazz band, she switched to saxophone which opened up the opportunity to play in the band. She was also involved in many outside activities such as the school's paper, National Honor Society, Porter Scholar classes, and AP classes. On top of these activities, she maintained a role as the saxophone section leader during her senior year.

DATA ANALYSIS AND CATEGORIES

The data revealed three main categories: 1) community influences on recruitment and students' participation; 2) aspects of their learning environment in their jazz band; and 3) their plans to pursue future jazz engagements. All of these categories discussed ways that gender identity was a factor in both the student and teacher participants' perceptions of a variety of situations. The influence of gender identity shaped their overall experiences within this program.

PERCEPTIONS OF COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT

Recruitment and Dismantling Gender-Instrument Associations

Recruitment to the middle school band programs began in 4th grade. All the educators were involved in the recruitment process in some way, as well as current high school students. When recruiting students, Mrs. H demonstrated most of the instruments herself. She showed them bassoon, flute, trumpet – her primary instrument – among others, coupled with recordings. “And I always tell them at the beginning, whatever instrument I play for you, you know that a girl can play them”. Making a point to “de-gender” instruments in the beginning when students receive their first introductions.

Mrs. H shared stories from her own early music education with the students that shaped her teaching process. She spoke to them about how when she was in high school, the best trombone player in the school was a female student.

Oh, I always tell them that our best trombone player, when I was in high school, was a girl. Well a lot of them were, actually. We had a couple good boys but most were girls. But it really doesn't matter if you are male or female or whatever is in-between. However you identify has nothing to do with what instrument you play.

Along with this story and others, Mrs. H and Mr. T cited using a YouTube video of an NFL player that played the oboe to show students two things that some people assume would not go together.

Mr. T also had a process of introducing instruments to the students. He also made a point of reassuring students that there are no “boy” or “girl” instruments.

My first teaching job down in Florida in 1988 - my tuba players. I had three tuba players and all three were girls. I don't know how that happened. I really don't. And I had boys in the flute section. I used to tell my kids, when I was doing recruitment, I made a big deal about how there is no such thing as a boy instrument or a girl instrument. And I make that point. And I use that example, three girls. And then I use this story. When I was in Florida, one year, I was the counselor with the all-state marching band. And they would get 350 high school students around Florida and they would get together for a week, learn a show, and then they would play at the Tampa Bay Bucks preseason home opener. Anyway, I was watching this very big, male and this tiny young lady walking down a path and he was carrying a flute case. And I was like, “Oh, that's sweet, he's carrying his girlfriend's case”. And then he pulled it out and started playin' the thing! And I was like “oh, okay.” I didn't care one way or another but that was my first thought. And of course, then I had three girl tuba players. But it was kind of shocking. And then we have all seen the NFL oboist...An African American, huge guy, and somebody saw him at a grocery store, and someone was like “What do you play?” and he's like, “I play the oboe.” And they are like “No, no really. What do you play?” Well, he got started into football and became an NFL football player but he can still play the oboe.

Mr. J was often involved with the recruitment night. During this, he had current students demonstrate and test instruments. While it varied from year to year, female students had demonstrated trumpet and tuba in recent events. His own daughter, a former participant in the jazz band, demonstrated flute and tuba. “It’s not like, a boy can’t play the flute,” Mr. J said. “We have boy flute players right now!”

Besides taking steps to “de-gender” instruments, all three educators stated they do not do anything “special” to recruit female students to their program. All three expressed that the gender of the student did not matter when it came to being an active participant in jazz band. “I do try my best to treat everybody with the same respect, with the same attitude that they can succeed, whether they are boys, girls, whatever,” Mr. T says. “They are musicians to me. Their gender is immaterial”. With the educators not taking extra steps to recruit more students, other factors played a role in these participants deciding to join jazz band.

Friendships and Siblings

All of the participants brought forward community, friendship, or siblings as influencers on their participation in jazz. Building these relationships, having a place to belong, and following in their siblings’ footsteps was common among the students. Even though most of the participants viewed this as the best thing about jazz band, the community can have a discouraging side to it as well.

Karen, the youngest of the participants, loved having the jazz “family” around her. Her favorite aspects of jazz band were, “just getting along with everyone. Just having friends and family and stuff. I don’t really have any enemies [laughs].” While she did not elaborate much on this, being with her friends was clearly the highlight of her jazz experience. Karen also

considered joining a peer-run small jazz group that would meet during the lunch hour. She had a positive outlook towards her involvement in this group.

Saoirse believed that big bands were a great way to build a sense of community but also felt some frustration within this community. Having a common goal and working towards that goal with her friends was one of Saoirse's favorite things about jazz band. "I like the community aspect," she said. "I like the friends I have made through the program. I like the feeling of home in the band room and the jazz band. I feel like myself." At times, she felt frustrated with her peers when they did not prepare music to the standard of the band. "When everyone is not in the same mind set," she said in regards to her least favorite aspect of the band. "When you're preparing for a concert, or preparing for a gig. And not everyone is as focused, or as prepared, as you are." While this was a minor frustration, Saoirse held her friendships in high esteem, motivating her to continue in high school. Along with Saoirse, Annabelle cherished her friends. "I like our community a lot. A lot of my friends are in this group and we are really connected," she said. "And it has helped me throughout high school."

Sara talked about the community and opportunities that jazz band brought to her life. Like most of the participants, band was where Sara felt that she most belonged. Band was where she felt she was able to find her place and felt most comfortable while getting the greatest experience in high school. "Opportunities to travel and play at different places and go to competitions. I'm not like a sports person so... [laughs]," she said. "Band is just what I needed to do, I guess. And I really like the community, I guess. Everyone is really supportive. Even if you're not that great. Which I'm not [laughs]."

In addition to friendships inspiring participants in jazz band, Karen, Annabelle, and Sara were also motivated to join the jazz band because of their siblings' positive experiences.

Annabelle, the youngest in her family, watched her siblings go through the jazz program and always knew she wanted to be in jazz band.

I wanted to be in band because they [siblings] were in it but I didn't want to do the same thing [play saxophone], I wanted to do something different. And to be honest, I was like, "Oh, it [the trumpet] only has three buttons!" [laughs] Then when I actually started playing it, I really enjoyed.

Like Annabelle, Sara had a sibling that was a part of the jazz band program who was two years older than she. Watching him inspired her to also join the band. "He really enjoyed it and I thought I would enjoy it," she stated. Her mother was another influence on her decision to join band. Sara began playing clarinet since her mother had played it for a year before getting kicked out of band. "That's how bad she was. But she still had a clarinet so I figured, 'Oh, I will just play the clarinet, I already have it.'" From there, Sara moved to playing saxophone in jazz band because it felt like a natural transition. Watching her brother perform on saxophone also influenced her decision to switch from clarinet to saxophone.

The high school program put a large emphasis on performing out in the community. This was how these participants witnessed their siblings and other peers having so much fun in the ensembles. The educators also showed, by example, the excitement and joy of performing with other musicians.

Building Community Through Performance as Educators

The jazz educators maintained their own performance schedule during the year while students were constantly working towards a performance, competition, or festival. The amount of time spent together likely contributes to the sense of community, positive peer interactions, and a love for performing. All three teacher participants spoke on the importance of maintaining

a playing career in jazz while teaching at public schools. Being out in the community playing with local bands, setting an example for their students, and preserving the history of the music all were important to these educators. “I feel like it’s [jazz] one of the truly American genres of music and I think that it is important that we keep the tradition up,” Mrs. H said. “If we didn’t continue with jazz music, we would lose a huge part of what our country was built around. It brought people together, it’s important.” Mr. T maintained a large performing career playing in multiple concert bands and local jazz bands. “I do not see how you can be a music teacher and not remain a musician,” he stated. “Period. Maybe it’s more important to me than somebody else but I have played in the [local] symphony for 15 years.” Mr. T also performed in local swing big bands that highlighted his versatility.

Mr. J maintained an active playing career in the surrounding community. “Well, I play about four to five times a month. With either a trio or a big band or a quartet. You know, small group,” he stated. “And we have a big band that plays once a month now. But yeah, I think it keeps you inspired to keep practicing, keep learning. And all those things you learn from playing, you can share with your students in some way.” Mr. J also held a jam session over the past summers where students were able to come and “sit-in” to practice improvising over jazz standards.

The community big band that Mr. J established allowed for student groups to perform in attempts to retain audience members as well as give students more playing opportunities. “Well, it’s a Tuesday night and we don’t always have a big audience,” he said. “But what we have been doing is having a group open for us so they tend to stick around a little longer. So, we will have a middle school group open or we have a [local community college] open.” While there have been no students who were currently in the program able to play with the big band, Mr. J often invited

former students to come and “sit-in”. Having these playing careers in conjunction with their teaching responsibilities, students are inspired to join the bands, play, and continue on. These performances helped more community members and younger students be exposed to this program.

With the positive aspects of community shining through, there were some experiences that left participants with a different perception of community. The competitiveness of the program provided a space for students to experience negative interactions such as stressful environments, a lack of empathy, and negative comments from peers. Negative interactions, between peers in and outside of the program, sometimes had participants wondering if their gender influenced these interactions. Student and teacher participants also had conflicting perceptions of the overall environment.

Stressful Environment, Negative Interactions, And Gender Perceptions

With dozens of concerts, competitions, and festivals every year, there was a lot of pressure on the students to do the best they can and aim for the highest they can reach. Some of the participants talked about how much pressure they felt during the hours of recording sessions around competition times. They strived to win a spot at some of the biggest high school jazz competitions in the country. This competitive attitude came with the territory of this community, but it was not always a positive experience.

The middle school educators spoke on their teaching environments that were fostered for their students. Mrs. H wanted students to have fun, with no pressure at all, with her middle school band. She wanted students to be exposed to a variety of music in an exciting way. These students did not have the stress of extra concerts out in the community. Mrs. H kept the stress

minimal to encourage students to get the most out of the music. Tiffany and Annabelle were the two participants that started their jazz education with Mrs. H.

Mr. T spoke of pushing students to their maximum potential but did not speak much on the overall environment produced by his expectations. He often reflected on how far he pushed his students. He did all he could to get them the most out of their middle school experiences by scheduling extra concerts in the community and holding them to high standards. Sara, Saoirse, and Karen were a part of Mr. T's band. While the participants did not speak about their middle school jazz band environment, they had a lot to say about their high school experiences.

Tiffany was one of the participants that had a slightly different perspective on community than the others. Like other participants, she started participating in band because of family influence. Like Sara, her mom influenced what instrument she played. "She [my mother] played trumpet," Tiffany explained. "She did concert band and marching band. But they didn't have a jazz band when she was here." Once Tiffany was exposed to jazz, she was hooked.

Tiffany talked about how the environment in the jazz band could turn very stressful and negative at times. She had a disability that did not allow her to play all the time. She had explained this to her trumpet section but was still confronted with negativity. Tiffany noted:

Like when they are recording for EE [Essentially Ellington] and people kept messing up and stuff like that. Or [pauses] like I was out sick for a while. I have a disability – here's my scar—[shows scar on collarbone] — so I have chronic pain and I can't play all the time and my pulse stops when I play. My hands turn purple. So, I can't play all the time. Yeah, so I have explained this to my section in the band and still people are talking trash about me. Even though, literally, I had surgery like

eight weeks ago. And so, it's just like a negative environment sometimes. And it got solved but it still hurts.

Tiffany continued, imitating what her peers had said to her: "You should be able to play and practice," "You're making the band horrible," "You're the reason we are going to lose the competition." As seen with Tiffany, the pressure for excellence might be felt by students, even though Tiffany was not in the "top" jazz band. This was a hard thing for Tiffany to talk about since her love for the music was so strong. She was the only participant who did not focus on the positive community aspects. According to Tiffany, the pressure was great enough that students lacked empathy for their peers. Clearly, the community was not a welcoming place for her.

While Tiffany spoke exclusively on the negative sides of the community, she was not the only participant who had difficulty with peers. Sara was the section leader for the saxophone section in the top band and had a lot of support from Mr. J. Although Sara received encouragement from her teacher, she still expressed feelings of uncertainty as well as negative encounters with peers. "It's [jazz band] definitely my most stressful activity." Despite Sara's love for the community felt in the program and her sense of belonging, she recalled many negative interactions with her peers:

Crystal: So, what's your least favorite part of being in jazz band?

Sara: Umm [pauses] The pressure that this band, in particular, has. The lead alto player from last year was this crazy soloist and he was just so, so good. And last year, at the end of the year, I came to [Mr. J]'s office and was like, 'I can't do this next year. I'm not going to be [him]. I don't want to let you down so I don't know if I can do this next year. I don't want to let the whole band down.' And he's like, 'It's okay. I don't expect you to be [him] at all. I just expect you to be a leader. I

don't care if you don't want to solo, that's fine. But I need you to be a leader and make decisions.' Just like [pauses] this year is a lot better. But in past years, there have been really negative people in the band. There's just a lot of negative energy.

Crystal: Towards you specifically?

Sara: No, not me specifically, just in general. Sometimes me, specifically. But like [pauses] I mean this year, there's none of that. I haven't felt like a single thing that's been wrong. But yeah, I mean, to answer your question, the pressure of following in the footsteps of the great people that were in this band before and living up to that expectation. This is like [pauses] we aren't crazy well-known, but we are pretty well-known, but just letting people down because we aren't as good as past bands is the hardest part.

Sara revealed a fellow saxophonist who would constantly criticize her skills. This male student continued these actions for most of Sara's time in jazz band. She was constantly being told by this student, and others, how she was not good enough or how she was bringing the saxophone section down. Comments she regularly heard were, "Oh, [male student] should be lead!", "You suck!", and, "Why are you still in band!" These comments clearly affected her view of her skill level. There were approximately four times during the interview that she stated she "wasn't good," or how music is not one of her "stronger abilities." Sara explained that there were comments made by both male and female peers. She did not feel that comments were made to her because she was a girl but had felt a lot more negativity from male students. "Well that one specific thing [negative comment] — that came from freshman year — came from a girl." She said. "But I definitely have felt more negativity from guys. There were a group of senior boys last year that definitely had stronger opinions about me." Even though most of the negativity she

felt was from male students, she did not state that they treated her this way because she was a girl. These comments were geared more towards her saxophone and jazz skills.

In fact, none of the participants spoke about gender being an influence on their negative interactions with their peers. Tiffany and Sara acknowledged that some of the negative comments came from other female students. All of the students within this program, regardless of gender, felt extreme pressure. There were experiences with peers outside of this jazz program that participants perceived gender as an influence.

Annabelle recalled being treated differently due to her gender by students from other districts and jazz programs. Annabelle always made a point to observe gender differences when at festivals or summer camps. She pointed out that most high schools that attended the same competitions and festivals had far fewer female students than her jazz program. When at these festivals, she observed how male soloists from other bands always talked with male soloists from her band but hardly ever to the female soloists. She had many solos during these performances but felt that male students from other programs had no interest in discussing jazz with her.

Annabelle remembered feeling like her gender was affecting the way her peers were treating her in an all-state jazz ensemble. To get into the all-state ensemble, students from all over the state audition and, based on that audition, could be placed in a jazz band with other students from the state. Annabelle was able to land a spot in this competitive environment where she noticed she was being treated differently based on her gender. When in this group, she and the other female students always stuck together and felt excluded at times by male peers. While male students did not overtly treat her poorly, Annabelle found it hard to be with male students and to discuss the music.

When it came to Mr. J's perspective of the environment in his program, Mr. J did not feel the environment he created in the jazz band fostered bad interactions between students. "That doesn't happen here. [long pause] Well, there have been isolated incidents, I guess. A person just being mean, but not as a whole," he said. "Not like people ganging up on females. There's always going to be someone, but not in general." Hearing Mr. J's perspective against those of the student participants implied he may not be aware of all the interactions between the students. He did not elaborate on who was involved in the "isolated instances." There may be instances that students have kept to themselves, leaving Mr. J in the dark about a portion of the negative interactions.

JAZZ BAND AS A PLACE AND SPACE FOR LEARNING

Love for Learning Jazz

Participants had an interest in other aspects of jazz that drew them into the art form in conjunction with their love for the community. Saoirse was extremely drawn to the culture and history around the music.

I really like the culture of the music. Every time we get a new piece, I really break it down and look at the history of it. And who made – who composed the piece – why they composed it. Was it part of a suite, did it mean something larger. So, *Magnolia's Dripping with Molasses*, when we played that last year, that was so cool for me! Because I could hear the different aspects of it. Because [inaudible] in it and it was really cool that Duke Ellington made a piece that sounded like a train and actual plantation work, and you could hear and it was incredible!

Ellington was a prolific composer which drew Saoirse's admiration. "I think I do that [examine the history] too, just to follow up, because I can't devote a ton of my time [to jazz]. I do

competitive dance. I do all sorts of stuff.” she said. “And I’m so stretched thin that I haven’t been able to devote as much time as I would like to jazz. So, when I have the opportunity to do something that isn’t soloing or being a fantastic crazy trombone player, I do the things I can do. And I appreciate the things that interest me through the music.” With all of these other activities, Saoirse focused on the history behind the music. She loved examining why a piece was made, the inspiration behind it, and the historical context. She would much rather focus on those aspects because her time outside of the band room was so limited. It was harder for her to find the time to develop her trombone playing and improvisation. Being able to grasp onto the history of the music influenced her decision to continue with band.

Tiffany and Annabelle talked about the creative aspect of jazz that pulled them to the music. “And the music is...you can be creative with it,” Annabelle said. “Like you can do anything with it. And there’s so many different types of jazz and it’s crazy.” Annabelle loved the creative side of jazz and was constantly working towards bettering herself. Her excitement for gaining more knowledge on improvisation showed through. Annabelle did everything she could to keep growing in her musical journey. She took lessons, attended camps, and signed herself up for stressful auditions all in the hopes to grow more as a jazz trumpeter.

Tiffany expressed the same interest. One of her main influences for joining jazz band was to get better as a trumpeter. “I wanted to get better at trumpet and we don’t have a marching band,” she said. “So, like, if you want to get good at your instrument, the only way to excel is to join jazz.” She loved improvising and learning to grow her knowledge. Jazz opened the door for Tiffany to grow as a trumpet player and as a well-rounded musician.

Student Role Models

Both the student and teacher participants brought up the summer jazz camp that is held at the high school. This program was created and directed by high school students for middle school students in this district. This is where a lot of participants got their first experience with jazz and with seeing other female students playing and leading in the ensembles. “Actually, [my daughter] said, ‘We need to start a jazz camp!’” Mr. J explained. “And I was like, ‘How are we going to pay?’ No one is going to want to pay to go to a jazz camp. And finally, she was like, ‘Well, we will run it! For free!’” After this conversation and the creation of the camp, the program grew to a very successful summer jazz camp. So successful, in fact, that Mr. J added a third big band to accommodate for all of the students wanting to attend. Middle schoolers getting to work one on one with high school students, such as Sara, showed these younger students that this was something within their reach.

Sara, who attended the camp in middle school and was an instructor in high school, attributed students she met as an attendee to being her role models. A female saxophonist, who was a big part of the summer camp, was a huge influence on the jazz band program. She was the section leader in an almost all-female saxophone section and left impacts on the whole program. Sara was in middle school when this student was at the forefront of the band. Once Sara met this student at the camp, she aspired to be like her.

Mr. J even thinks situations with the female alto player might have shaped a lot of the newer female students and encouraged them to join the program.

Mr. J: The only thing I wonder about, and I even asked some of the younger girls if they remember [female alto student].

Crystal: I had some kids bring [her] up.

Mr. J: They did? Okay, because I always wondered if that was what caused some of this. Because you get someone that is that charismatic, that excited, and that infectious. And younger girls see that and they are like, “She’s doing that, I want to do that.” It could have been anything. It could have been ping-pong and they would be like, “I want to be like [her]!” But I don’t know. How do you measure that or give a scientific answer to that? If that is what started a lot of this.

With female students potentially having an impact on younger female students, seeing older female musicians could influence these students as well. Unfortunately, there have not been many opportunities for these participants to be exposed to professional working female jazz artists.

Lack of Female Artist Influences

To assist in fostering this love for jazz, two of the three teacher participants spoke of bringing clinicians in to work with the students. With a large amount of female students, educators fell short of bringing in consistent female clinicians. On top of the lack of female clinicians, the student participants noted few professional female jazz musicians as influences in their journey.

Mrs. H was the only middle school educator that brought in clinicians to work with students. While both female and male clinicians worked with the group, Mrs. H did not have a role in selecting the clinicians. “We call a company and they send up clinicians to work with the kids,” she said. “And we usually get one man and two women”. These clinicians helped with both the concert band and jazz band music. The student participants never brought up any clinicians they had in their middle school experience.

Mr. T never talked about bringing clinicians into the school but did try to take the band to a local college to get feedback on performances. “We don’t travel except we do the [Local College] Band Fest Day in March,” he said. “And I think that’s a really good opportunity for them because they get feedback from five college professors and it’s a big deal. Now, I’m the only director that brings his concert band and jazz band down there for that.” Due to money restraints, Mr. T was not able to provide more outreach for the students.

Mr. J had considered having female clinicians since there is a large female population in the program but this had not been able to become a reality. “It’s just harder to find them, to be honest,” he said. He brought up two female jazz musicians that he had contacted to come and work with the band but nothing ever came to fruition.

On the other hand, Mr. J had brought in male clinicians every year to work with the students. “We still have Ron Carter, once a year. Reggie Thomas from NIU. Victor Goines has been coming in every year,” he said. “Kenny Rampton has been coming in the last three years. Those are the regulars.” Annabelle talked about Kenny Rampton being a positive influence for her. Other than this comment by Annabelle, none of the participants talked about clinicians that came to the school being inspiring or influencing their playing. While these clinicians have helped the program grow over the years, other participants spoke on professional musicians they encountered at summer camps as being extremely inspiring and influential.

Tiffany brought up a female trumpet player that left a huge impression on her from a summer jazz camp she had attended. “I met Tanya Darby this summer. She was amazing,” Tiffany said with excitement. “I took a lesson with her, she was amazing. She was super cool.” She continued, “Yeah, seeing her lead the section and like there’s all these super professional men. And she’s telling them what to do and they are like, ‘Yes, Tanya.’ [laughs]” Tiffany saw

Darby, a highly successful female jazz trumpeter, as an inspiration for her own trumpet playing. After speaking about Darby as an influence, Tiffany recounted male trumpet players, such as Chet Baker, as other influences in her jazz education.

When the student participants were asked if they knew of any female jazz musicians, all of them struggled to come up with more than two names. Tiffany and Annabelle, for example, brought up Tanya Darby due to the camp they attended. The one name that all five participants could come up with was Jazz at Lincoln Center saxophonist, Camille Thurman. The jazz bands had recently gone to a concert presented by the Jazz at Lincoln Center which featured Thurman as the second tenor in the saxophone section. “Like the Jazz at Lincoln Center. It’s all males, except for her,” Annabelle recalled. Saoirse spoke of an interaction with Thurman at a past Essentially Ellington Competition.

Camille! That’s what it [her name] is! I’ve listened to her talk too. Last Essentially Ellington, she gathered a bunch of the girls in the lobby of the Lincoln Center and just sat down – on the floor in her gorgeous dress – and just talked with them for like an hour and half. And I wish I would have known about it because I swung in at the end. She made sure she grabbed a bunch of girl musicians and was explaining her path to get into this band and her experience as a female jazz musician and how hard it’s been. And ways also that you can insert yourself and, you know, really stand up for yourself in the industry.

The participants were able to name male jazz musicians with much more ease but clearly the few female musicians left a mark on these students. Though the interactions were sparse, the participants were highly influenced by the female artists. During these interactions, these female musicians spoke honestly about their struggles with clear hopes to inspire young female students.

Even with these positive interactions, the participants' confidence surrounding jazz, in particular improvisation, waivered.

Lack of Improvisational Confidence and Intersections with Gender Identity

Learning to improvise is a key aspect of playing in a jazz band. Out of the five participants, only three of them had gone out of their way to work on their improvisation. The small group setting, in jazz, focused more on improvisation and spontaneous interactions between the members of the group. Although all of the student participants expressed uncertainty with improvisation, Mr. T. believed that this nervousness was not specific to females. When it came to improvisation and gender, he believed all students were scared to improvise.

My perception is that they are all afraid to improvise, you know. And I've battled myself because I try to hold the kids to the highest standard I can get away with. If it's too much then, of course, they give up. They can't get there. But if it's not enough, then they get sloppy. But you know how that works.

Mr. T was honest about how hard he pushed his students and often feared he may go too far.

I'm not going to comment on the validity of other peoples' approach but I believe that, if I didn't believe in my approach, I wouldn't use it. I am very demanding. I take it right to the edge. Of course, the [jazz band director at the local college] has been a professional trumpet player for 50 years. But he always jokes about me living on the edge. It's like I walk up to the edge and put one foot over and I push the kids right to the edge and I get everything I can from them and to them.

This high pressure could be why all students in the program, not just the female students, are nervous to attempt an improvised solo. "Yeah, everybody is afraid," Mr. T stated. "In fact, this is the most fearful program I have had in a while. So, I'm asking myself, 'Why is that?'" He did his

best, though, to help these students. “I hope that I do this. That if somebody, boy or girl, are showing signs of emotional turmoil over something, that I would be sensitive enough to try and figure out what it is,” Mr. T explained. “And work our way through the trigger. But that isn’t a boy or girl thing, you’re afraid because you’re afraid. You’re not afraid because you’re a boy or a girl, you’re just afraid.”

Karen was the only participant that said she was planning on joining a small group. She felt that the small group was the “vibe” she liked. This led to her excitement when she was approached by other students to be a part of a small group they wanted to form. She enjoyed improvising but it had to be “on the right song.” “Because there are songs that are hard to do it and it sounds weird and you’re like [pauses] Whoa.” Nerves did play a part in her improvisational skill. “I kind of get nervous when I solo in general,” she said. There was no specific reason that she could pinpoint as to why she was nervous, it “just happens.”

Annabelle took many opportunities to better her improvisational technique. She, at the time of the interview, was not a part of a small group although talked about always working on improvisation. She enjoyed it but showed hesitation around being in a small group. “I was thinking about joining it [jazz combo] but [pauses] I don’t know. [pauses]” Even so, she was putting in the work to improve on her skills. She named jazz standards she had been working on such as “A Night in Tunisia” and “In a Mellowtone.” Despite this great interest, there was a lot of uncertainty surrounding her participation in the jazz combos.

Annabelle had actively sought out ways to further her growth in jazz and improvisation. She took applied lessons whenever possible with a local college professor and always kept a positive take on her growth.

Trying to work on fundamentals while also trying to get better at improv. It can be like, 'What do I practice right now?' And it's kind of like [pauses] Sometimes I get down on myself. Like, 'Oh, I should be better.' But I try to think, 'You're gonna get better. You just need to keep practicing and pushing yourself.' Cause I know I have come a very far way from freshman year and I just gotta keep going.

Annabelle, as well as Tiffany, expressed that they felt unprepared for the high school jazz experience in terms of improvisational skill. "I was the only one to try out [for high school jazz band] from the west side from my class," Annabelle specified. Tiffany spoke about the lack of communication between her middle school and the high school that influenced her feel unprepared for her high school experience. The lack of preparedness from their middle school education may have affected their confidence around improvisation.

Even with her middle school experiences, Tiffany showed interest in bettering her improvisational skills. "I like creating music and telling a story through music," she said. "It's just like another art form." She spoke about how that there was only one jazz combo at the school which was "for the best kids." "There's a second one [jazz combo] and it's not for the second band. It's for other people in the top band." While she was passionate about improving on her improvisation, she did not feel adequate enough to be in a small group. She even said that Mr. J "wouldn't let" her play in one. She admitted that she had never approached Mr. J about participating in a small group. Her lack of confidence, based on what big band she was in, prevented her from taking the step to be involved in a small group.

Sara did not have a strong interest in being a part of a small group but did take small, pre-written solos in the big band setting. She spoke about a feature she had that gave her a solo but she did not feel she was good at improvising. "I mean I wish it was [my passion] but I have

never had the natural talent I guess. You know there are some players out here who get things like instantly and I feel like music is not one of my stronger abilities. With improv,” she said, “I think about it too much and then I can’t play anything. So, I don’t know. I’ll do anything but that [improvise] [laughs].”

While the participants in this study were not currently in a small group, Saoirse stated that there were no female students participating in a small group. While she did not feel discouraged from joining a small group, Saoirse articulated not having enough time to devote to improvisation and, consequently, did not feel like a strong improviser. She did observe how in a lot of other bands, there were far fewer female students and few female improvisers.

Every time going to Ellington - this will be my third year. Yeah, I know, really blessed. Every time I see an orchestra come up and there’s no girls in it, I’m always like, “Okay, you can’t tell me that this talented group doesn’t have any talented female musicians at their school. There’s no way!” It’s not [pauses] I don’t know. I just think about the statistics and I’m like that would be so weird if there are no girls that are that talented enough to be in the orchestra if you’re going to have a group go to Essentially Ellington.

While she personally did not have time to devote to improvising, she often thought about how all of the “star” improvisors in this band were male students despite such a large female population in the ensembles.

I don’t know. Maybe, I’m not saying it’s just [Mr. J] but it seems like the star players – or the people that come out with the most solos or given the most one on one time, or most invested time – seem to be guys. I don’t think that’s intentional but it just, to me, it seems that way. And I’ve always wondered that. I mean, yeah,

when you pose the question. I don't think its [Mr. J] going like "Oh, guys". But I don't know. It just seems that the people who are always featured, or the star players, tend to be - in past years - have tend to be guys. And I mean we had a bit of an issue this year where our lead trumpet player, who was kind of a star player, left and it was a whole mess. And so [Annabelle] has had an opportunity to fill in and be the soloist and really involved and be the prominent feature in a lot of our E.E. tunes. So [pauses] I'd say [pauses] It just seems she was second. When she had just as much talent as he did, I'd say.

Mr. J did attempt to rid of biases when it came to improvisation, contrary to Saoirse's observations. He wanted to avoid picking his "favorite" soloists or the students that were most comfortable. He talked about the application call "Wheel of Names" based off the show, "Wheel of Fortune." Mr. J placed all of the students' names on this "wheel." The application would spin until it selected a name. "If your name is on there, then you gotta solo." Mr. J made a point in his rehearsals to teach everyone improvisational basics and found local musicians willing to help students feel more comfortable improvising. These lessons, unfortunately, are to be paid for by the students limiting who has access to them. Annabelle, for example, did take advantage of these lessons but had to space them out because she was not able to afford a lesson every week.

While Mr. J claimed to make a conscious decision to teach all students the basics of improvisation, Mr. J acknowledged the lack of female student improvisors. He noticed, in all his years of teaching jazz in the district, that there was never a female student that could improvise as well as certain male students. "You know what is kind of interesting, though, is you look at these two piano players, [past male student], [begins naming many past male students]. We have not had a girl in that category while they are here," he said. "Like you're [Crystal] in that

category now but that was after years of training. [pauses] But why hasn't there been a girl in that category? I never thought about that until now." There have been female players in the forefront of the program but, according to Mr. J, they were never strong improvisors.

Her [prominent female saxophonist in program] playing was not on the same level as these guys. That's a really high level for a high school player to get at that level. And it was all about their ears. They all had really good ears. They had a special ear. But why hasn't there been a girl like that? In 25 years [pauses] I don't know [pauses] Or maybe there has and it never got developed. And you look at those kids that I mentioned and they didn't really do anything else besides be in jazz band. Well not [male student]. He was in swimming but he was constantly playing the piano. And this other kid coming up is very involved in athletics but his other thing is the piano. So, it is because [pauses] that's interesting too. Are girls just inherently more involved? I've never thought about this.

Mr. J's observation that there have been no strong female improvisors raised some questions. Was Mr. J doing enough to make improvisation more accessible to male and female students? The "Wheel of Names" application made the chance of getting a solo equal for everyone. He did not mention what jazz pieces this was applied to. Saoirse spoke of the big competition pieces having more male soloists, or the "star" students. Did Mr. J use the "Wheel of Names" application for the pieces that were the band's main focus? Or were other charts used for this way of picking soloists? This program's emphasis on competitions could possibly lead to female students being unable to be featured if Mr. J is unintentionally focusing on these male "star players."

PLANS TO PURSUE JAZZ IN THE FUTURE

Jazz in College

While all of these participants spoke of their positive experiences in jazz band, most of them decided to pursue other avenues in the post-high school education. Karen could not confidently say if she would continue with jazz past high school. An active participant in sport teams, she hoped to be involved with sports in college. She recognized the hard work and time it takes to be proficient in jazz and stated that it will depend on if she “[has] the time and dedication” to continue. While Karen loved being active in the jazz band, sports were higher on her list of priorities.

Saoirse talked about being in a similar position as Karen. She stated it was “one of [her] passions” but other activities ranked higher on her list priorities. She was a competitive dancer and had been since a really young age. On top of the dancing, she took her academics very seriously. She talked about how she was the recipient of a \$10,000 scholarship that was given out to very few students in this Midwestern state, aiding in her pursuit to be an Environmental Lawyer. Another passion of Saoirse’s was writing for the high school newspaper. Her articles had been published in the local college paper where her love for jazz glimmered with an interview with trombonist Vincent Gardner. These activities took a lot of her time leaving almost none to work on jazz outside of the band room.

Like I said, I just haven’t been able to devote as much time as I would like to it in high school. And maybe if I would have, I maybe would have pursued music but [Pauses] I just have so many things going on. And not to get deep but that’s one of my regrets leaving high school with my senior year. I’m like, ‘god, I wished I would have chilled out and picked maybe three things to really focus on and that

would have been a lot better'. And I [Pauses] Yeah [Pauses] It's a little disheartening when I really stop and think about it. If I wouldn't have spread myself so thin that I would have been able to do more in jazz.

While it may not be something taking priority soon, Saoirse is not excluding possibly of playing jazz in college completely. She made a point to apply to a college that had a strong jazz program. "I mean I would have to kick it into high gear," she said. "But if I, for some reason - junior or senior year - am like "I want to play jazz now!" If I went to that school, I would have that opportunity." She believed that she will be a life supporter of jazz music and shared how she could see her life proceeding with the art form.

Oh! [laughs] But I was sitting in Olive Garden with my mom and they were playing random jazz music! I was eating my spaghetti and I like totally zoned out to what she was saying because I was listening to the changes! This is how I am being entertained right now! And she was like "[Saoirse], [Saoirse] Hello?!" and I'm like, "What?!" and I think this will be my whole life.

Sara was another student, much like Saoirse. She participated in National Honor Society, Porter Scholar classes, AP classes, the newspaper, Academic Decathlon and volunteered on top of being the lead alto in the top jazz band at the high school. Sara, being involved in all of these great things and loving jazz band, was still undecided about continuing her jazz band engagements beyond high school. She had thought of selling her saxophone but, after reflecting more, realized she would not be able to part with it.

I think that I might [play jazz] because the second alto was like, "When you leave, are you going to play? Can I buy your alto?" And at first, I was like, "Oh, yeah! Take it! I never want to play jazz again!" But then I thought about how like this has been my best friend

for the last four years. And I got so sad! And then I was like “No, I can’t sell you my alto. I’m going to take it to college!” So, who knows. I might but if I get too busy with other things [pauses] And if I do do it, it will be casually. I’m not like going to major in it or anything.

It all depends on how busy she is with other things in her life. She knows, as do the other participants, that being active in a jazz ensemble can be a large time commitment. Interestingly, the negative comments were not brought up as an influence on continuing her jazz involvement.

Only Annabelle and Tiffany stated that they were, without a doubt, going to continue playing in jazz ensembles past high school. They were not planning on majoring in jazz studies but jazz would be a part of their lives in college and beyond. Karen, being a freshman, was not sure about what her future with jazz might hold. Lastly, Sara and Saoirse said that they would most likely not play jazz past high school.

Annabelle planned to study music education and to continue being active in the jazz community throughout her career. She aspired to be like Mr. J who had recently prioritized playing gigs again in conjunction with his teaching responsibilities.

So [Mr. J] has told us that when he became a teacher, he kind of stopped playing for a bit and now he’s been trying to get more into it. And I don’t want that to happen with me because I obviously want to keep improving myself and my musicianship. Like he does gigs on weekends sometimes and I would like to do that too.

Annabelle also spoke about building a jazz community in college if there was not one there already. “If there aren’t a lot of combos and stuff, I would probably take the initiative to make more for other people to join.”

Tiffany was the other participant who stated she would continue playing jazz past high school. Even though she will not be majoring in music like Annabelle, she planned on being a part of a band in college while majoring in engineering. Her motivation behind not majoring in music is fueled by scholarship opportunities and her love for building things. “They throw a lot of money at women who want to go into electrical engineering so I could get a full ride easy.”

Gender Identity and Future Participation in Jazz

Among all of the participants, gender was not a factor on their choices to continue in jazz past high school. Coming from a program with a large female presence, these participants recognize that they have a unique situation. “A lot of other high schools don’t have as many girls as we do,” Annabelle said. There comes a comfort in being in a band like this and Annabelle noticed how that dynamic really facilitated this comfort.

Even though Sara was not thinking of continuing on in jazz past high school, gender was not something that influenced that decision.

Sara: I have definitely notice that there are no women in higher level jazz bands at all.

Crystal: Is that discouraging to you? Since you are going in to college, do you want to be the only girl in the jazz band?

Sara: I mean, that would be really daunting being [Pauses] I mean, you come from this band where half the band is girls – maybe more than half—and then it’s just like really different. And I’m [pauses] Yeah. [pauses]

Crystal: Not something you would want to deal with?

Sara: I wouldn’t mind dealing with it. I think if that was the path I had chosen, I wouldn’t have let it bother me. But even I’m going into the medical and science field and that’s –

Crystal: Male dominated.

Sara: Yeah, male dominated. So, I mean I guess I never thought of that [pauses] [laughs] I'm trying to think [pauses] Like, obviously, we want to see change in that but I wouldn't mind being the only girl. But I would want to share these experiences and I want other females to be doing, progressing with me.

This was common among the other participants who either were not continuing or were not sure. Gender was never brought up as a reason that would prevent them from continuing on in their jazz education. Other interests or activities simply took priority over jazz.

Mrs. H wondered if hormones played a role in the lack of female participation in jazz past high school. "I wonder if there is a difference in male and female hormones," she said. "Because at this age [middle school], when they get interested in each other, sometimes they do hold back a little bit more. I wonder if, as they get older, when they are thinking of having a family or settling down or something, that maybe they try and pull in so they don't look so aggressive. So, I really wonder if it is a hormonal thing," she stated. "I wonder why they aren't going on with it. I don't really see a difference. I was counting up the boys and girls, because I didn't know when you first asked. It's fairly evenly divided. But I don't understand why they wouldn't continue unless it's just not what they intend with their life." Out of the five student participants, none of them commented on starting a family or getting married as reasons for continuing or not in their jazz education.

When Mrs. H crafted her instruction, she did not treat male and female students differently. She, instead, focused on having all students form a love for all music.

I guess the thing I tell them about – and it's all types of music – is that even if they don't like, or it's not really their thing, I just want them to have an appreciation and understanding of it. Because not every student is going to like every type of music.

But if they can understand it and can appreciate it for what it is. But I really don't honestly find a lot of kids that just don't like jazz.

Mr. T had a slightly different outlook on female students' participation. He believed that female students were more likely to be involved at the middle school level.

I believe, what is happening in schools, at this level, is that the boys are just not as interested in being a part of things as much as the young ladies are. Therefore, they end up occupying a lot of these chairs. And I don't know whether they [female students] would be able to out compete males, but the males aren't [pauses] Trying. So, I don't know what that answer is. I wouldn't care who it is if they can do the job. It doesn't matter to me! But I am seeing more and more that boys are reluctant to put themselves in leadership positions.

Comparing Mr. T's perspective that the male students seem less likely to step up in jazz band to Mr. J realizing that there has never been a strong female soloist creates the question: what is happening between middle school and high school? Why are younger female students more active in middle school but then less active in high school? Saoirse perceived male students getting more support in high school. Mr. J, Mr. T, and Mrs. H stated they did not treat students differently. Their gender did not matter when it came to making music. While all participants made it clear that gender was not a factor, it seemed that gender may in fact be unknowingly influencing all participants.

Summary

Through the investigation of the research questions, the participants cited that community was a big draw to jazz band as well as a stressful aspect. They relieved that their gender identity did not influence their decisions for continuing in jazz band or ending their participation in

college. The teacher participants do not take any extra step or care when it comes to recruiting female students or their interactions with them in the jazz band space. Chapter Five takes a closer look at the implication of the comments and opinions expressed by the participants as compared to previous research. Does this program highlight the findings from other researchers? Or does this program highlight new findings?

CHAPTER FIVE: REVIEW OF RESULTS

The purpose of this case study was to explore the perspectives of secondary-level students who identify as women and female on the musical and social aspects of participating in school jazz ensembles. Examining aspects that influenced these students in which their decisions to enroll and persist in jazz ensembles may help current and future educators increase female enrollment in their programs. The following questions aimed to investigate this purpose: 1) What reasons do students who identify as women and female cite for their decisions to join and continue to participate in jazz ensembles? What reasons do they cite for not continuing past their secondary education? 2) In what ways do jazz educators support students' participation and musical growth in the ensemble, and how do they consider students' gender identities in their instruction or personal interactions? Being a part of a program that had received recognition for their representation of female students, participants gave a glimpse of the inner workings of the program's unique situation and possible explanations for the large number of female students. Research has shown that female students historically are underrepresented in jazz professionally and in education settings.¹¹² In a K-12 school district where the female population was equitably represented in jazz ensembles, this inquiry provided some insight into how the students and the program itself cultivate this representation.

¹¹² Natalie L. Boeyink, "A Descriptive Study of Collegiate Female Jazz Instrumentalists." (Doctorate in Music Education diss., Indiana University, 2015); Tia Fuller. *Opinion | Tia Fuller: Jazz Has a Sexism Problem. I'm Using My Saxophone (and Grammy Nod) to Fight Back.* NBCNews.com.; Cat Hope. "Why Is There So Little Space for Women in Jazz Music?" The Conversation, December 6, 2018. <http://theconversation.com/why-is-there-so-little-space-for-women-in-jazz-music-79181>; Camille Thurman, "B I O," [camillethurman](https://www.camillethurmanmusic.com/bio/), <https://www.camillethurmanmusic.com/bio/>; Marguerite Claire Rizzi, "The Education of Women Jazz Musicians: Insights into Effective Teaching," 2000.; Erin Wehr-Flowers, "Differences between Male and Female Students Confidence, Anxiety, and Attitude toward Learning Jazz Improvisation." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 54, no. 4 (November 7, 2006)

Participants did not see their gender identities as a motivating factor for joining jazz band or as an influence in their decision to continue or discontinue in their jazz studies past high school. Research has shown that gender identity was not a significant factor in students joining concert band as well.¹¹³ The majority of student participants cited being a part of a community as the biggest motivator for staying in jazz band. These students found their “family” in the band room and built a great sense of community while working together towards common goals. Research on all-female choirs showed that the students had found a constant group of friends that helped them through their high school career, much like the participants in this study.¹¹⁴ Unfortunately, community also had an adverse effect: constant criticism from peers, a lack of empathy from students, and the overall pressure of high expectations from peers and educators. According to participants, this caused stress for many students. This stress was not just felt in the “top” jazz ensemble but throughout the program. Interestingly, these stressors did not prevent or influence participants’ decision in pursuing their jazz education.

Participants who had family members that played an instrument had a tremendous impact on the participants. Research has shown that “influential others”, such as family or peers, was one of the top three reasons students decided to join and continue on in concert band program.¹¹⁵ In this study, siblings were cited as a main reason for why participants joined jazz band. Watching their older siblings have fun in the program, regardless of the sibling’s gender, was a

¹¹³ Barry Corenblum and Eric Marshall, “The Band Played On: Predicting Students’ Intentions to Continue Studying Music.” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 46, no. 1 (April 1998): 128–40. doi:10.2307/3345765.

¹¹⁴ Sarah J. Bartolome, “‘It’s Like a Whole Bunch of Me!’: The Perceived Values and Benefits of the Seattle Girls’ Choir Experience.” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 60, no. 4(January 2013): 395-418.

¹¹⁵ Barry Corenblum and Eric Marshall, “The Band Played On: Predicting Students’ Intentions to Continue Studying Music.” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 46, no. 1 (April 1998): 128–40. doi:10.2307/3345765.

big motivator for three of the five participants. Parents who played instruments in middle school or high school swayed participants to also play an instrument. Two of the five participants even decided what instrument to play based on what their parents had played. One participant did not mention any sibling or parental influence. If students show a self-motivated interest in music, parents become support of their child even if they were not active in music themselves.¹¹⁶ She joined jazz band based on her own curiosity. It is clear, though, that a student's family influenced their decisions for beginning their music education.

When it came to the recruitment of female students, the educators in this study all said that they did not do anything deliberately to recruit female students to the program. Studies have shown that gender identity was not a significant factor with recruiting student to concert band programs.¹¹⁷ Yet, there is a large decline in female participation in jazz ensembles as students get older.¹¹⁸ The teacher participants in this study believed in treating all students with the same expectations and respect, regardless of gender. They also did not provide extra recruitment methods for young female students to jazz ensembles. Demonstrating instruments to elementary students was the main form of recruitment. To assist with beginning students' instrument choices, they made an effort to explain to students that there are no "boy or girl" instruments. They provided personal stories and videos to expose students to a diverse group of people playing different instruments in hopes that students would not pick an instrument based on

¹¹⁶ Veronica O. Sichivitsa, "College Choir Members' Motivation to Persist in Music: Application of the Tinto Model." *Journal of Research in Music Education*. 2003;51(4):330-341.

¹¹⁷ Barry Corenblum and Eric Marshall, "The Band Played On: Predicting Students' Intentions to Continue Studying Music." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 46, no. 1 (April 1998): 128–40. doi:10.2307/3345765.

¹¹⁸ Natalie L. Boeyink, "A Descriptive Study of Collegiate Female Jazz Instrumentalists." (Doctorate in Music Education diss., Indiana University, 2015); Kathleen M. McKeage, "Gender and Participation in High School and College Instrumental Jazz Ensembles.", *Journal of Research in Music Education* 52, no. 4 (2004): 343-56. doi:10.1177/002242940405200406.

stereotypes associated with gender. Mr. J had high school students help with the demonstration of instruments and did not consider gender identity in his selection of student demonstrators. When not intentionally supporting female students and finding ways not only to recruit, but to encourage them once in jazz ensembles, can be problematic given their underrepresentation in jazz ensembles. This gender blind approach could, in turn, negatively affect female and women students later in their jazz educational path.

Research has shown a large decline in female and women participation in jazz band ensembles past high school.¹¹⁹ The findings in this study echoed that of past research. Two out of the five student participants stated that they planned on being a part of a jazz ensemble in college. None of the participants planned on being a professional jazz performer or being a jazz performance major. One participant planned on being a music education major and playing jazz in conjunction with that degree. When discussing their future plans, the participants knew that jazz required a lot of time and dedication. While some may not see jazz in their immediate future, it is something that they hope they will be able to revisit.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MIDDLE SCHOOL FOUNDATIONS

Something that emerged from both student and teacher participants was the difference in how the middle school programs were run. Mr. T and Mrs. H had very different approaches and goals that were discussed during their interviews. I felt that student participants from the different middle school programs had slightly different perspectives on their preparation for high school jazz ensembles.

¹¹⁹ Natalie L. Boeyink, "A Descriptive Study of Collegiate Female Jazz Instrumentalists." (Doctorate in Music Education diss., Indiana University, 2015); Kathleen M. McKeage, "Gender and Participation in High School and College Instrumental Jazz Ensembles.", *Journal of Research in Music Education* 52, no. 4 (2004): 343-56. doi:10.1177/002242940405200406.

Mr. T, the east side middle school director, had a much more rigorous jazz band procedure. Students wishing to participate in jazz band were required to be a part of the concert band. Both of these ensembles met at 7am. Mr. T maintained a close relationship with Mr. J while Mrs. H and the west side program were often omitted. This left west side school participants like Tiffany upset and feeling at a disadvantage when starting high school. Sara, Karen, and Saoirse, just by being a part of the east side middle schools, had more of a connection to the high school. They did not speak much of their middle school experiences, unlike the west side participants.

Notably, the two participants, Tiffany and Annabelle, who planned on continuing in their jazz education were the two students from the west side. Their instruction was less intense and required less commitment outside the school day. The students did not have to rely on their parents for transportation like the students on the east side schools did. This allowed more students to be exposed to jazz if their families were unable to transport them outside of school hours. The band was solely focused on exposing students to the music and having fun. With research pointing to socioeconomic status (SES) as a predictor for joining concert band¹²⁰, perhaps students were able to objectively decide on their interest in jazz music without the strain on their parents. On the other hand, Mr. T's jazz band participation requires more commitment time outside of school.

Prior research indicates that female jazz musicians who continue in their education have a large amount of self-teaching present in their early education.¹²¹ This is typically cultivated by

¹²⁰ Daryl W. Kinney, "Selected Nonmusic Predictors of Urban Students' Decisions to Enroll and Persist in Middle School Band Programs." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 57, no. 4 (2009): 334-50. doi:10.1177/0022429409350086.

¹²¹ Marguerite Claire Rizzi, "The Education of Women Jazz Musicians: Insights into Effective Teaching," 2000.

receiving private lessons outside the instruction they receive from their band directors.¹²² Both Tiffany and Annabelle, the two west side students, went out of their way to enhance their jazz improvisation by practicing outside of rehearsals as well as seeking private instruction. They had their early foundations rooted in the “fun” parts of jazz and music but they also felt that they were slightly unprepared for their high school jazz ensemble. Perhaps they felt that they needed to do more to get themselves to the same level as the students from the east side. Through this act of self-teaching, Tiffany and Annabelle became more committed to this art form and learned skills to actively practice on their own.

Sara, Saoirse, and Karen were the three east side participants and also the three participants who had not planned on playing jazz past high school. They had a foundation that was much more stressful than that of the west side participants. They may have gained enough skills in middle school that prepared them for their high school jazz band experience. With this foundation, perhaps they did not feel the need for extra jazz instruction. All three participants did not attend high school summer jazz camps or take jazz lessons outside of school. Sara was involved with the summer camp hosted by the high school. Here, she taught lessons to the middle schooler but never found time to attend camps herself. Compared to Tiffany and Annabelle, these three participants seemed to spend less time, outside of the required rehearsals and events, furthering their jazz studies.

Another possible explanation for their decision to quit may be that the three participants were involved in a copious number of extra-curricular activities, limiting their ability to explore jazz in depth. The east side students may have been able to keep up with the demands of their middle school jazz band because they were already students who were able to balance a lot of

¹²² Ibid.

activities and stressors. Sara and Saoirse were obviously overwhelmed with their activities. Jazz was even one of their most stressful one. They had trouble prioritizing jazz during high school which may have resulted in their decision not to continue.

Many female students, even if they were music majors, do not see how jazz would fit into their future plans.¹²³ Sara, Saoirse, and Karen expressed this concern. Being involved in so many other activities and other interests left little room for jazz. This is not to say that Annabelle and Tiffany were unable to handle many of activities or that they were not involved in activities outside of jazz band, but they did not mention other extra-curricular activities beyond jazz band.

Growing up in this program, I always felt that there was a difference between the middle school programs on the east and west side of the district. When learning about the students' experiences, it was very interesting to hear that the participants who planned on playing jazz past high school were from the west side. The students with a less rigorous jazz education continued on while the students with a more involved and intense foundation planned on ending their jazz journey after high school. This intrigued me and left me wanting to know more about current middle school students' perceptions. Was this just a coincidence or did the middle school instruction shape students' decisions? Unfortunately, I was unable to answer that question due to COVID-19 disruptions.

When I was younger, I had the impression that the east side students had more opportunities than the west side and that the east side students were more prepared for high school. Having this impression early on, I sympathized with the statements from Tiffany and Annabelle. I loved my orchestra and jazz band experiences in middle school. I was able to thrive

¹²³ Kathleen M. McKeage, "Gender and Participation in High School and College Instrumental Jazz Ensembles.", *Journal of Research in Music Education* 52, no. 4 (2004): 343-56. doi:10.1177/002242940405200406.

in the program without putting any strain on my family. I came from a single parent household that made activities outside of school difficult at times. I even mentioned that point during the interview with Mr. T. Knowing that the program has a much higher standard, I expressed that I might not have continued on with music or jazz band. When I decided to join jazz band in high school, I realized I received little preparation in middle school. While they also felt unprepared for high school jazz band, Tiffany and Annabelle were clearly positively influenced in middle school and wanted to keep growing in their jazz education.

A question that arose after viewing the data was if the gender of the middle school instructors influenced the participants in any way. The two participants that planned on playing jazz past high school had a female middle school instructor. Yet, none of the participants mentioned if this influenced their decisions. Prior research has surprisingly mixed results on the influence of female role models.

THE EFFECTS OF FEMALE ROLE MODELS

Some research has shown that young female students are discouraged by the absence of female instructors or female role models when they are beginning formal music instruction. This can create a fear of tokenism and stereotype threat.¹²⁴ Being the only female student, or one of a few, may put extra pressure or develop insecurities to perform at a high level. Young female students may not inherently think they are bad at improvisation or jazz performance. Society has

¹²⁴ Natalie L. Boeyink, "A Descriptive Study of Collegiate Female Jazz Instrumentalists." (Doctorate in Music Education diss., Indiana University, 2015); Erin Wehr, "Understanding the Experiences of Women in Jazz: A Suggested Model." *International Journal of Music Education* 34, no. 4 (2016): 472-87; Erin Wehr-Flowers, "Differences between Male and Female Students Confidence, Anxiety, and Attitude toward Learning Jazz Improvisation." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 54, no. 4 (November 7, 2006)

constantly created a narrative that female and women musicians are unable to play jazz.¹²⁵ This can be perpetuated in educational setting with the lack of female role models and female student participation which creates the fear of living up to the negative stereotypes of women in jazz. However, another study found that having female role models is not a predictor of female student involvement and continuation in jazz.¹²⁶ Female students did not see jazz as a part of their career, even if becoming music educators, and stated that female role model may not have influenced their decisions.¹²⁷ These conflicting findings were prevalent in my findings as well.

None of the participants stated that their gender would deter them from participating in jazz in college. Participants stated that they were fortunate to have a high number of female students in the program and recognized how unique it was. They also stated how it was a bit discouraging that, in bands such as the Jazz at Lincoln Center, there was only one female musician in the band. It was not clear to me if having more experiences with female musicians would have convinced more participants to continue with their jazz education. The participants

¹²⁵ Sarah Caissie Provost, "Bringing Something New: Female Jazz Instrumentalists' Use of Imitation and Masculinity," *Jazz Perspectives* 10, no. 2-3 (2017): pp. 141-157, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17494060.2018.1>; Sherrie Tucker, 2000. *Swing Shift: "All-Girl" Bands of the 1940's*, chapter 1. Durham: Duke University Press.; Vickie Willies. 2008. "Be-in-Tween the Spa]Ces: The Location of Women and Subversion in Jazz." *The Journal of American Culture* 31 (3) (09): 300; Tia Fuller. *Opinion | Tia Fuller: Jazz Has a Sexism Problem. I'm Using My Saxophone (and Grammy Nod) to Fight Back*. NBCNews.com.; Cat Hope. "Why Is There so Little Space for Women in Jazz Music?" *The Conversation*, December 6, 2018. <http://theconversation.com/why-is-there-so-little-space-for-women-in-jazz-music-79181>.; Natalie L. Boeyink, "A Descriptive Study of Collegiate Female Jazz Instrumentalists." (Doctorate in Music Education diss., Indiana University, 2015); Erin Wehr, "Understanding the Experiences of Women in Jazz: A Suggested Model." *International Journal of Music Education* 34, no. 4 (2016): 472-87; Erin Wehr-Flowers, "Differences between Male and Female Students Confidence, Anxiety, and Attitude toward Learning Jazz Improvisation." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 54, no. 4 (November 7, 2006)

¹²⁶ Kathleen M. McKeage, "Gender and Participation in High School and College Instrumental Jazz Ensembles.", *Journal of Research in Music Education* 52, no. 4 (2004): 343-56. doi:10.1177/002242940405200406.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

seemed disappointed that they were not able to name more female jazz musicians or were not aware of more. Whether knowing more female jazz musicians would have motivated more of the participants to persist is uncertain.

The few interactions that these participants had with female artists truly impacted them. Tiffany, for example, was the only participant who spoke highly about a female trumpeter, Tanya Darby, who left a huge mark on her at the summer camp she attended. She was fortunate enough to work closely with Darby and see her in action. I had a similar experience in high school when I was able to work side by side with Chicago-based female jazz bassist, Marlene Rosenburg. This was the first time I had met a female jazz artist in person. The encounter inspired me so much that I decided to apply to the college she was teaching at. If it was not for her, I would not have considered applying to that college.

Annabelle, who planned on studying music, did not cite any influential encounters with female jazz artists. Most of her influences were male clinicians and professional male jazz musicians. If she had more than a few experiences with female jazz artists then perhaps she may have considered studying jazz studies. Saoirse was a participant who did not plan on studying or playing jazz in college but recounted an inspiring moment with Camille Thurman. Thurman recounted her struggles to these young women in the room and encouraged them. Saoirse was moved by this experience but still decided not to play jazz after high school. With the conflicting research and these participants' perspectives, it is unclear if female role models would influence female students' decision to pursue jazz. If Annabelle had heard Thurman's speech, would she had decided to be a professional jazz musician?

A topic of discussion in Mr. J's interview was the lack of female clinicians. Every year, Mr. J frequently brought in the same clinicians to help prepare for competitions and festivals.

Mr. J had several connections from being a prominent educator in the Midwest. His connections with the Jazz at Lincoln Center also enabled him to host many great clinicians from New York City. Unfortunately, all of the clinicians he was able to bring in were male. It seemed that he was only reaching for what was convenient. These clinicians were some of the same clinicians that would work with the groups when I was a part of the band over ten years ago.

Mr. J clearly knew that he had a unique situation with this program. He acknowledged the large female representation which sparked an interest in having female clinicians. But that is where it stopped, just as a thought or a possibility. He claimed it was difficult to find female clinicians. He named only two female musicians that he had attempted to invite. He never explained why getting a female clinician proved difficult. Was it timing? Money? Living close to major midwestern cities, there are many female jazz musicians that could work with the students. It seemed that he was falling back on things that came easy instead of branching out to find more diverse clinicians. Even with the lack of female clinicians, this program still gains more and more female participants. Researcher has mixed findings on the influence of female role models in the jazz setting.¹²⁸ Perhaps the lack of female role models is not as influential on students participating in a secondary high school band but is more influential on their jazz education past high school.

SOCIETAL NARRATIVES OF WOMEN IN JAZZ

I never really felt the effects of sexism in jazz until I had reached college. During my time in this program, I never felt that I was treated differently because I was female and one of

¹²⁸ Erin Wehr, "Understanding the Experiences of Women in Jazz: A Suggested Model." *International Journal of Music Education* 34, no. 4 (2016): 472-87.; Natalie L. Boeyink, "A Descriptive Study of Collegiate Female Jazz Instrumentalists." (Doctorate in Music Education diss., Indiana University, 2015)

the only female students. I had always been in situations that resulted in being surrounded by male peers, whether in school, music, or my personal interests. I resonated with the participants saying that their gender identity would not deter them from playing in jazz band. Most of the participants also planned on continuing in other male-dominated fields. Research has shown that combining students in jazz groups based on personality or gender identity may help with female students feeling more empowered.¹²⁹ Perhaps these students' personalities lend themselves to not overtly worry about their gender identity in relationship to their jazz education. Their other interests, outside of jazz band, may have involved many male peers.

Even without participants stating that gender identity does not influence their jazz education, there were many times that all participants, students and educators, spoke in a manner that suggested gender identity is indeed influencing their experiences. Many anecdotal stories from women in jazz, as well as scholarly research, show a painful truth that women are stereotyped as being unfit or unable to excel as a jazz performer.¹³⁰ All participants in the current study spoke with a lot of hesitation and self-deprecation about their skills. Sara, for example, said multiple times that she was not good at jazz or improvisation. Annabelle and Tiffany's

¹²⁹ Erin Wehr, "Understanding the Experiences of Women in Jazz: A Suggested Model." *International Journal of Music Education* 34, no. 4 (2016): 472-87.; Natalie L. Boeyink, "A Descriptive Study of Collegiate Female Jazz Instrumentalists." (Doctorate in Music Education diss., Indiana University, 2015)

¹³⁰ Tia Fuller. *Opinion | Tia Fuller: Jazz Has a Sexism Problem. I'm Using My Saxophone (and Grammy Nod) to Fight Back.* NBCNews.com.; Cat Hope. "Why Is There So Little Space for Women in Jazz Music?" *The Conversation*, December 6, 2018. <http://theconversation.com/why-is-there-so-little-space-for-women-in-jazz-music-79181>.; Giovanni Russonello, "10 Women in Jazz Who Never Got Their Due," *The New York Times* (The New York Times, April 22, 2020), <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/22/arts/music/women-jazz-musicians.html>.; Sherrie Tucker, 2000. *Swing Shift: "All-Girl" Bands of the 1940's*, chapter 1. Durham: Duke University Press.; Vickie Willies. 2008. "Be-in-Tween the Spa]Ces: The Location of Women and Subversion in Jazz." *The Journal of American Culture* 31 (3) (09): 300

statements surrounding being a part of small groups included hesitations and uncertainty. Participants seemed nervous and apprehensive to talk about their skills and improvisation.

It is difficult for me to claim that gender identity is the main factor in these participants' confidence around improvisation without having male students' perception as a comparison. But with this engrained idea in society that "women cannot play jazz," there might be a subconscious feeling among these participants. Identity contingencies are "things you have to deal with in a situation because you have a given social identity."¹³¹ In this context, we have the participants who are female in a situation where this group of people are perceived as being "bad at jazz." The educators admitted to not doing anything "extra" to help the young female students in jazz. In fact, they did not see gender identity as an insure at all. There was a collective "gender blind" approach to their instruction. With a combination of a lack of support from educators and the implications associated with having social identity of being a female jazz musician, it is not shocking to find that there have been "no female star players" in this program.

The topic of improvisation has been brought up in research when it comes to the differences between genders.¹³² It has been shown that women tend to be less confident, more anxious, and more nervous to make mistakes in improvisation.¹³³ This was prevalent with all five participants to some degree. Four of the five participants had a sense of uncertainty around

¹³¹ Claude Steele, "Whistling Vivaldi: How stereotypes Affect Us and What We Can Do," in *Whistling Vivaldi: How stereotypes Affect Us and What We Can Do* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011), pp. 3-10, 3.

¹³² Erin Wehr-Flowers, "Differences between Male and Female Students Confidence, Anxiety, and Attitude toward Learning Jazz Improvisation." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 54, no. 4 (November 7, 2006); Natalie L. Boeyink, "A Descriptive Study of Collegiate Female Jazz Instrumentalists." (Doctorate in Music Education diss., Indiana University, 2015)

¹³³ Erin Wehr-Flowers, "Differences between Male and Female Students Confidence, Anxiety, and Attitude toward Learning Jazz Improvisation." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 54, no. 4 (November 7, 2006); Natalie L. Boeyink, "A Descriptive Study of Collegiate Female Jazz Instrumentalists." (Doctorate in Music Education diss., Indiana University, 2015)

improvisation and participation in a small group. Karen was the only participant who considered being in a small group but still showed signs of uncertainty. All of the other participants showed signs of being less confident and anxious around the thought of having to improvise or being in a small group.

Mr. T made an interesting observation of his middle school students. He had the impression that male students were more likely to be inactive and avoided taking on leadership roles in his jazz ensemble. He also believed that all the students were nervous to improvise and gender identity seemed to be irrelevant. Mr. T's educational style consisted of pushing all students as far as he could in their instruction. Maybe this left all of his students fearful of improvisation because of this higher standard. Mrs. H, on the other hand, had all students, regardless of gender, asking to improvise when they worked on jazz pieces. She did not see any difference between the genders. Regardless of their foundation, the student participants all held this slight fear around improvisation and instructors held a gender blind approach.

Tiffany and Annabelle, the two participants continuing in jazz, had a waver in confidence when it came to talking about improvisation. Both of them had even gone above most of the other students with private lessons and attending jazz camps, but I got the sense that they did not think they were as good as other peers at improvisation. They were not involved in any small groups and gave the impression that they were not good enough. Tiffany stated that Mr. J would not allow her to play in a combo. She had not asked Mr. J directly but seemed certain he would not let her in. I wondered if Mr. J would have allowed them to be a part of a small group had they expressed their interest. Was Mr. J giving them the impression that they were not good enough? Or was it something within themselves holding them back from taking the chance?

Tiffany and Annabelle are both trumpet players which may limit their opportunities. In traditional small groups, there are about three horn players and, typically, no duplicates. Perhaps there were male students on trumpet already involved in a small group. This may have led Tiffany and Annabelle to automatically dismiss the possibility of being in the group.

Until the interview, Mr. J had not considered the fact that he had never encountered a “star” female improviser. He claimed that there was no female student that had even been “star” improviser in his 25 years of teaching in this district. Mr. J. did not elaborate on what he meant by “star” player, but the fact that he made this statement suggests that he actually harbors some unconscious bias towards female jazz musicians, at least in their abilities to improvise. This may unintentionally prevent him from seeing any potential in the female participants in his ensemble. Knowing that research¹³⁴ has shown that female musicians have much more anxiety around improvising, had he given extra support to female students, would they have succeeded more? There have been many female musicians in the band that have caught the attention at festivals or by professional jazz artists. Why were the female students who received recognition at outside performances not seen as “star” players?

Sara consistently responded to improvisation with self-doubt and low confidence. Being one of the participants who received a lot of criticism from peers, it was not surprising that she had low confidence. There were at least three times in the interview where she repeated how she was “bad” or “not good” at jazz. She often laughed off her comments as a way to redirect the conversation, as if she wanted to convey that being good at jazz was not important to her. I had asked if she was a part of a jazz combo and she repeated that she was not good enough. I have

¹³⁴ Erin Wehr-Flowers, "Differences between Male and Female Students Confidence, Anxiety, and Attitude toward Learning Jazz Improvisation." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 54, no. 4 (November 7, 2006)

heard several female students speak like this at conferences and forums, but it was shocking to hear this from a student plays in a program with high female enrollment. Sarah's lack of confidence could indicate that educators in the district may not be making enough conscious efforts to support females in the ensemble even despite the high female enrollment.

Saoirse noted, whether conscious or not, that Mr. J supported male improvisors more than female improvisors. While she did not express interest in improvisation, she took note of her surroundings. What do you mean by taking note of her surroundings? Female students may be falling to the wayside if Mr. J is not giving extra attention to these students, full of anxiety and low in confidence. There may be instances where Mr. J is taking actions that might be perceived as favoring male improvisors over female.

In my personal studies, I have had directors take solos away from me instead of giving me extra encouragement or attention to help me succeed. On the other hand, male students were given help if they were struggling in their improvised solos. While the educators in these situations may have had any cruel intent, I remember feeling discouraged and shamed by my improvisational skills. Similarly, Mr. J.'s student participants in this study may have been impacted by his potential unconscious bias towards females and improvisation.

“GENDER IS IMMATERIAL”

Prior researchers have suggested that from elementary to college-aged students, there is a tendency to associate gender with certain instruments.¹³⁵ These stereotypes include most of the traditional jazz band instruments as male instruments. This would include trumpet, trombone, drums, bass, and guitar. Research has also shown that when these stereotypes are broken early on, students may pick an instrument that goes against the assigned stereotype.¹³⁶ All three educator participants in this study make a point to say there are no “boy or girl instruments” through stories, anecdotes, and demonstrations.¹³⁷ Having these early stereotypes broken can provide students with an opportunity to think more objectively about what instruments they want to play. None of the participants stated that they felt as though they should play a certain instrument because they were female.

Mr. T stated that he treated everyone with the same respect, “whether they are boys, girls, whatever” and that “their gender is immaterial.” At the time of the interview, the band that Mr. T directs had a large number of female students. It was quite impressive that Mr. T had such a large female presence in the band but his comments on gender identity being “immaterial” suggest that he does not see the purpose of making conscious efforts to provide extra support or encouragement to female students, a traditionally marginalized group within jazz ensembles. Both scholarly research and anecdotal evidence show that female students struggle in the jazz

¹³⁵ H. F. Abeles and S. Y. Porter, “The sex-stereotyping of musical instruments”, *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 1978, 26, 65-75.; Philip A. Griswold and Denise A. Chroback, "Sex-role Associations of Music Instruments and Occupations by Gender and Major." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 29, no. 1 (1981): 57-62. doi:10.2307/3344680.; Judith K. Delzell and David A. Leppla, "Gender Association of Musical Instruments and Preferences of Fourth-Grade Students for Selected Instruments." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 40, no. 2 (August 24, 1992): 93. doi:10.2307/3345559.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

setting.¹³⁸ Mr. T.'s so-called gender-blindness may unintentionally perpetuate this struggle for female students in his ensembles. I do believe that Mr. T, as well as the other teachers, do not deliberately discourage the female students, but abstaining from supporting them might be doing just as much harm. What might happen if these educators did do a little extra to help female students? Would more of them push forward in jazz? Would they have more confidence to take the same chances as their male peers?

Mrs. H does not have a separate jazz band in her middle school program, like Mr. T does. This might change her perspective on how gender identity may play a role in jazz bands. Students that enroll in concert band are automatically in jazz band which is not the case with Mr. T's program. The demographics in Mr. T's jazz band differ slightly than that of the concert band because it is an extra activity. The demographics of Mrs. H's concert band and jazz band are the exact same because there is not a separate activity for jazz band. Research has shown that, when it comes to concert bands, that female students' participation equals or exceeds male students.¹³⁹ Mrs. H did not see any difference between the participation of students with different gender identities. If the jazz band were to be a separate activity, would there be a difference in female and male involvement? I was a part of the small jazz band at this middle school in the early 2000's and I was the only female student consistently coming to the band. If the female students

¹³⁸ Camille Thurman, "B I O," [camillethurman](https://www.camillethurmanmusic.com/bio/), <https://www.camillethurmanmusic.com/bio/>; Erin Wehr-Flowers, "Differences between Male and Female Students Confidence, Anxiety, and Attitude toward Learning Jazz Improvisation." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 54, no. 4 (November 7, 2006); Kathleen M. McKeage, "Gender and Participation in High School and College Instrumental Jazz Ensembles.", *Journal of Research in Music Education* 52, no. 4 (2004): 343-56. doi:10.1177/002242940405200406.; Natalie L. Boeyink, "A Descriptive Study of Collegiate Female Jazz Instrumentalists." (Doctorate in Music Education diss., Indiana University, 2015)

¹³⁹ Kenneth Elpus, "National Estimates of Male and Female Enrolment in American High School Choirs, Bands and Orchestras." *Music Education Research* 17, no. 1 (September 14, 2014): 88–102.

are already a part of the concert band then they have an equal opportunity to participate in jazz. On the other hand, Mr. T's program requires more time outside of school hours and has more female students than male. While all of the teacher participants did not see a need for extra support for female students, gender identity was certainly a factor in the environment of the program.

STUDY LIMITATIONS

When looking at this study, there are aspects that could be improved and expanded on in future work. The COVID-19 pandemic left a big hole in data I had hoped to retrieve. This sample was an extreme case sample. As stated in earlier chapters, I was unable to conduct several interviews due to COVID-19 disruptions. Middle school students, along with a student led focus group, would have provided a broader understanding of the program. Seeing how some of the results were pointing to middle schoolers being influenced by the high school students and the local jazz camp, it would have been revealing to see what the middle schoolers would have stated as some of their influences. After everything was complete, I was left wondering if the current middle school students looked up to any of the high school students or if they had attended the summer jazz camp. I would have really liked to compare the east and west side middle school experience to see how the different education approaches of Mrs. H and Mr. T influenced the students currently enrolled in the program.

This sample size was an extreme case sample. With equitable representation of students who identify as female, their perspectives could potentially differ from female students from a different district. Broadening the sample size would have created a greater possibility of including gender expansive students. All student participants in this study identified as female or women. This study sought to examine gender expansive perspectives as well but I was unable to

attain gender expansive participants. If I had broadened the districts I examined, I may have been able to acquire gender expansive participants which may have added a greater depth to the scope of the study. I was striving to gain the gender expansive perspective because women in jazz organizations and jazz competitions have started expanding their language and striving for more inclusive environments. The gender expansive individuals' voices may have added to a greater understanding of what educators could be doing to foster growth in more students.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

As I concluded my study, I found that not having the male students' perspective created new questions. Originally, I thought that just having the female, women, or gender expansive perspective would be enough. As the interviews were unfolding, it would have been helpful to see whether the male students shared the same opinions and perspectives as the female and women students. Would there be a larger portion of male students that would have continued on in jazz past high school? Would they talk more positively or confidently about themselves in regards to improvisation? Are they as overworked as the non-male students? Being a male dominated field, having the male perspective as a comparison would have shown potential differences and similarities between the two groups.

Comparing different groups of participants such as a different school district or the male students within this program might have demonstrated if this program had the unique characteristics that participants talked about. Do other programs perform as much as this program? Do male students share similar opinions when it comes to improvisation or their reasons for joining the program? At the beginning of this project, I had considered comparing this jazz program to one with a similar concert schedule, commitment for the students, and festival participation. The program I considered, another Midwestern district, has far fewer

female participants in the top jazz band and in the program as a whole. For future expansion of the research, replicating this study at another program and comparing the different districts would provide a more cohesive examination.

IMPLICATIONS FOR K-12 EDUCATORS

Examining this district provided insight into what K-12 educators can do to support their female and women students. This study has shown that, even with equitable representation of female and women students, gender blind approaches and unconscious bias may be at play. Educators should be checking in with their female students. The student participants in this study often gave the impression that they were not completely supported. They spoke on how male students seemed to be getting more attention and support, even if it was unintentional.

The actions taken to give female and women students do not have to be grand gestures. Educators can take note who is getting the most improvised solos during big band charts. A lot of solos are given to a certain section member. For example, if there is a male student on a part that is constantly required to solo, switching that chart to a female student would offer a chance for an improvised solo. After this female student is given this opportunity, check in with them. The research has shown that female students are more anxious and less confident when it comes to improvisation.¹⁴⁰ Offering additional support, guidance, and resources for this student may ease these anxious feelings.

¹⁴⁰ Camille Thurman, "B I O," [camillethurman](https://www.camillethurmanmusic.com/bio/), <https://www.camillethurmanmusic.com/bio/>; Erin Wehr-Flowers, "Differences between Male and Female Students Confidence, Anxiety, and Attitude toward Learning Jazz Improvisation." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 54, no. 4 (November 7, 2006); Kathleen M. McKeage, "Gender and Participation in High School and College Instrumental Jazz Ensembles.", *Journal of Research in Music Education* 52, no. 4 (2004): 343-56. doi:10.1177/002242940405200406.; Natalie L. Boeyink, "A Descriptive Study of Collegiate Female Jazz Instrumentalists." (Doctorate in Music Education diss., Indiana University, 2015)

Hosting a Jazz Girls Day event is another great way to foster confidence in female and women students. Having been a part of a Jazz Girls Day, I saw how high school and middle school students felt empowered and excited about the music. These young students got to work side by side with professional working female jazz musicians. During the event, the mentors and students all shared personal testimonies about their struggles, dove deeper into jazz theory, and performed a concert for their families. Hosting an event such as this and gaining community support and sponsorship could encourage younger female students to join jazz band. If directors wish to host such an event, extending it to female, women, and gender expansive students would be a way to promote more inclusiveness and support for students. Having the local community tied into an event like Jazz Girls Day can expose so many students to this art form.

The student run summer jazz camp that this district implemented would be another great way to encourage and recruit students. Student participants in this study talked about meeting older female students that ultimately inspired them to continue with jazz in high school. They were able to take lessons and build a mentorship while evolving their jazz skills. Developing a community where students are working together and building mentorships and friendships could encourage younger students, both male and female, to be an active participant in jazz band.

Ultimately, it is important for educators to know that gender identity is important and should not be disregarded in their practices. The program examined in this study was clearly unique with the equitable representation of female and male students. Consequently, this camouflaged underlying gender blindness in the environment. It can be easy for educators to ride the coattails of the manifestations of female student participation. The educators knew this situation was unique but never seemed to figure out why this was happening or do extra support to encourage female and women students. This is not to say that these educators were completely

unsupportive. They were just not including gender identity as a reason for more support or extra care. The student participants clearly picked up on this underlying gender blindness with their hesitation around doing small groups and improvisation. Participants even spoke on their impressions of the gender blindness.

To begin the process of supporting young female, women, and gender expansive students, I think it is important for educators to start by examining their personal approaches and ask questions. Attending conferences, such as the Jazz Education Network, where clinics are held discussing the experiences of female jazz musicians and young female students can give insight to what female students may need. Reviewing the research¹⁴¹ on female students' confidence and anxiety around jazz improvisation will enable educators to focus on area of need with female students. These small steps can begin the process of growth and change within a program.

CONCLUSIONS

This project's main goal was to see what was happening in this program to bring such a large female presence in a male dominated field. It was found that the directors are not taking ample steps to consciously recruit female students. Female students do not see gender identity as an influence in their decision to continue or not continue their jazz education. Female students cited other activities as taking more priority over their jazz education. Those who planned

¹⁴¹ Camille Thurman, "B I O," [camillethurman](https://www.camillethurmanmusic.com/bio/), <https://www.camillethurmanmusic.com/bio/>; Erin Wehr-Flowers, "Differences between Male and Female Students Confidence, Anxiety, and Attitude toward Learning Jazz Improvisation." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 54, no. 4 (November 7, 2006); Kathleen M. McKeage, "Gender and Participation in High School and College Instrumental Jazz Ensembles.", this comma is out of place I think *Journal of Research in Music Education* 52, no. 4 (2004): 343-56. doi:10.1177/002242940405200406.; Natalie L. Boeyink, "A Descriptive Study of Collegiate Female Jazz Instrumentalists." (Doctorate in Music Education diss., Indiana University, 2015)

playing jazz past high school did not speak of any other activities. It left me wondering if more support from educators would sway these female students to consider jazz after high school.

Promoting and encouraging female, women, and gender expansive students in this male dominated field has been a goal of mine once I began hearing more and more stories from young female jazz students. They did not feel welcomed in the jazz setting. They were constantly considering quitting. They were not being heard or supported. It was heartbreaking. There have been times where I have felt the same way. I was extremely lucky to have far more good times than bad. I was able to find support when I needed it most. I do not want these students to struggle when there are so many opportunities to be had in this amazing music. I hope educators, students, and professionals continue this line of research and create spaces for young student who identify as female or gender expansive—to succeed.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Individual Student Interview Questions

1. What was your main reason for joining jazz band?
2. What/who influenced you to pick your instrument? Parents, peers, own self-interest?
3. What is some of your favorite things about being in jazz band?
4. Do you plan on playing jazz music after high school? In college or a community group?
5. What is some of your least favorite parts of jazz band?
6. Do you have any role models when it comes to jazz band/jazz music?
7. Do you know of any women who play your instrument?

Individual Teacher Interview Questions

1. How long have you been teaching jazz band here in this district?
2. Do you play jazz outside of school? Do you think it is important as a director to do that?
3. What kind of opportunities do you provide for all of your students in the area of jazz education? Festivals, concerts, gigs, clinics, etc.
4. Historically, there have been less young women in jazz bands in secondary schools and colleges. While times are changing, is there anything that consciously do to attract young women to participate?
5. When it comes to leadership roles in the band, how are those assigned? Do you have your young women students asking to participate?

6. Improvising solos can be scary for all students but studies have shown that young women are typically at a larger disadvantage, is there anything you consciously do to help student feel more comfortable in attempting improvised solos?

7. What is your personal goal for all students when teaching them jazz music?

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW RESPONSES

Teacher Interviews

Mr. J Interview

[begins recording]

R (Crystal): Okay, let's just jump right in. How long have you been teaching jazz band in this district? And how many years total have you been teaching jazz?

T3 (Mr. J): This is my 25th year. 25 years.

R: Whoa. [laughs] Just in this district?

T3: Yup. Well I was at [School 2] for 5... 6 years.

R: Then here?

T3: [Nods]

R: Do you play jazz outside of school and do you think that is important as a director?

T3: Yes. And yes. Absolutely.

R: Do you care to elaborate?

T3: Well I play about... 4 to 5 times a month. With either a trio or a big band. Or a quartet. You know, small group. And we have a big band that plays once a month now. But yeah, I think it keeps you inspired to keep practicing, keeping learning... and all those things you learn from playing you can share with your students in some way.

R: Yeah.

T3: I think it is important to keep that cycle going.

R: I feel like you're playing more now than when I was in school.

T3: Yeah, I think once my own kids graduated, it kinda became a thing I wanted to do again. Or more of a priority.

R: Yeah. And did you start that [local big band]?

T3: Yeah. The drummer and I.

R: Yeah, I am never here but I am hoping that I...

T3: Yeah come and play.

R: [Laughs] to at least see you all. Do any of the students get to play in it?

T3: Umm... not yet. We have had former students. We have no problem filling the band, which is really weird.

R: Yeah!

T3: Yeah, I mean, even trombones. One of the trombone drives [about an hour].

R: Does it pay?!

T3: 20 bucks. [laughs] but we play good charts though!

R: What charts do you play?

T3: Well the drummer is a big Buddy Rich fan so we play a lot of Buddy Rich. Matter of fact, we did his whole Big Swing Face album. And then any Basie, Clayton-Hamilton... you know. Anything... Stuff people write, want to bring in.

R: That's cool to have that. Especially in [this town]. [laughs]

T3: Well it's a Tuesday night and we don't always have a big audience. But what we have been doing is having a group open for us so they tend to stick around a little longer. So, we will have a middle school group open or we have a [local community college] open. We will have any school... a bunch of schools.

R: Yeah. And I guess that kind of goes into this questions: what kind of opportunities do you provide for your students in the area. Festivals, concerts, gigs, clinics.

T3: Well we play at least once a month with the big bands at [local restaurants]. Was that happening when you were here?

R: Yeah it was just once a year, end of the year thing.

T3: Right so that's expanded a lot. And [restaurant] is in the last... 3 years? We run, in summer months, we run a weekly jam there too.

R: I've played with you at the steakhouse.

T3: Yeah that was the summer before we started doing [the jam]. They changed the ownership there. So, we couldn't keep that going. And it's fine. At this place, there's a stage and its inside.

R: Yeah. And how many festivals do you go to a year?

T3: We still do one in the fall and 2 or 3 in the winter. And then when we go to New Orleans. We go to New Orleans every other year now.

R: What?! [laughs]

T3: Did you not get to go?

R: My senior year I went. I only went once.

T3: Yeah 2010 was the first year we went.

R: Yeah that went I went.

T3: So, we did it 4 year or 3 years after that and then we decided to go every other year after that. And we will be going this year. Hopefully. [Knocks on desk]

R: Yeah unless the coronavirus... And when it comes to clinics, do you bring in a lot of clinicians?

T3: Yup. We still have Ron carter, once a year. Reggie Thomas from NIU. Victor Goines has been coming in every year. Kenny Rampton has been coming in the last three years. Those are the regulars.

R: And if that just a part of EE? Or...

T3: No, it has nothing to do with EE. That will be in April, with whoever they send.

R: and then for gigs and concerts, how many school concerts do they do?

T3: We don't do any school concerts anymore. We just do stuff out in the community. But we counted...I know that the Jazz Orchestra will have played 40 times by the time the school year is over. And the second band is not that far behind. Probably 30. They don't get some of the gigs that the top band gets but they'll be playing together, with each other, usually.

R: And do they have to audition to get into the top band?

T3: Mhm. All the bands you have to audition for now. We are adding a 3rd band next year.

R: Oh my god. [laughs]

T3: I have to because the middle school program is big. Well at least on one side of town.

R: Yeah. It's just interesting to bring up. Because I had both east side kids and west side kids and to hear both of their perspectives is kind of interesting.

T3: Yeah.

R: Because it was like, “let’s just have fun”, “Let’s just learn about this.” And the east side is kind of... different. I think I said to Teacher 2 in his interview, I don’t think I would have kept going if I was this side [laughs]

T3: Well that’s where I have most of the kids right now. There’s like 30 kids in one band.

R: Yeah, that’s a lot. [laughs] And I will see what kids bring in forms because I’m interested in what the west side kids will say. It’s interesting to me because I... the only person that I interviewed today that is going on in music is a west side kid. It’s just interesting to see that.

T3: Yeah. And well last year, you would have had my daughter, she’s east side, and [male student] west side, music ed. [Males student], east side, he’s music ed. there’s like one or two kids a year. It’s just not a popular thing, it just isn’t.

R: Yeah, and that’s what I was talking about with them. They would say “I’m in all these things and I wish I could give time to jazz more”... like why? You can!

T3: Yeah.

R: Which is why I’m doing this project. Okay next question: Is there anything you do consciously to attract non-male students to the program?

T3: Non-male students?

R: Like girls.

T3: No, not consciously. I mean I have thought about bringing in female clinicians because we have more females. I mean... I haven’t been able to get that to happen. Yeah... Well I talked to Sharel Cassity, you know her?

R: Yeah.

T3: We were judging somewhere together and she was open to doing that. And I guess... it’s just harder to find them. To be honest.

R: and a lot of students brought up ---

T3: Or Alexa Tarantino. That’s the other one I talked to.

R: Yeah, she’s really cool. She’s really busy though.

T3: Yeah, she’s really busy. I talked to her when she wasn’t as busy and we almost worked it out once but...

R: Yeah. And at that caliber, it's hard to find them. Everyone I interviewed was really impressed with Camille Thurman.

T3: Oh yeah?

R: They were just like... That's amazing to her playing with the Jazz at Lincoln Center. So, nothing consciously. And I think that's kind of across the board, no one is really thinking ---

T3: The only thing I wonder about, and I even asked some of the younger girls in they remember [female student].

R: I had some kids bring [female student] up.

T3: They did? Okay because I always wondered if that was what caused some of this. Because you get someone that is that charismatic, that excited and that infectious. And younger girls see that and they are like "she's doing that, I want to do that". It could have been anything. It could have been ping-pong and they would be like "I want to be like [female student]!" But I don't know. How do you measure that or give a scientific answer to that? If that is what started a lot of this.

R: [Sara] brought that up.

T3: I mean we have had that conversation, before you were around to ask that question. We thought about it.

R: Because when I was here – and I kept pointing out that picture – there are only 4 of us in there.

T3: Yeah.

R: And just thinking back, there was only like 6 of us.us 4 and then 2 or 3 in the second band.

T3: And there's this picture from 2004 and there's like – what—2 or 3 there. [female student] is in the army band and she's made a career out of that. And [female student] is the bass play and also the best clarinet student I have ever had. And maybe one or two more... but that's it. That's only the seniors but I don't think there were any other girls in that band.

R: Yeah and after I left, it seemed like it just kept getting bigger, bigger and bigger. And it might have been [female student].

T3: She came in 2013

R: Yeah 2 years after I left. And I wonder if that's, just seeing that. I kind of take credit for [your daughter] [laughs]

T3: In her case, yeah. She was definitely aware of you But she was also aware of [female student] And [two other female students].

R: Mhm.

T3: And all the girls that got called out by Wynton.

R: Yeah, that was cool.

T3: It was cool.

R: Yeah because everyone is citing community. And for young women to see a lot young women in this band, they're like, "Yeah, I can do that".

T3: Right.

R: When it comes to leadership roles, how are those assigned?

T3: Well it is usually the first chair person. Well it's not always the first chair person. I mean, seniority has a big part of it. I am just thinking in the sax section next year, [Sara] will be leaving. [other female student] will be around because she's a junior. Shell probably a little more vocal leader rather than the lead alto who will be a junior. You know. But she's getting that because she's had more experience.

R: So, it will be another female lead alto?

T3: Yeah it will be.

R: And do they still do sectionals? Like do they –

T3: Oh yeah.

R: Discuss articulations and phrasing?

T3: Yeah. Yup.

R: That's good. Do you have young women asking to be leaders? Or is it just kind of placed on them? You're not really thinking about it that way?

T3: Yeah, I don't really think about it that way I guess. I don't... I have never thought "oh she's a female so she should be a leader or not a leader". It's just whoever has the most experience and who has the leadership qualities that you need to be a leader. Or that could potentially develop into a good leader.

R: Yeah that makes sense. When comes to soloing, because this is something almost all of them said, do you help students... how do you help students feel more comfortable soloing? Guys or girls. Or do you have the young women wanting to solo more?

T3: Umm... well like [Annabelle] has a lot of solos but she plays second chair so that's where all solos are and that's where she got the solos. But I have also... I know [other student] in the section, there have been songs during the year where I said "okay, you're going to solo on this one and you're going to solo on this one." Because I want everyone to solo.

R: Yeah.

T3: But that has nothing... it's not because they are female, it's because you're in the section and you haven't had a solo so you're going to get one. And that's really the approach for all the sections. Because I'm thinking about trombones, I was talking to the 4th trombone player and I was like you got to get you a solo. Not because he's a guy but because he hasn't had a solo! He needs to... you should have one. If you in jazz band, you should have to stand up and solo at some point.

R: I feel like since I have been here, the focus on improvisation has gotten bigger... greater.

T3: Yeah and I'm still trying to figure that out. How to do that in a group setting because we don't have... I mean we have an improv class on the books but I don't have much time to teach it. Adding another ensemble, I will have five ensembles next. And that's overload, and they have to pay me more, but that doesn't free up any time to teach improvisation.

R: Yeah.

T3: but I'm trying to figure out ways to do it in a group setting. So, I have stolen some stuff from people like Reggie Thomas. He has some cool stuff he does with a group. So, we do that more at the beginning of the year and then we get away from it, and we shouldn't but we do. so, every year at the end of the year I'm like "we are going to stick to it the whole time!" And you know maybe we end up going another month longer than the year before but... you know...

R: And you guys rehearse every day?

T3: Yeah, we rehearse every day and we have no excuse not to do that. Other than me. Well we have a lot of gigs, like once a month. And I try not to play the same stuff every time we play. I try to make at least half of the set list new stuff at the next gig so people aren't like "oh they just play the same songs" But we're not. We play different stuff.

R: and so, when... have you ever been to the Jazz Education Network Conference?

T3: No... I need to go. I need to be a member first. [laughs]

R: [Laughs] it's in Louisville next year.

T3: Yeah, its closer.

R: But they are talking about “how do I get the young women in my band to solo more” so when you do the group activities, it’s all equal? Everyone has to do the same thing?

T3: Yeah! I will show you how I pick soloist. This is the best way to pick solos. [goes to computer and pulls up a “Wheel of Fortune” app] Here we go. Alright. [Spins the wheel on the computer]

R: [Laughs]

T3: Everyone’s name is on here.

R: That’s really funny.

T3: And then you take their name off once they have a solo. Yeah, we did that. Wheel of names.com! That way its fair, you’re not picking your favorites all the time, you’re not picking the people who are most comfortable. Nope if you’re name is on there, then you gotta solo.

R: That’s a really good idea. Certain people always pick the same people to solo on everything. So, you have a really great college band with the same 3 soloists all the time.

T3: Yeah why not do the Wheel of Names? That way its fair.

R: so, if you get someone that might not be comfortable, do they come in and ask for help? Do they get lessons? It’s just changed a lot.

T3: We spent awhile month on how to play the blues. With a minor pentatonic, they only have five notes. If you use these five notes, you will sound good. For a beginner. And so that’s how we get around that. I make it simple. Or if they are like “Well I really don’t know what one to play” well then just use these two. 1 and flat 3. And if that doesn’t work, just play 1 and make up some rhythms. You know we will study... I have some rhythms we will play through every week. Just having them put that all together. Now of course we have people who are way more experienced than that and can play whatever they want but I sometimes make them play 5 notes. Because sometimes they have too many notes that they play, they don’t need to play all of them.

R: Right. And sometimes it’s harder to play –

T3: Right, it’s a good exercise to limit your choices and try to be creative with less.

R: Are they taking lessons? Or are most of them taking lessons?

T3: So, in the last couple years, I have been lucky to have people come up from [nearby college], now we have a saxophone teacher that comes up on Fridays. A trombone guy that has started coming up this semester. He’s the guy that plays in the local band. Went to North Texas, has his degree in jazz studies from North Texas. And then [professor from local college] comes and

teaches our more advanced trumpet students. The guy I play bass with comes in every Thursday and does a private lesson with them. Piano player, I still work with the younger ones and the person that I studied with comes in and works with the older ones. In the summer. Then drummers, the guy I'm in a band with comes in every other week and works with the drummers. So, we have that going now. It's not from me, it's from adjunct.

R: And they have to pay for the lessons?

T3: Yeah.

R: Which might be hard sometimes.

T3: We would like to get them contracted.

R: I feel like the school district is very supportive of the jazz band. I don't know if that brings in more girls or not. Having such a powerful program.

T3: That's with anything. If you have something that is more successful, more people will want to be a part of it. And it's taken 10 years to get that to where it is.

R: It's like completely different now! I'm like "this is a class?!"

T3: Yeah that has something to do with this weird 5 block schedule so we can fit it all in. If we were on a 4 block, I don't think we could do it.

R: And you still AP music theory and all that?

T3: Yeah, that's still running.

R: Yeah, I was the first class to get that.

T3: Yeah, I'm not teaching that anymore. The other thing we did start was that middle school jazz camp.

R: Yeah, a lot of the kids brought that up.

T3: They brought that up? Yeah that's kind of... I mean obviously Teacher 2 and I are there to teach when we need to but it's more of them sharing what they know with the younger kids. And I think its part of that. Building that culture. Like they see that and be like, "maybe I can do that some day!"

R: Even Teacher 1 talked about it because she had some kids go to it. And I wonder if we had something like that when I was here –

T3: It probably would have had the same effect and things would have started sooner. I don't know. And again, actually [my daughter] said "we need to start a jazz camp!"

R: She said that?!

T3: Yeah! She said it years ago. And I was like how are we going to pay? No one is going to want to pay to go to a jazz camp. And finally, she was like “Well, we will run it! For free!” and I was like.... Alright. We can look into it. Let’s check this out. I was like okay we will maybe have the first year be just a couple combo and we had 40 kids show up with two huge big bands. One with less experienced and the other more experience. And then last year, we had to add a 3rd big band.

R: Oh my god!

T3: 65 kids showed up to that.

R: Just from [this town]?

T3: Yeah! Well one from [other school district]. Otherwise they were all our kids. And that’s why you have 40 kids in the middle school jazz band this year because all them came and started at camp. And we had a special section of saxophones for people who were just learning to play the saxophone because they played flute or clarinet. So, we had a whole separate class of that.

R: Do you have to beg people to play certain instruments anymore? Or are you... Because I remember you talking about clarinets going to bass like...

T3: I mean you have to beat saxophone players away with a stick, there’s so many of those.

R: [laughs]

T3: Trombones are pretty healthy... everything is pretty healthy right now. What we don’t have enough of right now are drummers. Which is odd. But there’s a whole bunch coming. And they are all girls! There’s an 8th grade girl, 7th grade and 6th grade. And a bass player who’s a girl. So, we went from an all-girl rhythm section to all boys and then back to all girls. *laughs* That’s so weird. But I wonder about that too. Are those girls in it because they saw the other girls playing? Those are the people you need to ask.

R: Yeah, we will see.

T3: Hopefully they turned in something. One of her names is [____], drummer.

R: She might have been the one that asked questions because the kids just stared at me. So, this is the last question I have: what is your personal goal for all students when teaching them jazz music?

T3: I just wanted them to hopefully develop a passion for it. Either they can go on to continue playing or continue to listen and consume it. So, we can keep it alive. It’s not... you know... a popular music. So, we need to people that we work with to keep it going. And that would be

another good study- how many people that have gone through the program are still supporting the music in some shape or form.

R: That would be good to know. I did have one of the student, she said that “yeah I don’t think I want to play after high school but I will go and support.”

T3: Yeah, go to concerts.

R: Yeah, I don’t really know what people are doing from my grade. I know _____ still plays. I don’t know what _____ is doing. I know he’s a piano player.

T3: He still plays! not so much jazz but ---

R: Yeah like R&B. and _____ is doing film scoring.

T3: [continues talking about past students and what they are doing now with the researcher]

R: I don’t have any other questions. Is there anything that you want to add? Because – oh there is one thing that I asked the middle school teachers! Do you ever introduce instruments in certain ways? There’s a lot of studies that are out there about gendering of instruments. And in all the studies over the last 20 years, the instruments that are in jazz band all come up male. So that kind of falls more on the middle school teachers but I don’t know what your philosophy is or how you present the instruments.

T3: Well I’m involved in the recruitment night here. And we have students do the instrument demonstrations and the testing.

R: Like the high school students?

T3: Yup.

R: So, you could have girls show trumpet ---

T3: I am just like... in the past, we had [male student] show trombone, [male student] show the trumpet... well I guess [a female student] played trumpet and she showed trumpet last year. So [my daughter] plays tuba so she showed the tuba. Yeah, she plays the tuba. [laughs] Umm... so yeah, she also helped with the flute. So, I don’t think they would have seen... I suppose though that’s something that...

R: Yeah because the studies say that when they see... both [teacher 1 and teacher 2] did this. There’s a Super Bowl commercial where the guy is playing oboe and they both show that. And [Teacher 1] is like, “I’m a girl and can play all these instruments so you can play them”!

T3: It’s not like, a boy can’t play the flute. We have boy flute players right now!

R: I don’t remember any! Well we had one.

T3: Yeah and he played saxophone.

R: Yeah but its kind of starts there. Because if they don't know they can play the trumpet. and something that did come up, and I don't know if you are conscious of this, but a lot of students couldn't name any female jazz artists. Or they could only name like three. And they ---

T3: which ones did they name?

R: Camille Thurman and Tanya ---

T3: Tanya Darby.

R: Yeah.

T3: Because of [local jazz camp]

R: Yeah and I wonder... its jazz education in general, no one's fault, it's how it's been but it's always guys. Look at these guys playing. So that was something interesting that came in the interviews. And I don't know of any women in these college bands we go to see. And I wonder if that is discouraging to them. And I told them when I was here, I never felt like I was treated any differently because I was a girl. it was more when I got to college I started noticing it. And I think that if I had felt that way here, I probably wouldn't have kept going. And Camille Thurman, I am quoting this in my dissertation, when she was in middle school and high school, the director was really down on her, her peers. And so, a lot of the girls drop out.

T3: Really? That doesn't happen here... I mean... [long pause] Well there have been isolated incidents I guess. A person just being mean. But not as a whole. Not like people ganging up on females. There's always going to be someone. But not in general.

R: I think what is nice about this. [Annabelle] said when she made the all-state band, there were only four girls. And she said she felt like the guys never wanted to talk to her. So, the girls just huddled together. Another student brought up how it's such an equal community here. And the thought of going to a college and being the only girl is daunting.

T3: So, this isn't the norm.

R: No, which is why I wanted to talk to these guys!

T3: You should have looked at another school.

R: Yeah, I thought about that.

T3: What about going to [another district]? They have girls.

R: Yeah, not as many though. I have female students [at that school] and they never really talk about being treated differently because they are girls. But it is interesting to see a school like this and you have pretty comparable programs in some aspects. But you guys have overwhelmingly more girls than they do. All these conferences and the directors just don't know what to do. And some people might be over thinking it.

T3: Yeah, they are just a member of the band.

R: And I think that might be the answer but I don't know.

T3: You know what is kind of interesting though, is you look at these two piano players, [past male student], [begins naming all past male students who were far beyond "normal" high school level]

R: Like really all-star players...

T3: We have not had a girl in that category. While they are here. Like you're in that category now but that was after years of training.

R: I just walked into it like...

T3: But why hasn't there been a girl in that category? I never thought about that until now.

R: Like [past female student] had her leadership skills.

T3: Her playing was not on the same level as these guys. That like a really high level for a high school player to get at that level. [naming more male students] And it was all about their ears. They all had really good ears. They had a special ear. But why hasn't there been a girl like that? In 25 years... I don't know... Or maybe there has and it never got developed.

R: and that's what I was asking these girls. And they were like "I'm in this, this, I'm in this. I don't have time." And I was in everything. And I didn't have time to devote to jazz until college and that's when my playing shot up.

T3: And you look at those kids that I mentioned and they didn't really do anything else besides be in jazz band. Well... not [student]. He was in swimming but he was constantly playing the piano. And this other kid coming up is very involved in athletics but his other thing is the piano. So, it is because... that's interesting too. Are girls just inherently more involved? I've never thought about this.

R: Because that's what I was trying to get out them because ---

T3: Well of all the ones you talked to... now [Annabelle], no. she's...

R: She's pretty serious.

T3: She's like how you were. She's gotten into a little later and more on your path.

R: I felt like I stood out but I wasn't like the person. I was a good bass player but...

T3: Right. And there's a freshman drummer, a guy. Exceptional ears again. He's going to be amazing. But he's also heavily in basketball. But that's what he does. Basketball and jazz. Maybe it's because girls are in too many things that they never get –

R: Or they feel like they have to be. Because that's how I felt. I felt like, I was in NHS, I was class secretary, a star student, orchestra, band. And I was talking to them and some of them are like "I'm the editor of the newspaper, I'm in ballet, I'm in this, this and this. I regret not having more time for jazz" and I'm like is this a societal pressure we aren't aware of.

T3: Yeah because before of that, you weren't supposed to do all that. You stay home and take care of the kids. It's gone from one extreme to another extreme. To over involved. And now you're not going to be... I'm still waiting for a girl to come along and be like one of those other people I mentioned. Maybe it just... I don't see that kind of person every year. It's like every few years but I have not seen a girl yet.

R: They have talked about this... is it a hormonal thing? Oh, girls are scared, shy, they don't want to be embarrassed. And I asked them and they are like "no... I'm not good... I don't have time..."

T3: Well time. Exactly. Some it might be exactly that. Its time. So, going back, it's probably because it wasn't developed. I mean there probably are girls like that but they haven't developed because they are in so much other stuff and they may never find out that they could be a good improviser.

R: Yeah. I told this to [Annabelle]. I started as a cello music ed because my mom didn't want me to be performance and I have to make money. And my cello teacher told me that this shouldn't be my fall back. My cello teacher is telling me to quit cello. So that must be good advice. And it worked out! And she said that she doesn't want to stop playing. And I brought up that you're still playing and if she wanted to do what you do, and she was like "yeah! Maybe a different age group" and I was asked "to keep playing too?" And she's like "Yeah! I want to gig on the weekends!" and I don't know if I should have said this but I told her to not be scared to just play.

T3: Yeah. And I did a jazz studies degree first and then I went back to do ed. And so, learned what I wanted to learn for jazz first. Because I don't think I could have learned that with all the crap they want you to learn for an ed degree.

R: That's where I was! I just wanted to play bass.

T3: And that's where [my daughter] is now.

R: Well I tell her I said its okay to change your major! This is around the time where I was like, "I can't do all of this."

T3: Right but I am also the one paying for it so I'm like, "you need to get your music education degree" [laughs] but they have a minor you can work in. But she already had this program to teacher her a lot. More than I ever had in my high school! We didn't get to experience any of this stuff.

R: And she has you!

T3: Yeah, she is way ahead of me.

R: Does she want to play?

T3: I think she really wants to teach. To have a program like this someday.

R: Well, we need that too.

T3: Yeah, because these programs will disappear without people to teach them.

R: Yeah, and we also don't have a lot of women doing that.

T3: That's true.

R: That's why I was trying to dive deeper with these girls. Like you're in all of these things, why can't jazz be one of those things?

T3: So, you never got the answer to that?

R: Well, it would be like, "I've been doing dance since I was 8" or...

T3: I mean, we are getting them in middle school. We can't get there any younger because they have to have a foundation on their instrument.

R: Well, these girls all seem really smart. AP classes.

T3: Yeah! They are all smart. Because there are different girls in band than jazz. It's an extra commitment. There's a higher grade point in jazz band.

R: Or better time management or support.

T3: Yeah.

R: That will be a big thing I talk about is how they are in all these things and jazz is at the bottom. But they love! And they would love to put more time into it. The trombone player was like "oh when we were playing this piece, I saw how all of this connected!" And I was like "why don't you go into this?! You seem so fascinated with it!" She's like "oh I just want to do engineering..."

T3: Yeah, they are in so many things. That's probably the answer. Just don't be in 5,000 things.

R: I was in 5000 things when I was here and when I got to college, I didn't want to do all that, the honors, I just wanted to work on my music.

T3: Yeah.

R: And now I'm here.

T3: So, you need to write something about them?

R: Yeah. Do you have anything else? I think we are good.

[ends recording]

Mr. T Interview

R (Crystal): Let's just jump right in. First the basic question; how long have you been teaching jazz band in the district? How long have you been teaching jazz total?

T2 (Mr. T): I've been teaching since 2003 so I guess that is like 17 or 18 years. I have not taught jazz band in school before this experience. Never did.

R: Before 2003?

T2: Yeah, I was out of education for a long time. And the program I had down in Florida didn't have a jazz band. So, I mean I played in jazz bands since 1974, 75, but never taught one.

R: And so, when you came here, was it already created?

T2: Well this was [Teacher 3's] program. And in 2003, he was trying to do this band and the high school band. And he called me up and said "hey would you do my middle school jazz band in the mornings?" I was doing other things. And I said I have no idea, I've never done a middle school jazz band before. And he said, "oh it'll be okay". So, I came over and I did just the jazz band from 2003 and 2005. And over the summer of 2005 they created a position here and the kids and parents got to know me from doing the jazz band and private lessons. And then they asked me to take it. And that's how I came to be the director here in 2005. So, I have been teaching jazz band two years longer than I had been teaching in the district.

R: For some reason I thought you came before [Teacher 3].

T2: No, I am 11 years older, to the day. We are both born on the same day. I was teaching middle school when he was in middle school. [laughs]

R: [laughs] Okay, well going off of that, do you still play jazz outside of school?

T2: Oh yeah. [begins listing lots of local jazz bands and performing stories in the area]

R: I feel like there are a lot of groups in this area. Like the [newly formed big band in town].

T2: [continues listing performances and gigs] All these bands have since disbanded because their audience is literally dying off. All these bands were the old time swing bands.

R: Oh, I love playing that kind of stuff. Yeah there are little markets for those things but not many.

T2: Mhm.

R: And do you think it's important, as a director, to keep playing?

T2: Absolutely. I do not see how you can be a music teacher and not remain a musician.

R: Yup.

T2: Period. Maybe it's more important to me than somebody else. But I have played in the symphony for 15 years.

R: You play... trumpet?

T2: Yeah, I play trumpet. I still play with an orchestra in [city] and concert band in [city]. I have the [local] College band, I direct the [local] college band.

R: Oh yeah! It's all coming back to me.

T2: I've got my hands in as many things as I can get.

R: I think that's good. I think with this program, you can tell the teachers still play outside. Because there's some where they just go to work and go home –

T2: If it's not a passion for you, how can you make it a passion for your kids?

R: Exactly!

T2: Yes, you can use that! [laughs]

R: That will be your quote! [laughs] So what kind of opportunities do you provide for your students? Festivals, concerts?

T2: We don't travel except we do the Vandercook band fest day. In march. And I think that's a really good opportunity for them because they get feedback from five college professors and it's a big deal. Now I'm the only director that brings his concert band and jazz band down there for that. Now these are only the morning groups that travel.

R: Okay.

T2: The other groups just play their concerts and the parade. And the music in the park thing.

R: So, the students I saw today, have to get here before school so they are a little more dedicated?

T2: Exactly. Yes. And if you come tomorrow for the jazz ensemble, like I said, everyone who in the jazz ensemble is required to play in concert band. So, its 5 days a week.

R: That's a strong commitment. When I woke up this morning, I was like, "how did I used to do this? Get to jazz band by 7am?" Yeah that's really good. Is there a reason why you don't take them to clinics or festivals?

T2: [sigh] Money. Its money. More than anything else. Because transportation is expensive. \$929 to rent a coach bus for one day.

R: That's a lot...

T2: And I guess if I was a really enthusiastic fund raising kind of person, but I'm not. I just... it's just irks me, and you can use this, it's just irks me that every sports team in the entire district, never has to pay a cent for their transportation. And yet anytime we do something, we have to find the money ourselves.

R: That's like the biggest complaint at schools. It's ridiculous. Do you do marching band?

T2: The only thing we march for in the Memorial day parade.

R: That's the same with [teacher 3].

T2: [teacher 3] lives a very charmed life that he doesn't have to do marching band. I mean every school does marching.

R: Yeah, I am glad we didn't. So, now we are getting into the scope of the project, historically there are been less women, or people who don't identify as male, in secondary schools and colleges. Is there anything that you do consciously to attract young women to the program.

T2: I don't do anything, consciously, to attract nonmales. I do try my best to treat everybody with the same respect, with the same attitude that they can succeed, whether they are boys, girls, whatever. They are musicians to me. Their gender is immaterial. And of course, if you were to see my jazz ensemble, you would see a female bass player, three female drummers. You can see an entire 12 person saxophone section and they are all females.

R: Really?!

T2: My tuba player here is a young lady. Two of the three tubas in my other group are young ladies.

R: That's awesome.

T2: You know, I don't care who shows up. If they show up, I will get a horn in their hand and let them go. Encourage them the best I can.

R: Yeah, when I was doing this project and getting ready for it, there's a lot of research on gendering of instruments. And something I wondered if these students think 'oh the drums are a boys instrument so I can't play that' so to hear that is amazing. Tuba was on that list too! All the brass. Sometimes the saxophone could go either way but bass was a male instrument, guitar is a male instrument. All the jazz band instruments.

T2: I'm of the mind... I believe, what is happening in schools, at this level, that the boys are just not as interested in being a part of things as much as the young ladies are. Therefore, they end up occupying a lot of these chairs. And I don't know whether they would be able to out compete males, but the males aren't... trying. So, I don't know what that answer is. I wouldn't care who it is if they can do the job. It doesn't matter to me! But I am seeing more and more that boys are reluctant to put themselves in leadership positions.

R: Actually, the next question is, when it comes to leadership roles, how are those assigned? At the middle school level, it's kind of hard to do that.

T2: Yes.

R: but I don't know if there's a certain student that stands up to do a little bit more. Or do they ever do sectionals?

T2: [shakes head no]

R: Yeah that's more of a high school thing.

T2: At this level...I mean I know there are places where there students rise to the level where they can take a sectional. But for the most part, I don't feel these kids are mature enough to be put in a position where they're like "okay let's get together..." you know.

R: Yeah, I've done a lot of middle school summer camps and I would not trust them to be alone. [laughs]

T2: It's just that they aren't ready for that. You know, you're setting them up to fail if you try. Now I have a couple -- and it happens to be girls and one that I hope becomes part of your project --- who comes in during the 5th grade band during her lunch and take some students back into the instrument room to help them out, to help get them going. And this person is a clarinet player but she will take her clarinet back and play for cornet players, and say this is the note your trying to get. And of course, brass instruments is like three or four different notes. I don't know what is going to happen. [laughs]

R: And that's why I don't play those instruments [laughs] and she's in jazz band too?

T2: Yup. Oh yeah. One of the bari.

R: If I had to play saxophone, I'd play that one.

T2: Well you're a bass player! Low notes!

R: Yeah, I think I gravitate to low notes.

T2: If you were a brass player, you'd play bass trombone!

R: It looks really hard. Oh, so improvising solos. Something that I have seen come up in the research is that young women are traditionally... well research shows they are a little more scared and fearful to improvise. Is that the case in your band?

T2: I don't perceive it. My perception is that they are all afraid to improvise, you know. And I've battled myself because I try to hold the kids to the highest standard I can get away with. If it's too much then of course they give up. They can't get there. But if it's not enough, then they get sloppy. But you know how that works.

R: Yeah.

T2: But my fear... I always fear that my effort to get them to play accurately works against them when they try to improvise because all the notes sound wrong at first. So, I will pick it [trumpet] up and play the most god awful thing and play it big and loud. And I will tell them, 'believe it or not, I can play that in front of people and they will think it's okay. Because I played it boldly!' They must think it must be that way. So... don't... I try to talk them out of the notion that there is a "right" note.

R: So, when it comes to picking solos, do you assign –

T2: I try to get them to – yeah.

R: Do you have any girls that are just like "me!"

T2: A couple. I have a couple. But this year, not so much. This year is a little tougher from an improvisational stand point.

R: So, do you have more guys kind of? No one?

T2: Yeah.

R: Oh, so everybody is scared.

T2: Yeah everybody is afraid. In fact, this is the most fearful program I have had in a while. So, I'm asking myself "why is that"?

R: Yeah.

T2: I know things ebb and flow but this is the most politest brass section I have ever seen in my life! I'm like "don't be polite and just butt right in!" and of course I play for them, and if you notice, we play cornets.

R: Its louder?

T2: [picks up cornet and plays] that's a much darker sound than what you're used to hear from a trumpet.

R: Yeah.

T2: And so, when you put in cornets with flutes and clarinets, they blend a lot better, especially at the middle school level because they can't control the sound on the trumpet. It just sounds like "ehhhh". My experience has been that when I start them on cornet and transition them to trumpet, they have a much darker sound than they would otherwise.

R: Oh.

T2: This is something I stumbled upon when I got my masters at Vandercook. They are every old school and I heard the 6th grade band from Skokie and I remember going "wow what a great sound!" And I look around and they are all playing cornets! So, then I talked to the director and of course this is years and years and years ago and they all did this. This is like back to the future. And I was like okay... and this is side – nothing to do with this –

R: Its fine!

T2: I wanted to play a masters recital at Vandercook and I thought what's the best way they would except it. I will do this. I will play a masters recital on a historical cornet and playing music from the founder of the college. Composed at the medal level. And they bought off on it and I grew to love the cornet. And now there's the brass band movement so more people are playing cornets. So, after this, I decided to start them all on cornets and they have a different concept of sound.

R: and you switch them in 8th grade?

T2: If they are in jazz ensemble, they double. And no one has ever complained. No one has ever said they can't play that instrument. *goes on discussing trumpet, cornet set ups and mouthpieces*

R: Let's see... So, I guess you covered this but what is your strategy for helping students with improvisation, with gender identity, is to not treat them any differently.

T2: Yes.

R: And that's why I wanted to come back here. When I was in high school, I never remember being treated differently because I was a girl. And there were less of us then. So, I wonder if that's the secret, don't treat them any differently. Because one of the big things that band directors are asking at conferences, what can I do as a director to encourage these young girls to explore jazz more. And I wonder if people are just trying too hard.

T2: Well I am sure that [Teacher 3] does this and I hope that I do this, that if somebody, boy or girl, are showing signs of emotional turmoil over something, that I would be sensitive enough to try and figure out what it is. And work our way through the trigger. But that isn't a boy or girl thing, you're afraid because you're afraid. You're not afraid because you're a boy or a girl,

you're just afraid. Or you're just agitated or whatever it is. And you deal with it on a one on one basis. It's not a gender related thing, it's an emotional need thing.

R: Yeah.

T2: And so perhaps if there is an answer, maybe that's the answer.

R: I was at the JEN conference, and they are doing a lot of women in jazz things. It's getting better but there are a lot of kids just straight up saying "why should I continue in jazz when my peers are making fun of me, my teachers are supporting me, what's the point?" and so hear young girls say that, it makes me really upset.

T2: I'm sure it does, I'm sure it does.

R: There was another girl at the international bass conference that said "well I wanted to be a jazz bass player, but I felt like I didn't fit in or I didn't feel welcomed so I just stuck with orchestra"

T2: well the professional world is a lot different than the educational world. The people in the professional world came of age with a different set of values. And I'm 61, and so I was certainly raised in an era of the values you're talking about. And maybe I have some of the same issues that these other people do. I hope I don't. if I don't exhibit these... gender issues or characteristics that you speak of, if I don't do this, which I hope I don't, I don't know why.

R: Yeah.

T2: For me it's not a girl, boy, non-binary, its...

R: Student.

T2: Yeah. Student, musician, an emotional issue. Not a... you know.

R And that's why this topic is so interesting to look into because sometimes there is no answer. That's why I wanted to do teacher interviews to see what the teachers were doing and then student interviews to see what the students say

T2: now this is interesting and if you were to interview kids and they would tell you that their perception is different than my perception. I wouldn't care to know who said what but I would care to know that they don't perceive me as I'm trying to be perceived.

R: Yeah. We will see how this works out. I feel like if you're making an effort, it won't come across that way. In my experience, I will be in rehearsal, and this is at the college level, they will be like "oh there's a lady here, we need to be careful" and it's like "what are you doing?"... and I think just the fact that you are not looking at them as like "you're a girl so you can't play the trombone" because there has to be directors like that and it just limits these students.

T2: My first teaching job down in Florida in 1988, my tuba players. I had three tuba players and all three were girls. I don't know how that happened. I really don't. and I had boys in the flute section. I used to tell my kids, when I was doing recruitment, I made a big deal about how there is no such thing as a boy instrument or a girl instrument. And I make that point. And I use that example, three girls. And then I use this story, when I was in Florida, one year I was the counselor with the all start marching band. And they would get 350 high school students around Florida and they would get together for a week, learn a show and then they would play at the Tampa bay bucks preseason home opener.

R: Mhm.

T2: Anyway, I was watching this very big, male and this tiny young lady walking down a path and he was carrying a flute case. And I was like "oh that's sweet, he's carrying his girlfriend's case". And then he pulled it out and started playin' the thing! And I was like oh okay. I didn't care one way or another but that was my first thought. And of course, then I had three girl tuba players. But it was kind of shocking. And then we have all seen the NFL oboist.

R: [confused look]

T2: You've never heard of that?! You need to go out to YouTube and type NFL oboe.

R: Okay.

T2: And you'll get this movie. An African American, huge guy, and somebody saw him at a grocery store, and someone was like "what do you play?" and he's like, "I play the oboe" and they are like "no, no really. What do you play?" well he got started into football and became an NFL football player but he can still play the oboe.

R: going off when you saw that guy with the flute, I still even think that sometimes. And that's why I think this project is important. When I host a jam session or I'm at a jam session and I see a woman go up to play, I am thinking "oh what is she going to sound like" and I'm a woman. And it's just ingrained in the culture and I'm like where does this start? Does it start in middle school or high school? I didn't notice it until I got older which is also very interesting. And so, when you introduce instruments and you say there is no boy or girl instruments, there is a study that says that helps students to acknowledge that. There was some where they talked to 4th graders and they gendered instruments like everyone else. But when it came to the teacher introducing instruments with a picture of a male flute player and kind of changing their perception of it. And that might be why you have so students playing other instruments because you're like there is none. And parents have an influence as well.

T2: Certainly.

R: You're just backing up research in music education! [laughs] Well I guess we are getting close to the end. My last question is what is your personal goal when teaching all students jazz music?

T2: I see my role here as giving them a solid background in the basic elements of jazz. Swing, articulations, knowledge of different style, you know, Latin, swing, up-tempo tunes, ballads. So, when they get to the high school, [teacher 3] can take them from the stand point of “okay you’ve got your basics. You know your instrument, you know your scales, articulations, styles” you don’t have to invent the wheel and take them on from there. And the fact, honestly, that 85% of his top band always comes out of my program. The fact that since I have been doing this, he’s gone to New York 9 out of 12 years. I’ve got to believe I’m doing something right. Now understand, and people will tell you, I’m not one of these people to be like “look what I did”. No, no honestly. I don’t even care to be acknowledged, that’s not. I do like people to know that... so many kids came out of this program. Their program. “Me” is not part of the picture. So...

R: Beloit is very interesting. This side of town and my side town are very different. Not saying it’s good or bad but [my side] seems to not the means as much as over here. Because I don’t know if I would have stayed in music if I had to go through your program, which is interesting to think about.

T2: I find that statement curious.

R: Well, I almost quit and maybe in middle school, at the beginning, I didn’t practice.

T2: Well, hardly any of my students’ practice.

R: I do like the structure, more support. I think there are more parental support on this side of town.

T2: Yeah, it’s not like it was when I first took over. The demographics have absolutely changed. It doesn’t bother me. I don’t care boy, girl, racial background. Hey if you got an instrument and you’re a musician, I’m going to try get and get you to play. Years ago, there were more parents in a position to be supportive and that’s not so much the case now.

R: Oh, maybe that’s why. I was in middle school 15 years ago and I remember being one of the few kids that stuck it out from [my middle school]. And I always thought [this middle school] had all the teachers and doctors.

T2: I suspect that if you would have been here, you would have been with the pack that stuck through. I really don’t believe that you would have...

R: Maybe I was selling myself short [laughs]

T2: I’m not going to comment on the validity of other people’s approach but I believe that, if I didn’t believe in my approach, I wouldn’t use it. I am very demanding. I take it right to the edge. Of course, the [jazz band director at the local college] has been a professional trumpet player for 50 years. But he always jokes about me living on the edge. It’s like I walk up to the edge and put one foot over... and I push the kids right to the edge and I get everything I can from them and to them.

R: I think that's good and it really shows.

T2: So, nothing else, when they get to the high school, they are like oh! It's the same.

R: I'm not going to lie, when I joined jazz band, I was like "whoa we have to meet so much!" and then we made Ellington and I think it shaped the jazz program from then on out. I really think this program is doing amazing and it's nice to see both schools, with their different approaches and seeing them come together. I went to [west side school] and [east side school] kids going off and doing great things. But that sax section was all from here. I wish I was doing my project back then. That's gotta be great to see!

T2: I'm happy for the kids! I joke with my college kids, I stand in front of the band and wave this stick and have something to do with what is going on. *laughs* But I do feel very good that I have so many students that are able to go up and take their place in that program. And the leadership is primarily out of this program.

R: And I'm was like how? Did that form here or in high school when they are older. And so, when I was starting this project, people were like why not just interview high schoolers. But it starts in middle school! That's where everyone has their beginning. And reading articles now, they cite "oh in middle school I was treated badly" so that's when students drop out in middle school and high school.

T2: It is easy to lose them. And that's why I get scared because I do push so hard. And am I going to push somebody out. I do worry about that and I just cross my fingers that I don't. and you know if you scare them, they are done!

R: Yeah.

T2: There's not a whole lot of resilience at this age.

R: Yeah, it needs to be fun but not a blow off class.

T2: Yeah so it is my aim to help them experience the joy and satisfaction of doing something really, really well. And if I can get them to play really well, I can get them to be like "oh this is really neat! I want to do this again!" and that getting to that point can be a little painful.

R: Yeah.

T2: But I have also said too, they have to be willing, I have get them to be willing to experience a little pain now so they don't experience great pain later when they fail. Because failure to me is a much greater pain than "oh this is hard and working hard, and I'm really being stressed a little bit" I mean you really have to be willing to do that, to find the grit, the resilience, whatever you want to call it, to work your way through adversity. And we all know, every year, kids are less and less able to handle adversity. Because they have all been snowflakes for so... but really.

R: I think that's what is good about music education, if you set a little higher bar, you learn that "Oh I can get through this and I can work together with people and problem solve". Well I'm technically out of questions. This was really good.

[ends recording]

Mrs. H's Interview

[confirmed date and recording device]

R [Crystal]: How long have you been teaching jazz band in the district and how many years total have you been teaching jazz band?

T1[Mrs. H]: [Pauses] Hmm. I'd say 8. And 8.

R: Because you were the orchestra teacher.

T1: Right.

R: Did you do anything before orchestra?

T1: Mhm.

R: Where?

T1: Here.

R: Oh! Really? You went band, orchestra, and then back to band?

T1: Right. Because when I first came here, [Teacher 3] was at [School 2] and then he had his parents go on a [letter writing] [inaudible] and had moved here because he wanted the high school gig.

R: Huh.

T1: So, he took my job and it just happened to be when [orchestra director] retired so they put me in her job.

R: Yeah, I didn't even know you weren't a string player when I was in orchestra! Do you play jazz outside of school?

T1: Yes.

R: And do you think it is important?

T1: I do.

R: Why?

T1: Because I feel like it's one of the truly American genres of music. And I think that it is important that we keep the tradition up. If we didn't continue with jazz music, we would lose a huge part of what our country was built around. It brought people together, its important.

R: Do you think it is good for students to have their teachers play?

T1: Very much.

R: Yeah. Cause I know you're in a concert bands too. What else do you play in, outside of jazz stuff?

T1: Yeah, I do. I play in a couple community concert bands and then we have a community jazz band. I play in [Local surrounding towns] [concert and jazz band]

R: So, I know that the jazz situation at School 1 is a little different.

T1: It is.

R: Do they do any concerts or anything?

T1: Not just the jazz band but with the other bands they do.

R: Do you bring in any clinicians to work with the jazz band or concert band?

T1: Mhm, to work with our concert band and jazz band.

R: Do you try and get female clinicians? Or do you think about that?

T1: We do get female clinicians. It's not on purpose. It's just what the company provides.

R: Company?

T1: Yeah, we call a music company and they send up clinicians to work with the kids. And we usually get one man and two women. One year we got two men and one woman. But it is usually two women and one man.

R: And they do jazz, concert band?

T1: Mhm.

R: That's cool!

T1: It is neat! They give us some really good feedback. They give the kids a lot of nice ideas. And they also reinforce what I tell the kids. [laughs]

R: [Laughs]

T1: They will say “well if you do this...”[(inaudible) I told you that!

R: [Laughs] That’s what I do too. So, they [jazz band] just do local concerts? The jazz bands.

T1: Yeah, we basically just do our school’s [concert] because we don’t get invited to the other things.

Break in interview

R: So, is there anything that you do consciously to attract non-male students.

T1: I don’t think so. I really don’t think so because I don’t find myself treating the boys and girls any differently. I just try to get everybody to love music. I feel that is my job at this stage of their development. If I can get them to love playing and love different kinds of music, then they will continue with it.

R: yeah, I think that’s, going off my orchestra experience, that’s what I remember. You didn’t let us slack but it wasn’t super high pressure so we had more fun. That the one thing that kept me in. I didn’t take it seriously until later on.

T1: I don’t expect kids to take it seriously in 4th, 5th, 6th or 7th grade. I mean they don’t know what they want to do with themselves yet. I don’t go about it from the stand point that I want to make music majors out of these kids. That’s not what it is. I just want them to love music. I feel it’s good for them, good for their brain development. Good for them in all of their school subjects. And, you know, if they can get that love for music, and expand on that, why would I want them to quit? So, I try to make it fun for them.

R: Yeah that is something I remember. So, when it comes to assigning instruments... When I was starting this project, I was coming across research that people tend to gender instruments. And there is a lot of research out there say that brass instruments are male, or the bass is a guy’s instrument, or drums... and so when you present instruments to students, how do you go about that?

T1: There’s only a couple that I used recordings. For oboe, there’s a Super Bowl commercial and I use that one but I just think it is the best, it’s just neat. Because they ask... what’s an oboe and he tells them. Then he plays and he’s really quite talented. So, I do play that one. Oboe can sound one of two ways: really, really beautiful or like a dying duck.

R: I love the dying duck sound, not gonna lie. It’s so funny but I don’t have to teach it.
[laughing]

T1: And I have kids that sound like that and it doesn’t bother me but I don’t want to sound like that when I show them. So anyways, other than that, and bassoon I also show them. Those two I present with recordings and the other ones I present myself. And I always tell them at the beginning, whatever instrument I play for you, you know that a girl can play them. But that

doesn't mean a boy can't. So, I don't want you to think that if it's a little pretty instrument, that it's a girl instrument. Because, in groups that I play in, some of the best flute players are men.

R: Well even just in history of orchestras, that's something my bass teacher brings up, that women weren't even in orchestras until like the 70s so it was just all men. But that's some of the research I came across, even music majors gendered instruments the same way when asked to. With 4th graders, if they were shown images of men flute players or women trumpet players, it tends brake that cycle. So, it's really cool that you and (Teacher 2) are doing that too. Because that might be why you have students picking instruments, like 'oh I can't play the trombone because I'm a girl'.

T1: Oh, I always tell them that our best trombone players when I was in high school was a girl. Well a lot of them were, actually. We had a couple good boys but most were girls. But it really doesn't matter if you are male or female or whatever is in-between. However you identify has nothing to do with what instrument you play.

R: That is really good! And I am going to assume there are directors who may be like oh you can't play that because you're a girl.' So this might be why in the high school band you have 3 of the 4 trumpets that are girls.

T1: Oh really?

R: Yeah, in the top band over there. And they had an all-female rhythm section last year. I think it's silly to not realize it starts in middle school because that's where it all starts. That's when they are introduce to it. And if you guys aren't setting it like, "you can't do that because you're a girl"

T1: Oh, I would never do that.

R: And its sad to think that there are directors who might. So in your jazz band, are there leadership roles? Or is it more just like, let's see what we all can do. Do all the of the concert band play in jazz band?

T1: Yeah, they all play. As for concerts, do you mean who plays at the actual concert?

R: So its during band rehearsal, which is different than other groups. So when it comes to concerts, are they all playing?

T1: Yes for the most part. Once in a while there is a kid that just doesn't feel comfortable or just doesn't understand swing. I try, I play them some of the hooky recordings from MASH. You know how they have those Korean bands that play the so-called swing music. I play those to kids and say, "this is what you don't want to sound like" [laughs]

R: So it's kind of, not just a free for all, but there not a "Here's the saxophone section, you're the leader," like the lead alto so you can help shape.

T1: No, I don't do that. I just hand out the music and say look through it, see what works best for your range, choose your part and pass the rest around. And, you know, usually the stronger players take the firsts.

R: Do you have any female students that take firsts?

T1: Yes. In the saxophones, I have two girls. They both take first. Then the boys pass it around. But the girls are the stronger players.

R: So, when it comes to improvising, how is that handled? How do you approach that?

T1: So, we do theory Thursdays. And I usually teach them something different each week. So when we work on chords and scales. I will show them certain notes in certain scales and they can figure it out using their half step- whole step rules and things like that. And then I say if you get a chord that says this, and you know how to build a chord, then you know that those notes are going to sound best with this chord. You can bring in notes that are dissonant to that and resolve them. But when you're playing, you know are making up music, when improvising your own stuff, if it fits within this chord, it's going to sound really well. Like you actually wrote it to fit with that. They are being more adventurous about trying it. And a lot of the kids will attend the summer camp, the Rock River Jazz.

R: Oh, at the high school. Oh!

T1: They love that! And improvisation is one of the things they teach. And so my kids went in there scared the first year. I know one of my trumpet players and he was in 5th or 6th grade the first year they did it. And he came back and was like "I was so scared and then they showed us this and how to not be afraid of it" and he's like "I will take all the solos, you can just give them to me!" [laughs]

R: Are there any girls like that too?

T1: Yes.

R: That's good!

T1: Because then I had a girl say "oh yeah?! Well I want them too!" [laughs]

R: Awesome! And there's a research study that surveyed middle school to community members in jazz band. And across the board, women tend to be more anxious and less confident when it comes to improvising. I always wonder because there is such a large age range, like who is actually feeling more scared? Is it the middle schoolers who may not have the self-awareness to be scared or is it the 20 year old who knows more about that.

T1: I feel like the middle schoolers would be more apprehensive about trying to improvise. Just because they aren't used to it. They have no experience. Once they get a little experience, and find out they can be successful, it's really neat to watch them.

R: This is true. Right now I teach more college, a band. We have a couple girls in there and they are always like, “I don’t want to solo, I don’t want to do this”.

T1: Really?!

R: Mhm, and then I make them [laughs]

T1: See I would be taking those! [laughs]

R: Yeah! I have a lot of Music Ed. and freshmen, not a lot of jazz majors. My second alto player, she is doing me a favor. She is one of the top players in the school, she’s a sophomore. So we have some women in there. But I only have 4 out of the whole band.

T1: Wow!

R: Which is why I am doing because there are so many young women in the middle school and high school. I was like “I hope I printed off enough forms if they all take!” [laughs] And then in college, I think I am one of the few female instrumentalists to get a doctorate at my school. There are some in the program now but I can’t think of any women [in recent times] to get a doctorate, that’s not a vocalist.

T1: I wonder why they aren’t going on with it. I don’t really see a difference. I was counting up the boys and girls, because I didn’t know when you first asked, its fairly evenly divided. But I don’t understand why they wouldn’t continue unless it’s just not what they intend with their life.

R: At a lot of conferences I go to, these girls are like “the guys make me feel like I can’t do this” Or “the teachers make me feel stupid or talk to me bad”. Then I’m like “what’s happening?” But here, is an extreme case because this doesn’t seem to be an issue. But still when you go on after high school, there aren’t many that are still playing. It is just interesting to wonder why. At [college] there are 100 jazz major, maybe, 10 women majors. I wonder where it starts. There are interviews of professional women who almost quit because of a teacher or a peer. The first female player to be contracted with the Jazz at Lincoln Center stated that she almost quit in middle school and high school but powered through and now she’s got the best jazz job you can get! It is sad to hear these stories and to come from a school not like that –

T1: Hmm. I wonder if there is a difference in male and female hormones. Because at this age, when they get interested in each other, sometimes they do hold back a little bit more. I wonder if, as they get older, when they are thinking of having a family or settling down or something, that maybe they try and pull in so they don’t look so aggressive. So I really wonder if it is a hormonal thing.

R: This is something that gets talked about in the arts in general. A lot of them don’t have kids, or have later. For guys its different. I thought about doing something like for my dissertation, but that’s a little too personal. There’s a lot of reasons that that could be the case. But in middle school and high school, oh you don’t want to come across as too smart, too good. And that’s

probably a factor. So when the culture shifts, and you see these young women standing up and taking solos, and being like “I know what I am doing”, I think that’s really good. And you said you don’t talk to the students differently if they are male or female.

T1: No, they put up with me as I am [laughs]

R: And you don’t specifically recruit based on gender?

T1: I never would.

R: We kind of talked about this before but what is your personal goal for all students when teaching them jazz music?

T1: I guess the thing I tell them about – and it’s all types of music – is that even if they don’t like, or it’s not really their thing, I just want them to have an appreciation and understanding of it. Because not every student is going to like every type of music. But if they can understand it and can appreciate it for what it is... but I really don’t honestly find a lot of kids that just don’t like jazz.

R: Yeah, I think it’s exciting for little kids.

T1: Yup. And even when we play slow things that they have to try and be laid back on. trying to teach laid back is the hardest thing

R: Like slow swing?

T1: Yes. They just want to rush it forward – Rush, rush, rush – they want to be on top of that beat. You gotta lay back, lay back. This is easy going. That’s the hardest thing to teach that but they all seem to really enjoy it. I try to pull in as much music I can. We do everything from the classics, from Duke Ellington, all of those, to current day things. I gave “You Made Me Love You” and “You Got a Friend In Me”. [laughs] So they got something very current and old standard-ish. And they get to play them both, they are in the same style. And it’s neat for them because they know one and they are comfortable with it. But if they transfer all of that to the other, they get a good feeling for it.

R: So when I was in the concert band, there was no rhythm section. Do you have someone jump on bass or –

T1: We don’t have bass player this year.

R: In orchestra?! Oh no!

T1: I know. We had three at the beginning at the year and they have all chosen different instruments.

R: Any girls?

T1: Yeah, I had two girl. One went to cello and the other to trombone.

R: Okay. I mean trombone is cool.

T1: Eh, its fine. And the one boy I had, he went, “Yeah orchestra isn’t for me” and stayed in band. I get a lot that sign up for both. I have a clarinet girl that plays cello and I have a trumpet girl who plays ukulele.

R: In orchestra?!

T1: Yup, I’m trying to teach her to play individual notes so she can play the violin 2 part. I had a girl on guitar and she learned all the individual notes, and she was able to keep up pretty well.

R: That’s really cool. So basically if you play a string instrument, you’re in orchestra.

T1: Yup!

R: I guess when I was there, we didn’t have any of those issues. That’s nice that they can still feel included. So when you do [jazz] concerts, you just make it work? Do you have a keyboard player?

T1: Just me. The only keyboard player I have only had moved onto high school a couple years ago. And he’s in jazz band!

R: Yeah, I didn’t get time to talk to them much. Is there anything you want to add to this?

T1: Yeah, I don’t have anything else to really add.

[stopped recording. We kept talking and they started talking about their teaching philosophy again so I asked to resume the recording]

T1: –and figure out how to play it. 5th grade band is separate from 6th grade band, which is really nice. Because my 6th graders are quite advanced and I am giving them a lot of different styles of music. So they are getting marches, jazz, a little bit of everything. It’s interesting to see what they like. They don’t like any piece of music that I give them in the beginning because its new and different, this is hard and I hate [laughs] but it’s neat because I can start them at 6th grade learning those things. And with the orchestra kids, I try to sell them on “maybe you can move over to bass for a couple of things.”

R: Do you have any electric bass?

T1: No. I think we did at one point but we don’t have them here anymore.

R: Oh okay, because that is always an easy switch for some kids. Do you jazz with the 4th and 5th graders?

T1: I don't have any 4th graders. 5th is as young as they start, They used to start kids in 4th on strings but they did away with that...

R: Oh.

T1: I wish they would bring it back. I don't remember why but everyone was really upset because they were scared that they would get rid of 5th grade strings and then the whole string program.

[interview was interrupted by other school employees coming into our meeting room and ended here]

Student Interview Transcripts

Karen's Interview

[confirmed recording was on, forms collected, name picked]

R [Crystal]: Alright! So let's start, what was your main reason for joining jazz band?

K [Karen]: I just really wanted to do it since 5th but we couldn't do it. So I was waiting and in 7th grade I started doing jazz.

R: What school did you go to?

K: [School 2]

R: Oh okay! What instrument do you play?

K: The Tenor.

R: Tenor sax?

K: Yup!

R: Nice. So who influenced you to pick your instrument?

K: My brother and... that's pretty much it.

R: Your brother did?

K: Yeah, my brother played tenor. Well I originally started on alto and he originally started on alto. But when he came here, he went to tenor, so then I went to tenor.

R: That's cool! And your parents were like, "Yeah, just do whatever!"

K: Yeah! [laughs]

R: Awesome. So what are your favorite things about jazz band?

K: Just getting along with everyone. Just having that family of friends and stuff.

R: So your pretty much friends with everyone in jazz band?

K: Pretty much, I don't really have an enemy. [laughs]

R: Well that's good! [laughs] Yeah that's the nice thing about music in general. Most of my friends were in band, orchestra, choir. So, do you plan on doing jazz band after high school?

K: [looks uncertain]

R: Well what year are you?

K: I am Freshman.

R: Oh, so that's a long time from now!

K: Yeah, it's a long time from now. [laughs] But I'm also like into sports and stuff. I'm a couple different sports and stuff. So it all kind of depends on the next three years.

R: So what might prevent you from playing jazz? It doesn't have to be in college but even local stuff.

K: Well nothing will prevent me. It's just if I have the time and dedication. Like if I'm on a full sport team, it will be hard to go to gigs and stuff.

R: Oh, yeah! It would be like two full time jobs. So what are your least favorite parts of jazz band?

K: Waking up in the mornings [laughs] I hate waking up in the mornings.

R: So it's just the time? [laughs]

K: Yeah pretty much. [laughs] When we had it as the last class of the day, it was perfect. But... now its 7 in the morning, 6 in the morning... is early.

R: Yeah, I woke up at 5:45 today and I was thinking, "How did I used to do this?!" We had it two days before school at 7am. Do you have it every day at 7am?

K: Yeah, some days he will call it off. But it is scheduled for every day.

R: Oh my gosh! When I had it was 7am Tuesday and Thursday and then Monday nights at 7am. And now it's like a class?

K: Yeah. It's a whole block.

R: So, you get graded for this?

K: Yeah.

R: Whoa. I was never graded on it. That's cool. So when it comes to jazz band, role models, do you have any? Like in jazz music is there a tenor player you're really into?

K: Not really. I just listen around. Sometimes, I just listen to jazz, not a tenor. So...

R: Do you have any artists that you like?

K: [thinking]

R: Any jazz musicians you can name at 7am? No pressure [laughs]

K: Barely. I can't even think of any right now. [laugh]

R: Well we know Duke Ellington.

K: Well yeah.

R: Yeah that guy!

K: That guy [pauses] I can't think of any. I really can't think of anything.

R: Do you know Miles Davis?

K: Yeah! I know a lot of them, it's just hard to think of them.

R: Do you like big band music or small group?

K: Kind of smaller group music. That vibe.

R: Are you in a combo here?

K: Actually, we just started a second combo! The percussionist for our band and they asked me if I wanted to play in it. And so I probably will...

R: Oh cool! And when would that meet?

K: Probably during our lunch time.

R: So, you're going to give up lunch time to play in combo? Awesome! So do you like improvising?

K: Sometimes. It has to be like on the right song. [laughs] You know what I'm saying? Because there are songs that are hard to do it and it sounds weird and you're like... whoa...

R: Do you ever get nervous to improvise?

K: Yeah, I kind of get nervous when I solo in general.

R: Do you know why? Or have a reason why?

K: Nope. [laughs] It just happens!

R: Its changed a lot and we didn't have any classes for improvising. And they have that now, right?

K: Yeah, I think they have an improv class and a couple other classes.

R: Do you think you will take that in the future?

K: Probably because I need that. In the summer they have a camp. And there is like classes in there that you do improv but you only do it for like 5 minutes.

R: And was that helpful though? That wasn't around before either.

K: Yeah because in middle school band... I don't know, it's not the same as here. And you didn't really improvise in middle school so when I got to the camp, I was like, "Oh that's what we are doing!" It was different.

R: Middle school is a lot of learning to play your instrument, just learning the jazz style. And my first solo here, I just played quarter notes and [Teacher 3] was like, "You can do something else!" And I'm like " I can't! I can't do anything else!" *laughs*

K: [laughs]

R: That is awesome you're going to do a combo! As a bass player, we get kind of forced to do it [laughs] because they need ya. But that's awesome you're going to do it! So last questions, no pressure, do you know of any jazz musicians that are women, non-male, professional?

K: I know of one but I don't know their name...

R: What do they play?

K: They play the saxophone... and they scat! Because we went to a concert and they were there. But they were the only one. The only one.

R: Was it the jazz at Lincoln center?

K: Yeah.

R: That's Camille Thurman. That's a tenor player too!

K: Oh really?

R: Yeah you should listen to her! She's awesome!

K: So we saw her in concert, 'cuz their tenor player was out doing something so she played for them.

R: Was this recently?

K: Like January?

R: So she's actually the first female musician to be contracted with that bad.

K: Oh really? Whoa.

R: In history.

K: Oh wow.

R: But most of the people you listen to are men?

K: Yeah.

R: Isn't that kind of weird?

K: Yeah.

R: I will give you a list after this! I can give you a list of some though! Is there anything else you want to add? This is kind of just getting your thoughts on all of this.

K: No, I can't think of anything.

R: See it wasn't that bad [laughs] Well thank you!

[ends recording]

Tiffany's Interview

[Starts recording]

R [Crystal]: Alright so we are going to start! I am also very tired. So what year are you?

T [Tiffany]: A junior

R: Junior, okay. So what was your main reason for joining jazz band?

T: I wanted to get better at trumpet and we don't have a marching band so like if you want to get good at your instrument, the only way excel is to join jazz.

R: Really?

T: Yeah.

R: Do you take lessons?

T: Yeah, I do.

R: With who?

T: [College Professor]

R: Who's that?

T: He's the director of jazz bands at [local college].

R: Oh cool!

T: Yeah, I didn't remember where he was from.

R: So it was basically to get better at trumpet. Did you want to do marching band?

T: No.

R: [laughs]

T: I wanted to do jazz because I like jazz.

R: You wanted to do some extra.

T: Mhm

R: And you play trumpet, like you said. Who influenced you to pick your instrument?

T: My mom. My mom played trumpet.

R: Oh really! Did she do jazz?

T: No she didn't. She did concert band and marching band. But they didn't have a jazz band when she was here.

R: Yeah. So no one else? You were just like, "this is fun! I'll do trumpet!"

T: Yeah.

R: So what are some of your favorite things about jazz band?

T: I like creating music and telling a story through music. It's just like another art form.

R: Yeah! Do you improvise a lot?

T: Yeah.

R: Are you in a combo?

T: No because [Teacher 3] won't let me in a combo.

R: Really? Have you asked?

T: No but... he hasn't...

R: [chuckles] well you could ask!

T: Well there's only one combo... and it's for the best kids... and I'm in the second band...

R: Well someone else said that there may be a second one?

T: There's a second one and it's not for the second band. It's for other people in the top band.

R: Well you should start your own combo!

T: [laughs]

R: But do you do any jazz camps or anything?

T: Yeah, I do. I went to [regional camp] this summer.

R: Cool!

T: Yeah. Tanya Darby was there.

R: Have you gone to [another camp]? That's the one I went to.

T: No, I went to [camp].

R: How was that?

T: The first time I went, when I was going into the jazz program, I learned a lot because I didn't know what a blues scale was and stuff like that so it kind of prepared me.

R: That's cool. What middle school did you go to?

T: I went to [school not a part of study] there's not a lot of west side kids. Yeah there's a huge disparity and [Teacher 3] doesn't talk to any of the west side kids at all. Nobody goes over there and the west side teacher doesn't come over here. There's no communication ---

R: so who – sorry didn't mean to cut you off – who directs the band at [school that isn't in study].

T: I don't know who's there right now. But [teacher 1] did before.

R: Yeah, I didn't even realize [that school] was a middle school when I started this project because it was a grade school when I was growing up. Because that was recent in the last... 5 years?

T: 2014 it was a middle school so it's been like 6 years.

R: And I'm probably going to talk about this in the project because there is a big difference between the two schools. So what kept you going? What attracted you to it?

T: I don't know... there's a difference in the way they teach in schools. Where the west side, where [Teacher 1] is like, if you want to have fun with it, we have fun a lot with it. Whereas, on the East side, it's more like you have to be serious with it. And I had a lot of fun with it so I kept going.

R: Yeah, that's how it was with me. I almost dropped out of orchestra, because I started on violin.

T: I started on violin too. But I couldn't play anything so – because of my lungs – I wanted to play trumpet in preschool but nobody would give lessons because my lungs were underdeveloped. They won't give you lessons until you were a 4th grader so I had to play a different instrument so I played piano.

R: Oh cool! Did that help your trumpet playing?

T: Yeah! I can read bass clef and treble clef still.

R: Did you ever improvise on piano?

T: No. I don't think [Teacher 3] knows I can play piano.

R: You should get all these jazz piano books and learn jazz piano really well and walk in and be like "what!?"

T: [laughs]

R: Yeah there is a big difference. I'm a west side person so don't give up! There's hope!

T: Yeah and especially because they are trying to turn [School 2] into a performing arts school for the middle school. So only 50 kids can go for the performing arts and none of the west kids are gonna get to go there. So they won't be able to do any music.

R: If that happens, I will riot. [laughs]

T: I know.

R: Well you're saying a lot things I felt when I was your age. So after high school, do you plan on playing jazz?

T: Yeah. I'm going to like go into it because I plan on going into engineering but I definitely plan on being in band.

R: So major in engineering and jazz on the side?

T: Yeah like an extracurricular activity.

R: Why wouldn't you want to major in it?

T: Uhh [pauses]I'm just more interested in engineering and building things.

R: That wasn't meant to be a bad thing! At my school, it's one of the top engineering schools. You might already know that if you are looking. There are so many [pauses] I think [pauses] So I just went on tour with the jazz trombone ensemble and he's, I think a sophomore, but he's a chemical engineering major and jazz studies double major. And there's things amazing trumpet player and he's also a chemical engineering major.

T: Yeah, I'm looking into going into mechanical and electrical, double major, with a minor in civil engineering. Because they just throw money at women who want to go into electrical engineering. So I could like a full ride easy.

R: University of Illinois and then you can play in the jazz band! That makes sense. And a lot of people do that. It's cool you're going to keep playing. What are your least favorite parts of jazz band?

T [pauses] umm I don't [pauses] I don't like the stressful environment sometimes. It's a lot different in the second band but sometimes the top band, I know, it can be a negative environment.

R: Do you mind elaborating on that?

T: Like when they are recording for EE and people kept messing up and stuff like that. Or... like I was out sick for a while. I have a disability – here's my scar—so I have a chronic pain and I can't play all the time and my pulse stops when I play. My hands turn purple. So I can't play all the time.

R: Yeah.

T: yeah so, I have explained this to my section in the band and still people are talking trash about me, even though literally I had surgery like 8 weeks ago. And so it's just like a negative environment sometimes. And it got solved but it still hurts. “you should be able to play and practice”, “you're making the band horrible”... yeah... “you're the reason we are going to lose the competition”

R: They said that to you?!

T: Yeah.

R: This makes me sad.

T: I'm sorry.

R: No, no, no its okay. Its good. I don't think people want to talk about this kind of stuff. When I got to college, I had someone that was always telling me “you're the reason the band is dragging”, “ you're the reason for this” and blah blah blah. Like freaking out on me. And I wonder if he was doing that because I was an 18 year old girl. He wasn't yelling at anyone else. And sometimes it is a negative environment. And through this project, I have learned that that can deter women. No one wants to hear that, we are trying our best. You have a legit reason.

T: Yeah.

R: But you're still showing up and doing what you need to do. And if you need to take a break, like, this is good. So, least favorite part is negative vibes. And if this is too personal, you don't need to answer, but do you feel like it's because you're a girl? Are they going at the guys too? Are the guys just coming at you? Girls and guys?

T: It's definitely the girls and guys. I don't feel like it's a gender thing. Everyone is just like ahh!!

R: Yeah, I forgot how competitive high school jazz band is. Oh man. Yeah, its intense. It was like that when I was in high school. People always screaming and stuff.

T: My boyfriend was in the top band when they went to EE and he played saxophone. It was like him, one guy and all girls. They had to bring in a counselor during the thing to talk to them. Somebody's mom came in because everyone was freaking out so badly.

R: That happened with us too. It's a great experience, we made it once when I was in high school. And people were going crazy! Yeah people take it seriously which isn't good or bad. But this music isn't about competitions. Like there is competitive aspects in the real world but it doesn't have to be that way.

T: Yeah, I know.

R: And you're not the only one that goes through these things. A lot of people in those pictures said a lot of "nice" things to me. Thank you for sharing that. Maybe some more positive stuff now: do you have any role models when it comes to this music?

T: When I met Tanya Darby this summer. She was amazing. I took a lesson with her this, she was amazing. She was super cool.

R: Was it awesome seeing a woman playing trumpet?

T: Yeah seeing her lead the section and like there's all these super professional men. And she's telling them what to do and they are like "Yes, Tanya". [laughs]

R: [laughs] Have you heard of the diva jazz orchestra?

T: No.

R: It's an all-female big band.

T: That's cool.

R: And I think she's one of the lead players.

T: I will have to check that out.

R: So when you're causally listening to music though, who do you listen to? Who do you want to play trumpet like?

T: I try to sound Chet Baker. I've been told I sound like I'm playing a flugal horn when I play my normal trumpet and I love playing flugal horn. Like when I solo and stuff, I try to play like Chet. When we play a song, I try to see what he played on it and sound like what he did.

R: Have you transcribed a lot of Chet Baker?

T: A little bit.

R: Sometimes it's good to just emulate it.

T: Mhm.

R: Not actually writing down what he said.

T: Yeah.

R: Cool. So any women?

T: Umm.

R: I guess this is kind of my last question. Do you know of any women? Like you know of one.

T: Yeah. I [pauses] Not [pauses] Like I know women but –

R: Or anyone else.

T: Her name isn't coming up to me right now. And I listen to female saxophonist... I just can't remember what their names are. There's one in JLCO.

R: Camille Thurman. I guess you guys saw that group recently?

T: I didn't get to go because I was sick.

R: oh okay. She is the first –

T: I know!

R: Oh you knew that! She's the first in history. They have a couple subs...

T: They had a couple guest artist, but the first one to actually play in the band.

R: Yeah. And usually the women are the vocalists.

T: Mhm. I saw this one thing, I was watching a live stream or something, and this judge or something and went up to this girl. She was a trombone player but he wasn't paying attention and he was like "What? Are you a vocalist?" and I was like –

R: That's why I'm interviewing non-vocalist. Because in the vocal jazz world, male vocalists are the rare ones. And then instrumental female. They have had a lot of subs in the band. Alexa Tarantino, who's an alto player. Helen Sung is a pianist and those are the two main ones. For trumpet, have you heard of Ingrid Jensen?

T: No.

R: She's pretty cool. I'm trying to think a list to give to [Teacher 3]. Because when everyone is like Miles Davis, Coltrane –

T: Yeah, it's like the same. It's like the same 5 guys. It's not women.

R: I think the culture is starting to change but it's still crazy to see the first female instrumentalist in the jazz at Lincoln center in 2020. 2019 – 2020. That's crazy! She sounds great! When I saw them last fall and she didn't sing, I was like yes! I liked that a guy sang and she just got to play tenor.

T: Yeah especially when they double as vocalists and instrumentalists because that happens a lot.

R: Yeah, I feel like women bass players – but yeah, a lot of female bass players double and sing. And I'm a weird one like "I don't want to do that, I just want to play bass!"

T: [laughs] I don't sing. But there's a bunch of theatre kids in here who sing. But last year, we did have a guy who sang but he quit this year.

R: Yeah, I went to school with his brother. So that's all the questions I have. Is there anything you want to add?

T: No, I'm good.

R: Well thank you!

T: Thank you.

[Ends recording]

Sara's Interview

[Starts recording]

R [Crystal]: Alright so you're an alto player right.

S [Sara]: Yeah

R: And you're a senior?

S: Mhm.

R: So what was your main reason for joining jazz band?

S: My brother was in jazz band. And he's two years old than me. And I kind of watched him in middle school and he really enjoyed it. And I thought I would enjoy it. I started in 7th grade.

R: What middle school did you go to?

S: [east side], and then I started on the tenor in 7th grade.

R: And then you switched to alto here?

S: Yeah.

R: Any reason?

S: They needed a lead alto player? [laughs]

R: Well that's a reason! [laughs] so when it came to picking your instrument, who influenced you?

S: Well I started on the clarinet. And my mom played the clarinet for one year but she got kicked out of band. [laughs] That's how bad she was... but she still had a clarinet so I figured, "oh I will just play the clarinet, I already have it". And then I wanted to do jazz band and saxophone was just like...

R: The natural.

S: Yeah.

R: That makes sense. Let's see. I need more coffee. What are your favorite things about being in jazz band.

S: I really like the experiences that I have. I think like that I wouldn't have as many opportunities if I didn't do jazz band.

R: Opportunities? Such as?

S: Opportunities to travel and play at different places and go to competitions. I'm not like a sports person so... [laughs] so any other thing would just like... I don't know... its rare. I don't think I could be anywhere else. Band is just like... what I needed to do I guess. And I really like the community I guess. Everyone is really supportive. Even if you're not that great. Which I'm not. [laughs]

R: Why did you say that?!

S: But yeah. Band is great.

R: But why'd you say that... are you in any of the combos or anything?

S: No.

R: Oh why not?

S: Because I'm [pauses] not good. [laughs]

R: Oh my.

S: So, improv is not my thing at all.

R: Is there a reason why?

S: I guess I never learned. I don't know. Like music [pauses] I guess I enjoy it while I'm here but it's not really my passion I guess. So I don't know. I'm in like a million different things beyond band so I never felt like I had time to sit down and actually learn how to do it.

R: What other stuff are you in?

S: I'm editor of the newspaper, academic decathlon, NHS

R: Yay NHS! [laughs]

S: I take porter scholar classes, AP classes... I volunteer a lot. I don't know. I'm just in a lot.

R: Are you one of the student body...

S: No.

R: I was in vice president of NHS and class secretary so I understand that! Do you feel like... I think all the girls I'm interviewing are involved in everything. Do you ever feel like you're pressured to do everything so then you can't focus music? Or do you want to do all of that or...?

S: I want to do all of them. Like I've never had... Band is the only place that tells me to do things or I feel like I'm forced to do things. [laughs]

R: Are your parents like, "you have to do band"?

S: No, no, no. its... [teacher 3]. [laughs] no like I don't know. It's definitely my most stressful activity.

R: Really?

S: Yeah.

R: Interesting... usually it shouldn't...

S: Oh...

R: Oh I don't know! Well thinking back, this was the least stressed. I didn't want to learn calculus... no... [laughs] so when you get out of high school, are you still going to play? Play in college? Any community stuff?

S: I haven't really decided yet. I think that I might because the second alto was like "when you leave, are you going to play? Can I buy your alto?" and at first I was like "oh yeah! take it! I never want to play jazz again!" but then I thought about how like this has been my best friend for the last four years. And I got so sad! And then I was like, "No, I can't sell you my alto. I'm going to take it to college!" So who knows. I might but if I get too busy with other things... and if I do do it, it will be casually. I'm not like going to major in it or anything.

R: What are you going to major in?

S: Biology, society and environment.

R: Man... you guys are smart... [laughs] all these smart majors. So it's just not something you... it's not your passion to keep pursuing it?

S: I mean I wish it was but like I have never had the natural talent I guess. You know there are some players out here who get things like instantly and I feel like music is not one of my stronger, abilities.

R: But you sound great!

S: Thanks...

R: I don't know. No one is naturally talented at it.

S: [Male student] is.

R: Who's that?

S: The bari player. He literally came out of concert band and he picked up the bari and he's not our best player. [laughs] it's kind of funny.

R: Is that intimidating?

S: No, no! I'm like good for him! That's amazing, I'm so happy for him.

R: Yeah! But you're like "I can't do that so I shouldn't."

S: Yeah, I don't know.

R: You work so hard!

S: Eh.

R: Oh, I am always trying to get people to stay in jazz so don't mind me [laughs] because it's interesting to hear. The women work so hard and they are like "oh, after high school I don't..."

S: Yeah, it's not that I don't want to. I'm not strongly opposed. It's just that if the question is when almost.

R: Because there are other things you want –

S: Yeah.

R: That makes sense. So what's your least favorite part of being in jazz band?

S: Umm, the pressure that this band, in particular, has. The lead alto player from last year was this crazy soloist and he was just so, so good. And last year, at the end of the year, I came to [teacher 3]'s office and was like "I can't do this next year. I'm not going to be [him]. I don't want to let you down so like I don't know if I can do this next year. I don't want to let the whole band down." And he's like "It's okay. I don't expect you to be [him] at all. I just expect you to be a leader. I don't care if you don't want to solo, that's fine. But I need you to be a leader and make decisions." Just like [pauses] this year is a lot better. But in past years there have been really negative people in the band that have [pauses] there's just a lot of negative energy.

R: Towards you specifically?

S: No, not me specifically, just in general. Sometimes me specifically. But like [pauses] I mean this year there's none of that. I haven't felt like a single thing that's been wrong. But yeah, I mean to answer your question, the pressure of following in the footsteps of the great people that were in this band before and living up to that expectation. This is like, we aren't crazy well-known, but we are pretty well-known, but just letting people down because we aren't as good as past bands is the hardest part.

R: That makes sense. I think that's good though he's like "just be you, be a leader" because you seem like a leader, you're doing all these things, so I think that's good! But yeah, its really easy to compare yourself to other people – I know. I'm trying to think of some follow up questions. Yeah, the section sounds great. Do is there any reason why you don't want investigate improvising?

S: Uhh, I just [pauses] I don't know. I mean I have soloed before, I have soloed. I have a feature.

R: Oh cool!

S: Yeah, Star-crossed Lovers. It's very nice! That I can play fine. But with improv, I think about it too much and then I can't play anything. So I don't know. I'll do anything [pauses] but that. [laughs]

R: Have you gone to any of the camps?

S: No, I've always been doing other things in the summer. I do teach at the [local summer camp]

R: Do you like teaching jazz?

S: Yeah! And I give lessons and stuff. It's not like I don't like jazz [laughs]

R: Oh no! I'm just curious! I just want to see your thought process. For me it's interesting for me to hear such a great band and then... and that's why I said when I started recruiting, when you get to college it just drops off. So to see like, most of all the girls I'm interviewing, aren't going to go on. And it's interesting to me and I want to know why. So when it comes to playing jazz, do you have any role models? Who do you listen to?

S: Like?

R: Who do you look up to? If anyone.

S: So a few years ago – this isn't a famous person or anything – [female student] was lead alto four years ago and when I was in middle school. She was this great alto player and [Teacher 3] was like "you can be like her one day if you practice! You can be just like her!" and she gave me lessons and she was such a good player and a good person. And I would be like "I wanna be just like [her] when I'm in jazz!" so I guess she would be. And then [make student]. He didn't get into jazz his freshman year. And then his sophomore year was my freshman year and we were in the band together. He was so much better than me but I was the lead. And no matter what anybody else said to, like "Oh [make student] should be lead! You suck! Why are you still in band!" they would say that.

R: To you?!

S: Yeah [laughs] It was like one person. But I felt that from everyone. And he would be like ‘don’t worry about them. You’re doing such a great job! It’s okay, everything’s fine, you’re doing fine’.

R: That’s really good. I’m trying not to ask not to ask this but do you ever feel that, because you’re a girl, that maybe you get more criticism or people felt like they could tell you that? Verses be If not, that’s cool too.

S: Well that one specific thing that came from freshman year, came from a girl. But she was like... she got... she definitely got cut. So I’m in Jazz 1 now and she is not. That tells you something. But I definitely have felt more negativity from guys. There were a group of senior boys last year that definitely had stronger opinions about me. Like [pauses] I guess [pauses] like kind of not [pauses] like [pauses] I don’t know [pauses] Gah!

R: It’s okay! I’m just asking this because I have gone through this. So my next question is if you know any women who play jazz and everyone has been bring up Camille Thurman, who you guys saw recently. And she talks about this. When she was in middle school and high school – I found this article that I’m going to talk about in my paper – and people were so mean to the girls. Like a group guys always talking down to them and she was one of the only ones that didn’t quit. And look where she is now! Its credible! It’s the first female artist to contracted ever.

S: Mhm.

R: in 2019/2020! So like what you’re saying, is echoed in other parts. Like its okay to say these things. I experienced it more in college. I did get it a little bit in high school. I had a drummer freak out on me like, “you’re the reason the band is dragging” “you’re the reason we sound bad”. And would he have done that to a guy?

S: Right.

R: So it’s not weird to think these things.

S: Like I have definitely felt a difference this year. I feel more respected. Maybe it’s because I am in a higher position than last year.

R: And you’re older.

S: Yeah, I’m older. The section is all sophomores except for one girl who I have played with for a long time. But they are all sophomores. And none of them. and even the guys look up to me and they make sure they like... they always ask “what can I do more” and they are not negative at all. And I haven’t felt that with guys in my section in the past. They, except [previously stated male student] have always been the ones to put me down. Like yeah, I’ve gotten “you’re the reason this section is so weak” and stuff like that.

R: That’s discouraging.

S: Yeah.

R: Because it kind of sounds like you maybe wanted. Did you maybe want to play jazz later on and these comments maybe –

S: Maybe. Yeah in 7th grade, and it's the same guy that's been in my section for 7 years. He was like, "play this" and it was my first day playing saxophone, barely knew what I was doing. And so I played the three notes for him. And I'm like, "why" and he said, "that's why you shouldn't be in jazz band. I really think you should quit. I'm the only tenor in this band that is good enough. We don't need you." And I got that every single year from him.

R: Would he do that to any other people?

S: Not really. So [pauses] Yeah.

R: And that's the kind of stuff that these older women musicians talk about. And I think it's important – that's why I'm doing this project – the culture is changing but it's important to talk about these things so thank you!

S: Mhm.

R: And the last question: are there any women jazz musicians that you know of? Besides Camille Thurman [laughs]

S: Besides Camille [pauses] Hmm [pauses] Not really [pauses] Not that I like [pauses] Have an active interest in –

R: But no one has presented any women to listen to?

S: Not really.

R: When you go to festivals, are there any female clinicians? Are there any women in the professional bands?

S: Not like clinicians but like guest artists. Maria Sch –

R: Schneider?

S: Yeah, she was in it. I've seen her a few times at Purdue maybe? Umm, and then there was this one singer at Lawrence? There was like a group of women but I came in to the concert half way through because I couldn't find the building [laughs] so I didn't really catch her name. but like I have definitely notice that there are no women in higher level jazz bands at all.

R: Is that discouraging to you? Since you are going in to college, do you want to be the only girl in the jazz band?

S: I mean, that would be like really daunting being [pauses] I mean you come from this band where half the band is girl – maybe more than half—and then it’s just like really different. And I’m [pauses] yeah.

R: Not something you would want to deal with?

S: I wouldn’t mind dealing with it. I think like if that was the path I had chosen, I wouldn’t have let it bother me. But even I’m going into the medical and science field and that’s –

R: Male dominated

S: Yeah, male dominated. So I mean I guess I never, the thought of that isn’t... umm uh. [laughs] umm I’m trying to think... like obviously we want to see change in that but I wouldn’t mind being the only girl. But I would want to share these experiences and I want other females to be doing, progressing with me.

R: Yeah, me too! [laughs] well those are all the questions I have. Is there anything you want to add or follow up on?

S: Not really.

R: I appreciate you doing this!

S: I felt bad because I was like, “I’m not going into jazz and I feel like she wants people going into music”

R: Nope. Its might be better that you aren’t because it’s the big question. Why aren’t these young women continuing? And sometimes it has nothing to do with jazz because who knows about these guys and if they are going out there and keep playing. It’s just statistically when you get to college, it’s a huge drop off as you see at these festivals. And I have been pointing out that that picture right there is when we went to Ellington the first time and I’m one of 4 girls in the whole band. And I think the second band had 2. Which is like 11 years. Which makes me feel old but there’s more and more girls each year.

S: Like there are probably 6 or 5 guys in Jazz 2.

R: Yeah, its crazy! But when you move on, just being an active part of the jazz community. There are other roles that you might be able to fill. And listen to concerts and support people. But it’s okay you’re not going into it! But you’re also 18 so you have your life to pick up your alto again and play in like a community jazz band.

S: Mhm. Right.

R: Somewhere, wherever you move. But yeah, I wasn’t looking for someone where jazz was their passion.

S: Yeah. And I think once I move to college in august. Oh... that's soon.

R: Yay!

S: [laughs] I'm ready to go. But I feel like that in that big city, there's more opportunities to go see jazz bands at like... I don't know.

R: like an actual scene. The scene here is you guys.

S: Yeah.

R: Jam session, be the only girl there but yeah that will be cool! I don't have any other questions so if you're good, I'm good!

S: I'm good! Thank you!

R: Thank you!

Annabelle's Interview

[starts recordings]

R [Crystal]: Okay! And you are a senior?

A [Annabelle]: Yes.

R: And you play trumpet?

A: Yup.

R: Alright! First question: what was your main reason for joining jazz band?

A: So, I joined jazz because of my siblings. They were both in jazz and I really enjoyed playing trumpet in middle school. So I was like, "you know this would probably be good" [laughs] so I joined my freshman year, and it was... alright at first. And then when I tried out for the next year, that's when I started to like get more involved in jazz.

R: So sophomore year?

A: Yeah.

R: And you're one of the few [School 1] and I am a [School 1] person. So did you do jazz at [School 1]?

A: Well I went to [school not in study] because the schools switched.

R: I forgot about that!

A: Well, there wasn't really a jazz band. They said there was but we only met like once.

R: Ever?

A: Yeah. And for our regular band, my conductor would pull out a couple songs that they said were jazz but they really weren't.

R: It wasn't [Teacher 1] was it?

A: It was [Teacher 1]. Yeah. It was just like two or three songs. And I was the only one to try out from the west side from my class.

R: It's really interesting. Because when think about when I was in the group, there's a lot of west side people.

A: Yeah, I think there are only like 3.

R: So, you got more into it sophomore year?

A: Yeah.

R: So when it came to picking trumpet, who influenced that? Because all your siblings play saxophone.

A: Yeah, so that's the thing, I wanted to be in band because they were in but I didn't want to do the same thing, I wanted to do something different. And to be honest, I was like, "oh it only has three buttons!" [laughs]

R: And then its ones of the hardest ones of them all! [laughs]

A: Then when I actually started playing it, I really enjoyed it.

R: And you picked trumpet on your own?

A: Yeah, I picked it on my own.

R: Cool! What are your favorite things about jazz band?

A: I like our community a lot. A lot of my friends are in this group and we are really connected. And it has helped me throughout high school. And the music is... you can be creative with it. Like you can do anything with it. And there's so many different types of jazz and its crazy.

R: It's pretty overwhelming! [laughs] so are you in any of the combos here?

A: No I am not. I am trying to get more into improvisation but I'm not in the one combo. I was thinking about joining it but [pauses] I don't know.

R: Why not?

A: I don't know [pauses] maybe [pauses]

R: Do you improvise a lot? Are you comfortable with it?

A: Not [pauses] on certain things kind of like sometimes. Blues are more comfortable. But then when it comes to standards, I've been trying to learn more of those.

R: Good, what have you been working on?

A: Night in Tunisia, Blue Bossa, In a Mellowtone.

R: That's cool! So, when you get out of high school, since you are getting out of high school, will you continue playing jazz music?

A: Yeah so, I'm actually going to go into music education. [talks about what schools she applied to]

R: What do you want to do with? Do you want to basically do what [Teacher 3] does?

A: Yes and... I've been thinking about it. Either doing high school stuff or elementary general music. I sat in a class at [local college] and I found it fun and interesting and would like doing that. And I would be open to middle school too, it's just at the bottom [laughs]

R: That's a lot of "be quiet", "stop talking" [both laugh] So when you do that, are you going to keep playing?

A: Yeah. So [Teacher 3] has told us that when he became a teacher, he kind of stopped playing for a bit. And now he's been trying to get more into it. And I don't want that to happen with me because I obviously want to keep improving myself and my musicianship. Like he does gigs on weekends sometimes and I would like to do that too.

R: Yeah, its hard. I started as Music Ed because I wanted to be an orchestra teacher. And there's a lot you have to do with music ed. And in my experience, I wanted to just get better at bass. I just didn't want to do all the music ed. stuff. That's kind of why I am getting a doctorate because I love teaching and I got to focus on my bass playing. Do you see yourself making your own group? Community playing? What kinda of playing would you want to do?

A: It depends on what school I go to. If there aren't a lot of combos and stuff, I would probably take the initiative to make more for other people to join. Then for like the future... I'm... not really sure.

R: That's okay! Well at [college], if you want to play, you are really close to [a big city]. And there's a really good [female pianist] there.

A: I think I have met her before.

R: I have heard her play but I haven't met. So what are some of your least favorite parts of jazz band?

A: It can be stressful sometimes. Trying to work on fundamentals while also trying to get better at improv. It can be like, "what do I practice right now" And it's kind of like [pauses] Sometimes I get down on myself like, "oh I should be better." But I try to think, "you're gonna get better. You just need to keep practicing and pushing yourself." Cause I know I have come a very far way from freshman year and I just gotta keep going.

R: Yeah! I didn't even play bass [at your age] I didn't know what I was doing, I didn't practice. I didn't know I had to practice. I wanted to be an orchestra teacher so I focused on cello. Do you take lessons too?

A: Sometimes. We have lessons set up with [local teacher from local college]. The thing is that they are so expensive and I just don't have the money to take a \$50 lesson every week. So I try to do them sometimes. Like at least once a month.

R: That's really good that you are proactive and soon it will be you charging \$50 for an hour! [laughs] that's good you're really going that extra step. Least favorite part is high pressure... I wasn't trying to ask this question straight up but have you ever feel like you're treated differently at camps, competitions, or festivals? Like based on gender.

A: On gender? Yeah definitely. So going to competitions, the jazz camps are pretty cool and inclusive of everybody. But I notice – because I like to pay attention to this stuff a lot - but I notice, that even if I do – how to do I explain this – well first of all, a lot of other high schools don't have as many girls as we do. We had more girls last year but –

R: Yeah, there are only four in that picture!

A: And it seems like the guys who are from other schools talk more to the other guys who take solos in our band, instead of the girls. I notice that me and [other female student], she takes a lot of solos too, but like after performances, they don't come up to us. They go over to the other people. And I feel like we are timid to go up to other people and talking about music and stuff.

R: But no one has been mean to you or said anything like, “oh that was a weird comment”.

A: No, but I know other people in the band who have had comments made to them about their gender.

R: Hopefully not any clinicians? That may be a too specific question. Well what was weird for me, when I was here, I never felt like I was treated differently because I was a girl. I got that more when I went to college.

A: That just reminded me. I was in the [All State Jazz Band] a couple years ago and there were four of us. And the guys were pretty nice about it and to us but it kind of felt like we stuck together. But yeah there was nothing wrong with that.

R: Yeah and if you're the only one, it's like, “who do I hang out with?” I have been using this story, when I was a freshman, I was the only girl. And the drummer was [yelling at me often in the band] and over the 9 years in college, there's always been one person that's point at me. And I'm like “you're not doing this to any of the guys.” When I was in high school, we didn't have all these gender movements happening so you might be more aware when I was like [shrugs] [laughs] so when comes to role models in jazz, professional or not professional, do you have any?

A: Yeah so there a couple trumpet players that I really look up to. Chet Baker, I really like listening to him and his sound and all that. Tanya Darby, she's really empowering. A woman who's a lead trumpet player.

R: Did you go to [the jazz camp] when she was there?

A: Yeah so, I went two years. The first year she wasn't there but this last summer she was. And I always enjoyed her and she always motivated me to keep working, it was great.

R: Have you heard of the Diva Jazz Orchestra? All-female big band.

A: No I have not. I have heard of them but I haven't heard any.

R: She's one of the lead players, I think. At least on rotation. So anyone else besides those two?

A: Also Kenny Rampton, I really like. He's come and helped us all the years I have been here. And he's really helpful and give great tips.

R: You specifically? Really encouraging to you? Just the band?

A: Yeah! There's a couple times I have talked to him and he's been really encouraging to me. And the band.

R: I like how it's an all-female trumpet section! That's pretty cool!

A: Yeah! [laughs]

R: Alright, this is the last question. Do you know of any jazz musicians who are female? Do you a lot of them?

A: Yeah there are Tanya. And there were two who played at the [jazz festival] Tina Fuller ---

R: Tia!

A: Oh Tia Fuller! And Aubrey...

R: Trombone player?

A: Yeah, I really liked their playing. I wrote their names down but I haven't looked them up yet. But not really, I don't --

R: Is that discouraging?

A: Umm, a little bit. Oh! Camille Thurman!

R: Because you guys just saw her! [laughs]

A: But yeah it can be a little bit discouraging. Like the Jazz at Lincoln Center. It's all males, except for her.

R: She's the first female musician to ever get contract. It's crazy because it was 2019!

A: And back in the swing area, I have never heard of any girl musicians besides Ella Fitzgerald, who's vocal.

R: Ever heard of Mary Lou Williams?

A: No.

R: She's a pianist who was probably just as good as Ellington. I wrote down a lot of names from my doctoral studies. Like during WW2. Women filled in for the men and people saw them as temporary but they were there the whole time! But I have a lot of bass players in my head like Esparanza Spaulding, Linda oh, the whole diva orchestra. Alexa Tarantino, she was the first girl I saw at the Jazz at Lincoln Center. There is Helen Sung. And Ingrid Jenson that plays trumpet. Ever heard of her? There are so many people! And I think, as you're going to be an educator, we can start showing our students that girls can do this. I wonder if, people like you or me, it didn't discourage us but maybe it could have extra encouraged us to keep going.

A: Yeah.

R: I don't remember ever having a female clinician in high school. Which is kind of sad. And that's what I want to do. I want to be the person on the panel. So it's changing slowly but I'm glad you didn't give up. Is there anything you want to add to any of this?

A: [shakes head]

R: I'm happy you're going to keep playing!

[recording stops]

Saoirse's Interview

[Starts recording]

R : Let's start right on it. What grade are you in?

S: 12th grade, senior.

R: Oh so you have a whole hour to do nothing today!

S: Study. I have a test.

R: Yay! [laughs] Okay so we will jump right in. What was your main reason for joining jazz band?

S: In middle school or in high school?

R: Just in general.

S: Well I enjoy the music and I like the history behind the music. It's really interesting to me. The culture in New Orleans and the culture in New York is really interesting. I enjoy the community aspect, in the band. In the big bands there's so many opportunities to make friends, so many opportunities to work with people and I really appreciate that.

R: Yeah! Are you in a combo?

S: No.

R: So you play trombone?

S: Mhm.

R: I just want on tour with a bunch of trombone players! Do you know who Elliot Mason is?

S: I do!

R: I got to see the live stream. Can I bother you during the study hour if we have time so I can show you the group?

S: Yeah!

R: Okay cool! That's not part of the research [both laugh] So who influenced you to pick this instrument?

S: Honestly it was myself. Because I am a euphonium player first, I started that in 5th grade. I really wanted to do jazz band in 6th grade and my mom was like, "No, you need to find out what

you like before I let you join this really big additional time commitment.” Because I was still in the regular concert band.

R: What school did you go to? [School 2]?

S: [School 2]. Well I went to [School 2] for my 8th grade year but [School 2] for 6th and 7th. And I had [Teacher 2] and it was the last couple weeks of 6th grade and we were about to do marching band. And he’s like “if you want to march with a trombone, it might be easier.” And then he’s like “And if you want to start learning it for the jazz band in case you want to do it.” Okay sure! Learned the trombone honestly about 3 days. Because it all collates with the valves and the slide positions. I legitimately learned the trombone in less than 3 days. [laughs] I took it home that night and just shedded.

R: All day! [laughs]

S: Yes! [laughs] and it was great and I played it in marching. I fell in love with it. And joined jazz band the following year and have been playing it ever since.

R: Oh, cool! How did you pick euphonium? Just like oh that looks cool!

S: So, our band director, [Teacher 2], came to the school at the end of 4th grade and played a bunch of different instruments for us in an assembly. And was like “if you like any of these sounds, check us out next year!” and it came down to the euphonium, French horn, and the bassoon. I just really liked those sounds.

R: The lower ones?

S: Yeah, I like the lower tones and I like the fuller sound. I didn’t immediately like the trombone as much because it is a very direct sound but for jazz band its really great! So I picked euphonium because I really liked it, it came pretty easy to me. Brass was easier than woodwinds.

R: Really?

S: Yeah.

R: So, I’m the opposite. So I took low brass tech, because I was a music ed major. And I couldn’t play the trombone. Everyone was like you’re playing all the right notes in the wrong positions. And I’m like “cool!”

S: That’s honestly pretty easy on trombone though. Because you can play one position and get like 5 different notes [laughs]

R: Yeah, play “Mary had a little lamb” in one position [laughs] it was not good for class though when you are getting graded on playing trombone. But I’m really good with string instruments so I resonate with that. So what are your favorite things about jazz band?

S: Well, I mentioned some of them. I like the community aspect. I like the friends I have made through the program. I like the feeling of kind of home in the band room and the jazz band. I feel like myself here mostly. I really like the culture of the music. Every time we get a new piece, I really break it down and look at the history of it. And who made, who composed the piece, why they composed it. Was it part of a suite, did it mean something larger. So Magnolia's Dripping with Molasses, when we played that last year, that was so cool for me! Because I could hear the different aspects of it. Because [inaudible] as in it and it was really cool that Duke Ellington made a piece that sounded like a train and actual plantation work, and you could hear and it was incredible! I like to hear the history of the piece and then being to admit that through the playing.

R: Wow. You really like jazz.

S: I do!

R: I just wasn't like that in high school because I came to jazz super late. He's like "oh, we need a bass player" and I'm like "I will try?" [laughs] I didn't get really into until I got to college. So it's really cool to hear you so engrossed in the music early on.

S: I think I do that to, just to follow up, because I can't devote a ton of my time. I do competitive dance, I do all sorts of stuff. And I'm so stretched thin that I haven't been able to devote as much time as I would like to jazz. So when I have the opportunity to do something that isn't soloing or being a fantastic crazy trombone player, I do the things I can do. And I appreciate the things that interest me through the music.

R: Do you take lessons?

S: I don't, no.

R: Do you plan on playing jazz after high school or majoring in it?

S: No. I would like to continue being an active audience member and appreciate the music that the musicians play. But I don't think I'm going to do it after high school.

R: Can I ask why?

S: I think it's just too many other passions. It's one of my many passions. I've been dancing since I was 2 years old and I'm going to continue with that. And I would like to be an Environmental Lawyer. So that's going to be an environmental science and political science degree. So...

R: So you never saw yourself being like "I would love to be a trombone player"?

S: Umm not really. I think it has always just been a high school thing that I really like to do and I have spent a lot of time on it but I will probably leave in high school.

R: Okay. So what are your least favorite parts of jazz band?

S: [thinking]

R: I love all of it! [laughs]

S: [laughs] well I guess [pauses] I'm just trying to think of a legitimate answer [pauses] I don't want to even say it's the amount of time it takes because it's a commitment so you choose that. You sacrifice things to do this. Hmm, I don't know. Maybe when everyone is not in the same mind set. Its exclusive to high school, when you're preparing for a concert or preparing for a gig and not everyone is as focused or as prepared as you are.

R: Oh that's not just high school. That's real life.

S: Yeah, I guess that gets frustrating. But you could really apply that to any discipline, anywhere, if people aren't in the same mindset or as dedicated as you are. That's frustrating.

R: So I'm trying to not just ask this outright but do you ever feel, because you are a girl, as a minority in this art, do you ever feel like you're treated differently? And if not, that's cool! You don't need to search for any specific answer or anything. Because I never felt that way when I was in high school.

S: Umm, it's hard. Because our ensemble has been very lucky in the past. To have so many girls that I don't feel –

R: Yup! In that one, there's 4 [points to picture of research in the band 2011]

S: Yea that's crazy, so I feel really lucky to have that. I don't know. Maybe, I'm not saying it's just [Teacher 3], but it seems like the star players – or the people that come out with the most solos or given the most one on one time, or most invested time – seem to be guys. I don't think that's intentional but it just, to me, it seems that way. And I've always wondered that.

R: Yeah, I'm not trying to fish for anything but that's a valid point.

S: I mean yeah when you pose the question. I don't think its [Teacher 3] going like, "oh guys". But I don't know. It just seems that the people who are always featured, or the star players, tend to be, in past years, have tend to be guys. And I mean we had a bit of an issue this year where our lead trumpet player, who was kind of a star player, left and it was a whole mess. And so [Annabelle] has had an opportunity to fill in and be the soloist and really involved and be the prominent feature in a lot of our E.E. tunes. So... I'd say... it just seems she was second. When she had just as much talent as he did, I'd say.

R: Makes sense, thanks for answering that. But you don't really have a least favorite part of jazz band, just certain times. So when it comes to jazz music, I know you're not going to do professionally, but do you have any role models? Like, "Oh, I love this trombone player! I would love to sound like them!"

S: Oh yeah, Vincent Gardner. I've actually done an interview with him before. I'm the editor in chief for our paper here.

R: Oh wow! You do a lot!

S: I wrote a piece for the new paper here and the college paper.

R: Holy Crap! Sorry! [laughs]

S: Yeah, I don't sleep much [laughs] and that was really fun and I really got to hear his perspective. You know... I've met him a couple times at Essentially Ellington and go to concerts as a group. And he always makes sure he comes back and makes sure he says hi to all the trombone players and its really cool. Chris Crenshaw does the same thing. I haven't ever talked to Elliot Mason. But I'm sure he would be just as interested in talking to kids.

R: I just got back from all these trombone players because the American Trombone Workshop was this weekend. So yea I lived your world for a minute. I learned to hold a trombone *laughs* So those are your role models?

S: Yeah cause I hear them the most and we play a lot of Duke Ellington. And the jazz at Lincoln center are the specialist in that.

R: Do you listen to anything besides Ellington's music?

S: Yes, yes!

R: Who do you listen to?

S: I listen to Al Grey sometimes, so another trombone player. I mean, of course [pauses] Uhh, oh gosh. My head. [pauses] Miles Davis, of course. I really like some of Henderson's stuff.

R: Joe Henderson?

S: Fletcher.

R: Oh, Fletcher Henderson! Oh cool!

S: And [pauses] this is embarrassing! If you asked me out there, I'd be like perfect names!

R: [laughs] It's okay! It's happening in every interview I've done today!

S: Like, he did Moanin' and Fables of Fabes.

R: Charles Mingus?

S: Yes ,Mingus! God! Okay, sorry. Charles Mingus! I really like his stuff too cause its weird and I like playing it.

R: Bass players are weird. We're weird.

S: I used to play bass bone for the band so his stuff was always the most fun to play.

R: Oh yeah, he likes bari, bass trombone.

S: I kind of actually hate the bass trombone

R: Can I quote that? [laughs] "I hate the bass trombone."

S: [laughs] Basically cause I was thrown into it, it wasn't really asked. When I joined my sophomore year, they are like, "Here, take this large mammoth instrument and learn how to play it." And I got no direction [laughs] and I was like, "uhhh." And I was quite small then. But yeah, I was playing Mingus stuff.

R: Mingus is really cool! Have you ever done Haitian Fight Song?

S: I haven't played that one.

R: Well, it's a bass feature so I like it [laughs] so I guess I have one last question and if there is anything else you want to add about your experience or how you feel. Do you know of any jazz musicians who aren't male? Can you name any?

S: Yes. Oh god, I literally know her name.

R: Tenor player? Jazz at Lincoln center?

S: Yes. Because it's so crazy, it's so nice to see a female in that band.

R: Did you know she's the first female –

S: Yeah! She's the first. I do know that. And at first, she was just a sub. And they wouldn't even say she was in the band, even though other subs that were male were in the band.

R: Yup.

S: But she... she finally inserted herself! Fully into there! Oh god and I know her name too...

R: I don't want to give it away. Starts with a C.

S: Hmm. I literally followed her on Instagram. I feel so bad. [laughs]

R: It's okay! Camille Thurman.

S: Camille! That's what it is! I've listened to her talk to. Last Essentially Ellington, she gathered a bunch of the girls in the lobby of the Lincoln center and just sat down – on the floor in her gorgeous dress – and just talked with them for like an hour and half. And I wish I would have known about it because I swung in at the end.

R: That's so cool!

S: Yeah. She made sure she grabbed a bunch of girl musicians and was explaining her path to get into this band and her experience as a female jazz musician and how hard it's been. And ways also that you can insert yourself and, you know, really stand up for yourself in the industry.

R: Which we all need.

S: Tanya is another one.

R: Tanya Darby? Trumpet player?

S: Yup.

R: Did you go to Birch Creek too?

S: No I didn't but I have heard of her and her videos of her.

R: Have you ever heard of the Diva Jazz Orchestra?

S: No.

R: It's an all-female big band and I think Tanya is one of the lead players in there.

S: Cool! I do know another one too. I regretfully don't know her name.

R: What does she play?

S: I think she plays saxophone. She's the [regional college] director. She's one of the band directors. Blonde, curly hair, very tall, very slender.

R: Hmm, I don't know who she is.

S: I see her every year when we go to [there]. But I didn't know if she played an instrument, I mean she probably does if she's a band director but...

R: Jazz band director?

S: Yup!

R: Oh cool! I should look her up. I didn't know –

S: Yeah, she's the director there.

R: Yeah, because there are not many collegiate jazz, female, directors. There's a lot out there but its whenever we are in high school, everyone is like "listen to Miles Davis, listen to John Coltrane, Ellington, guys, guys, guys, guys." And I think we lose sight of the women who were actually in this field.

S: Mhm.

R: Like I know of a couple female trombone players. I feel bad now because I can't remember her name [pauses] Audrie [pauses] something.

S: Oh yes! I heard her! She was a guest performer at Purdue. Aubrie, I think. Short blonde, choppy hair.

R: I think there's another one that's closer to my age who's a trombone player from Canada.

S: Yeah, the one at Purdue was a crazy singer and also played trombone fantastically.

R: That's cool. Yeah, I'm always curious because when I was in high school, I knew of Esparanza Spaulding. I didn't really know of any female jazz musicians growing up. And we went to festivals, I never remember seeing any women. I think I saw Ingrid Jensen, a trumpet player, but that is the only woman that I saw at the festivals. Like when we went to Ellington, it was all guys. And I remember sitting at tables and thinking "there's a bunch of guys here..." and I think since I went to EE, there are a lot more women in jazz bands in general.

S: Adding a comment to that. Every time going to Ellington this year, this will be my third year.

R: Wow!

S: Yeah, I know... really blessed. Every time I see an orchestra come up and there's no girls in it, I'm always like... okay... you can't tell me that this talented group doesn't have any talented female musicians at their school. There's no way! It's not...I don't know. I just think about the statistics and I'm like that would be so weird if there are no girls that are that talented. Or enough to be in the orchestra if you're going to have a group go to Essentially Ellington.

R: And that's why this band is like – I'm like what's happening here? How is this a thing? Like I said there's only 4 of us there and every year, there's more and more. And everyone is talking about the community and –

S: Yeah, I've never been discouraged to not do anything or being given the same opportunity to excel in this program. Middle school or high school.

R: That's good!

S: And I really appreciate that. The thing about the star player... I just think... like I said I don't think its intentional and I don't think... it's not even happening for a particular reason. It's just in the past, we have had a particularly tight group of guys. That have done the combo. And done this. So, they put themselves out there.

R: Are there any girls in the combo?

S: I'm not sure. Because I think [female student] does it sometimes and she's a tenor player. But I don't think so. Yeah, I honestly don't know and I don't want to be misleading.

R: Oh, it's okay! Do you take a lot of improvised solos?

S: Generally not because I don't think I am really good at it. [laughs]

R: Why?

S: Like I said, I just haven't been able to devote as much time as I would like to to it in high school. And maybe if I would have I maybe would have pursued music but I just have so many things going on. And not to get deep but that's one of my regrets leaving high school, with my senior year. I'm like, god I wished I would have chilled out and picked maybe 3 things to really focus on and that would have been a lot better. And I yeah [pauses] It's a little disheartening when I really stop and think about it. If I wouldn't have spread myself so thin that I would have been able to do more in jazz.

R: And high school kind of makes you feel like you have to do that.

S: Yeah, I mean I'm in the top of my class and competing for these top scholarships.

R: Oh yeah, make sure you apply for scholarships!

S: Oh I have! And I did just recently earn the [scholarship] which is a \$10,000 one for the state. So while its paid off in that sense, sometimes. I wouldn't have traded my health in high school and been able to delve into and give 110% to everything I did.

R: You got the rest of your life, girl!

S: Yeah, yeah. I think I'm just ready for high school to be over. [laughs] Just slam the door and walk out.

R: You can always come back to trombone! There's nothing wrong with taking a break and figuring out what you want to do. It will probably change, just coming from someone 10 years older than you. So, what are you thinking about majoring in?

S: Depending on the school: environmental science or policy and political science. And then a dance certificate or a minor in dance. I did apply to North Western University and they have a great jazz program. With Victor Goines.

R: And he knows who you are!

S: And he knows who I am! I mean I would have to kick it into high gear. But if I, for some reason, junior or senior year, am like “I want to play jazz now!” If I went to that school, I would have that opportunity.

R: And I think most schools, you would have that opportunity. You are from a good school that gave you a good foundation. I think you should do it. But that’s just me always being like “girls don’t give up on jazz!” But we do always need audiences. And people to support us.

S: Oh yeah, I will be a life-long support because I know the work that it takes. And side note – sorry I’m taking forever.

R: Oh, no worries! We’ve only been here 20 minutes [laughs]

S: Oh [laughs] but I was sitting in Olive Garden with my mom and they were playing random jazz music! And I was eating my spaghetti and I like totally zoned out to what she was saying because I was listening to the changes! This is how I am being entertained right now! And she was like “[Saoirse], [Saoirse] hello?!” and I’m like, “What?!” And I think this will be my whole life.

R: Yeah, Olive Garden and Starbucks!

S: Yeah, I do it at Starbucks too.

R: Well, thanks for all of this. Is there anything you want to add? We covered a lot. If you’re good, I’m good.

S: Yeah!

R: Thank you so much!

S: Yeah, thank you!

[End Recording]

APPENDIX C: IRB APPROVAL LETTER



OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR FOR RESEARCH

Office for the Protection of Research Subjects
805 W. Pennsylvania Ave., MC-095
Urbana, IL 61801-4822

Notice of Approval: New Submission

December 18, 2019

Principal Investigator	Donna Gallo
CC	Crystal Rebone
Protocol Title	<i>Perspectives of Students Who Identify as Women and Gender Non-Binary Participating in Secondary Jazz Ensembles</i>
Protocol Number	20384
Funding Source	Unfunded
Review Type	Expedited 6, 7
Approved Subparts	D
Status	Active
Risk Determination	no more than minimal risk
Approval Date	December 18, 2019
Closure Date	December 17, 2024

This letter authorizes the use of human subjects in the above protocol. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed and approved the research study as described.

The Principal Investigator of this study is responsible for:

- Conducting research in a manner consistent with the requirements of the University and federal regulations found at 45 CFR 46.
- Using the approved consent documents, with the footer, from this approved package.
- Requesting approval from the IRB prior to implementing modifications.
- Notifying OPRS of any problems involving human subjects, including unanticipated events, participant complaints, or protocol deviations.
- Notifying OPRS of the completion of the study.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

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