

The score study procedures of three collegiate wind band conductors

by

Andrew Dean Feyes

B.M.E., Bowling Green State University, 2003

M.M., Kansas State University, 2007

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Curriculum and Instruction  
College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
Manhattan, Kansas

2017

## **Abstract**

This study examined the characteristics of the score study processes implemented by three collegiate wind band conductors. Participants engaged in anticipatory discussion, think-aloud score study session, and a follow up interview to verify researcher inference and observation. Using a multiple case study methodology, the research focused on identifying the individual score study process of each conductor and the impact held beliefs and educational influences had on these processes. The research then compared cases to identify common and unique interactions across participants.

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Approved by:

Major Professor  
Dr. Fred Burrack

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## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to my family. To my parents, Tom and Diane: I am forever grateful for your support of my musical pursuits. To my children, Clara Jo and Alexandra Dea: You inspire your daddy more than you may ever know. To my wife, Kelsey: This simply would not have been possible without your love and devotion. This is for you.

# **Chapter 1 - Introduction**

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the characteristics of the score study processes implemented by three collegiate wind band conductors. Using a multiple case study methodology, the research focused on identifying the individual score study process of each participant and the impact held beliefs and educational influences had on these processes. The research sought to understand the role of held beliefs and educational influences on the score study process in order to identify common and unique interactions across participants. Understanding interactions across participants may inform current practice and conductor training.

## **Need for the Study**

“Without a precise concept of the music, the conductor has no musical message to convey through his gestures. Only by studying the score will a conductor discover an expressive message and develop a feeling about the music” (Battisti, 1997, 11). The importance and need for conductors to engage in score study has been well documented (Battisti & Garafalo, 1990; Colson, 2012; Green & Gibson, 2004; Green & Malko, 1975; Hunsberger & Ernst, 1992; Stith, 2007; and Walker, 2013). Many of these texts label score study as a personal process defined by the conductor.

Frederik Prausnitz, former director of conducting programs at the Peabody Conservatory of Music wrote in his text, *Score and Podium* (1983) that, “the objective is always the same: *ownership* of the score, including answers to certain questions with regard to performance which are *not* provided by explicit evidence on the musical surface of the work” (p.97). He exposes the concept that thoughtful analysis, along with personal interpretation, is essential in the act of

conducting. Prausnitz continues by labeling a conductor's work with the score as a private skill that exists in the mind of the conductor. The concept of score study as a private affair may be exactly what has led to the lack of description of personal score study processes in conducting literature. There are many texts that provide a generalized method of score study, in some cases intended to streamline the process into a manageable method for educators, but as Battisti and Garafalo (1990) acknowledge, very few books and articles on score study detail individualized processes.

In the 1976 text *Conversations with Conductors* edited by Robert Chesterman, Leonard Bernstein says the following of his mentor Fritz Reiner, "His standards were enormously high on knowledge, on knowing every score. You simply do not ascend that podium unless you know everything you can know about the score at that moment. You have to have the right to conduct" (p. 56). Bernstein and Reiner saw score study as a means of gaining knowledge, created by the composer, ready to be discovered by the conductor. It is also important to note that they believed this knowledge to be essential in order for the conductor to earn the right to lead an ensemble. Unfortunately when discussing score study, this text and many others typically end the discussion at this point, leaving the reader completely aware of the importance of the activity and yearning for a detailed description of an expert's actual process.

In the study, *Selected band conductors' preparation to conduct selected band compositions* (1994), author Barry Ellis sought to determine the procedures used by experienced university wind band conductors in preparing for performance. In an interview setting, Ellis asked each participant to detail his approach to score study and score analysis. Ellis noted the following about the participant's approach to score study:

Even though the band directors participating in the study differ in age, background, education, and experience, there emerged notable consistency among them with regard to the processes they employ in preparing to conduct a major band composition. They carry on intensive study of the score using what for them is the most effective means to hearing the composition whether it be playing the score on the piano or another instrument, singing with or without solfege or audiating during analysis of the composition. (p. 192)

While Ellis's study provides a window into the preparations made by expert conductors, data collected on score study could have been supported and verified through observation of the participants while engaging in the activity.

A majority of undergraduate university conducting programs train musicians well in the necessary skill of baton technique. These same programs often fall short of instructing novice conductors on the topic of score study. Acknowledgement of this educational gap in score study instruction can be found in the recent publication of texts focused on providing young conductors and music teachers with generalized score study processes (Roman 2012, Stith 2011). There are many possible reasons why undergraduate conducting curricula does not focus more on score study skills. The most obvious is perhaps the time constraints of only having one or two semesters of instruction to prepare students for the many faceted occupation of being a conductor and music educator.

Curiosity about the score study process is common among novice conductors and music teachers. Texts like Battisti and Garafolo's *Guide to Score Study* (1990) incite interest in the ways that experienced conductors develop a score study process. However, novice conductors cannot help but feel overwhelmed by the depth of process provided in these texts and

unimaginable investment of time required to fully understand a score the way Battisti and Garafolo suggest.

A majority of conductors begin as performers in an ensemble. It is reasonable to assume that young conductors aspire to educate and conduct in a manner similar to their own mentor-conductors. Most graduate programs in conducting are seen as an opportunity to closely study with and learn from an expert conductor. For many, the graduate level of instruction includes conducting lessons, which is different from the undergraduate conducting classroom experience due to the individualized nature of instruction. It stands to reason that if score study is a process focused on the development of a personal aural image and interpretation (Battisti & Garafolo, 1990; Colson, 2012; Green & Malko, 1975), then undergraduate conducting students may not be seen by expert conductors as ready to learn these personal processes.

It has been the experience of the researcher that individualized graduate conducting lessons garnered an understanding of score study processes used by my conducting mentor. Also revealed to the researcher was the impact that educational influences and held beliefs had on the development my mentor's processes. Learning the origins of my mentor's score study process fostered a sense of pride and ownership that has impacted and remained with the researcher to this day. It was the combination of my educational influences and held beliefs that made me the conductor that I am. This awareness of my own score study process and its genesis provided much of the personal need for the current study.

A similar study by Ellis (1994) sought "to determine the procedures used by selected, eminent university band conductors in preparing to conduct a performance of a major band composition" (p.2). Ellis examined the personal, educational, and professional experiences of each conductor in an interview setting. In attempt to further the work by Ellis, the current

research examined the score study process through interview, think-aloud score study session, and a follow up interview. It was the belief of the researcher that more information regarding the score study process could be gained by asking participants to not only describe their process of study, but to observe the score study processes first hand.

As a result, this study examined the characteristics of the score study processes implemented by three collegiate wind band conductors, and the impact of educational influences and held beliefs on the discovered processes. Each case included verbal and written descriptions, researcher observations, and verification of each participant's score study process.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

- 1) What are the individual score study processes of three collegiate wind band conductors?
- 2) What is the purpose of score study to the individual conductors?
- 3) In what ways do the educational influences and held beliefs of each conductor impact their individual score study process?
- 4) What commonalities in score study processes exist across participants?
- 5) What implications exist that may inform score study instruction in university conducting curriculum?

### **Assumptions**

The research was conducted under the assumption of honest and truthful participant responses. The acceptance of this assumption is enhanced by the anonymity of the participants. Anonymity allowed participants the freedom from potential repercussions resulting from statements or assertions made in the course of the research.

Another assumption made was that the participants possessed a working knowledge and process of score study. This assumption was made based on the over-whelming literature support for the importance of score study as well as the participant's success as conductors. It was therefore assumed that success, as a conductor is partially dependent upon the ability to study and prepare musical scores for rehearsal and performance.

The think aloud methodology used created the assumption that participants were verbalizing all pertinent thoughts throughout the score study process. Encouragement for verbalization of thoughts was made by allowing the participants to select the environment of their interview sessions, and by probing questions from the researcher. However it should be assumed that participants might not have divulged all possible information regarding their score study processes.

### **Limitations**

The research sought to examine the characteristics of three individual cases, and thus findings are not to be generalized to a greater population. It was not the goal of the research to determine how all conductors should score study. The individual cases sought to describe only how and why these participants score study.

Geographic limitations were put on the list of participants in order to ensure that the researcher could reasonably travel to the participant's location. For the purposes of this study, participants were selected by the parameters set forth in the methodology section of this paper and by residence in Midwestern states of America.

### **Delimitations**

Due to the qualitative nature of the study, the researcher restricted the size of the population to three participants. This decision was made to create the potential for differences in

collected data across cases while also fostering a manageable population size. Had the research focused on only one case, comparison across cases would not have been possible.

The researcher also delimited the study by not including member checks as a means of verification of researcher interpretation. The interview process took place in three phases; 1) Anticipatory discussion, 2) Think aloud score study session, and 3) Follow-up interview. The follow up interview portion of the methodology was designed as a means of verification of researcher interpretation. While further verification may have been achieved through the process of member checking, the researcher did not wish to encumber the participants beyond the three phased interview process.

## **Definitions**

The terms listed below are used throughout the research with the following intended definitions.

*Conductor* – An individual that leads and directs a musical ensemble through the use gestural communication informed by his or her interpretation of the music.

*Director of Bands* – A title often assigned to conductors at colleges and universities across the United States that implies managerial, financial, and musical responsibilities.

*Score Study* – The process undertaken by conductors to discern composer intention and personal interpretation of an individual piece of music.

*Case Study* – Research involving the study of an issue explored through one or more cases with in a bounded system or context (Creswell, 2007, 73).

*Think-aloud Methodology* – A research method in which participants speak aloud any words in their mind as they complete a task (Charters, 2003, 68).

## Chapter 2 - Review of Literature

### Purpose of Score Study

There is no debate in the musical community regarding the need for ensemble conductors to engage in score study. Most agree that score study is an activity that requires a clearly defined purpose and process. However it is the defining of these purposes and processes where the literature presents differing perspectives.

Perhaps the most apparent purpose of score study is to serve as a means of rehearsal and performance preparation, allowing conductors to develop an interpretation or aural image of the composition, and adequately communicate their interpretation to the ensemble (Battisti & Garafalo 1990; Chesterman 1976; Green & Gibson 2004; Green & Malko 1975; Prausnitz 1983; Stith 2011; Williamson 2008; Walker 2013). Many conducting texts caution against presenting oneself in front of an ensemble before he or she has thoroughly studied the score, stating that this failure to complete the essential task of score study often results in lower quality and uninspired performance (Battisti 1997; Chesterman 1976; Green & Malko 1975; Williamson 2008). In the text, *Basic Conducting Techniques* (2010), Labuta states:

“(Score) Analysis may confirm intuition, but it may also guide you away from the possible misconceptions and faulty interpretations to which intuition might otherwise lead you. Thus, score analysis is an indispensable tool for the practicing conductor for both practical and theoretical reasons” (p. 74).

In this Labuta proposes score study for the purposes of practical rehearsal and performance preparation. Labuta also sees score study as a means to guide the conductor to confirmation or reconstruction of interpretive ideas. In any individualized action, the individual’s interpretation may need to be checked or balanced. As a result Labuta says, “A conductor with integrity is

above all faithful to the score” (p. 74). Labuta clarifies his notion of score study for both practical and theoretical reasons by saying, “The primary purpose of score analysis is to achieve an aural concept, or ideal inner hearing, of the score...(and to) be prepared for problems and have solutions ready” (p. 74). The two purposes of score study proposed by Labuta are highly connected as a conductor’s aural concept of the music informs the musical standards for rehearsal. When combined with the knowledge of an ensemble’s strengths and weaknesses, a conductor’s aural concept will allow him to predict potential ensemble challenges.

Another purpose of score study not in opposition to rehearsal and performance preparation is the personal and musical growth of the conductor. Battisti and Garafalo (1990) wrote, “Learning new repertoire through the discipline of daily score study both helps the conductor improve his score reading skills and promotes musical growth, thus avoiding the common pitfall of stagnation” (p. 2). While there is not a great deal of literature that addresses this purpose of score study, most acknowledge the need for conductors to develop and practice their own score study process, which results in the musical growth of the conductor.

An additional purpose of score study is the anticipation and practicing of conducting concerns. In the text 1992, *The Art of Conducting* Hundsberger and Ernst stated:

Appropriate conducting gestures grow out of the musical requirements indicated in the score; all you must do is find and identify these requirements and then apply the right set of gestures...The primary route to comfort and security on a podium is knowledge and command of the score, and possession of the physical skills necessary to portray the composition visually (p. 51).

In the 2011 text, *Score & Rehearsal Preparation*, Stith supported the ideas presented by Hundsberger and Ernst:

Regular practice (of conducting) in a quiet, solitary room in front of a large mirror is an important step in preparation for the first, as well as subsequent rehearsals. To be most effective, the conductor should sing the most prominent parts while conducting, give all intended cues, use facial expression, and conduct nuances precisely as he or she plans to conduct the piece in rehearsal and in the concert (p. 50-51).

Stith describes a practice regiment for conductors that can only be accomplished once a precise concept of the music has been achieved through a rigorous score study process. Hundsberger, Ernst, and Stith all support the anticipation of conducting problems as a purpose of score study.

### **Score Study Processes**

In the case of score study process, the literature typically presents a generalized process that is intended for practical application by a large population of conductors. This section seeks to explore the score study processes described in various texts and articles that were directly related to this study.

#### **Guide to Score Study – Battisti and Garafalo**

In 1990, Frank Battisti and Robert Garafalo authored, *Guide to Score Study for the Wind Band Conductor*. This text provided a guide for conductors to follow when beginning the study of a piece of music. The guide consists of four main steps in the score study process: Score Orientation, Score Reading, Score Analysis, and Score Interpretation.

The score orientation step is designed to give conductors a complete overview of a composition and is organized in three sequential phases, “A. a reading of preliminary information printed in the score, B. an examination of specific information appearing on the first full page of music, and C. a cursory glance at each page of music (a leaf through)” (p. 4). During the score orientation step of Battisti and Garafalo’s process, conductors examine various components of

the music including title, composer, author, editor, dedication, program notes, instrumentation, and score layout. In the third phase, conductors are to make observations of all tempo markings, tempo relationships, meters, key signatures, and any additional signs or symbols.

Battisti and Garafalo describe the second step of their score study process, score reading as follows:

Score reading is a complex process that involves the conductor's musical imagination, intuition, inner hearing ability, memory, and emotions... The objective should be twofold: to acquire a skeletal image of the music; an overview of it that can be heard with unbroken continuity in the mind without referring to the score, and to develop an intuitive musical feeling for the expressive content and form of this image (p. 22).

In this step conductors are encouraged to find a reading tempo that allows the reader to process the entire piece from beginning to end without stopping. Battisti and Garafalo believe that this step is very much one of discovery that should be embarked upon with curiosity.

The third step in Battisti and Garafalo's score study process is score analysis. The authors view this step as required for the formation of an informed interpretation and encourage conductors to thoroughly examine all musical elements. "To make analysis possible, a score must be separated into its component parts – melody, harmony, form, rhythm (including tempo and meter), orchestration, texture, dynamics, stylistic articulations, and expressive terms" (p. 29).

The final step of the score study process proposed by Battisti and Garafalo is score interpretation. "Step four concerns the formulation of an interpretation of the score – a personal sound image of the music which represents the conductor's own creative point of view" (p. 54).

This step is seen as the synthesis of everything a conductor has learned about the piece as well as

the conductor's personal experience. The result of the fourth step is a "personal interpretive image that captures the essential character and spirit of the music" (p. 56).

Battisti and Garafalo's text has become one of the most widely used books in conductor education at colleges and universities. For this reason it is at the forefront of how many conductors perceive of their own score study process.

### **Score and Podium – Prausnitz**

Frederik Prausnitz's 1983 text, *Score and Podium* presents a score study process that seeks to create a total (mental) image of the music through the steps of transformation, preliminary exploration, and assembly and temporary reassembly. Prausnitz's process involves:

"Transformation of music from its encoded surface in the score to an organized memory image in the conductor's mind; preliminary exploration of that image with allowance for unrestricted employment of personal imagination, speculative analysis, or extra-musical association; assembly and temporary reassembly of chosen units within the work under study to provide a practiced sense of identity and continuity for the sections of music which your own involvement has brought to life for you (p. 139)."

This process highlights the importance of imagination, speculation, and association in the creation of the conductor's mental image of the score. In doing so, Prausnitz draws even more attention on the individualized nature of score study as imagination, speculation, and association are all products of an individual's creativity and experiences.

### **Basic Conducting Techniques – Labuta**

Labuta (2010) proposes three basic steps for score study: Acquisition of an aural concept, Anticipation of conducting problems, and Anticipation of ensemble and rehearsal problems.

“Your first step should be to develop an aural concept of the score through a structural and expressive analysis of the music (p. 75).” For successful construction of an aural concept, Labuta details an investigation of the musical concepts, practical matters, and historical context of the piece. “In the second step of score analysis, you should beat through the score to locate possible trouble spots for conducting (p. 76).” Here Labuta brings up the importance of score marking and the personal practicing habits of the conductor in order to develop the required skill express the music with the baton. “In the third step of score analysis, locate the technical and interpretive errors that performers are likely to make and decide how you intend to correct them if they occur in rehearsal (p. 76).” Labuta’s final step in his score study process is intended stress the importance of using the developed aural concept to foster efficient rehearsals and effective performance. Labuta’s three-step score study process is widely accepted as his text is commonly used in conductor preparation courses.

### **Marches are Music – Chevallard**

Another process of score study proposed by Chevallard (2003) breaks score study into two main parts: 1 – The horizontal view, and 2 – The vertical view. In this approach Chevallard advocates for conductors to first spend time absorbing the music from a horizontal perspective. Special attention is given in the horizontal analysis to form, phrasing, articulation, rhythm, meter, and tempo. Chevallard states, “Music is temporal: it progresses linearly through time, and the most basic structure in this linear stream is form. When developing a musical interpretation, form is a good place to start” (p. 2). Here the author suggests conductors begin by examining the music’s progress through time. Because most music contains an internal structure or form,

Chevallard encourages conductors to begin their study with the creation of a horizontal concept of form.

In Chevallard's second stage of score analysis, he encourages musicians to achieve a vertical understanding of how individual parts work together to create the music. Chevallard says, "Gaining a vertical view of the music also helps musicians realize how inescapably dependent they are on one another" (p. 33). Therefore a conductor must thoroughly examine the relationships between horizontal lines in a vertical framework. The vertical examination results in a complete understanding the interactions of individual performers in an ensemble.

### **Score Study Fundamentals – Roman**

A recent trend in the literature is to provide practicing music educators with an efficient approach to the score study process. Roman's 2012 text, *Score Study Fundamentals for the School Band Director* describes a three-step process: 1 – Overview, 2 – Analysis, and 3 – Applications. The first step, score overview is broken into five sections: 1 – Read, 2 – Scan, 3 – Listen, 4 – Draw, and 5 – Write. Roman encourages band directors to read the program notes to gain a sense of the piece. Next, she suggests band directors scan through the score several times taking note of "key signatures, time signatures, musical terms, instrumentations, etc." (p. 20). Following the scanning of the score, Roman suggests listening to several different, high quality professional recordings. Next follows the drawing of a graph that, "...outlines the general movement of the piece, including mini arrival points, and main arrival points" (p. 20). Roman's score overview process is completed by writing out assigning labels to the main themes or melodies of the piece. The score overview step in Roman's process is similar to other processes

except for the drawing of a graph. Music educators that desire a visual aid will find this step beneficial, and it is something that could be easily shared with students.

The second step in Roman's score study process, score analysis, involves the completion of chart using the categories of measure numbers, theme labels, form, instrumentation, dynamics, description, other, and concepts. The unique portion of Roman's second step is the inclusion of the description category. Roman (2012) encourages band directors to, "Use this column to write thoughts, feelings, images, and descriptors that preset themselves while listening to or studying a particular section" (p. 25). By advocating for conductors to identify the thoughts and feelings of the music, Roman is encouraging music educators to bring these elements into their instruction.

The application step in Roman's (2012) score study process informs conductors of the benefits of establishing "connections between piece of information gathered in the previous steps" (p. 27). Not until connections are made can band directors begin to make interpretive decisions. Roman advocates that interpretive decisions then impact the planning of effective rehearsal strategies. Roman's proposed score study process is thorough and would certainly be effective preparing conductors for rehearsal and performance.

### **Score Rehearsal Preparation – Stith**

Another text focused on providing an efficient score study process is Stith's (2011) *Score rehearsal preparation: A realistic approach for instrumental conductors*. Stith's process exists in three phases: 1 – Initial overview of the score, 2 – Compositional structure and preparation of the score, and 3 – Interpretation and preparation for the initial rehearsal. Phase one of Stith's score

study process is similar to processes in the literature with its focus on the acquisition of provided knowledge and the search for additional supportive materials.

The second phase, compositional structure and score preparation, examines relevant literature, form, and tonal centers while encouraging conductors to construct a flowchart of the entire piece. The flow chart is intended to assist in the synthesis of the acquired knowledge. Once the flowchart is complete, Stith (2011) advocates for marking the score acknowledging that, “This procedure is very personal and philosophies regarding this important process (score marking) vary significantly among highly respected conductors and pedagogues” (p. 33).

The final phase of Stith’s (2011) proposed score study process, interpretation and preparation for the initial rehearsal begins by expressing the importance of conductors having the ability to sing each part with the appropriate phrasing and style. The remaining portion of the third score study phase provides thoughts and suggestions for various rehearsal considerations such as ensemble seating, percussion assignments, anticipating ensemble problems, and the practicing of conducting skills. Stith’s proposed process easily achieves its goal of providing time-constrained conductors with an efficient score study process.

### **Case Study Methodology**

In Creswell’s 2007 text *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, he defines case study research as “a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in depth data collection using multiple sources of information...” (p. 73). The case study as a research method obtains its rigor through the means and depth by which it explores the case(s). The current study sought to achieve a unique level of depth through the think-aloud score study observation process, not previously used in score study research.

Concerning data collection in case study research, Creswell (2007) advocates drawing on multiple sources of information such as observations, interviews, documents, and audiovisual materials. The current study examined data from participant interviews, researcher observations, a follow up interview, and participant provided documents. The use of multiple sources of information provides the opportunity for the researcher to verify data.

Data analysis, according to Stake (1995), results in an emergent and detailed description of the case. The current research modeled the presentation of the individual cases in the manner suggested by Stake. The result allowed the emergent content to inform the organization and description of the cases. In multiple case study design, Yin (2003) advocates for an analytic strategy that seeks to identify issues within each case before searching for common themes across cases. Yin's description of the establishment of individual cases prior to the search for themes across cases is parallel to the approach of the current research. Thus data was presented in the form individual emergent cases, and analyzed across cases for unique and common themes.

### **Think-aloud Methodology**

In the publication, *The Use of Think-aloud Methods in Qualitative Research* (2003), Charters confirmed the value of think-aloud methodology as a means of exploring individuals' thought processes through the method's theoretical framework. The foundation for think-aloud methods began with Vygotsky's 1962 text, *Thought and Language* and the concept of "inner speech." Vygotsky presented the theory that the "inner speech" of adult thought process develops from toddler monologues, or "egocentric speech." The "egocentric speech" of a young child being a form of thinking aloud or verbalizing thoughts without complete or reasoned ideas. Thus an

adult's "inner speech" or thoughts on an activity may be verbally presented by thinking aloud while simultaneously engaging in said activity.

Regarding the value of think-aloud methods as a way to expose cognitive process, Davison, Navarre, and Vogel (1995) had the following to say:

One mode of cognitive assessment, the think-aloud approach, is viewed as of particular value in accessing the products as well as the process of cognition. Because think-aloud methods assess cognitions concurrently with their occurrence, they may be better suited to tapping actual thought content than other modes (p.29).

As some researchers have pointed out, think-aloud methods are not without some measure of criticism. According to Davison, Robins, and Johnson (1983), think-aloud methods are potentially reactive because they impose the dual demands of speaking and task performance, with the possible consequence that the task will have an undue influence on the behavior itself.

As a result, participants in this study may report only a portion of thoughts experienced. It is also possible that their score study actions may be hindered by the act of speaking. In order to combat the potential for partial reporting of thought process, Charters (2003) advocates for the use of triangulation in the form of researcher observation and exit or follow up interviews. Thus the need for three-phased interview method involving anticipatory discussion, think-aloud score study observation, and a follow up interview.

## **Chapter 3 - Methodology**

The purpose of this study was to examine the characteristics of the score study procedures implemented by three collegiate wind band conductors. A multiple case study methodology was used to uncover how education background and beliefs influenced decisions made in a score study process.

### **Participants**

Participants were selected based on their qualification and experience as collegiate wind band conductors. For the purposes of this study, qualifications of the participants were 1) previous attainments of a terminal degree in music, 2) holding a position as Director of Bands at a College or University with an accredited program in music education, 3) the reputation of their scholarly work as perceived by the researcher and members of the faculty at Kansas State University, and 4) the performance quality of their ensembles as perceived by the researcher, members of the faculty at Kansas State University and performances at state, regional, and/or national wind band symposiums and conferences.

In order to maintain the integrity of the study and allow for honest descriptions of score analysis the participants remained anonymous. Each participant received notification of the study, outline of procedures, and a formal invitation to participate in the proposed research (Appendix A). Participants signed a letter of informed consent per Kansas State University's Research Compliance Office. In order to foster an environment that was conducive to research, the score study process, and the comfort of the participants, the researcher allowed each participant to select the location for all three phases of data collection.

Three sets of data were collected: 1) understandings and beliefs pertaining to score study as documented in the participant's scholarly work, educational publications, and instructional

materials, 2) participant's reflection of educational influences on their score study process, and 3) observation of each participant's score study process.

### **Scholarly and Educational Documentation**

Participants were asked to provide the researcher with documents relating to their individual score study beliefs and teachings. These documents included but were not limited to score study articles used in the participant's classrooms, professional presentations, and published or unpublished writings that pertain to the participant's score study process. The purpose of these documents was to inform the researcher of the participant's held beliefs and instructional philosophy in relation to score study procedures. The documents were collected at least one week prior to the participant interview to allow the researcher to examine the documents and seek clarification and/or verification the interview session.

### **Statement of Educational Influences**

Participants provided a written statement of educational influences that have directly impacted aspects of their score study process. The purpose of the statement was to expose the perceived educational influences of each participant. The statements were collected at least 48 hours prior to the participant interview to allow the researcher to thoroughly examine the document and seek clarification and/or verification of the role the educational influences have played in the development and implementation of the participants score study processes.

### **Score Study Observation**

The score study observation consisted of three phases, 1) anticipatory discussion, 2) observation of score study using a think-aloud process, and 3) a follow up interview. All three phases occurred consecutively with the goals of defining, observing, and verifying the

participant's score study procedures. Audio recordings were made of all three phases of the participant interview to provide a means for transcription and further detailed analysis.

The first phase of the participant interview took the form of anticipatory discussion. Six specific questions were used for each participant:

- 1) How long have you been a college wind band conductor and how long have you been in your current position?
- 2) For what ensembles do you currently engage in score study?
- 3) What is score study to you?
- 4) Describe your personal score study process.
  - 4a) Follow-Up for clarification.
- 5) How do you know when you have accomplished enough score study?
- 6) What factors, musical or non-musical, impact your normal score study procedures?
  - 6a) Follow-Up for clarification.

The goal of anticipatory discussion was to begin data driven conversation and foster a naturalistic environment that resulted in participant comfort. Emphasis was placed on providing the participants with an opportunity to verbally expose their score study procedures to allow for verification in the second and third phase of the score study observation.

The second phase of the score study observation was a think-aloud score study session. Each participant was asked to engage in the score study of composer, David Gillingham's *Bright Gleams a Beacon*, an unpublished manuscript used with permission from the composer. An unpublished manuscript was selected to ensure that the participants had not previously studied or conducted the piece of music. Due to the lack of previous knowledge about the music it ensured that the score study processes were not influenced by previous study or performance of the piece.

Participants were allowed to keep their copy of the score as a gift for participation in the research. While studying the piece, participants were asked to verbalize their reasoning and thoughts regarding their personal score study process and how their current actions relate to their previously stated score study procedures.

The primary goal of the second phase of score study observation was to document the actual process each conductor employed while seeking verification of the verbally exposed score study process from the anticipatory discussion. A secondary goal of the think aloud process was to discover potential connections between the score study process and the previously identified educational influences and scholarly output of the participant. The researcher created free-form observational field notes from the think-aloud session and an audio recording for further review. During the observation, the researcher was particularly focused on reinforcement of the participant's statement of educational influences, scholarly and educational output, and the anticipatory discussion, as well as the discovery of additional elements of a sequential process for each case.

Throughout the course of the think-aloud session the researcher took on the role of observer, seeking to allow for as close to a normal score study environment possible with the exception of participant verbalization of reasoning and thoughts regarding their personal score study process. When deemed appropriate, the research issued unscripted probing questions to encourage participant verbalization of thoughts. In all cases, the researcher sought to balance the silence of study with the verbalization of thought process.

The third and final phase of the score study observation, the follow up interview, was designed to provide an additional means of verification of the score study process and confirmation of any perceived relationships between score study process and other data in the

case. The follow up interview sought to achieve these goal by allowing the participant an opportunity to respond to questioning regarding the relationship between their individual statement of educational influences, held beliefs, and observed score study procedures. Connections and discrepancies between all data collected thus far were discussed to alleviate researcher bias and confirm interpretation. Data from the follow up interview took the form of observational field notes and audio recording.

### **Data Analysis**

Data for individual cases took the form of audio transcripts of all interview phases, observational field notes taken by the researcher, and documents provided by the participants. Detailed review of data from individual cases resulted in the identification of the participant's perception of the purpose of score study and the verification of the observed score study process. Special attention was given to the discovery of how the held beliefs and educational influences of the participant influenced their score study process.

Each participant's score study process was observed, documented, and enhanced with supportive relationships from analyzed data and through researcher interpretation. Researcher interpretation was verified by the participants through the follow up interview process and review of associated literature. Individual cases were organized in four sub-categories; 1) Score Study Discussion, 2) Score Study Observation, 3) Follow Up Interview, and 4) Score Study Process. All three cases were then compared and contrasted in search of unique as well as common characteristics of score study processes. Resultant unique and common characteristics were reported in the context of a discussion on the purpose and process of score study.

## **Pilot Study**

Prior to the implementation of the study, the researcher engaged in a pilot of the score study observation process. The purpose of the pilot was to increase the researcher's effectiveness at writing observational field notes, test the reliability of questions, and practice the use of the think-aloud method. Two graduate students in conducting at Kansas State University were selected to participate in all three phases of the score study observation: 1) anticipatory discussion, 2) observation of score study using a think-aloud process, and 3) a follow up interview. Pilot participants were audio recorded with permission to allow the researcher to analyze the proposed methodology. The pilot resulted in a more refined line of questioning during anticipatory discussion, as well as enhanced researcher effectiveness in the usage of the think-aloud method.

## **Chapter 4 - Results**

The purpose of this study was to examine the characteristics of the score study processes implemented by three collegiate wind band conductors. In this chapter, data is presented in a sequential format to allow the reader to follow the same progression as the researcher. Each participant's case is reported individually and begins with a description of the participant's background and experiences as a conductor. The narrative follows the interview progression of score study discussion, score study observation, and follow up interview. Additional data from participant provided documents are included throughout each case as a means to provide insight into each participant's educational influences and held beliefs.

### **Conductor #1**

At the time of this study, the conductor #1 was serving as Director of Instrumental Music and Chair of the Department of Music at a small liberal arts college in the Midwest. His responsibilities include conducting two concert ensembles, teaching undergraduate courses in conducting, assisting with the music education curriculum, and managing the department's personnel and budget. It is important to note that the researcher has known this conductor for the better part of ten years as a mentor, colleague, and friend in the profession. Our mutual respect for each other grew out of an informal teacher-student relationship, which has now blossomed into a kinship of shared perspectives on music education.

Conductor #1 is known in our professional community for his research on wind band literature and is well respected for his focus on supporting music education in primary and secondary schools. The focus on music education appears to derive from a combination of personal philosophy and the needs of the institution for which he serves. It is unknown if the majority of the undergraduate music students at his institution major in music education, but it is

easily assumed with knowledge of his track record of support for music education. This is also evident through the number of successful graduates of the conductor's program now serving in the public schools of the Midwest.

Being a faculty member at a small liberal arts college, this conductor's visibility in the field is purposefully limited to the Midwest for the sake of recruiting and the betterment of small public school band programs. Some may believe that his visibility is limited as a result of his position at a small college. It is the belief of the researcher that he intentionally limits his national visibility in order to better serve his institution and focus efforts on the support of local and regional music educators. There should be no doubt regarding his national reputation in the field of wind band conducting. This conductor has built this reputation through his research in wind band literature, training at prestigious universities, compositional output, and professional network. Although, he would likely rather say that his reputation is built upon the successes of his music education students in the field.

## **Score Study Discussion**

### **What is score study to you?**

Conductor #1 opened his response to the initial question with a very direct response: "Score study is essentially preparation for performance. And as it is, my position does not always allow me as much time for in depth study as I would like." After a thoughtful pause, he continued:

Generally speaking, my score study is limited to pieces I plan to perform either with my ensembles or ensembles I am guest conducting...(thinking)... In the summertime I do have the luxury of looking at some other things... I try to do that as much as I can.

It was interesting that after a brief pause, he brought to light a situation in which score study could be more than just his initial statement, of “preparation for performance.”

Based on Conductor #1’s statement of having additional time for study in the summer, the researcher inquired about the nature of this type of study and if there were differences between his summer study and regular score study activities:

It’s funny, not anticipating this question... because I write music. I look at what other people are doing. For instance, I am writing a piece for my band to (perform) two years from now and I’ve been looking at *The Rite of Spring* to see how Stravinsky scores certain things. Stravinsky used an octatonic scale and I am putting my melody into an octatonic scale. I’m looking at how (Stravinsky) did that... how he made the transition to that very eerie, otherworldly sound. I can tell you what led me to (doing) this was something my college band director said many years ago, which has always stayed with me... When (J.S.) Bach was trying to assimilate someone else’s style, he simply transcribed the piece and rewrote what the composer was doing. Now you can’t do that with *The Rite of Spring*, it would take hours and hours. But I do take sections of 8-10 bars at a time and look at how (Stravinsky) scored (the piece).

It is interesting that he referenced educational influences when describing the analytical process of transcribing scores. Conductor #1 appeared to assign substantial value to the advice he received from his mentor. The respect he has for his mentor and J.S. Bach, as well as his own experience with transcribing scores has led him to believe that this process is beneficial to his own score study process.

Having heard Conductor #1 express his lack of time for score study outside of the summer months, the researcher inquired as to how more time would impact his teaching:

There are a number of things I wish I had more time to do... My own personal ear training development, that is anchoring myself around pitch centers, singing intervals, and listening to recordings of ensembles playing well in tune... One of my mentors, John Paynter told us that we should keep a tuning fork in our car and practice singing around that pitch. A minor second up, a minor second down. A major second up, a major second down, and so on... But again, the real issue in score study, besides wanting to understand the art (the composer) is presenting, is to rehearse as efficiently as possible. In other words, to not waste the time of the 55 musicians in the ensemble figuring out the music in front of them. The problem for me is that due to the nature of my job, on any given day there are unanticipated issues that need to be resolved, and I am the only one that can do this. That is in essence my excuse for saying ‘I wish I had more time to develop’.

These statements confirm that Conductor #1 views personal ear or aural training as a skill that requires consistent development that also positively impacts his ability to efficiently study scores. The continued pursuit of aural development, influenced by his mentor, John Paynter, has transitioned into a held belief through the conductor’s own experiences.

In attempt to verify aural development as a held belief, the researcher questioned if the Conductor #1 made a conscience effort to impart the idea of aural development to his own students. “Every great teacher I’ve had and try to model myself after was an outstanding musician that sought to impart their skills upon their students by demanding as much of themselves as they did their ensemble.”

### **The score study process.**

Conductor #1 began the description of his score study process by stating that because he teaches conducting, his process can be summed up in three phases or steps:

I've gotten my (score study) process down to the three headings or phases from Labuta's book (*Basic Conducting Techniques*, 2010). The steps are acquiring knowledge, anticipate ensemble problems, and anticipate conducting problems. Those in essence are how the score study process begins for me every time I start. So the first step is to look at the score and see if there is any information that the composer is offering about the piece. He pointed out that when the composer offers no information, program note, or text, conductors should perform their own research to acquire knowledge about the score.

He then continued the discussion of the knowledge acquisition phase of his and Labuta's score study process:

I'm going to be candid with you. My teachers when I was brought up told me to 'get your own knowledge of the piece.' But I'm going to be totally honest with you and say that if there is a recording available, I try to listen to a recording of the piece. It helps me to come to grips with the form and understanding of the piece quicker. I would like to think that it doesn't necessarily effect my own interpretation of the work. While I listen a couple times, I am not listening to (the recording) through the entire study process... Eventually, you have to take ownership of the piece, and learning someone else's interpretation is not the right thing to do.

What is intriguing is that Conductor #1 would express the need to be candid or honest regarding the use of recordings. While these comments did not appear to be said with a tone of regret, it is possible that he is somewhat self-conscious of the use of recordings because his teachers told him to "get your own knowledge of the piece." The knowledge being referred to by his mentor is the acquisition of an aural image of the piece. Listening to recordings can greatly impact this process. In the case of the conductor, use of recordings as a potential time saver is relevant given

nature and time constraints of his job responsibilities. It appears that Conductor #1 is aware of the perception of the use of recordings as a short cut in the process because of educational influence of his mentor.

Conductor #1 continued with his description of the knowledge acquisition phase by discussing the specific details he looks for when he first opens a score:

When I first open a score, I am flipping through looking for a connection, or some sort of repetition to grab on too. Then I take the score to the piano and sort of plunk my way through stuff... My father was an opera singer and he would learn an aria by playing notes on the piano and singing them back... So I do the same. All the while I am looking for relationships, connections, contrast, and any sense of form that emerges. At this point, I have to be honest in that I am thinking about those three Labuta steps (acquiring knowledge, anticipating ensemble problems, anticipating conducting problems) and how they fade in and out. Each one takes a turn as the primary thing that grabs my attention.

As I look at a piece of music, I am invariably thinking about my band...

He continued with a discussion of his current ensemble and how his thoughts are almost always led to his weakest section and the parts they are being asked to perform. Wondering, "How will this work out for them?" or "How can I help them along with this?" Conductor #1 was very clear to say that even in the onset of his score study process, potential rehearsal and conducting problems weave in and out of primary focus while attempting to acquire knowledge.

Conductor #1 did express that if the piece warrants, he will proceed to a more in depth analysis:

It depends on the piece. If it's a contemporary piece, I tend to look at events and search for how ideas are presented. I'll look for the tonal center of the piece and see if there are

notes that are sticking out, etcetera... On the other hand, if the composer is someone like Bach, I would conduct a more systematic and harmonic analysis. I have to be honest; time does not allow me to do a note-by-note, measure-by-measure Roman numeral analysis... I haven't done that for a long, long time.

These statements were approached with a desire to have more time for analysis. He seemed to not find it necessary to rely upon a full harmonic analysis in some time. This could be seen as evidence of his development as a conductor or a particular aspect of his process that only applies in specific situations.

### **How do you know when you have accomplished enough score study?**

Conductor #1 responded to this question by expressing that there are no shortcuts in score study, "...but at some point the study goes from analysis to thinking about how I am going to conduct it." Acknowledging that this process and timeline is different for every piece, he continued by saying, "The goal is to enter the first rehearsal with a clear conception of the piece, but that doesn't always happen. I have gone into rehearsal without knowing everything I want to do and I regret that deeply." The participant was quite remorseful with his expression of regret. He cares deeply for his craft and his students. When Conductor #1 is unprepared for rehearsal, he feels as though he is not providing his students with his best. It is possible that he believes he is letting his students down when this happens.

### **Score Study Observation**

Conductor #1 began the think-aloud score study session by spending substantial time investigating the cover page and internal 'pre-music' pages of information:

Okay, so I am looking at the title page and I see this is brand new piece, *Bright Gleams a Beacon* by David Gillingham. I have done some other Gillingham pieces. I am familiar

with *Be Thou My Vision* and a few others... I see that this piece is built around a regional University Alma Mater. What's great about this is that Mr. Gillingham shows us the theme he built the piece around and he shows us the motives out of which he is constructing the piece.

He continued by looking over the motives provided in the score by humming and singing a few short lines. Once he had a firm understanding of the musical qualities of the motives exposed, "Now I am going to look at the piece and start to see where I can trace those (motives) down. Sort of like putting a puzzle together."

Conductor #1's analogy of 'putting a puzzle together' is quite profound. In putting a puzzle together, the goal is to create the picture on the lid of the box, but invariably the box must be opened on a table to find pieces that are flipped and out of order. The majority of his knowledge acquisition seemed to take the form of that initial assessment of the puzzle; flipping pieces, sorting different colors or portions of a picture, looking for corners, etc. The moment he felt comfortable with his pile of puzzle pieces, he seemed to dive headfirst into a constant stream of discovery, searching for 1) more knowledge about the score, 2) possible ensemble problems, and/or 3) possible conducting problems:

Here is a clear motive of A1 in the third bar after five. I'm seeing how it is developing. As I'm looking at this I'm saying to myself, 'could my band play this piece?' I have a very good sax player and he wouldn't have any trouble with that, but my flute section would have trouble playing that opening. I would have to work on pulling this out (of them), practicing slowly with them to get them started correctly, and then getting them to practice on their own.

In this moment, the intersection of knowledge acquisition and anticipation of ensemble problems was evident. Conductor #1 clearly identified a passage that would challenge the musicians of his ensemble and instantly transitioned to the need to assist his performers with the technical execution through his instruction. As a result, he demonstrated considerations in score study in relation to the inherent abilities of his own ensemble.

He continued to keep his ensemble and the search for rehearsal problems near the front of his thoughts:

As I look through the first section, I'm looking at the trumpet parts and it all looks very playable... The trumpets haven't even moved out... Ah! I was wrong, they went a little above the staff, but it is only an A. So up to measure 66, a written A is the highest pitch in the brass.

The concern for instrument range and the discovery of rehearsal problems led him to express his thoughts concerning exposed writing in general:

One of the things I look for, especially in music for my top band, is how much exposed writing there is. Exposed writing says two things to me, first that the composer has been careful in not over-scoring the piece. There's a level of craftsmanship and sensitivity to the music when it is not over-scored. Second, that I need to be careful in how I am going to present the exposed section. Figuring out how balance is going to work. How am I going to handle making these textural elements work?

The statements made by Conductor #1 regarding exposed playing suggest that decision-making and treatment of rehearsal problems is a primary focus of his score study process. The participant's skills as a composer impact his score study as prior knowledge and experience when he describes the level of craftsmanship and sensitivity used by David Gillingham.

Conductor #1's knowledge of compositional techniques and analytical skills guide his acquisition of knowledge in score analysis.

Moving on to another section of the work, Conductor #1 discussed his discovery of contrasting elements from the opening section as well as a continued focus on rehearsal problems concerning his own ensemble:

So we are into the B section here at measure 103, and I can see that we have completely changed style here. Dynamically, we are playing softly. The main melodic idea appears to be in the horn at measure 122. So, is everything from 103 to 122... is that all an introduction? As I'm looking at that, I can see that the flute has a certain melodic shape to it. I can see that maybe that is a derivative of the C motive, or maybe it's something a little easier than that... I can see that when the melody does begin, there is an ostinato in the clarinet. So how is that balance going to work against the melody? Ah! I see Gillingham's already set the balance up for me. The ostinato and chords are marked mezzo-piano and the melody is marked mezzo-forte. But I'm looking at 122 and I see that the melody in the horn goes from a low B all the way up to a high G. I'm wondering if my third and fourth horn and get all the way up to that G...

Knowledge acquisition, rehearsal problems, and conducting problems continue to intertwine in his thoughts and considerations for rehearsal. It was obvious that knowledge acquisition was informing the perceived rehearsal and conducting problems, but there appeared to be far more rehearsal or ensemble concerns than potential conducting problems. This was interpreted as the result of Conductor #1's years of experience leading an ensemble and the held beliefs of how technical demands impact his ensemble.

Remaining in the B section of the work, he began looking closer at an apparent musical climax:

I see there is a building that occurs in the B section and the climactic moment appears to be at 134... I'm looking and seeing how that's working out... It appears we are in the key of E major and we go to A-flat major. So I'm, curious about that relationship. I'm wondering out loud, if I look at the motives enough, is there something in this tune that caused him to use that particular harmonic relationship? This is an area of the music that would require more in depth study to completely understand the composer's intent.

Something that I would spend some time on.

He moved on past this point in the music due to the increased depth of study necessary. It was understood that the depth of study he was referring to would not normally occur until much later in his score study process.

Moving forward in the piece, Conductor #1 identified a case where the composer assisted in the discovery process by providing information about a recapitulation. "At 145 we have a recap... this is a recap of the first section. I haven't determined this. Gillingham is telling me this. It has made the analysis of the piece a little easier for me." He was pointing out that in this case, David Gillingham had assisted in the acquisition of knowledge by clearly labeling the structure of the piece inside the cover page. While some composers do not provide this kind of information, those that do have done so to ensure that conductors perceive musical concepts the way the composer intended.

After the realization of the composer-provided information, the discovery of a potential conducting problem abruptly stole Conductor #1's attention:

I noticed how in the beginning we were at 80 beats per minute to the quarter note, and now at 145, we are at 80 beats to the half note. So I am noticing that there are some metrical relationships here that as a conductor, I'm going to have to give attention to...

Ah, yes! I did bring it with me! One of the things I do when looking at a score is turn on my metronome at the indicated tempo. This helps me get a feel for the pace of things and how things are moving.

After turning on his metronome, he began saying rhythms on singular syllable. Making a few mistakes along the way, and always going back to correct himself. "...I can now see that at this tempo, there are going to be some fast moving parts. These parts would take some time to get through for my band." Once again Conductor #1 seamlessly transitioned from the acquisition of knowledge concerning musical relationships to anticipating rehearsal problems for his ensemble.

What followed was the discovery of the need for extensive percussion equipment due to the instrumentation called for by the composer. He also acknowledged the need for a pianist and what the piano part contributes to the composition:

I see that we will need a pianist, and by the looks of things, a *good* pianist... As I look closer at the piano part I see that it is always doubled by another instrument... But I really think Gillingham is interested in the color of the piano... Which raises a bunch of questions about balance.

By referencing the sound color of the piano and doubling of piano music, Conductor #1 has implied that he has an aural understanding of what these instruments will sound like when combined. This understanding is reflected in his statement about balance. He is acknowledging that in order to achieve the sound color the composer is asking for, he will need to pay careful attention to performer volume and the blending of these sounds. Thus, analytical decisions are

being influenced by the aural skills of the conductor. This influence speaks to the benefit of his desire to continually develop his aural training.

Almost immediately following his thoughts regarding the piano, Conductor #1 ran into a meter change that caught his interest:

I see here that we have a meter change from two-two to six-eight... I can see where if it were four-four to six-eight, it would be easier. That will take some work for my band. I would practice that as a conductor so that I clearly knew how that meter-modulation worked. That would allow me to teach that clearly to my students. This may even be something that I pull out as a special exercise that I would write for my students. Most of my players have played very little in two-two or six-eight, let alone two-two and six-eight together. This would certainly be a challenge...

For the first time, he appeared to encounter a musical issue that was identified as both a potential conducting issue to be practiced, as well as a rehearsal issue for his ensemble. Up to this point the ideas of rehearsal problems and conducting problems had been mostly separate in his discussions. The combination of rehearsal and conducting problems seemed to have an impact on his perception of whether or not his ensemble would be successful in performing this composition. Interestingly, there appeared to be no impact on the intensity with which he pursued the remainder of his score study process.

He continued to the conclusion of the composition, undaunted by the challenges his students would face performing the work. In fact he proceeded with exuberance for the musical ideas presented by the composer:

The piece ends very big, which doesn't surprise me... I noticed inside the cover that Gillingham says that the K-State Alma Mater is the centerpiece of the work with the

addition of original celebratory motives. I would spend some time here at the end identifying which motives are from the alma mater, and which are celebratory motives added by Gillingham. Now, what is a celebratory motive? To me that would be something that is uplifting. So I might look for some flying motivic gestures and if you go to the end of the piece you can see the horn in the second to last measure plays something that looks like motive A2. Except Gillingham set it in a duple feel...

Although, it is not exact... That might be one of Gillingham's own celebratory motives.

Throughout the think-aloud session, Conductor #1 displayed the ability to think both as a conductor and as a composer. When in the midst of acquiring knowledge, he was very analytical. In most cases acquired knowledge segued immediately into anticipation of rehearsal or conducting problems. The anticipation of rehearsal and conducting problems appears to directly impact his thoughts regarding teaching and preparation for rehearsal.

## **Follow up Interview Session**

### **Score Study as Preparation for Performance**

Conductor #1 began our initial discussion by stating, "Score study is essentially preparation for performance." As a conductor, the ability level of the ensemble we work with has enormous impact on the musical product. Conductor #1 said the following regarding the impact his ensemble has on his score study process:

If I am totally honest, almost every time I look at a score I am thinking back to how is this going to work for my students. I should say that in my situation there is a wide range of ability levels among my students. So finding a piece that is satisfactory to play is very challenging... When I look specifically at band music, I do find myself thinking about individual players in my ensemble.

In this statement he is acknowledging the reality that it is very difficult for him to look at band music and not have his thoughts drawn back to his ensemble. This concept is understandable as one of the chief responsibilities of any conductor is selecting literature for performance. Thus Conductor #1's score study process is deeply tied to his ensemble's preparation for performance.

In further explanation of the challenges of programming for an ensemble Conductor #1 states:

The problem for me is as I think about Gillingham's piece... I might want to attempt to play it with my band, but the technical playing of it is going to get in the way. My issue always comes down to finding the balance between what is technically possible and musically achievable. I would love to expose my students to the Hindemith Symphony, but the truth is we could not get past the technical problems on the page.

Conductor #1 is somewhat regretful in his final statement that his ensemble may not be able to technically achieve the demands of a major composition like the Hindemith Symphony. The concept of striking a balance between technical demands and musical achievement informs us that he is concerned with ensuring that his students perform at a certain level of musical quality or expression. The attainment of a musically expressive performance is the driving force behind his attention to his ensemble during his score study process. Conductor #1's desire to keep his ensemble at the front of his consciousness during score study is the byproduct of years of experience leading ensembles to musical performances.

### **Held Beliefs**

In Conductor #1's provided documents he discusses the developing an interpretation of the music and the transition from analytical score study to interpretive score study. Regarding the transition from analytical to interpretive score study he says:

It never happens the same way in every piece. It just sort of ends up moving that direction and its messy... it's just messy (smiles). So maybe what I'm about to describe to you is leaky... You're looking at the shape of a melody and the harmonic implications, and at some point asking yourself, What IS going to be brought out of this melody? How hard are these accents going to be? How aggressive is that going to be? At some point I, as the conductor have to make these decisions based on the knowledge I've gained and the summation of my experiences...

The decision-making referenced by Conductor #1 speaks to the transition from an analytical process rooted in the acquisition of knowledge to an interpretive process that applies the acquired knowledge to musical concepts like melodic shape, style of articulations, etc. He continues:

I like to think that there are no hard and fast rules when it comes to feelings. The word *Love* has many meanings. If I were to tell you that I love my wife, you would understand that because you are married. If I told you that I love my best friend, you would understand that because you have friends. If I told you that I love my dog, you would also have a reference for understanding that. But in each of those cases, that word, *Love*, has a different meaning... As a conductor, I need to decide how I intend to say things. The way we say things impacts their meaning...

In this second reference to the decisions made by conductors, he is implying that there are multiple ways to interpret and perform music, and that conductors must have a clear concept of how they wish to present the music. Inherent in these decisions is a deep consideration of musical meaning and possible realities. If the way conductors “say things impacts their meaning”, then conductors have the ability to alter the musical or emotional meaning based on

the decisions they make. It is Conductor #1's belief that these decisions can only be made once enough knowledge has been acquired.

As he stated, there is no definitive moment as to when enough knowledge has been acquired. Nor is it the same for every piece of music. These statements speak to the "messy" or "leaky" nature of what he describes. It should also be noted that although this process is often grey, it is a process that he is perfectly comfortable with. Conductor #1 embraces this part of his score study process and considers it essential to his rehearsal preparation.

When asked to elaborate as to why this transition is "messy" or "leaky" Conductor #1 says, "For me, it is very messy. It is part of a function of my personality. I see myself as an abstract, random, and creative type. For others who are highly organized it can be more structured. I think it depends on the individual." This makes clear his belief that not only is the transition from analytical to interpretive score study different from piece to piece, but also from conductor to conductor. It is Conductor #1's held belief that his personality impacts his score study process. This concept supports the claim made in many conducting articles and texts of score study being a deeply personal and individualized process.

### **Educational Influences**

It was intriguing to hear Conductor #1 reference one of his mentors, John Paynter during the score study discussion. When asked about the characteristics he admired in his mentor, he said:

There are two things about John Paynter that I have never been able to acquire. 1 – He had immediate grasp of things. I have to look at things for a while. He could just look at it and Bam! Nail it the first time. 2 – He had very big ears, and I mean that to say he could hear everything. I wish I could hear like that...

It was obvious that this is a topic Conductor #1 has thought about before. To immediately be able to list “the two things about John Paynter that I have never been able to acquire” informs us that he has thoroughly examined the characteristics of his mentor. It is easily assumed that Conductor #1 has sought to acquire these characteristics within himself because of his previous description of the desire to consistently develop his own aural skills through exercises prescribed by his mentor.

Conductor #1 proceeded into a discussion of the differences between his own and Mr. Paynter’s score study process:

I think Mr. Paynter was a little more analytical, or process oriented... He had a can of colored pencils and a cup of coffee. He would sit and make a mark here, and make a mark there. Then he would sing a few lines without piano or anything else and if he found something tricky, he would figure it out. For me it is a matter of continuing to look, over and over again until things come together. I just wish things came together for me the way they did for him.

This was the first time he expressed any regret for his own score study process. The desire to be like his mentor in the way ideas come together weighs on him. The fact that Conductor #1 needs to continually look “over and over again” also speaks to the time constraints of his job. It is easy to see that he believes he would be more efficient in his study if he possessed the same skills as his mentor.

Intrigued by the differences between John Paynter and Conductor #1’s processes, the participant was guided to determine if there was another mentor that he attributed to the “abstract, random, or creative” influence described earlier:

No. Not really. Most everyone else I know is more disciplined... I have lived an absolutely charmed life in music. At various times throughout my career I've performed under the direction of John Paynter, Fred Fennell, and H. Robert Reynolds. They were all different, but yet the same. These individuals were all deeply committed to the craft of music and they felt like they had something to say. In essence, that's where I am. In that I deeply enjoy music-making and I feel like I have something to say, and I feel like I have a mission teaching in my little college... To expose the students to the best quality music we are able to play.

Conductor #1's mission to "expose (his) students to the best quality music (they) are able to play" supports his personal commitment to the greater music education community. His commitment to his students has been heavily influenced by the "commitment to the craft of music" of those that he holds in high esteem. Conductor #1 clearly enjoys his line of work and while he may ask for more hours in the day, he likely wouldn't change a thing about his "little college."

### **Score Study Process**

Conductor #1 clearly identified Joseph Labuta's text, *Basic Conducting Techniques* as a guide for his own personal score study process. As a result, this section uses the three stages of Labuta's process to organize Conductor #1's score study process. It should be noted that key difference between Labuta and Conductor #1's processes is the lack of linear progression in from stage to stage. Instead Conductor #1 freely transitioned between stages throughout the observation. These transitions were supported by his assessment of his personality type, being an abstract, random, creative individual.

## **Stage 1 – Knowledge Acquisition**

Conductor #1's goal of the knowledge acquisition phase was to seek out all available information on the piece of music and look for relationships and connections between musical concepts in the score. If there is a high quality or professional recording available, he will use it to expedite this process, but he tries to only listen to a recording once or twice. In doing so, he is careful to not continue to listen throughout his score study process as it may have an impact on his aural image of the work.

Conductor #1 strives to seek out and understand all written information on the score before looking through the actual music. He does so because of the recognition that information about a dedication or program notes can have an impact on his aural image. By consuming this information prior to the creation of his aural image, he allows the information the opportunity to have a greater influence on his conception of the piece.

The next portion of the knowledge acquisition stage begins seeking out connections and relationships across musical concepts. He achieves this best by taking the score to the piano and playing through various lines and/or harmonies. Often times he will play a line and sing it back so as to ensure that it is properly conceived in his head. This portion of Conductor #1's process is vital to his success as a conductor. He views aural training and development as a constant pursuit and works diligently to practice these skills. For Conductor #1, aural skills and their development are essential to his ability to study scores and conduct music.

It should be noted that it is during this stage of Conductor #1's process that he begins to transition in and out of all three of Labuta's stages of score study. This is understandable because it is during the process of hearing and singing lines that he begins to take inventory of both his ensemble's capabilities, and his own conducting concerns.

## **Stage 2 – Anticipation of Ensemble Problems**

When transitioning to this stage, Conductor #1 is often drawn to the individual needs of sections or specific students within his ensemble. He is attempting to first discover if the piece of music is technically possible for his own ensemble, and thus he weighs the strengths and weaknesses of his players as he encounters potential ensemble issues. These ensemble problems can take the form of, but are not limited to the following; key signatures and fundamental techniques, rhythmic or metric concerns, instrumental ranges, orchestration and doublings, and the musical maturity of his students.

As these ensemble problems are anticipated, he makes written notes so as to inform future rehearsal planning. Conductor #1 is already prioritizing sections of the music for the amount of rehearsal time that may be required to be successful with these issues. He also is prescribing various strategies to assist his students with the potential problems. He may conceive of an exercise to assist them or simply acknowledge the need to call a sectional and encourage further practice.

## **Stage 3 – Anticipation of Conducting Problems**

When transitioning into the stage of potential conducting concerns the lens typically turns inward on Conductor #1. He is encountering issues that if not properly sorted out will inhibit his own success as a conductor, and thus the success of his ensemble. He makes every attempt to go into each rehearsal as prepared as he can possibly be and does so by ensuring that he has practiced his own issues far ahead of time. The conducting concerns most often encountered involve, but are not limited to issues of tempo, meter, and phrase shaping. Special consideration is given to moments when tempo, meter, and style drastically change and how he would guide his ensemble through those transitions.

As previously discussed, the three stages of knowledge acquisition, anticipation of ensemble problems, and anticipation of conducting problems develop concurrently. The result is a somewhat abstract or seemingly random process. However, Conductor #1's process is actually quite logical given that his primary concern is for his student's success. While he makes use of Labuta's text as a framework for his own process, the transitions between stages most often occur because of a desire to be prepared for rehearsal and be as efficient of an instructor as possible.

### **Transitioning from Analytical to Interpretive Score Study**

Once each of the stages set out by Labuta have reached a sort of 'critical mass', Conductor #1 begins to transition further from analytical to interpretive score study. The difference between these two types of score study is that the analytical portion is organized around the pursuit of knowledge. Be it knowledge about the score or knowledge concerning ensemble or conducting issues. Whereas, interpretive score study takes the gained knowledge and begins a decision-making process where judgments concerning phrasing, balance, and emotional content are made.

It is crucial to realize that there is no clear moment when this transition actually occurs for Conductor #1. He describes this portion of his overall process as "messy" or "leaky" because it is unable to be defined by him or anyone else. Simply put he believes there is a time in his overall process when he begins to feel comfortable with making these kinds of decisions. There is recognition from Conductor #1 that there are many ways to shape a phrase or balance an ensemble. His goal is to ensure that he has acquired enough information and anticipated enough potential issues to allow him to make the most informed decision he can make, resulting in the highest quality performance attainable by his ensemble.

# Conductor #1 Score Study Process Outline – Figure 1

## Conductor #1 – Score Study Process Outline

### Three Stage Process

Adapted from J. Labuta (2010) *Basic conducting techniques*, personal experience, and educational influences

#### Stage 1 – Knowledge Acquisition

- A. Understand all provided information about composer and composition
  - a. Program Notes, Biographical Information, Dedication, Instrumentation, etc.
  - b. Seek additional information from variety of sources as needed
  - c. May use recordings once or twice – Does not use recordings past this point in overall score study process
- B. Discovery of relationships and connections across musical concepts
  - a. Thorough analysis of musical elements: Melody, Harmony, Expression, Rhythm, Meter, Tempo, Form, Structure, etc.
  - b. Routinely plays and sings excerpts at piano
    - i. Primary focus is creation of aural image/model

#### Stage 2 – Anticipation of Ensemble Problems

- A. Drawn to technical and musical abilities of performers in his ensemble
- B. Considers various technical and musical aspects
  - a. Key signature, instrument ranges, articulation, complexity of rhythm, meter, doublings, and musical maturity of students
- C. Prioritizes amount of rehearsal time needed for sections of music
- D. Creates exercises or supplemental materials to aid performers

#### Stage 3 – Anticipation of Conducting Problems

- A. Identification of specific moments in music that may inhibit the rehearsal and performance process
  - a. Emphasis on tempi, metric changes, style, and phrase shaping
- B. Preparation focuses on the facilitation of efficient rehearsals

#### Coda – Interpretive Score Study

- A. Upon completion of Stages 1-3 the conductor begins making informed decisions on musical issues of phrasing, balance, intensity, style, etc.
  - a. Primary goal is creating a personal interpretation of the score.

#### Notes:

- The three stages do not occur in a linear or sequential fashion. Discovery of knowledge in stage 1 can lead directly to stage 2 or 3 and then return to stage 1.
- There is no defined moment when the transition from the 3 stages to interpretive score study occurs.
- Large emphasis is placed on the continued aural development of the conductor.

## **Conductor #2**

At the time of this study Conductor #2 had recently retired from a professorship as Director of Bands and Chair of the Department of Music at a large metropolitan university. As Director of Bands he conducted a wind ensemble, instructed graduate courses in conducting and wind band literature, and taught various courses in instrumental music education. Being Chair of the Department of Music he oversaw the strategic vision, budgets, and personnel of the department. It is important to note that while the researcher does not have a deeply personal relationship with Conductor #2, their paths have crossed numerous times at various conferences and honor band festivals. As a result the researcher and Conductor #2 have a mutual respect for each other as professional colleagues.

Conductor #2's ensembles have performed at many state and regional conferences. His wind ensemble toured the Midwestern United States and Europe on numerous occasions. As a result, his ensembles have received the praise of many conductors in the profession. As a masterful networker and a consummate professional, Conductor #2 is known for being an excellent colleague and mentor to many young conductors.

Being heavily involved with the National Association of Schools of Music, he has served as an external reviewer for colleges and universities seeking accreditation. After twenty-five years in his former position, many credit him with building a department of music focused on high quality musical performance, metropolitan community engagement, and the development of young music educators.

## Score Study Discussion

### What is Score Study to you?

Conductor #2 began the discussion with a subtle joke, “For me? Score study makes sure I don’t look like a fool in front of my group! (Laughter from researcher and participant)” He continued, “One of the things that I’ve always tried to implement, even in my high school teaching days, was to bring my realization of what the composer had in mind to the performance of the piece. So much so that I rarely listen to recordings.” The first statement, although made in jest, does explore a desire to be perceived by his students as prepared and professional. This supports the idea of score study as a means of rehearsal preparation for performance. Looking at the second statement, Conductor #2 expresses his desire to discover the composer’s intent and apply his own realization or interpretation to the performance. In this we see that score study has multiple purposes for him: preparation for rehearsal and performance, discovery of composer intent, and achievement of conductor interpretation.

Regarding the use of recordings Conductor #2 says:

In preparation for a performance at our university, I sometimes listen to a recording or two, as we get closer to the performance. I do this just to make sure I haven’t missed something.

Here he has expressed his desire to use recordings only as a means for ensuring that the performance is complete and accurate. Using recordings as a bit of a safety net after majority of his personal study and the rehearsal process is complete. He continued:

I won a bet with our Dean one time over a recording of my group on the radio. Less than two minutes into the recording I knew that it was my group. I said something to her like, “That’s my wind ensemble.” She responded, “How do you know that?” The bottom line

was, I could tell! If I remember correctly, I think we were playing Holst's *Second Suite in F*. There are probably thousands of recordings of Holst's *Second Suite*. Yet, I could tell it was my group within two minutes of listening to it. I think many conductors probably could do the same thing with their recordings. Even recordings like the Fred Fennell Eastman Wind Ensemble recording they did back in the 50s. I can almost always tell those when I hear them even though they have been re-mastered and enhanced and everything else. They have a character to them and it's pretty distinctive. I'm that way with trumpet players (his personal instrument). Clarinet players... I have no clue!

Here he is describing the characteristic sound that conductors achieve with their ensembles. Musicians realize there are many factors that go into the characteristic sound of an ensemble. Perhaps the largest factors are the interpretation of the conductor and the performance space in which the recording was made.

Conductor #2's ability to recognize his own recordings and the recordings of others is certainly within the ability of most experienced conductors. However, the ability to recognize his performance is perhaps better equated to the ability to recognize one's own signature. Handwriting is a form of expression that every individual observes and recognizes throughout their lives. We even grow accustomed to the handwriting of our personal friends and colleagues. The result is a literal and figurative 'signature' that can only come from that particular individual. Conductor interpretation, when realized by an ensemble, can easily become the aural 'signature' of that conductor. The desire to not use recordings implies that Conductor #2 is concerned about copying the signature of other conductors. While he does see value in using recordings as a tool to "make sure I haven't missed something", he desires to ensure that the aural 'signature' of the ensemble is his and his alone.

Conductor #2 described his wind ensemble's signature sound through the following discussion:

I tend to probably be more flexible in terms of the expressive side of the music. I invited Alfred Reed to a performance of ours at a music educator's convention because we were playing *The Hounds of Spring*. And so about a week before that performance, I listened to a recording of *The Hounds of Spring*, conducted by Alfred Reed and found that I was taking the piece at least 20 clicks faster than it was on his recording. I thought to myself that I was in big trouble... After some thought, I realized that we had rehearsed it this way and this is how I hear the piece... So, we performed it the way we had prepared it. I introduced Mr. Reed to my wind ensemble and told him how much I enjoyed his recording. Mr. Reed then said, that he liked our performance too. Al continued, "My publisher makes me put metronome markings on these pieces and often after hearing it, I think that I really missed the mark with that. I love the tempo you took the piece." I frequently tell my conducting students that once you enter your 'romantic period' as a conductor, you probably will be a little more flexible with time and not so rigid with the metronome.

Here Conductor #2 expresses his ability to trust his own musical decisions and interpretation even when it was thought to be in opposition to the intentions of the composer. While the composer ended up agreeing with his interpretation, he certainly expressed feelings of trepidation leading up to this performance because of the differences in his interpretation and the composer's published intentions. Undoubtedly, a situation like this provided Conductor #2 with a greater sense of trust for his own musical decision-making.

Conductor #2 then expressed how over the years, musical decision-making has become an enjoyable hobby:

Score study has truly become one of my hobbies. If I travel someplace on an airplane, I'll take a couple new score with me. I just enjoy the creative process... That creative process of taking what is a bunch of dots on a page and making a realization of it in real time is really exciting for me to do... Many times the scores are pieces I am thinking about doing... I'll spend some time trying to get my head around what the composer had in mind so that I can decide if we are going to perform it or not. In some cases I may have not even heard the piece, but in others, I may have been intrigued by a performance at a conference or a concert. The decision to perform the piece or not is made entirely on the amount of rehearsal time we have and the group's abilities.

Labeling score study and literature selection as a hobby is quite intriguing. In a provided statement of educational influences, Conductor #2 credits his mentor, Frank Piersol with introducing him to the repertoire of the wind band. He and his mentor used Acton Ostling Jr.'s 1978 study, *An Evaluation of Compositions for Wind Band According to Specific Criteria of Serious Artistic Merit* to select and study many significant pieces of wind literature. One can see how time spent in score study and exploration with his mentor has influenced the formation of score study as a hobby. While hobbies are often thought to not be associated with one's line of work, the fact that Conductor #2 views score study and literature selection as a hobby speaks to his passion for these topics.

### **The Score Study Process**

Conductor #2 described his score study process in several stages. The initial stage of his score study process begins with an overarching review of the entire score:

I begin by going through the score and looking for landmarks or the things that you cannot conduct through the first time. For example, if there is lots of mixed meter, you've got to give the students the subdivisions. If you do not, the students will have no idea what is going on when they are not playing. If we are in a seven-eight time signature, it may be 2+2+3, 3+2+2, or 2+3+2... So I look for those kinds of things.

As I observe Conductor #2 describe his process, his words and facial intensity shows a concern with discovering the type of information that will allow him to read the piece through from beginning to end. Knowing that he will study in greater depth later, the priority is to be able to conceive of the music, as a whole from beginning to end without being held up by something like a meter change. Conductor #2 continued:

I also look for the tempo changes like ritardandos. At this time, I frequently write small notes or reminders in pencil in the score. I don't really know how unique this is, because I never really studied with anyone who taught score study, but anything I mark in pencil is temporary. Once I make it color it has a sense of permanence... I tend not to mark in the score until I made a decision about what I want to do.

Conductor #2 is displaying a high degree of confidence in his ability to efficiently discover potential conducting problems in the score. By marking these potential issues first in pencil, he is acknowledging the need to return to the score and make permanent decisions based on the information he discovers. Admitting that he never studied with a conductor that taught score study implies that much of his score study process is the product of his held beliefs, verified through years of experience.

Leaning forward into his music stand and looking over his reading glasses he looked directly at me and continued:

I just try to look at the things I will need to do to get through the reading the first time. If it is a score I do not know at all, I'll contact the composer and get some indication of what he had in mind. But I like to sight read just like the performers. So the first time I go through a score is as much sight-reading as possible and no decision-making.

The separation of score sight-reading and decision-making implies a very analytical discovery process that sounds similar to the sight-reading process of an individual musician. Typically those who sight-read are given a brief amount of time to survey the landscape of the music they are about to perform. Conductor #2's process of searching for landmarks within the music prior to his own initial score reading parallels the surveying done by musicians prior to a sight reading performance. Conductor #2 described it as going through stages:

In the process of preparing a piece of music you go through different stages. The first stages are more analytic than interpretive... The stages usually come after the first reading... I don't do any real advanced study of the score until after the first reading of it with the wind ensemble...

There are many university conductors that complete extensive score study prior to the initial reading with the ensemble. It is clear that he is extremely confident in his initial assessments of a score and therefore goes into the initial ensemble reading with a fair amount of understanding. The idea of a shared sight-reading experience with his ensemble is a concept not often explored by collegiate conductors. High school bands engage in this type of conductor/ensemble sight-reading as a means to prepare for state ensemble contest where groups are adjudicated on this process. This is not something that occurs in every state, but it should be noted that it does occur in the state where Conductor #2 instructed high school band.

The desire to embark upon a conductor/ensemble sight-reading rehearsal verifies the initial stage of Conductor #2's score study process. By separating score reading and decision-making in his first stage of study he is attempting to prepare himself for only the initial sight-reading of the piece. In this, Conductor #2 is not preparing himself for a detailed rehearsal. Therefore, in his eyes, it is not necessary for him to have made musical decisions about the piece at this stage.

Conductor #2 then began a discussion of the process he uses after the initial sight-reading with his ensemble:

I do a vertical and horizontal analysis before I do anything else. I go through horizontally and follow the flute line from beginning to end. Then the oboe, then the bassoon, and so on... I'll then look at things vertically, going measure by measure, up and down. This way I get in my head what each instrument is being asked to do. You need to know what the problem spots are going to be so that you can predict their mistakes and be prepared for rehearsal.

Here we see his focus shifting from the initial sight-reading of the score to a systematic approach that is geared towards the anticipation of ensemble problems and the preparation for rehearsal. These preparations are accomplished using a horizontal and vertical approach to score study. This approach is a common among articles and texts that provide generalized score study processes because of its focus on the needs of the individual performer and rehearsal preparation.

### **Score Study Observation**

Gillingham! Well first of all, I like his music! We performed *Be Thou My Vision* on tour this past summer. I did it specifically because most of the solo parts in that piece match up well with my group. It was a way I could feature the students without having them all

play solo pieces. I like his writing a lot and I've met him before. CBDNA (College Band Director's National Association) North Central has been at Central Michigan (where David Gillingham is employed) at least two times. Both times Jack Williamson (Director of Bands at Central Michigan) performed at least one of David's pieces.

He is expressing prior knowledge about the composer and a previously performed work. This knowledge is already impacting his expectations for the new piece:

The first thing I think about with Gillingham is that there is going to be a lot of percussion, and tuneful percussion at that... I see it is based on a university alma mater... I see that the first page of the score is nothing but percussion at the beginning. I know that Gillingham is a percussionist too...

The rationale for his expectations of Gillingham's music came to light when he identified the composer as a percussionist. Interestingly, these expectations were confirmed in the opening measures of the music. Conductor #2 proceeded to identify and comment on various issues of instrumentation and conducting:

First of all I'm looking at the instrumentation to see if it suits my ensemble. The first thing I see is contrabassoon. That could be an issue because we don't own a contrabassoon... There is also a piano part, which is not unusual in Gillingham's music. That can be a concern, simply because many good pianists simply do not have good ensemble chops. They've learned to play all by themselves and often don't play well in ensembles. There was a time at our university when a piano part like this would have been an issue, but lately we have had fantastic pianists here...

He is expressing that there was a time when he had a negative experience with pianists in his ensemble. These prior experiences have impacted his score study process and how he evaluates potential student and ensemble issues:

I noticed that the percussion begin to fade out, and I just realized that I'm not sure what percussion it was. I'm going back to find out... Lot's of melodic percussion, and in this case it is bells... At some point I'll need to follow the percussion lines through to the end and determine what instrument each line is playing. I often write that in so that I know who I am cueing when we read it.

Each instrumentation concern expressed was done so with his ensemble in mind. Looking to see if "the instrumentation suits us" informs us that his main priority is related to whether or not the piece is suitable for performance by his ensemble. However, we also see that he is searching for information that will inform his conducting. Possessing the knowledge of what percussion instrument is being played at any given time will allow him to properly cue the correct musician. Conductor #2 is achieving two score study goals in this portion of his process, 1 – determination if the piece is performable by his ensemble, and 2 – identification of conducting concerns:

So I see nothing but percussion on the first page. The first entrance otherwise is a saxophone. Looks like (pause)... I'm looking at this melodic theme in the sax and I'm not quite sure where it comes from... Then I see the flute enters and the percussion begin to thin out. There is a motive going on in the piano here (flips to inside cover page)... These themes are not directly from the alma mater, but they do have some similar intervals (moves on)...

His score study process is attempting to make connections and build relationships between the musical ideas. While he believes he may have found an intervallic relationship between the melodies and the source material of the alma mater, he filed the information away for use later.

This piece is not in a particularly user friendly key for bands... The alma mater is in the key of G, but the piece is essentially in D... (Looking ahead in the score) So there is a key change here too... Key changes are one of those things that I don't usually mark in the score, unless it is a critical issue. If I do mark it, I'll do so in pencil. This one's not bad. We just lost a sharp... (Looking ahead) Here at 39 and again at 66 we have more key changes. Gillingham seems a little schizophrenic about the key. It's like he got tired of sharps so he switched to flats... Okay, here at 91 we have another new key...

(Flipping ahead) At 122 there is a new key, and... Ouch! (Researcher: "What's Ouch?") The Key!! (Already moving on)... Here's another key change at 180. Wait. Where did that happen? (Flips backward in score)... Ah. We had one at 169 too. This piece could be called 'Variations on a key signature!' I don't know that there are many keys Gillingham has missed! The key signatures may be the biggest issues in the piece. Although the technical issues have a lot of repetition... Once they master them, the piece should not be too challenging.

His brief occupation with key signatures shows concern for having an understanding of the tonal centers used by the composer. Conductor #2 also makes clear his impression that the various key changes present technical issues for performers. While he has not said that these issues make the piece too challenging to perform, he has implied that he wishes there were fewer changes.

Similar issues concerning rhythm and meter occurred:

I am seeing a few meter changes, so now I am going to look into those... For this first one, although the meter changes, time does not. The quarter note remains constant. (Flips ahead)... Now in this case, we are going from quarter note to half note pulse. I would mark this in my score in color, usually red, just so that I am confident in leading the performers through it. (Looks ahead in the piece)... Now we are at the first part of the score where I would need to make decisions before we even sight-read it. The question at hand is, "What pattern best fits the meter?" It is marked seven-eight and I can tell be the note groupings that it is 2+2+3. Let's see if there are any other seven-eight bars coming up... Doesn't look like it. I would mark this in red too. (Looking ahead)... Here at 91 I see the meter doubles. Another metric modulation... I may need to indicate these to the students before we sight-read it. (Flipping pages forward)... There are two seven-eight bars after measure 180... looks the same as before. Eighth note stays constant and 2+2+3. That should be fine because it happened earlier... I see here that he has written a variation on the six-eight theme from before. Except now it is in three-four. The dotted quarter is at 80 (beats per minute) here. (Flips backward to the middle section of the piece)... Really there are only two underlying pulses in the whole piece. The slower middle section at 60 (beats per minute) and the beginning and ending are at 80.

Throughout his metric and rhythmic analysis, he was again concerned about the playability by his ensemble and any potential conducting concerns. The conducting concerns of being able to navigate the various changes were the primary concern. He describe the over arching pulse structure when he compared the tempo markings of the introduction, middle, and end of the piece. Despite acknowledging the need to mark the metric changes in red, Conductor #2 did not feel as though these challenges were too difficult for his students.

In closing the score study observation session, Conductor #2 described his next steps with the piece:

I feel like before I would do anything else, I would read it with the ensemble. Then I would go back and solve some those questions marks with instrumentation and balance. Thankfully that task is not daunting because Gillingham does such a good job indicating the dynamic he wants. There are a few moments in the score where Gillingham put the percussion in duples and woodwinds in triples... I would want to make sure that we're aware of that before the second rehearsal of the piece.

This closing statement acknowledges that Conductor #2 engaged in the score study process that he normally undertakes when presented with a new piece of music. He feels as though he has enough information to lead his ensemble in the sight-reading of the piece. He has also identified several areas of the score that will require additional study and would pursue these areas after the initial reading with his ensemble.

## **Follow up Interview Session**

### **Score Study Process**

Conductor #2 has a consistent score study process through which he confidently demonstrates his created aural image of the composition. This particular focus confirms his unique approach to studying a score:

Well, orchestral conductors whom train at a conservatory are often forced to realize the score at the piano. This requires a great deal of skill for the piano and my piano skill are almost non-existent... When I was younger if I had trouble hearing a specific part, I would play it on my trumpet. I always found that I could transpose it more efficiently that way. Sitting at the piano just took too much time for me... Now I find that I can hear and

sing my way through most lines with some ease... I think this is a product of not having many recordings to listen to early on in my career... There just were not very many recordings out there, so I guess I've learned to function without them.

His reliance on his own inner ear and aural training to hear the parts of a score is evident in his decision to not use the piano, trumpet, or recordings. While even he was somewhat unsure, he assumes that his lack of need for recordings is a product simply not having access to them during his formative years as a conductor.

When asked about some of the humming he did during the score study observation, Conductor #2 said:

It was my way of trying to wrap my head around the motive that was in the score. I had a pretty good conception in my head of the alma mater, as that was pretty easy to follow... When you look at contemporary music it can be very difficult to sight sing a line. Sometimes I will do it just to make sure that a doubling is exact... If I had my way, I would make every score a concert pitch score. It would make score study so much easier...

Here he notes that humming or singing individual parts only occurs when he has a difficult time capturing the melody in his head. Based on his comments regarding the use of piano and singing, majority of his aural conception occurs in his head. Conductor #2 only seeks an audible source as a means of verification or support for what is already conceived internally.

### **Held Beliefs**

Concerning Conductor #2's beliefs about gathering information from the score and the decision making processes of conducting he had the following to say:

I am always looking to gather information from the score to be able to make decisions about the music. The organization of what you do, as a conductor is something that you have to discern before rehearsals can begin. For example, in John Mackey's *Hymn to a Blue Hour*, he is adamant that you conduct the half note pulse throughout the piece. Even though the half note is close to 40 beats per minute in some places... I tried as best as I could in the performance of the piece, but I ended up showing subdivision much of the time. There were two measures in particular where I was determined to show only the half notes and we had performance problems as a result... So making the decision about what you have to do to help your ensemble is essential.

In this he is demonstrating his held belief that a large part of score study for him is making decisions about potential conducting issues. His desire to assist his ensemble and ensure that he is providing them with his best as a conductor is seen as essential to success of the performance.

Conductor #2 also expressed some beliefs concerning the nature of ensemble leadership and direction:

Don't conduct the things that are not there (smiles)... Let me give you an example. At the end of another of Gillingham's works, there is a section where the marimba rolls on a whole note, followed by a flourish in the next measure from the woodwinds. In the third measure the alto saxophone enters, and finally in the fourth measure comes the trombones. Even when we initially sight-read the piece, I conducted this section without beating time. Instead I simply cued the various entrances and when I got to the trombones at the end of the section, they had no idea it was their turn. I did this because this is how the music needed to be conducted... This was something that required an explanation to the ensemble, but I intentionally conducted it this way the very first time. Some people

would say that I should have explained it first, but the less you do talking and the more you do showing, the more they HAVE to watch you.

What is most important in this story is his desire to show only what the music requires. This not only increases the sensitivity of his ensemble to his gestures, but it also ensures that his gestures are reflective of the music. In this Conductor #2 possesses the held belief that his gestures are embodying the essence of the music and are not wasted on non-essential ideas such as time beating when it is not needed.

In the presentation I provided, you saw the quote; “If you lead them they will follow you, especially if you give them no option.” In this case, there was no other option but to follow. Invariably a student will ask, “Why aren’t you showing time there?” My answer is that if you went to a concert and I did this, (conducts a typical four-four pattern) and all that happened was a marimba roll. You would be left wondering what musical idea was missing. These kinds of decisions are made because they are best for the music and the ensemble’s performance.

### **Educational Influences**

It was intriguing to hear Conductor #2 describe some of his interactions with his mentor, Frank Piersol. He had the following to say about the manner in which he studied scores while training with his mentor:

One of the things Frank Piersol did was assign me five scores a week to go through and study. I would come in for my lessons and he would drill me on one of the five, but I never knew which it would be ahead of time... There were very few times that I would be assigned a score that he had not conducted. When it did happen, he would sit and go

through the score with me so that he became familiar with a new work too. I always enjoyed looking and talking through new works with him.

In this we see the enjoyment Conductor #2 experienced learning alongside his mentor. It is also clear that Mr. Piersol was demonstrating to his student the desire for continued personal growth as a musician and conductor. A connection can easily be made between these sessions with Mr. Piersol and the formation of score study as a hobby for Conductor #2.

In terms of his current score study process Conductor #2 had the following to say:

My own score study process just evolved over time as I was doing it... There is no doubt that I gained a great deal from the sessions with Mr. Piersol... The feedback I received from him in those sessions always informed my next study session...

It appears that while he had studied many scores prior to his time with Mr. Piersol, Conductor #2 refined his process through the feedback he received from his mentor. Acknowledging that the feedback informed the following score study session shows a clear connection to the advice he received from his mentor and the development of his process.

Regarding some of the opportunities Mr. Piersol provided for him, Conductor #2 had the following to say:

One thing that I've taken from my time with Mr. Piersol was the opportunity he would provide after his ensemble finished a concert. Usually, he would have a reading rehearsal and would allow me the chance to read through a piece or two that I had been studying. This is something I've continued to do with my own graduate students. This gives my students some valuable podium time in front of an ensemble and also provides the students in the ensemble an opportunity to learn more music. After all, many of the

undergrads in my ensemble are music education majors and they need to be exposed to this music too.

Here we clearly see his devotion to his students and his desire to foster the best music education possible for the future conductors in his ensemble. Conductor #2 assigned a great deal of value to these experiences when he was a student, and is therefore eager to provide similar opportunities for his own students.

### **Score Study Process**

Conductor #2's score study process took the form of three stages; 1 – Score Overview, 2 – Score Reading, and 3 – Score Analysis. The goal of the score overview stage was to gain knowledge about the piece, search for landmarks within the context of form, and discover conducting concerns that may inhibit a complete reading of the entire score. During this first stage, Conductor #2 began by examining the information provided within the score. Reading program notes, composer biography, instrumentation, and any other provided. He expressed that if information was lacking, he may elect to contact the composer or seek outside sources of information.

Score overview continued with the search for landmarks and potential conducting concerns. These two concepts occurred simultaneously, going page by page through the score. Emphasis was put on understanding climactic moments, meter/tempo changes, and shifts in tonality. These understandings informed both his conducting as well as the technical demands that would be placed on his ensemble. Conductor #2 acknowledges the landmarks or conducting concerns by marking them in the score with a pencil. He notes that once these ideas become permanent, he will mark them in color.

The second stage of score study, score reading begins with Conductor #2 completing a full reading of the piece at tempo. Reading the score in this manner requires him to conceptualize many of the conducting and ensemble demands as they occur in time. At the conclusion of his score reading session, he usually feels as though he has constructed enough knowledge to proceed to a sight-reading rehearsal with his ensemble.

The third stage of Conductor #2's score study process, score analysis is broken into two components; 1 – Horizontal Analysis, and 2 – Vertical Analysis. He begins the horizontal analysis by examining individual instruments and following their lines through a complete reading of the piece. Traveling line by line allows him to conceive of the individual demands for each performer while examining concepts of phrase shape and dynamic contrast. Conductor #2 does not often make use of the piano, relying instead on his aural training to hear the parts in his internally. He does acknowledge that earlier in his career, he would play lines on his trumpet, citing that it was easier for him to transpose in this manner.

The vertical component of his score analysis stage comprises of an examination of intriguing harmonic moments and cadences. He will also take note of doublings across instruments and make decisions regarding ensemble balance. The score analysis stage of Conductor #2's process exists as a means of identifying and understanding the technical demands so that he may predict ensemble problems and thus prepare for rehearsals.

Conductor #2 tries to avoid the use of recordings throughout his score study process. If he does listen to recordings, it is usually near the performance to ensure that something wasn't missed in his study process. Conductor #2 emphasizes the importance of aural training as a means to internalize a score.

## Conductor #2 Score Study Process Outline – Figure 2

### Conductor #2 – Score Study Process Outline

#### Three Stage Process

Adapted from personal experience and educational influences

#### Stage 1 – Score Overview

- A. Examination of provided information within the score
  - a. Program Notes, Composer Biography, Instrumentation list, etc.
- B. Discovery of “Landmarks” and potential Conducting Concerns
  - a. Occurred simultaneously in one complete viewing of the score
  - b. Emphasis on understanding climatic moments, meter/tempo changes, and shifts in tonality
- C. Notes made in pencil throughout the score overview process
  - a. Notes lack permanence until made in color later

#### Stage 2 – Score Reading

- A. Full reading of entire score at prescribed tempos
  - a. As if in performance, no stops
- B. Conceptualization of ensemble and conducting demands as they occur in time
- C. Proceeds to sight-reading session with ensemble
  - a. Does not attempt in depth analysis until after sight-reading session with ensemble

#### Stage 3 – Score Analysis, two parts

- A. Horizontal Analysis
  - a. Line by line examination of each individual part
    - i. Seeks to understand individual demands on performers
    - ii. Examination of musical concepts: phrasing, dynamic contrast
    - iii. Relies on aural training to hear parts in his head
- B. Vertical Analysis
  - a. Examination of intriguing harmonic moments and cadences
  - b. Takes note of doublings, orchestration, and texture
    - i. Informs ensemble balance

#### Notes:

- Process is sequential in nature.
- Score Analysis may require multiple study sessions.
- Makes no use of recordings until end of score study and rehearsal preparation process. Recordings are used as “safety net” to catch anything he may have missed.
- When beginning as a conductor, during horizontal analysis he would play lines on his primary instrument.
- Emphasizes the importance of aural development as a means to internalize a score.

### **Conductor #3**

At the time of the study, Conductor #3 was in his eleventh year as Director of Bands at a large university in the Midwest. He also serves as Chair of the Department of Music and has done so for six years. He is widely known for his high performing ensembles at an institution with no graduate program in music. In his position, he conducts the top band, a wind ensemble of roughly 65 musicians.

Conductor #3 also instructs a laboratory ensemble of music majors on secondary instruments. This is a unique course as it provides conducting opportunities for undergraduate students as well as a means of teaching band repertoire to future music educators. He also teaches an instrumental methods course prior to the student teaching semester that seeks to provide the administrative, logistical, and practical skills required of the music education profession. He takes pride in the music education curriculum at his university and has a track record of successful graduates in the field.

Thoughtful and humble, he is highly respected in the profession as an intellectual, as well as simply being a good person. Conductor #3's nature makes him quite easy to talk to and he always gives the impression that he is interested in what others have to say. Conductor #3 is a consummate professional that seeks to provide his students with a high quality musical experience.

### **Score Study Discussion**

#### **What is score study to you?**

I first engage in score study as a means of literature selection for our ensembles. I need to have a good idea of what the piece is doing so that I can decide if we should perform it. Every group has limitations. Every group has strengths and weaknesses... It is pointless

for us to try and put something together if we are not going to do it well. Score study helps me determine if the music is possible for us.

Through the discovery of technical issues and musical challenges, Conductor #3's score study impacts his literature selection process. Ensemble limitations and technical concerns are at the forefront of his mind when first examining a piece of music. His initial score study process leads to a determination of difficulty and possibility with his ensemble:

Every piece has validity... A good example is a work like *On a Hymnsong of Philip Bliss* by David Holsinger. It may be an easier piece for our top group, but there is so much *music* there... Score study allows me to find the music in a piece so that whatever we perform, we do it well.

Conductor #3 sees the value in studying music at all levels of difficulty and pursuing a musical performance as the result of his score study.

### **The score study process**

My approach to score study is the same as my approach to rehearsal... We start by looking at the big picture. Getting a sense of what the piece is all about without getting bogged down or going measure by measure. This is much like the sight-reading process with a band... There is no need to stop. The goal is to get an overall sense and feel for the music... Then we focus in on separate sections. We learn how and why it is constructed, and iron out the details... Finally we go back to the big picture and put it all together. We make sure the overall feel of the music is in place... I guess you could say it is very Macro-Micro-Macro.

His reference to a Macro-Micro-Macro approach is well documented as a rehearsal planning strategy (Corporon, 2010), but not as a score study process. This is a unique perspective on the

score study process that begins and ends with the “Big picture” or overall feel of the music at the forefront of the conductor’s mind. The micro stage being where he focuses on separate sections, and gets into the detail work of study and analysis:

I like to live with scores for a while... I’ll take them home and look at them. When I take the score home I read through it from beginning to end. If there are recordings of good quality I’ll listen to them. When I look at the score, I try to envision our group playing it.

I try to determine what we are going to sound like based on the abilities of the group...

His desire to “live with scores for a while” expresses that Conductor #3’s discovery process happens over a number of study sessions. Reading the score, listening to quality recordings, and imagining his ensemble’s sound are all part of this process:

One of the people I learned a great deal from was John Paynter. He always made a point to say, “You need to find enough time for score study.” Most people in the profession do not dedicate enough time... You will never have an administrator at a high school, or a department chair or dean at your university tell you that you need to do more score study. It is a real personal thing and I think it is part of your integrity and dedication to the art and your teaching.

Mr. Paynter’s quote is of great importance to Conductor #3, and labeling score study as a personal process is in alignment with the views of the conducting profession. Integrity and dedication to the art of music are things that Conductor #3 takes very seriously:

You’ve got to make time and do it (score study). There are too many conductors that blow it off and think “I’ll learn it in rehearsal.” That is never the way to go about making art... As you noticed, I have two offices in this building. This one is my sanctuary.

People only knock on this door if it is very important... When I want to study scores or have a project to do, this is my escape.

Having a defined space for study is crucial for Conductor #3. The fact that he “escapes” to study and work towards understanding his art form tells us that his score study process has great value, and requires a great deal of focused attention:

I like to find out as much about the composer as possible... I do a lot of arranging and composing myself. I see score study from the performer perspective and the composer perspective. My mentor, John Paynter was a composer and an arranger too. I think his approach to score study was as if he had written the piece. He was a huge influence on what I do and how I approach a score...

Based on the influences of his mentor and his own experience, he is advocating for conductors to learn the score so well that it would be as if they had composed the piece:

I was at a clinic led by Fred Fennell where he talked about the percussion section as one of the first things he looks at in a score. He told us that most conductors look at percussion last. When in all reality the use and non-use of percussion will clearly spell out the form and special moments of the piece. So if you can look at where and how percussion is being used it will tell you a lot about the structure of the piece. I always thought that made a lot of sense... So I'll often look at the percussion right way to figure some of those things out.

Fred Fennell had a lasting impact on the way Conductor #3 looks at scores. The method of looking to percussion early in the score study process speaks to his desire to look at the score through the lens of the composer. He achieves this by determining the role the percussion section is playing, and that section's greater impact on the overall form and structure of the work:

After percussion and general form, I look at texture. I think texture says a lot about a composer... How thick is the piece? Are there varieties of instrumentation being used? Are certain instruments playing all the time? These are the types of questions I'll try to answer, and those answers often determine whether or not we perform the piece... When it the texture gets thin, that's usually when the music gets challenging... The combinations of instruments the composer uses fascinates me. Frank Ticheli is a master at getting so many different colors out of the band.

His fascination with texture and color implies that these characteristics are important factors in discerning potential ensemble problems and whether or not the composer created a well-crafted piece:

When I'm really into the Micro stages of my analysis, I'm searching for everything... I'll look at articulations, rhythmic patterns, what instruments are needed, major cadences... I always take inventory of what the bass voice is doing and the chords being used. I play a lot of jazz piano, so I know my chords pretty well. I'll determine things like how many people are on the root, third, etc. This helps us in rehearsal with balance and intonation... I like to look at ranges and keys. There are certain keys where the band just sounds better... We did the Mendelssohn Overture a while back and it's in C. If that would have been in even D-flat, it would have been easier and it would have sounded better! (pause)... I always try to find the peak of the piece and get an understanding for the dynamic range of the work... I'll also look into how the composer is putting themes together. Is this melody from somewhere else? I appreciate a lot of Frank Ticheli's music because he actually shares with conductors where themes came from.

The micro stage of Conductor #3's score study process is an all-encompassing analysis that is guided by the demands of the composition. To say that he is looking for one or ten specific things is not wholly accurate. He is simply consuming all the musical information the score has to offer:

It's hard to define when I am done with the Micro stage of analysis... You get to a point when you think you understand a piece and you return to the big picture and come up with your rehearsal plan... Ultimately, when I am done with score study, I like to think that if the score fell off the stand, I could keep going... I think you just know when you've invested enough and it is time to pull out and prepare for rehearsal.

While there is no clearly defined end to the Micro Stage of his analysis, it is clear that the result of the Micro Stage is being informed enough about the piece to properly plan for and execute rehearsals. He is using the Micro Stage to determine and understand the various musical issues that will need addressed in rehearsal:

One of my goals in score study is to get to a point where I can get my head out of the score. Not in terms of memorization, but so that I'm truly able to listen to what the group is doing.... That's the point of the last Macro stage (of study). Having a model for the big picture of the piece in your head and evaluating what you hear from the ensemble... We get so focused on the details that we need to take the music out of our brain and get it into our ears.

In his return to Macro Stage of score study, Conductor #3 places a great deal of value on making sure that he is concerned with the overall concept of the piece. He believes the details of score study and rehearsal have the potential to get in the way of what needs to be a musical

performance. Therefore, the final stage of his study process is driven by his desire to “get out of the score” and present the most musical performance achievable by his ensemble.

### **Score Study Observation**

David Gillingham... That tells me something about the style and also gives me a harmonic picture. I can think about the shape of his other works. They have a real intensity about them. Before I even open the score, I’m making guesses about what’s in there. I see it was a commission. It is probably a very celebratory piece. I bet it has lots of energy and some fanfare elements... Just looking at the title (*Bright Gleams a Beacon*), I bet it’s got a fast ending to it... That’s a guess.

Interestingly, Conductor #3 was not prompted to make guesses about the piece prior to opening the score. His doing so brings to light the assumptions and generalizations that all conductors tend to make when we encounter music by familiar composers:

Gillingham always writes good notes about themes to conductors. I see he has used thematic material from the university’s alma mater to create his own themes... So it is a combination of content from the alma mater and these celebratory themes... The first thing I want to do is look at the alma mater... (Sings the melody aloud on a neutral syllable.)

While he is reading the program and thematic notes provided by the composer, he is consuming a lot of information very quickly. His ability to accurately sing through a melody that he is not familiar with was well on display:

It is a traditional alma mater... There was nothing weird or out of the ordinary there... Now the composer breaks down the form for us... I see an intro, A section, B section, and a return of A. He shows me how he layers the motives... I wonder if the composer

has a pure rendition of the alma mater in here at some point. (Reads from the score) “And a rousing celebratory conclusion!” (Looks at me) Good guess on that!

In expressing curiosity regarding the composer’s possible use of a “pure rendition” of the theme, he shows us how the compositional side of his thought process is fully engaged. Compositional possibilities are being proposed before he has turned to the first page of music:

I see that motive A is a little punchy. (Sings the melody)... It sounds like a light, syncopated idea... Motive A2 has more of a double time feel. (Sings this melody)... Rhythmically, motive A3 looks a lot like motive A, but the notes are a little different... He’s done some augmentation of A to create motive B... Motive C looks similar to the alma mater, so I would compare these to see if there are any similarities.

Conductor #3 is quickly moving through the motives presented by the composer on the inside cover of the score. The result is a decision-making process focused on developing an understanding of the nature of each motive. The understandings constructed in this portion of his score study process inform how he conceives of the emotional qualities of the music:

Now I am going through looking at instrumentation. (Reads the instrumentation list) Pretty straight ahead instrumentation list. Contrabassoon is the only addition I see to what is considered standard instrumentation. Generally his piano parts are not too difficult, so I would have no problem finding a player. There is no harp part... I’m going to assume that we could do this with six percussionists. There are six percussion lines, and that is Gillingham’s style of percussion notation. Usually he has figured out the parts pretty well so that no one needs to cover someone else’s parts.

His commentary on the composer’s style of percussion writing is another implication of Conductor #3’s familiarity with the works of Gillingham. Undoubtedly, his prior knowledge of

other works by the same composer had an impact on his expectations for this piece. His familiarity and experience with Gillingham's music allows Conductor #3 to make decisions more efficiently:

In looking at this motive it has the sense of a pentatonic idea... (Grabs the score and walks to his piano) Whenever I talk to students about how to get a pentatonic sound in your head I do this... (Glissandos the back of his hand up and down the black notes on the piano) There it is! Pentatonic scales always create a very heavenly, or whimsical sound, which is what I believe Gillingham, was going for here.

His association of the emotional content of the pentatonic scale with the music in the score informs us that Conductor #3 conceives of these ideas in a technical and musical sense. The picture created in his head is not purely structural, but is also one of emotion. This process allows him to assign a character or emotional idea to a particular section of the music:

Now I see the piece has some nasty stuff... It looks like it has been all peaceful and happy, and all of a sudden it's got this... (Sings "Bum-Bah!" in an almost guttural way) It's almost a muscular version of what we had before. It still looks pentatonic, but I think it is a different note relationship than before...(examines the score closely) The first time the piece started the motive on the sixth note of the pentatonic scale. Now it's starting on the second note of the scale. So even though it is the same scale, the second theme is going to have a different relationship...(Walks to piano) the first motive sounds like this, (Plays it on the piano) and the second one is more like this (Plays the second theme).

Conductor #3 uses the harmonic content of the piece to prescribe an emotional idea to this section of music. In order to achieve this he is frequently making use of his own extensive aural

training as well as his piano skills. These skills are obviously an important component of his score study process:

The piece has some of the tinkly stuff here... The flute and piccolo are playing with support from the oboe and there is some percussion. Probably xylophone, but I need to go back and check... (Flips pages) No! It's bells! Even more tinkly stuff! Well there you go.

Much in the manner harmonic content was used earlier; instrumentation and style are being used to assign character to the music. We also see his excitement for the discovery process. He made a guess as to the nature of the percussion instrument that was playing and was quite excited to find out that his guess was wrong. Conductor #3's score study revealed that the actual percussion instrument used supported his character description better than his original assumption. This occurrence displays how initial observations can be verified or alerted based on the score study process.

Conductor #3 turned his attention to an articulation issues that may have an impact on his rehearsals:

I see we have some accents with staccatos on them. (Pauses briefly) So this would be punchy. (Sings the passage using a very percussive sound)... I am already thinking about rehearsing the trombones, tuba, and percussion that have this rhythmic accompaniment. That is one of those things where if you have that group play with everyone else, you may not know how long they are playing those notes. If you can isolate them and have them play it on their own, you'll be able to get some clarity on the length of those notes.

Here an articulation marking has clearly impacted Conductor #3's style of his singing and thus, the concept of sound that is forming in his mind. Decisions made during Conductor #3's score study process are clearly impacted by preconceived ideas of his ensemble's rehearsal needs:

What's interesting here at measure 103 is that the only instrument with a crescendo is the tam-tam. I would probably ask the performers to grow a little bit here to make it more of a moment. Then we relax here. This part is flowing and expressive. Not much happens for about three measures, which is nice because the composer allowed time for the tam-tam to ring and fade... I wouldn't want to conduct much here. I certainly don't want to beat time through all of this. I'd probably start conducting again with the pick-ups into measure 106.

He expresses the desire to add a crescendo in the performer's music at measure 103. He is very confident in his decision-making and willing to make small alterations to the score if he believes they are in the best interests of the music. We also see the first time Conductor #3 has referenced his conducting and how the music will impact his gesture:

Now the piece is really rocking at measure 145! Similar to what the composer wrote at measure 26, but here the piece has some sixteenth notes. (Sings them)... These really add intensity and energy to what is going on. I sense a big build and a dramatic ending coming soon... Here we go. Everybody is in at 153 for a big moment. Similar material to what we have had before. Gillingham is bringing back a lot of ideas to drive home the idea of a recapitulation... There are a couple of the usual Gillingham meter changes from two-two to six-eight. As long as you've done these before, they are usually pretty easy for people to follow.

His ability to assign labels to the composer's music is heavily influenced by the beliefs he possesses regarding Gillingham's music. We also see the recently attained knowledge from earlier in the piece impacting his ability to label motives as "similar to what we had before." In

this case the establishing of relationships between the source material and the motives allows Conductor #3 to quickly assess ideas in the recapitulation section:

Let's look at the last chord... I see the horns have a triple-forte, which is different than the rest of the brass. I'll probably need to have the rest of the brass back off so that the horns can come through... Looks like the chord is pretty solidly in B-flat. The horns and second trombones have concert C, which will add a nice color and not be too dissonant... When we tune this we will certainly tune the B-flat major without the C, and then add the C back in... By adding that major ninth Gillingham created a John Williams *Star Wars* sound...

The knowledge he attained segues seamlessly into rehearsal considerations for his ensemble. Discoveries like the major ninth chord at the end bring about the existence of prior knowledge and experiences. He already knows how to tune the chord and has a solidified aural image:

This is typical Gillingham. He's not trying to sound like anyone else. Gillingham used the alma mater appropriately so that people who know the melody will recognize it. He has used enough colors and effects to make it a very emotional piece... What the piece doesn't have is a dark side... A lot of Gillingham's music has a dark side to it and this does not... This is a happier Gillingham piece...

Conductor #3's prior knowledge of the composer's music greatly influenced his ability to consume information from the score. Interestingly, when he came to the realization that this piece was missing a "dark side" he took a moment to think on it. Although this was brief, it seemed as though he was uploading this new information into the "Gillingham File" in his brain. Updating prior knowledge and held beliefs so that this new information would be readily available for the next time he encountered Gillingham's music.

## **Follow up Interview Session**

### **Score Study Process**

Conductor #3 made substantial use of singing during the score study observation. When asked about this score study strategy he responded immediately:

All the time. I do it (singing) all the time. One of the things my high school band director used to say is, “If you can sing it, you can play it.” I have what I think are pretty good sight-singing skills. If there was a way to sing harmonies, I think I would be able to do that too. I can look at the harmonization on this score and I know what that B-flat chord with the C is going to sound like. When I was a kid, my parents made me take organ lessons. As a result, my left hand can harmonize really well, but my right cannot. My right is great with melodies. A piece like the Gillingham, which is melodically driven, is very accessible to me at the piano.

He sees aural training as one of his largest assets when studying scores. When it comes to the creation of an aural image of a piece, he relies heavily on his aural development and seeks to improve these skills in his students:

I make all of my conducting students sing. We will take things to the piano and sing along with what we play, but they have to be able to sing it. Then we will sing and conduct it at the same time. There’s no doubt with young conductors that if you can do this (conducts a four-four pattern) while singing, it will make it so that you do not have to think about this (points to his conducting hand) all the time.

Here we note that his aural training has influenced how he instructs his students. Because Conductor #3 vocalizes music during his score study, he expects his students to work towards the

development of that same skill. Regarding the use of recordings in the development of an aural image Conductor #3 said:

If there are good recordings I will listen to them throughout my entire process. The focus is on listening and taking inventory of things like phrasing and balance. We occasionally make recordings of some of our rehearsals and make comparisons... Anytime you learn a piece you need to make sure that you have an image in your head of how it needs to sound. That image needs to be the model going forward. When listening to recordings I think, "That's good, but I didn't like the way they did this..." You need to have your model and listen with a critical ear. At the end of the day, conductors need to be able to put their own stamp on things. It's not about copying someone else; it is about making it your own.

He believes that recordings are a useful tool and have a place in the score study process. While recordings may influence the aural model he constructs, he is sure to listen to recordings with a critical ear. This allows him the opportunity to make judgments on what he hears in order to develop an appropriate aural model.

### **Held Beliefs**

Throughout the score study observation, Conductor #3 often described sections of the music by associating the thematic or harmonic material with emotional content:

When I describe something as "muscular" or "tinkly" it brings with it a host of rehearsal and technical concerns. For the "tinkly" sounds I would be making sure that the balance was appropriate and that all voices were heard together to ensure that the texture created by the composer was properly realized. The way I describe it in my head impacts the way we rehearse and perform that section.

The labels he assigns to sections or components of the music have an impact on his aural conception of the piece. When he describing something as “muscular, nasty, or tinkly” he is determining the way it should be presented to a listener. He believes that these word associations provide clarity to his aural image.

### **Educational Influences**

Conductor #3’s own aural abilities mirror those of his mentor, Mr. Paynter. The desire to create an aural image through the lens of the composer has directly influenced the way he studies scores:

John Paynter’s approach to score study was from the perspective of the composer. He was able to quickly read a score and visualize (in his head) all aspects of the music. The score study that I do is the product of all the lessons, classes, and clinics I’ve attended. We are all a sum of whom ever we’ve studied with. It is never ending and we never stop learning. For me, John Paynter was huge, and I know my approach to score study was the way he did it. I saw how he marked his score, I saw him in rehearsal so many times. I also learned a great deal from John Whitwell, Ken Bloomquist, and Bob Jorgensen. All of those people had their own style and did something a little different, but they certainly all knew what they were doing. As good as all those people were, I do not want to do things exactly the way they did. They are great models, but we all need to be our own person in this profession.

He holds all of his mentors in high regard, but puts emphasis on ensuring that his process is his own. While his score study process is informed by their teachings and many other sources, Conductor #3 most of all seeks to score study in a way that works for him and his ensemble.

## Score Study Process

Conductor #3 describes his score study process as Macro-Micro-Macro. He begins his process with the big picture goal of establishing an overall sense and feel for the music. He accomplishes the initial Macro stage by consuming all available information about the composer and the composition. This new information combines with his prior knowledge and experiences to create expectations for the composition. Upon examining the music, first he globally surveys the percussion parts. He believes that percussion writing often frames the overall structure, form, and climatic moments of a piece.

As Conductor #3 transitions into a more Micro stage of score study, he examines the textures used by the composer. He makes note of the thickness or thinness of the composer's writing as well as the colors created by the varieties of instruments. Conductor #3 noted that texture greatly impacts his aural image of the composition. Throughout his process he frequently sings and plays sections on the piano. His ability to verbally express or perform sections of the score heavily influences his developing aural image of the composition.

Continuing further into the Micro stage of score study he diligently explores all musical concepts including, but not limited to: articulation, rhythmic patterns, major cadences, chord voicing, balance, intonation, and instrumental ranges. Noting that it is difficult to know when the Micro stage of score study ends, Conductor #3 identifies the return to a Macro perspective as one of the major goals of score study. In the final Macro stage of his score study process, Conductor #3 is interested in ensuring that he has clear aural model in his head that serves as the driving force of his rehearsal process.

Conductor #3 expressed the importance of revisiting the score study of a composition over a period of time. Throughout his entire process he will listen to high quality recordings, but

does so with a “critical ear”, constantly comparing the recordings to his aural model. Conductor #3 stated that his listening as akin to a game; testing his aural image against professional quality recordings and making judgments as a result.

## Conductor #3 Score Study Process Outline – Figure 3

### Conductor #3 – Score Study Process Outline

#### **Macro-Micro-Macro**

Adapted from rehearsal preparation process, Corporon (2010) *The quantum conductor*, personal experience, and educational influences

#### **Macro Stage 1**

- A. Big picture overview of composition
  - a. Goal is to establish an overall sense and feel of the music
  - b. Seeks to understand all available information about composer and composition prior to evaluating music.
    - i. Program Notes, Composer Biography, Instrumentation, etc.
    - ii. Acquired knowledge and prior experiences create expectations for composition
  - c. Globally surveys percussion section to assist in determination of overall structure, form, and climactic moments
  - d. Examination of composer's use of texture
    - i. Thickness, Thinness, Use of instruments, Created Colors/Sounds
      - 1. Impacting creation of aural image

#### **Micro Stage**

- A. Diligent exploration of all musical concepts in the score
  - a. Articulation, Rhythm, Patterns, Major Cadences, Chord Quality/Voicing, Balance, Intonation, Instrument Ranges.
  - b. Frequent Singing of lines and use of piano
    - i. Audible expression of music on page is crucial in the development of his aural image of the composition
    - ii. Establishment of aural image becomes baseline of comparison to what performers create

#### **Macro Stage 2**

- A. Gradual return to big picture, sense, and feel of music
  - a. Goal is to get out of the score and get into what the performers are doing
  - b. Clear aural model created in Micro stage is further developed by placing importance on the overall feel of composition

#### **Notes:**

-Transition between Macro-Micro-Macro stages is fluid and seamless. There is no clear definitive end or beginning of each stage.

-Makes use of recordings throughout entire process. Listens and compares recordings to his own aural model.

-Believes aural skills are essential to the success of score study process.

## **Chapter 5 - Conclusions**

The purpose of this study was to examine the characteristics of the score study processes implemented by three collegiate wind band conductors. Each case resulted in an in depth description of the participant's score study process. Findings suggested that common and unique interactions existed across participants. What follows is an examination of the common and unique interactions of the three conductor's score study processes.

### **Score Study Process Findings**

Each conductor began their process with a knowledge acquisition stage that had the goal of consuming general information about the composer and composition prior to the study of actual music. In all cases the attained knowledge combined with prior knowledge, past experiences, and held beliefs to create expectations for the composition.

Once the score was opened, differences in the participant's score study processes became apparent. Conductor #2 sought the discovery of structural "landmarks" and potential conducting concerns. Whereas Conductor #3 created a concept of form through a brief surveying of the percussion writing and the composer's use of texture. Conductor #1 extensively looked for relationships and connections across various musical elements. All three conductors sought to compile copious amounts of information, but each displayed their own unique priorities and methods of discovery.

During the beginning stages of their score study processes, Conductor #1 and #3 indicated the additional goal of the formation of an aural image. Interestingly, Conductor #1 and #3 also sang or made use of the piano to aid in the formation of their aural image. Conductor #2

relied on his aural training to internalize and “hear” the music in his head, but did not state this as his primary concern in the beginning stages of his study. Instead, Conductor #2 focused his attention on score reading and conceiving of the entire score at the prescribed tempos. This allowed Conductor #2 to conceptualize the ensemble and conducting demands as they occur in time. The varied approaches of each participant in the creation of an aural image is supported by the findings of Ellis (1994):

They (participant conductors) carry on intensive study of the score using what for them is the most effective means to hearing the composition whether it be playing the score on the piano or another instrument, singing with or without solfege, or audiating during analysis of the composition (p.192).

While all conductors in the current research possessed the goal of the formation of an aural image, each made use of a unique method that was most effective for them. The varied and personal approach to the creation of an aural image in Ellis’s study as well as the current research has implications on the score study instruction of undergraduate and graduate conducting students. These findings suggest that the individual learning modes of students should be considered when developing the process in which they create an aural image.

Another common interaction was discovered as each conductor regularly referenced their own ensemble’s abilities to successfully perform the music being studied. As Conductor #1 formed his aural image and made discoveries, his attention quickly transition to the anticipation of ensemble or conducting concerns. He was frequently drawn to the performance abilities of the individual students in his group. While engaging in score reading, Conductor #2 would also acknowledge the potential ensemble issues within the score. Conductor #3 did not become overly concerned with potential ensemble issues until after he obtained a clear aural concept of the

music. It appears that the conductor's perception of the quality of his ensemble is a factor that influences the priority of concern pursued in score study.

While each conductor's score study process was identifiable in terms of stages, they all traversed these stages in unique ways. Conductor #3 described a linear Macro-Micro-Macro process with no definitive transitions between stages. This resulted in a score study process that gradually morphed into its next stage much like sand through an hourglass. Conductor #2's process was highly sequential with new stages occurring only when he made the conscience decision to embark upon them. Whereas Conductor #1's stages weaved in and out of focus based entirely on the discoveries that were made in the music.

Although each conductor used recordings, they differed as to the purpose and placement of their listening within their score study processes. Conductor #1 expressed the desire to listen to professional recordings only once or twice in the very beginning of his process. Conductor #2 waited until his ensemble was near performance-ready to listen to recordings to determine if his interpretation was missing anything. Conductor #3 made use of recordings throughout his score study process, stating that he is sure to listen with a critical ear; making comparisons to his own aural model along the way. All three conductors see value in the use of recordings and all three expressed some degree of caution against over-use.

Educational influences had a large impact on the priorities and processes of each participant. Conductor #1 expressed that he still strives to develop his aural skills using an exercise learned from a mentor many years ago. The process of score overview, reading, and analysis used by Conductor #2 was imparted to him by one of his greatest teachers. Conductor #3's desire to create a clear aural model was also imparted by a mentor. In each case, the influence of their mentors and years of experience provide the participants with strong enough

verification and support to shape these ideas into held beliefs. Therefore, educational influences have the potential, given the support of the conductor's experiences to develop into held beliefs. These beliefs are what make each conductor's process unique and worthy of further exploration.

### **Suggestions for Further Study**

Based on the current study, the researcher suggests the following for further study on the topic of score study processes:

1 – The current study benefited greatly from the use of think-aloud methods, but was not able to continue the use of the method to verify the entire score study process. It is suggested that an individual case study be created that makes use of think-aloud methodology while following an expert conductor through the score study process from initial conception of the composition to performance. This research would provide valuable insight into a conductor's thought process including aspects of the realization of interpretation, rehearsal planning, and rehearsal execution.

2 – Participants in the current study expressed at various times a shifting of attention towards the individual performers in their ensemble. Further exploration is needed to determine the extent to which a conductor's ensemble influences their score study process.

3 – One participant in the current study made comparisons between their personality type and how it impacts their score study process. The personal nature of score study encourages exploration into the impact of a conductor's learning mode on their score study process. The conducting profession would benefit from a deeper understanding of the relationship between a conductor's learning mode and their score study process. This

research may have a large impact upon graduate and undergraduate score study instruction.

4 – Additional research is needed to provide insight into the process of forming an interpretation. Knowledge of what musical factors are most strongly considered when conductors make interpretive decisions could have a lasting impact on our profession and score study instruction.

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## **Appendix A - Letter of Informed Consent**

Formal Invitation to Participate in the Research and Letter of Informed Consent

Dear (Participant name),

My name is Andrew Feyes and I am a Ph.D. Candidate in Curriculum and Instruction of Music Education at Kansas State University under the supervision of Dr. Frank Tracz and Dr. Fred Burrack. I am writing to ask for your participation in my research on the sequential score study procedures of collegiate wind band conductors. This study is seeking to identify commonalities of score study processes to expose if three collegiate wind band conductors utilize a uniform process.

Participation in this study will include the following: 1) provision of documents relating to your individual score study beliefs and teachings. These documents may include but are not limited to course syllabi, classroom teaching notes, class or professional presentations, and published or unpublished writings that pertain to the participant's score study process; 2) a written statement of educational influences that have directly impacted aspects of their score study process; and 3) participation in a 90 minute score study observation with the purpose of discussing and observing your score study process through a think aloud methodology.

Participants in the research will remain anonymous. Should you elect to participate you will receive a copy of the unpublished manuscript being used in the study for your personal keeping. Participation in the research is voluntary and refusal to participate or discontinuing participation at any time will involve no penalty or loss of benefits.

It is my intent to travel to a location of your choosing on a day and time that matches your availability. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the research, please do not hesitate to contact me at [adfeyes@ksu.edu](mailto:adfeyes@ksu.edu), or Dr. Fred Burrack at [fburrack@ksu.edu](mailto:fburrack@ksu.edu).

Thank you for your consideration,

Andrew D. Feyes, Ph.D. Candidate

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