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LISTENING PRIORITIES AND REHEARSAL PROCEDURES OF
SELECTED TEXAS HONOR BAND DIRECTORS

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LISTENING PRIORITIES AND REHEARSAL PROCEDURES OF SELECTED
TEXAS HONOR BAND DIRECTORS

A DOCUMENT APPROVED FOR THE
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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ABSTRACT

This document seeks to determine if the selected Texas Honor Band directors prioritize musical elements while rehearsing their ensembles, resulting in a listening hierarchy. A secondary goal is to determine to what extent this influences their rehearsal processes. Through personal interviews, it is apparent that a large amount of intuitive teaching takes place in the participants' classrooms. Perhaps the most revealing insight that the research provides is in the area of student responsibility for the ensemble sound. While this was not an original intent of the research, the research design began with broad questions so that emergent themes not previously considered could be explored. Each of these teachers discusses how they are able to engage their students' critical listening skills in order to help them achieve a high level of musicianship.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Purpose of the Document

All conductors bring their own values, interpretations and expectations to their ensemble. John Pasquale states "the conductor aids the performers in creating an informed interpretation of the composer's intent with the ultimate goal of achieving ensemble clarity allowing artistry to occur."¹ If we are to determine how ensemble clarity is reached, one approach may be to examine a conductor's ability to listen and prioritize the various musical elements within the ensemble. How a conductor prioritizes sound is fundamental to performance.

The author was introduced to Dr. Pasquale's document, "Directed Listening for Wind Ensemble Conductors: A Pedagogy for Developing Aural Analysis and Effective Rehearsal Strategy", while attending graduate school at the University of Oklahoma. In this document, Dr. Pasquale prescribes a specific method for

¹ John Daniel Pasquale, "Directed Listening for Wind Ensemble Conductors: A Pedagogy for Developing Aural Analysis and Effective Rehearsal Strategy" (doctoral diss, University of Oklahoma, 2008), 1.

undergraduate conducting students to aurally analyze music.² While discussing the concept of a directed listening hierarchy with Dr. Pasquale, the author determined that it would be worthwhile to explore the opposite end of the spectrum: Do those who have been successful teachers for a long period of time prioritize their listening in a similar fashion? The author is currently a Texas band director and due to the reputation of Texas bands across the country, it was decided that Texas band directors would provide a strong pool of potential participants.

With this in mind, four Texas Honor-Band directors were interviewed with the primary goal of determining if they prioritize musical elements in their ensembles, resulting in a listening hierarchy. A secondary goal was to determine to what extent this influences their rehearsal processes. As will be discussed later, a case study based on an emergent themes design was used in order to allow for flexibility as the research progressed. If the data did not suggest a listening hierarchy, the topic could be reshaped to explore themes not previously considered.

² Ibid, 2.

Understanding the Culture of Texas Band Programs

Schools in the state of Texas have a reputation for having some of the strongest performing bands in the country. An examination of the Midwest Clinic's performer database reveals that as of 2009, 72 Texas public school bands have been selected to perform at the 64-year-old international convention.³ Bands are selected through a competitive juried process.⁴ The only other state to approach that number of school group performances is Illinois, where the clinic is held each December. The culture in many parts of Texas creates a standard of excellence in performance that is not only common, but expected. This is in large part due to the competitive nature of band programs in Texas. It is not uncommon for large schools in Texas to employ three to four band directors, percussion and color-guard specialists, and private-lesson teachers for each instrument. Many band budgets total over \$100,000 per year and students often

³ The Midwest Clinic, "The Clinic - Performer History", The Midwest Clinic, <http://www.midwestclinic.org/performers/history/> (accessed December 20, 2010).

⁴ The Midwest Clinic, "The Midwest Clinic - Performance FAQ's", The Midwest Clinic, http://www.midwestclinic.org/performance_faqs/ (accessed April 26, 2011).

pay as much as \$500-1000 for participation in band.⁵ Parents in these high-achieving communities are willing to make sacrifices in accordance with expectations of excellence in performance. While competition certainly contributes to the overall performance level of Texas bands, having the large population of Texas creates some advantages that perhaps other states do not have. Texas has the second largest population in the U.S.⁶ Because of the large number of schools, there is the possibility for colleagues to collaborate and assist one another. This can be more difficult in states with more rural populations.

⁵ L.D. Bell High School Band, "L.D. Bell High School Band", L.D. Bell High School Band, <http://www.ldbellband.org/FeeSchedule.pdf> (accessed April 26, 2011); Richland Area Band Boosters, "Richland Area Band Boosters Website", Richland Area Band Boosters, http://www.richlandbands.com/media/2010_2011_Band_Fees.xls (accessed April 26, 2011); Martin High School Band, "Martin Band - Forms", Martin High School Band, <http://www.aisd.net/martinband/docs/5.10.11.FEES.PAPERWORK.pdf> (accessed April 26, 2011).

⁶ United States Government, "2010 Census Data," United States Government, <http://2010.census.gov/2010census/data/> (accessed March 14, 2011).

The Honor-Band Process

One of the long-standing competitions in Texas is the Honor Band competition, which began in 1958.⁷ According to the Texas Music Educators Association there were two main reasons for creating this competition: 1) So that directors could improve their teaching by seeing and hearing the high quality performances of peer ensembles and 2) to recognize those communities and school systems that support music in education.⁸ As of 2010 the University Interscholastic League, the state's governing body for public school athletic and fine arts competitions, has divided the state into 28 different regions.⁹ Each school wishing to compete in the honor-band process submits the necessary forms and recordings of performances from the current school year. The first evaluation of their performance takes place at the regional level. A panel of five judges listens to each

⁷ Texas Music Educators Association, "Honor Band" Texas Music Educators Association, <http://www.tmea.org/divisions-regions/band/honor-band> (accessed December 20, 2010).

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Texas Music Educators Association, "Region Alignment" Texas Music Educators Association, <http://www.tmea.org/divisions-regions/regions/alignment> (accessed December 20, 2010).

submitted recording. The recordings are not identified at this time. The judges rank each wind band performance from highest to lowest. The composite score is determined by adding together the judges' rank scores after the high and low judges' scores are discarded for each band.¹⁰ For example, if a band receives rankings of 2, 1, 2, 3, 4; the 1 and 4 are discarded. That leaves rankings of 2, 2, and 3 for a composite score of 7. This is done for each band that has entered the contest. Recordings with the two lowest composite scores advance to the area competition.¹¹ Four regions comprise one area (with a total of seven areas across the state).¹² This yields a total of eight bands for adjudication at each area level. The area adjudication proceeds with the same system as the region adjudication.¹³ Two bands advance

¹⁰ Texas Music Educators Association, "Honor Band Competition Rules, Procedures, and Guidelines" Texas Music Educators Association, <http://www.tmea.org/divisions-regions/band/honor-band/rules> (accessed December 20, 2010).

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Texas Music Educators Association, "Region Alignment".

¹³ Texas Music Educators Association, "Honor Band Competition Rules, Procedures, and Guidelines".

from each area for a total of fourteen semi-finalists.¹⁴ In the rare cases of a tie, a region or an area may send three representatives.¹⁵ At the state level, after the judges have ranked each group, the top fifty percent are listed as honor band finalists.¹⁶ The top-ranked group is invited to perform at the Texas Music Educators Association Conference that is held each February in San Antonio.

It should be noted that there are honor bands for each classification (1A, 2A, 3A, 4A and 5A high schools, 1C, 2C and 3C middle schools) in Texas. Thus, schools with an average daily enrollment of 500 students are not competing against schools with an average daily enrollment of 2000 students. Additionally, each classification only enters this process every other year: 1C, 1A, 3A and 5A schools take part in the honor-band process with performances at the annual convention in odd-numbered years while 2C, 3C, 2A and 4A schools perform at the convention in even numbered years. While the number of schools who enter the competition varies

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

from year to year, there are always a large number of entries, particularly in the 4A and 5A high school classifications. For example, in 2010 the number of entries for the 5A high school classification was 100.¹⁷ At the same time, in the 3A classification there were almost 50 entries.¹⁸ Regardless of classification, any ensemble that has undergone this level of rigorous aural evaluation by three different judging panels and is selected as the honor band for a given year, earns its place in Texas honor band history as one of the top ensembles in the state.

Based on the multi-layered evaluation process to become a Texas honor band, many groups never advance in the process. Only the very finest performances allow a band to advance beyond their region or area. Simply reaching the state level is an accomplishment in itself. The fact that some schools have achieved this honor multiple times is even more remarkable.

¹⁷ Texas Music Educators Association, "Entry List By Classification" Texas Music Educators Association, <http://www.tmea.org/divisions-regions/band/honor-band/entry-list/class> (accessed December 20, 2010).

¹⁸ Ibid.

Need for the Document

The existing published literature examined in Chapter Two contains many opinions and ideas concerning what one or two authors believe to be important. There are few studies that have examined and analyzed multiple successful secondary school conductors. This document will seek to provide insight to an area that has not been sufficiently addressed in the current literature. By revealing if the selected Texas honor-band directors prioritize their listening, it is the author's intent to inform the profession how they prioritize various musical elements if in fact they do so, and how this process impacts their rehearsals. In addition to informing the profession, these findings may assist those teaching in an undergraduate or graduate music education setting in the listening development of young music educators.

Limitations of the Document

While this document seeks to bring clarity to any hierarchy of listening discovered via the participant's interviews (or conversely any discrepancies), it is limited by only covering the opinion of a small group of music educators. Additionally, directors in the state of Texas are the only participants considered for the study.

This document does not consider how booster clubs, socio-economics, support staff or other outside elements impact the group's performances.

Organization of the Document

This study contains six chapters. Chapter One serves to introduce the investigation and to explain the Texas Honor-Band process. Chapter Two is a review of literature related to listening and various rehearsal procedures. Chapter Three details the research design. Chapter Four presents the data collected through the interviews with the participants. Once the data has been presented, Chapter Five discusses the convergent and divergent themes that have emerged during the study. The final chapter includes conclusions, a summary, and recommendations for further research. All redacted interview transcriptions appear in the document's appendices.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Related Literature

As stated in the previous chapter, the goal of this document is to determine if and how successful Texas Honor Band directors prioritize their listening and how this impacts their rehearsal processes. In the course of analyzing existing articles and studies about conductor listening skills and rehearsal procedures, five broad themes emerged: the conductor's mental picture of the score, fundamental concepts, aural evaluation of the ensemble, a hierarchy of listening priorities, and specific rehearsal procedures. The last two areas are the most directly related to the current topic.

Conductor's Mental Picture of the Score

The area of score study is well documented in many texts, and one of the recurring ideas is the conductor's mental picture of the score. Elizabeth Green and Nicolai Malko discuss how the conductor is "constantly imagining the sound" which leads to an "ideal in his mind."¹ According to Robert Hasty, this is the first area that

¹ Elizabeth A.H. Green and Nicolai Malko, *The Conductor's Score* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1985), 2.

the conductor must address.² This is time consuming, but as Peter Boonshaft points out, score study and research is the only way one can have a learned opinion.³ The problem with not knowing the score leads to repetition in the rehearsal while the conductor is attempting to discern where the problem lies and how to solve the issue.⁴ Expert conductors have that mental representation of the music and have their plan for transforming it in rehearsal.⁵ As Frederick Prausnitz notes, the mental representation of the music must be well thought out and not merely arbitrary.⁶ He goes on to say, "and yet, two conductors may well arrive at different interpretations – even if they chose the same data as points of departure. Such is the wonder of music."⁷ How the participants in this study arrive at their interpretation of music is not

² Robert G. Hasty, Jr., "Critical Listening While Conducting: A Study of Conducting as a Music Cognition Paradigm in Divided Attention Within a Multiple Task Environment" (D.M. diss., Northwestern University, 2004), 16.

³ Peter Loel Boonshaft, *Teaching Music With Passion: Conducting, Rehearsing and Inspiring* (Galesville, MD: Meredith Music Publications, 2002), 74.

⁴ Ibid., 69.

⁵ Hasty, 70.

⁶ Frederik Prausnitz., *Score and Podium* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1983), 12.

⁷ Ibid.

discussed in great detail. However, they each discuss the tonal and ensemble concepts that shape the way their ensemble sounds.

Fundamental Concepts

How ensemble students fundamentally approach music will shape the collective ensemble sound. Amanda Drinkwater notes that her goal is for students to always play with a good sound.⁸ She states:

A good sound is a good sound, and if you simply expect that regardless of the technical demand, then students will always value a good sound. The individual sound quality, along with ensemble balance, becomes the signature of a group's ensemble sound. These are the first things I hear when the baton goes down.⁹

Thomas Goolsby notes that the areas most often focused on by expert teachers are tone, airstream, balance/blend, articulations, energy and intonation.¹⁰ Poor intonation is the focus of many articles and books. Daniel Kohut even states that the biggest issue in school instrumental

⁸ Judy Nelson, "Making Great Music at Marcus High School: An Interview with Amanda Drinkwater," *The Instrumentalist* 65, no. 3 (October 2010): 18.

⁹ Ibid, 16.

¹⁰ Thomas W. Goolsby, "Verbal Instruction in Instrumental Rehearsals: A Comparison of Three Career Levels and Preservice Teachers," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 45, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 36.

ensembles is poor intonation and dedicates an entire chapter to the issue.¹¹ According to Elizabeth Green, the most important areas to emphasize during rehearsals are rhythm, articulation, pitch, and tone color.¹² Each of these conductors/educators has fundamental concepts that help shape their rehearsals. Similarly, participants in the current study discuss some or all of the same concepts and how that shapes their ensemble sound.

Aural Evaluation of the Ensemble

Ronald Hooten writes, "The conductor...must perceive and critically evaluate the performance, identify problems, and make corrections."¹³ Robert Sidnell states that, "this ability is germane to successful band and orchestra rehearsal methodology and the realization of

¹¹ Daniel L. Kohut and Joe W. Grant, *Learning to Conduct and Rehearse* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1990), 57.

¹² Elizabeth A.H. Green and Mark Gibson, *The Modern Conductor*, 7 ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc., 2004), 208.

¹³ Ronald Dean Hooten, "A Study of the Effects of an Instructional Program on Student Conductors' Ability to Critically Evaluate Concert Band Performance" (doctoral diss., Univeristy of Mississippi, 1980), 2.

high standards of musical performance."¹⁴ Because the ability to listen and evaluate critically is necessary for a high level of musical performance, one might assume a large body of literature exists on this subject. In reality, very little has been written. Robert Hasty writes, "most authors on conducting write as if the skill of critical listening is a given element in the make-up of all conductors."¹⁵ Later, Hasty points out that so much of the existing conducting literature focuses on the physical and score aspects of conducting, that there is little or no time left to address the aspect of critical listening.¹⁶ Additionally, he notes that most of the literature claims this skill can only be learned through experience.¹⁷ Through this study, Hasty concludes that the concept of critical listening takes the most time to develop.¹⁸ However, he believes that if this skill is not

¹⁴ Robert H. Sidnell, *The Development of Self Instructional Drill Materials to Facilitate the Growth of Score Reading Skills of Student Conductors*, (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1968), 3.

¹⁵ Hasty, 15.

¹⁶ Ibid., 27.

¹⁷ Ibid., 36.

¹⁸ Ibid., 134.

addressed, opportunities to help prepare younger conductors for success will be missed.¹⁹ How the participants in this study aurally evaluate their ensemble may help reveal a listening hierarchy if in fact there is one.

Hierarchy of Listening Priorities

What is the most important concept for a conductor to address at any given time is difficult to define because what is deemed "correct" can be personal. Elizabeth Green notes in *The Conductor's Score* that statements are occasionally made about how one school pays too much attention to technique, which she calls nonsense.²⁰ She states, "There is no such thing as too much technique or too much artistry."²¹

In *The School Music Conductor*, Paul Van Bodegraven and Harry Robert Wilson note that there are some elements in music that must be emphasized before others.²² If that

¹⁹ Ibid., 136.

²⁰ Green and Malko, 27.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Paul van Bodegraven and Harry Robert Wilson, *The School Music Conductor* (Chicago: Hall & McCreary Company, 1942), 72.

is the case, one may question in what order these elements should be considered. While any form of art rarely has rules that cannot be broken given a particular circumstance, some authors have attempted to prescribe an order of priorities that will help a conductor achieve the desired results for most situations.

Studies and publications from well-respected musicians and educators such as Elizabeth Green and Mark Gibson, Daniel Kohut and Joe Grant, Paul van Bodegraven and Harry Robert Wilson, and Frank Battisti, each give lists of their priorities in rehearsing and performing.²³ The concepts of rhythm/ensemble precision, articulation, intonation, tone, precision, phrasing, expression, dynamics, balance, blend, technical accuracy, interpretation, tempo, and ensemble technique were all listed. Tone, articulation, intonation, rhythm/ensemble precision and interpretation were the most common areas listed among all these authors. However, they did not suggest that one area was more important or should be addressed more often than another.

²³ Green and Gibson, 208; Kohut and Grant, 109; Bodegraven and Wilson, 70-73; Frank L. Battisti, *On Becoming a Conductor: Lessons and Meditations on the Art of Conducting* (Galesville, MD: Meredith Music Publications, 2007), 95-104.

Paul Doerksen asked both preservice and expert instrumental music teachers to evaluate tone, intonation, blend/balance, rhythm and precision, articulation, technical facility, musical interpretation, phrasing, and dynamics in several groups' performances and noted the differences in answers between the two groups.²⁴ The two groups were most similar in their diagnoses when evaluating a high-level performance and were least similar when evaluating a low-level performance.²⁵ While this study provides insight into how undergraduate students vs. current teachers perceive a performance, it does not clarify any sort of listening hierarchy.

John Pasquale does, however, prioritize musical elements into categories to help undergraduate music education majors learn to rehearse more effectively by directing their listening to different elements.²⁶ He consolidates the elements of music into four basic areas: pulse, body of sound, symmetry (balance), and

²⁴ Paul F. Doerksen, "Aural-Diagnostic and Prescriptive Skills of Preservice and Expert Instrumental Music Teachers," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 47, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 84-85.

²⁵ Ibid, 79.

²⁶ Pasquale, 40.

musicality.²⁷ He believes that first, all events must occur in time in order to achieve ensemble clarity.²⁸ Once the vertical alignment of the music takes place then the fundamentals used to produce the body of sound on the instrument must be considered.²⁹ Once the music is aligned, and all players are creating fundamental sounds throughout, then balance can be addressed.³⁰ Musicality is the final area to be considered.³¹ In terms of Pasquale's directed listening hierarchy, he defines musicality as, "the process of relating one event to another within a musical context."³² However, Pasquale cautions the reader that while this is the fourth in the hierarchy, musicality is just as important as the other three categories and must not be ignored.³³

²⁷ Ibid., 41.

²⁸ Ibid., 43-48.

²⁹ Ibid., 48-56.

³⁰ Ibid., 57-62.

³¹ Ibid., 63-72.

³² Ibid., 63.

³³ Ibid.

Rehearsal Procedures

As existing literature suggests, rehearsal and instructional techniques are largely responsible for the musical success of a band performance. If this is the case, it is likely some of the most important keys to these directors' successes lie in how they approach their rehearsals. As Robert W. Demaree and Don V. Moses point out, rehearsal procedures "must be outgrowths of your musical purposes."³⁴ Many of the books published on conducting and rehearsing discuss the fundamental concepts listed in the previous section: rhythm/ensemble precision, articulation, intonation, tone, precision, phrasing, expression, dynamics, balance, blend, technical accuracy, interpretation, tempo, and ensemble technique.

Interestingly, very little literature exists that has studied specific conductors and their rehearsal technique as a whole. Research by Mary Ellen Cavitt and Melvin Floyd Pontious does, however, provide examples of this type of study with one exception. They each made the

³⁴ Robert W. Demaree and Don V. Moses, *The Complete Conductor* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Dall, Inc., 1995), 5.

decision to omit the warm-up period in their study.³⁵ Cavitt's goal was to determine how teachers correct errors during their class, so other rehearsal elements outside of the performance of actual music was not necessary for her study.³⁶ Pontious notes that, "since the point of interest in this subproblem was the conductors' attention to the elements while rehearsing the various compositions, interaction during the announcements and warmup was not considered."³⁷ While the time spent in rehearsal prior to the performance of the actual music may not have been necessary to their investigations, the warm-up or ensemble skills portion of the rehearsal impacts how a Texas honor band director achieves his or her desired results and, therefore, is a necessary consideration for the current study.

³⁵ Mary Ellen Cavitt, "A Descriptive Analysis of Error Correction in Instrumental Music Rehearsals," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 51, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 220; Melvin Floyd Pontious, "A Profile of Rehearsal Techniques and Interaction of Selected Band Conductors" (doctoral diss, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1982), 101.

³⁶ Ibid, 228.

³⁷ Melvin Floyd Pontious, "A Profile of Rehearsal Techniques and Interaction of Selected Band Conductors" (PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1982), 101.

Studies Involving Secondary School Conductors

Of the studies in the literature, very few deal directly with secondary school conductors. The studies by Doerksen and Goolsby compare different aspects of current teachers and those in the process of becoming teachers.³⁸ Research by Cavitt, Pontious, and Maureen Ferly provide some of the few documents that only examine secondary school conductors.³⁹ These studies primarily involved observing certain aspects of rehearsals such as examining only the time while the students were rehearsing the music, omitting the warm-up period. In the research examined, only *The Instrumentalist* article by Nelson has a direct interview with a secondary school conductor.⁴⁰ This study will seek to fill this gap in the literature.

Summary

The concepts most often addressed in the examined extant literature are the conductor's mental picture of

³⁸ Doerksen, 77-88.; Goolsby, 21-40.

³⁹ Cavitt, 218-230.; Pontious 4; Maureen Ferley, "An Action Research Study of Effective and Efficient Rehearsals in a Grade 8 Band Setting" (master's thesis, University of Manitoba, 2006), 1-8.

⁴⁰ Nelson, 16-22, 108-9.

the score, fundamental concepts, the aural evaluation of the ensemble, a hierarchy of listening priorities, and rehearsal procedures. A mental picture of the score along with the ability to understand and assess how the actual performance differs from the mental model is an essential skill used by conductors to create a sensitive performance. How the conductor prioritizes what they are hearing coupled with how this impacts their decision making in rehearsals is of great importance to this document. While the literature brings valid and much needed insight to different aspects of wind band conducting, a significant gap in the literature exists when discussing if and how successful secondary-school conductors prioritize their listening.

CHAPTER THREE

Design of the Study

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this document is to determine if the selected Texas Honor Band directors prioritize musical elements in their ensembles, resulting in a listening hierarchy. A secondary goal is to determine to what extent this influences their rehearsal processes.

Questions to be considered include:

- 1) What are the similarities in listening priorities between the cases studied?
- 2) What are the differences in listening priorities between the cases studied?
- 3) How are the rehearsal processes between the cases studied similar and how are they different?
- 4) Do these conductors listen and rehearse as a result of a constant listening hierarchy?

Reasoning for a Qualitative Approach

To investigate these questions, a qualitative approach is appropriate for several reasons. Qualitative research allows one to examine phenomena in depth; in this case, how the selected honor band directors prioritize their listening, why they prioritize it that

way, and how this impacts their rehearsal processes. With the depth and richness of the data collected via participant interviews, a qualitative approach allows the participants to communicate more freely what they feel to be the most important aspects of wind ensemble listening and rehearsal processes. Additionally, the sample size is too small to apply a quantitative approach with any validity or reliability.

Reasoning for a Collective Case Study

The format for this document is a collective case study. This format not only allows the explicit processes these participants use to be revealed but also uncovers some implicit processes they employ. Because the document examines multiple cases, it presents the ability to examine multiple approaches and analyze what is common to all cases studied or what, if any, approaches are different. Single-case analysis does not allow for such a comparison to take place.

John W. Creswell discusses how case studies involve examining an issue "within a bounded system."¹ The bounds

¹ John W. Creswell , *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2007), 73.

for the cases in this study include conductors who have a reputation as excellent teachers, longevity at their current or most recent teaching job, and have achieved success in various competitions throughout their careers.

Participant Selection Process

To meet the bounds for each case it was determined that a purposeful sample would serve the best interest of this study. For this reason, four Texas honor-band directors were selected for study. The selection process for these directors began with a survey of the Texas Music Educators Association Honor Band database.² Compiling the results of the past thirty years generated a list of approximately five-hundred potential participants. Including only those whose names appear in the database a minimum of three times, the list was narrowed further to approximately sixty. The researcher then began contacting potential participants until the desired number was reached. Choosing participants whose name is listed multiple times in the honor-band database

² Texas Music Educators Association, "Honor Band History" Texas Music Educators Association, <http://www.tmea.org/divisions-regions/band/honor-band/history> (accessed December 20, 2010).

ensures that the participants meet the bounds for this study.

Participants in the study are anonymous and identified only by pseudonym. It is the author's hope that anonymity allows participants to speak as freely as they wish, without the concern of any professional repercussions.

Data Collection Procedures

The data for the document were collected via participant interviews by the researcher. Each participant was interviewed twice with each interview lasting between thirty and sixty minutes. In order to reveal the nuances of how these directors approach their craft, a semi-structured interview process was used. The first interview questions were determined prior to the first meeting. These questions were designed to be broad to allow the participant to lead the interview in any direction they deemed appropriate. Questions were determined based upon themes most often addressed in extant literature and through the author's personal experiences. Each interview was captured on digital video or audio and then transcribed by the researcher prior to the follow-up interview. The second interview questions

were based upon a combination of emergent themes from the previous interview or upon the need for further clarification. The interview transcriptions were returned to the participants and member checked. Participants were asked to clarify any points they felt did not represent their intent and return the transcript to the researcher. Redacted interview transcriptions are placed in the appendices of the document.

Data Analysis Procedure

Because analysis was structured upon an emergent themes design, the researcher made use of a constant comparative method that began with open coding for emergent codes in each case. Once the open coding of the first interview was complete, axial coding was used to group the original codes into larger themes. After the axial coding was completed, cross-case analysis allowed the researcher to determine the common emergent themes and a second semi-structured interview protocol was developed based upon these themes. Questions on this protocol were used to clarify responses received in the previous interview and to explore ideas that were not the primary focus in the first interview, but warranted investigation based upon emergent themes not previously

considered. The coding was done manually after it was determined that the complexity did not warrant use of a software program.

Allowing the participants to edit the interview transcripts to clarify any discrepancies contributed to validity. At the conclusion of data collection, there were eight complete sets of data, creating a large quantity of information. These multiple data sets allowed the researcher to triangulate findings to help establish reliability.

CHAPTER FOUR

Presentation of the Data

Case 1 - Marylou Ashbrook

Marylou Ashbrook is a retired band director who has a wide variety of experiences in teaching. She began as a high school director, but ended her teaching career teaching nothing but beginning band. Over close to forty years she taught in both very large and very small schools in multiple states. Most of her students would not be considered economically advantaged or disadvantaged. She taught students from many different backgrounds. Not only have her ensembles been successful in the Texas Honor-Band competition, but in many other competitions throughout her career. Ms. Ashbrook still has every critique sheet from every judge beginning from her first year of teaching. As she mentions during her interview, she would look back at the judges' sheets and say, "I don't want to make that mistake again. What do I do to fix it?"¹ Her ability to learn and evolve as she progressed in her teaching career seems to have contributed to her success. By her own admission, she did not have a great background from which to draw

¹ Marylou Ashbrook, Interview A by author, June 8, 2011, 85.

experience. In fact, she states that when she first began teaching, playing correct notes and rhythms were the only aspects of the performance she knew that had to be correct.

During her first interview, Ms. Ashbrook discusses the fundamental concepts for which she listens as she begins rehearsing a group. Characteristic sounds, pitch, balance, blend, vertical alignment and breath support are all concepts of which she is cognizant. However, her ability to hear and understand these concepts was an evolutionary process. In order to understand the characteristic sounds of each instrument, Ms. Ashbrook listened to recordings of professional musicians and attended live performances. She says, "To get the concept down – whether it's of an individual or the ensemble – you need to listen to really good groups."² Additionally, when she pursued advanced degrees, she made the time to begin studying privately on multiple instruments.

Pitch assessment was difficult in the beginning for Ms. Ashbrook. When she began teaching, she had a one-window tuner to help her identify the problem areas. However, she claims:

² Ibid., 107.

You've got to get the kids to hear the pitches. It doesn't make any difference what your ability is. What makes the difference – are those kids learning how to hear pitch? And I know that children can learn how to hear pitch. In a way it's a skill. It's not just a talent, it's a skill. The kids have got to experience playing in tune before they can play in tune but at first it's a time consuming thing.³

She also discusses the concept of beatless tuning. Ms. Ashbrook spends time with two students playing a unison pitch and points out the beats that occur when the sound waves do not match. Scales and Bach chorales are an integral part of her methods to help the students learn to listen and match one another. She believes that, "kids can be taught to hear pitches and they don't even realize what they are doing."⁴ She goes on to say, "what I did notice when we were playing those scales...kids were learning how to play in tune without me telling them."⁵ Ms. Ashbrook tells her students, "If you can hear yourself, you're either out-of-tune or out-of-balance."⁶ In her own personal playing experience, there were times when she wasn't even sure if she was playing: "I could

³ Ibid., 86.

⁴ Marylou Ashbrook, Interview B by author, November 20, 2011, 108.

⁵ Ibid., 109.

⁶ Ashbrook, Interview A, 89.

feel the vibration in my lips, but I was blending in with everyone else and I was in tune with everyone else and so I was fitting in to the ensemble."⁷ Her students also understand the concept of overtones and direct their listening to the overtones buzzing in the room. She notes:

I've already mentioned that I did the Remington warm-up every rehearsal and when I did this Remington warm-up, I kept doing it until we could create overtones on every one of them. If we couldn't create an overtone there was something wrong. Someone was killing it. And you kill it by being out-of-tune. I'm just a firm believer that it doesn't all have to be with compensating slides and head adjustment, barrel adjustment, and mouthpiece adjustment and all this. You can lip a note quite a ways up or you can lip it...a long ways down. And if you hear the pitch, you do it automatically. No one has to tell you and that was my goal; is to get the kids where they didn't even realize what they were doing to play in tune.⁸

In the areas of balance and blend, she believes that these are more of a skill and there are multiple correct answers. In referring to many aspects of music she uses the analogy that, "There's more than one way to get to the post office and they're all the right way."⁹ She explains to her students:

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., 90-91.

⁹ Ibid., 101.

It's no different than going up to your stereo system and you like the treble turned down and the bass turned up. That's what you like to hear. And that's what I do as a conductor. I stand up here and then as I listen to you, then I adjust the "knobs" to make it sound like what I think it should sound like.¹⁰

She considers the concept of balance to be the conductor's role because otherwise the students will "continue to do what they've always done" and will not automatically begin to make adjustments.¹¹

The concept of vertical alignment was not even in her vernacular when she began teaching but as she said while laughing, "I learned it's best to start together and stop together."¹² She does not like to use the metronome while the band is playing because, "the sound of the metronome - it was clashing with the tuning of the band. And that was my philosophy. I've hardly ever used the metronome while the band was playing."¹³ She would explain the concept of vertical alignment to her students by placing a ruler on the page to allow them to see how the notes lined up across the score. While the concept of starting and stopping together is an absolute concept,

¹⁰ Ashbrook, Interview B, 112.

¹¹ Ibid., 113.

¹² Ashbrook, Interview A, 84.

¹³ Ibid., 85.

where the notes actually end is more of an interpretation in many cases. As she states, "Some directors like longer notes than others."¹⁴ To help line up the fronts of notes, Ms. Ashbrook uses a concept called "bopping", where students play the front of the note only and do not sustain the sound. The sustained sound can mask the poor or out-of-pulse entrances of other players, so this exercise exposes any inconsistencies in the beginnings of notes. She explains, "The vertical alignment really helps you with the clarity and transparency of the ensemble. I really like to hear a band that's clean-cut and you can't do it if your starts and your stops aren't together."¹⁵

Breath support is an area Ms. Ashbrook feels many directors reference, but do not take the time to explain to their students. When a director says, "You need to use better breath support", that may not mean anything to a kid.¹⁶ Instead, she goes through a process of teaching kids how to use their air, which in turn directly relates to their tone quality.

Ms. Ashbrook believes that all of these fundamental concepts largely contributed to the success of her

¹⁴ Ibid., 84.

¹⁵ Ibid., 90.

¹⁶ Ibid., 84.

ensembles. Regardless of the length of her rehearsal, she feels so strongly about the fundamental concepts that she spends at least fifteen minutes each rehearsal on exercises to emphasize them. The beginning of her class is mainly focused on ensemble sound and pitch. She spends this time attempting to make the ensemble sound the way she wants. She notes, "I've always stressed ensemble sound and pitch as being my top priority."¹⁷ This is reflected in the amount of time she spends playing exercises that emphasize these skills.

Case 2 – Neil Bradstreet

Neil Bradstreet is a current band director still teaching in a public-school classroom. Over a more than twenty-five year career, his ensembles have been consistent UIL sweepstakes winners, state marching contest participants, and honor-band finalists. He has taught both middle school and high school in his career. He has been at his current assignment at a large school for a number of years. His approach to ensemble playing begins with each individual student. Mr. Bradstreet makes it a priority to spend time in class every day making

¹⁷ Ibid., 95.

sure that the fundamental aspects of each student's playing are correct. A good portion of time, especially at the start of the school year, is spent analyzing each student's embouchure to be sure that everything looks correct. He believes this is the best way to make sure a student can produce their best, most vibrant sound. Once everyone is making his or her best sound, the pitch center settles in very quickly. He makes sure to spend time listening to each student play individually, which not only allows each student to receive individual instruction, but also allows him to hear deficiencies. If he hears a large number of students with the same kind of deficiency, he knows where time will be best spent with the large group. He states, "I hear all my kids play individually throughout the year. And when a certain number of them are deficient in an area, that's where I know I had to work that a little bit extra."

Mr. Bradstreet believes he was fortunate in that he was a member of a fine high school band. Because of this, even before his teaching career began, he had a concept of a characteristic sound on each instrument. In order to refine these concepts when he first started teaching, the head director of the high school would spend each Friday with him as he went to each class. That way he could help

Mr. Bradstreet develop a clear aural image of a characteristic sound for each instrument. He also had clinicians work with his groups and listened to recordings of high quality ensembles.

In order to address concerns or concepts in class, Mr. Bradstreet often has a student model the sound or style he would like to hear from the ensemble. This helps the students listen and match what they are hearing. He states that modeling is a major portion of how he designs his instruction. During the first interview, he discusses why he uses modeling so much:

A lot of the way I do things is because I taught private lessons a whole lot. The way I use modeling - maybe it's because it was very easy for me to teach private lessons. The way I taught private lessons and my private lessons in college - my students did really well so it was easy for me to adapt the way of modeling individually with the group because - especially when I first started teaching - I could stand in front of a group and I couldn't hear anything. It was like, 'I don't know what's going on.' So I had to create a way for me to hear and a way for others to hear.¹⁸

In addition to modeling, and in some cases in conjunction with modeling, Mr. Bradstreet uses the metronome and creates games with different exercises to address deficiencies in the ensemble. One specific example of this comes in the area of vertical alignment.

¹⁸ Neil Bradstreet, Interview A by author, June 10, 2011, 136.

Mr. Bradstreet created an exercise where the ensemble plays a concert F descending scale in two note segments. Mr. Bradstreet made the decision to do this because his ensemble could not play the descending portion of the scale and start and stop together. By using this exercise, he created a situation where the students could practice these skills.

In order for a group to have a resonant ensemble sound, Mr. Bradstreet believes that individuals must have a great sound. They also must have exceptional balance and he believes this is an area where many groups are deficient. He states:

I think people don't balance and prioritize their stuff enough to where it sounds right to me. It sounds too muddy and it doesn't have the clarity. My goal is to hear – like listening to a great orchestra – you can hear every part with clarity so that's how we try to create our balance and what we do to hear all the parts - but then to prioritize the order in which you want to hear it. It's overwhelming...It must be balanced to where you can hear all the lines.¹⁹

There are a couple of different ways he addresses balance with his group. The first way is within a unison line. What color does the conductor want to primarily hear? Then, when balancing a chord there must be the right mixture of root, third and fifth. The third way Mr.

¹⁹ Ibid., 138-139.

Bradstreet discusses balance is to prioritize each part and tell the students what their role is in the texture. For example, "Priority one is first trumpet here. Priority two is the second and third trombones."²⁰ Once the students know everyone's role, he will layer in the voices. Sometimes he layers groups in from the lowest voice to highest voice and sometimes he layers voices in one musical line at a time.

Mr. Bradstreet's approach to ensemble is very much rooted in the fundamental aspects of playing. The concept of a vibrant, resonant sound for each individual is of the utmost importance to Mr. Bradstreet's ensemble's sound. From an ensemble standpoint, the concept of balance is the main concept that he believes is the most often overlooked.

Case 3 – Jamie Petteway

Jamie Petteway is a recently retired band director who remains active in the profession as a clinician for many groups around the state of Texas. He spent a large portion of his roughly thirty-year career all at one school. The population of the school changed considerably

²⁰ Neil Bradstreet, Interview B by author, November 18, 2011, 143.

during his tenure with many students considered at-risk or economically disadvantaged towards the end of his career. Similar to Ms. Ashbrook and Mr. Bradstreet, his ensembles have consistently been strong contenders in many different competitions in both concert and marching band. Perhaps part of the reason for his ensembles' successes is because of his ability to have a global view of what he wants to accomplish in each piece. In his first interview, he states that there are two different types of challenges in music. There are those things that will not ever work themselves out until the conductor fixes them and there are those things that will work themselves out over time through repetition. He says he does not support the concept of a rehearsal where, "Okay. We're going to fix this phrase before we go on to this phrase," where the conductor attempts to fix everything before moving on to the next phrase.²¹ In his long-term rehearsal planning, he uses a grid approach where certain concepts will need to be worked on every day, others will be worked out over a period of a few days or weeks, and still others will be fixed simply through the process of rehearsing the piece. Through his experience, he learned

²¹ Jamie Petteway, Interview A by author, June 2, 2011, 151.

how to determine what he needed to address and what would be solved on its own.

In terms of concepts that Mr. Petteway believes are crucial to the success of the ensemble, at the top of the list are correct notes and rhythms, along with characteristic sounds. Like the other participants, he developed his concept of a characteristic sound by listening to high quality groups and recordings. It was not something he left college knowing or even felt comfortable with his first several years of teaching. He also listens for other concepts such as balance but, as he points out, balance is subjective. There is not one correct way to balance a piece of music and people have many different opinions on this subject.

In order to achieve good intonation, pitch is approached from the standpoint of making sure that all the major unisons and octaves are in tune. He states that, "chordal tuning very rarely ever has to be done if students truly can match a unison and an octave."²² Correct intonation is one of the largest deficiencies that he hears in groups. It is amazing "how out-of-tune

²² Ibid., 157.

many bands play" Petteway says.²³ He also states that there must be a constant process of directing the students listening. As he points out:

Most students that fail to listen don't do so because they're not interested or they're not paying attention. They don't know where to listen. They don't know what to listen for. And it's not just as simple as tuning to the person next to you. It's where do they fit in the music? Who else has that octave? Who else is matching? What are the tendencies? What are you trying to match with? Are you matching another instrument that has similar tendencies to yours? Are they going to be going in opposite directions naturally? You have to counteract that. It's a thousand little things, but mostly it's just a matter of making sure that the students know where to listen in the first place. I go about that through continual questioning.²⁴

He discusses how this was the focus of his teaching the last fifteen to twenty years. In order to play the most demanding pieces in the repertoire, the students had to become responsible for asking the questions of themselves, rather than waiting on Mr. Petteway to point out every detail to them. They must be constantly challenged to listen and to understand what is expected of them. He states:

Unfortunately, most kids respond to directors in that they're given measure-specific instructions about what to do, but not usually generic instructions that would apply in more than one case.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Jamie Petteway, Interview B by author, February 26, 2012, 161.

Many students just don't have fundamental skills. They may have skills that are applicable to the piece they're working on and that's fine. But if a student truly knows how to listen, then they don't have to be told every time how to listen for this phrase and how to listen for this phrase and how to do this. Then they can start to apply things, and that's when you can play major works within the scope of a high school program without starting a year ahead of time.²⁵

The director's role then is to know the music and to know what to ask the students. Once that information has been conveyed, the responsibility ultimately falls on the performers to do what they have been taught.

As previously stated, balance is a subjective concept. Not everyone will balance each piece the same way. However, Mr. Petteway firmly believes that all the parts are there for a reason. He says, "There's a whole school of thought in band – as long as you make it sound rosy and good it's all right. That's not true at all. Just because the group is not objectionable doesn't mean that it's correct."²⁶ He has students mark their music with notes such as "with trumpet" or "with clarinet." This gives his students reminders of where to direct their listening as they are performing the music.

Mr. Petteway says that as he works with groups, he

²⁵ Petteway, Interview A, 156.

²⁶ Ibid., 158.

always starts with five or six tonal exercises and an articulation exercise. In order to be extremely successful, the students need to understand the importance of these exercises and that they are responsible for the way the exercises sound. Then they take those fundamental concepts and apply them to every piece of music they are playing. They must understand that if they sit back and wait for the director to point everything out to them, they will only be able to reach a certain level of performance.

In Mr. Petteway's teaching, he constantly challenges the students to be responsible for their own sound and uses Socratic questioning to raise the awareness level of his students. As stated earlier, this was the main focus of his teaching for the last half of his career. He believes this is the only way that the very top level of literature can be accessible to high school musicians.

Case 4 – Nelson Ruckman

Having recently moved from the classroom to an administrative position, Nelson Ruckman still maintains an active schedule of working with ensembles. He taught for thirty years, with the last half of his career all at one large school. Most of his students come from middle

class families. He judges UIL competitions in concert and marching as well as spending time as a clinician with groups. Mr. Ruckman spends a good portion of his first interview discussing the concept of student responsibility in the group. In his ensembles, he has pared the student responsibilities down to three levels. Level-one is, "Can I play my part and sound good?" Level-two is everything in level-one and, "Can I respond to the people on either side of me and/or the people sharing the same musical line with me?" Finally, level-three is comprised of everything within level-one and two as well as, "How does my part fit with the entire ensemble?" This is not an easy concept to achieve, especially with a large group of students playing at the same time. In order to increase student awareness, there are several games or exercises Mr. Ruckman will use with the group. One exercise consists of dividing the group into as many as six smaller groups by assigning them a letter. Then band "A" will play a portion of the music or the exercise on which the ensemble is working. This accomplishes two primary goals: 1) Each student who is playing feels important and 2) All the lines and colors can be heard provided all of the level-one responsibilities are happening. This also allows the other students in the

ensemble the opportunity to listen critically to their peers and provide feedback. He contends that in most band music if a quartet of a high and low woodwind and a high and low brass play, most if not all of the parts will be covered. This allows the other students to hear everything that is written in the music. Another exercise that could be used in conjunction with the small-band concept is to change the seating in the classroom. All the students can be placed in a circle and can sit by an instrument different than their own. All these exercises create different listening environments to help make the students aware of the things beyond simply level-one. This concept of transparency, where every line and every voice can be heard, is what Mr. Ruckman strives for in his ensemble. He states that it is hard to get people to have the patience for it. Without the transparency though, he equates the music to, "having a clean house but it doesn't pass the white glove test. It's still kind of dirty."²⁷

A well-developed daily drill plan is also at the center of Mr. Ruckman's rehearsals. Time is spent on concepts such as note starts and stops, keeping the sound

²⁷ Nelson Ruckman, Interview A by author, June 9, 2011, 171.

steady, playing with a characteristic sound, knowing the intonation tendencies, articulation, and style. He spends time on various exercises and will ask the students to listen critically to what they are playing and then ask them questions to stimulate their thinking. For example, "Did anybody play longer than anybody else? Did anybody play shorter than anybody else?"²⁸ One of the key points Mr. Ruckman makes is, "anything that you do as an exercise needs to be technically so easy that they [the students] can go mentally well beyond just getting the notes and rhythms to come out."²⁹ By creating exercises and isolating the concept he is attempting to teach, he takes away the visual distraction that the music on the page can be, thus allowing the students to focus on the sound produced.

Mr. Ruckman uses the metronome while working with his ensembles in order to work on vertical alignment. He says, "I think the metronome is incredibly important in lining up an ensemble or working out any kind of technical individual thing."³⁰ However, he also feels that it is important not to overuse this tool. When discussing

²⁸ Ibid., 172.

²⁹ Ibid., 173.

³⁰ Ibid., 176.

how he has changed over the years he states, "I think probably I've trusted the students more and tried to be a little less with the metronome or have more times without the metronome."³¹

Balance is an area in which Mr. Ruckman feels many groups do not spend enough time. He believes that balance is a subjective concept so it is harder for students to grasp. It is not merely "you're fingering this, you're tonguing this, this is that rhythm."³² Because the concept of balance is abstract, students must focus on listening; they must hear and analyze everything that is played. This takes a tremendous amount of mental energy and requires higher order thinking. Mr. Ruckman points out that this is why you must vary your activities. Otherwise the student may feel like, "I just was in calculus last period and this is ten times harder."³³

Mr. Ruckman's ability to engage the students' critical listening skills is key to his ensemble's success. He helps his students understand their role in the ensemble by assigning them level-one, level-two, and level-three listening responsibilities. By stripping away

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 179.

³³ Ibid.

the layers of music and ensuring the students understand their role within the larger framework of the music, his ensembles are able to achieve a high degree of transparency.

CHAPTER FIVE

Data Analysis

Emergent Themes

As the coding of the first interview began, several codes emerged. In no particular order they were: fundamentals, matching/ensemble, pulse/vertical alignment, correct notes/rhythms, balance, characteristic sounds/tone, pitch/intonation, musicality, overall concept of what an ensemble should sound like, and student responsibilities. These concepts then led to a second series of questions, which largely focused on the most consistent theme that emerged from the data: student responsibility for the ensemble sound. Since the researcher did not anticipate this theme, the second protocol focused on elaborating the topic. Through this, the interviewer was able to gain an understanding of how the participants teach their students to listen as well as more deeply address the concepts participants mentioned in the first interview.

Similarities in Listening Priorities

Most of the categories mentioned above were discussed at some point during the first interview by each of the participants. While they did not all mention

every single concept, they each mentioned most of the concepts on the list at least once. Some of the concepts discussed likely come as no great surprise to those who teach and conduct high school bands. All of the participants believe that playing correct notes and rhythms, for example, are important. Even though the data does not reveal any great revelation in approach, it may help to discuss the similarities of how each teacher addresses these issues.

Fundamentals and Matching/Ensemble

The terms "fundamentals" and "matching" are broad and could include a multitude of concepts. They also can intersect one another, so for the purposes of coding during the first interview, a concept was coded as a fundamental if the participant used the word "fundamentals" (usually in reference to the daily drill portion of the rehearsal) or if they talked about the physical aspect of playing an instrument. This included articulation, note starts/stops, steadiness of air/notes, embouchure, style, and fingerings. When the word "match" or "matching" was used, the concept was recorded as matching without specifying which concept. Most, if not all, objective elements in music can be matched within an

ensemble. Therefore, the two concepts intersect in many cases and thus, will be discussed together.

All the participants discussed spending the first portion of their rehearsal working on exercises that addressed fundamental concepts where the primary goal was for students to match one another. Mr. Bradstreet says he is a "major modeler."¹ A large portion of his class is spent with students alternating who is the model that everyone must listen to and match. He and Mr. Ruckman both mentioned that it becomes fun for the students when games are created that require them to listen and analyze what they are hearing. All the participants believe that spending rehearsal time practicing these concepts is extremely important so that literature can be performed at the highest possible level.

Pulse/Vertical Alignment and Correct Notes/Rhythms

Mr. Petteway, Mr. Ruckman, and Ms. Ashbrook link pulse and vertical alignment with correct notes and rhythms. If notes are not vertically aligned, then technically they are not rhythmically accurate, no matter how slight the variation. While Mr. Bradstreet did not specifically address vertical alignment that way, he

¹ Bradstreet, Interview B, 134.

states that the ability to achieve this concept is setup during the fundamental work at the beginning of the class. He also believes that notes and rhythms should be:

a basic expectation of the kids. Like, that's not something you're trying to work on. That should be kids fixing that on their own by themselves. Of course it doesn't always happen, but you need to approach it where your kids are developing that standard for themselves. And you're teaching them to develop that standard.²

Mr. Petteway echoes this as he mentions that as a clinician, he does not discuss notes and rhythms. If it is his ensemble, he will deal with wrong notes and rhythms. However, when working with other ensembles he does not feel as if this is an efficient use of his limited time. As this is the most basic of concepts, the conductor of the ensemble can solve this issue without his assistance.

Balance

Balance is discussed at length largely because of its subjective nature. According to the participants, there are many different ways to balance a band and there are many different opinions about how proper balance should be achieved. Based on the number of times it was

² Ibid., 145.

mentioned in their interviews, this was a very important concept to all and especially to Mr. Petteway and Mr. Bradstreet. Mr. Ruckman puts the concept in perhaps the most objective light possible when he states:

Balance is, as long as you can hear what you're supposed to hear in the correct proportions - of course correct proportions is very abstract. But what I'm saying is that as long as you can hear what you're supposed to hear and the music communicates in the right way, then you've got good balance.³

It was also a concept that Mr. Bradstreet feels is most often a problem in ensemble performance. Mr. Ruckman appears to agree, but in a more global sense. He feels that students do not often understand their role in the ensemble, which would include not only balance, but also other level-three concepts such as matching various elements throughout the ensemble.

Characteristic Sounds/Tone and Intonation

Analysis of the data suggests that participants believe that characteristic sounds and tone are closely related to the concept of intonation. Each participant spent significant time learning the characteristic sounds for each instrument. Mr. Petteway and Ms. Ashbrook readily admit that their concept of sound took years to

³ Ruckman, Interview B by author, March 7, 2012, 185.

develop. They did not have a full understanding of a characteristic sound for each instrument when they left college. Mr. Bradstreet had a mentor who would travel with him to his classes to help him learn the characteristic sounds. Mr. Ruckman believes that the ability for students to have proper tone demonstrated for them is important. When he first began teaching, he brought in experts on each instrument and he would sit in the ensemble and participate as a member of the class while the clinician worked with the group. Each of the participants developed their concept of a characteristic sound essentially the same way; by listening to good players both live and on recordings. By developing an aural imprint of tonal concepts, they are able to help students refine their sounds to match the mental model.

Musicality and Overall Concept

Musicality and overall ensemble concept are mentioned, but the ability to discuss these abstract concepts in detail is limited. The vast majority of the time spent in interviews was on concepts that can be defined in more concrete terms. However, Mr. Petteway, Ms. Ashbrook and Mr. Ruckman mentioned musicality as an issue, so the researcher felt it was important to note.

No one had the exact same concept of what he or she would like to hear. This is possibly what makes each conductor and each ensemble unique. The participants each have clear mental pictures of the music before they begin working with their ensemble. Similar to a characteristic tone quality, this clear mental picture of the music creates an overall concept that allows the conductor to call attention to areas where the ensemble sound does not match the mental model. As Ms. Ashbrook mentions several times during her first interview, "It's all about concept."⁴ She also applies this to characteristic sounds, "Like the french horn sound. There's the French sound and the German sound. Which one do you like the best?"⁵ There is not a single correct answer for this, although it is important that one has an answer, even if it may be different from others.

Student Responsibility

The concept of the students' responsibility for the ensemble sound was not a concept on which the researcher originally intended to focus. It does not have a

⁴ Ashbrook, Interview A, 82.

⁵ Ibid., 83.

prominent place in the extant literature addressing this issue. However, as the interviews began, it was obvious that this was an area in which these directors placed considerable focus. Mr. Petteway mentioned that he spends a lot of time asking students questions in order to stimulate their thinking and listening skills. He believes that part of the problem is, "most average students in most average bands don't truly actively participate. They just hope not to get discovered."⁶ He goes on to say:

I'll ask questions of the kids like "Why does that chord sound so bad?" There are reasons and they're not mysteries and it's not a secret, and you don't have to be eighteen to know it and - what are the reasons? And in most cases kids have never thought about it because they've never been made to pause to think about it. So they're just waiting to be told what to do. And that's the main thrust of everything that I did for about the last twenty years of my teaching, especially the last fifteen - was just to get students to a point where they ask those questions of themselves rather than waiting on me to ask all the questions or to point out everything that had to be done.⁷

This approach not only allows the students to gain a deeper understanding of the music, but also gives them a sense of ownership in the ensemble. Listening and analyzing can be expected even from younger players as

⁶ Petteway, Interview A, 157.

⁷ Ibid., 159.

Mr. Ruckman points out. It is simply not expected at as high a level for the younger players. Mr. Petteway concurs stating, "I would still want the middle school kids to play with clear sounds, but it's still a clear middle school sound as opposed to a clear high school sound."⁸ Because modeling is such an integral part of Mr. Bradstreet's class, he also places a considerable amount of responsibility on the students. He notes:

It is a lot of responsibility on the kids. And they accept it and they like it. When they get skills they have opinions like you would not believe. I'll say, 'That sounds pretty good to me.' And they will say, 'Uh...no.' Usually my kids have more opinions about that stuff than I would ever.⁹

Ms. Ashbrook regularly told her group, "if you can hear yourself, you're either out-of-tune or you're out-of-balance."¹⁰ As discussed by Mr. Ruckman in the previous chapter, he believes that the students must understand their role in the ensemble; they must understand their level-one, level-two, and level-three listening priorities.

⁸ Ibid., 155.

⁹ Bradstreet, Interview A, 140.

¹⁰ Ashbrook, Interview A, 89.

Differences in Listening Priorities

The elements of music that can be clearly defined - pulse/vertical alignment, correct notes/rhythms, characteristic sounds/tone, pitch/intonation, fundamentals, and matching/ensemble were largely all agreed upon. As mentioned earlier, it will likely come as no great shock to those who conduct and teach high school bands that the participants believe these elements are important. Even with the more abstract or subjective aspects of music such as balance, it was agreed upon that these elements must be in place. However, analysis of the data does support that there are some differences of approach and opinion within this sample of participants.

Characteristic Sounds/Intonation

As previously noted, most participants believe that characteristic sounds and intonation are interrelated. Some participants separate these into two categories, while others believe it is difficult to do so. Ms. Ashbrook believes playing in tune is more important than having a characteristic sound. She goes on to clarify, "however, an ensemble's not ever going to sound good without characteristic sounds that are in tune and

blended."¹¹ Mr. Ruckman disagrees with the idea that tone is not as important as playing in tune. He states:

Tone quality is the most important thing - because if you get all the notes right on the Star-Spangled Banner when you're singing it, that doesn't mean it's going to be good. It could be excruciating. And you can be perfectly in tune but if your quality's not good...If you're talking about music, tone is the most important thing.¹²

Bradstreet appears to agree with Ruckman as he states, "if everyone has the basic sound that I want, then the pitch center should come around real quick. So, that's usually not a concern."¹³ For Mr. Petteway, this is the area in which he believes most groups are deficient. He says, "it just amazes me how out-of-tune many bands play."¹⁴

Balance

According to Mr. Bradstreet, balance is a major issue for many groups. He states, "the outstanding groups have a great sense of balance. The outstanding groups have a clarity about their sound that you can hear the

¹¹ Ibid., 102.

¹² Ruckman, Interview B, 187.

¹³ Bradstreet, Interview B, 132.

¹⁴ Petteway, Interview A, 157.

parts to where the kids don't sound like they're forcing. You just hear all the parts being played."¹⁵ As was discussed previously, Mr. Ruckman believes that this fits under a larger umbrella where students understand their role for every phrase in the music. This would include not only balance, but many other fundamental concepts as well.

Similarities and Differences in Rehearsal Processes

As noted in the previous section, each participant addressed most, if not all, of the concepts that are listed. This suggests there is an overall consensus on these basic concepts. It may, however, be interesting to analyze how these master teachers deal with these concepts in their classrooms. As Mr. Petteway points out, everything will ultimately be the students' responsibility once the performance takes place. As with the listening concepts, there is a large amount of consensus among the participants that students must be responsible for the ensemble sound. Each has a slightly different way they relate to the students in their classroom, but all the participants largely approach concepts similarly.

¹⁵ Bradstreet, Interview A, 140.

In addressing pulse and vertical alignment, all the participants except Mr. Petteway mentioned the use of a metronome. Ms. Ashbrook does not use it perhaps as much as the others do, because she doesn't like to hear the click added to the ensemble sound. Her main area of concern in her ensemble is pitch and the tone generated by the metronome bothers her in that aspect. So rather than keeping the metronome running throughout the rehearsal, she uses it to spot-check tempos. Mr. Bradstreet points out that if students are having trouble with pulse, he will have them subdivide. Ms. Ashbrook also has students subdivide and bop the Bach chorale she plays as a part of her rehearsal every day. Interestingly, Mr. Ruckman says if he were to go back into the classroom, he would trust the students more and use the metronome less. This appears to be another instance where Mr. Ruckman wants his students to have a deeper understanding of their responsibility in the ensemble.

Characteristic sounds were mentioned by all, but were really emphasized by Mr. Bradstreet. Getting students to play with their most resonant sound is almost his sole focus at the beginning of the year. He mentions the quality of sound over and over in his interview. Mr.

Bradstreet approaches teaching quality of sound both visually and aurally. He looks at each student to ensure that their embouchure is appropriately formed and the balance of the embouchure and air are correct. As mentioned in the previous section, he believes that once this is correct, the intonation will no longer be a major concern. The data suggests Mr. Ruckman believes similarly about the relationship between intonation and tone although he does not state this quite as definitively. Ms. Ashbrook believes the two are related, but she also believes they can be dealt with separately. While Mr. Petteway also mentions characteristic sounds, he spends a little more time talking about how to approach the intonation issues in the ensemble. By tuning the unisons and octaves that occur in the music, the chordal tuning necessary in a just intonation model of listening are negligible according to Petteway.

Mr. Bradstreet and Mr. Petteway spend a good portion of their time discussing balance. Perhaps this is because while based upon some objective criteria, balance is largely affected by personal and subjective opinions. Mr. Bradstreet spends time in rehearsal prioritizing the lines, having the students play and make sure they can hear the appropriate people while they play. As noted

earlier, Petteway states, "there's a whole school of thought in band - as long as you make it sound rosy and good it's all right. That's not true at all."¹⁶ He points out that the parts are all there for a purpose and everything must be heard. Mr. Ruckman claims to spend a much of his rehearsal time using the listening levels discussed earlier. In conjunction with this, he spends time playing one on a part so the students can hear all the parts and all the colors. As Ms. Ashbrook points out, "if you don't bring it [whatever you are trying to teach] to a child's attention, then they're going to continue to do what they've always done."¹⁷ Most students are, "just waiting to be told what to do"¹⁸ according to Petteway. Students will not deal with balance issues in the ensemble unless they are directed to do so.

Data analysis supports that participants in this study believe that fundamentals affect everything from the basic sound one makes to whether or not the ensemble works together as a cohesive unit. Most classify these as individual fundamentals, such as each person making a characteristic sound and ensemble fundamentals, such as

¹⁶ Petteway, Interview A, 158.

¹⁷ Ashbrook, Interview B, 113.

¹⁸ Petteway, Interview A, 159.

moving notes together. Each of the participants discussed spending time at the beginning of their classes working on fundamentals.

In Ms. Ashbrook's class, time was spent playing nine major scales, the Remington warm-up (starting on a given note, usually concert F and moving further away from that note a half step further each time), and playing a Bach chorale as written, subdivided, bopped and one beat to the bar.

As previously mentioned, Mr. Bradstreet has the students model and critique one another. Another exercise he uses is "F Around the Room"; an exercise where each section passes a concert F to the next section, usually starting from low voices to the high voices with the objective of each section matching all elements of the previous. He also uses an F descending scale in half notes in two-note segments with four counts of rest between each. He states that he began this exercise because students were having trouble playing in the low part of their instrument with a good sound and with the ability to start and stop together. He also claims to create new games and exercises to deal with any deficiency that the ensemble may be facing.

In addition to the above exercises, Mr. Ruckman likes to modify the "F Around the Room" exercise to overlap individuals where one person plays for eight counts. After four counts the next person enters and plays for four counts. This continues so that every four counts there is a new pair of people playing. Their job is to exactly match the previous person. This can then be modified further so that the student plays an "F" for four counts followed by a "C" for four counts. This allows students to practice making a fifth sound in tune. This type of exercise further solidifies how Mr. Ruckman likes to start with smaller groups of players and layer them in over time. It also helps to make all the students in the class responsible for their sound rather than attempting to hide within the ensemble sound. Mr. Petteway mentions using several tonal exercises and an articulation exercise although he did not go in to any great detail on these procedures.

Concept of a Listening Hierarchy

One of the main purposes of this document was to determine if how these conductors listen and rehearse is the result of a constant evaluation of a listening hierarchy. In the second interview, these questions were

largely posed directly to the participants. Questions such as "do you believe that concept 'a' is more important than or must be in place before concept 'b'?" Based upon responses to these questions, it appears most of the fundamental concepts the participants mentioned in the first interview are addressed simultaneously. Three of the four participants agreed that notes and rhythms were the very first priority when preparing a piece of music. Mr. Ruckman dissented, saying tone quality was more important followed by notes and rhythms. The others agreed that tone must follow the correct notes and rhythms. When the concept of vertical alignment was discussed, most of the participants placed that in the same category with notes and rhythms. Mr. Petteway and Mr. Ruckman did not mention articulation or style, but Ms. Ashbrook and Mr. Bradstreet both felt that this should also happen simultaneously with the notes and rhythms. Ms. Ashbrook points out, "I've always believed that if you can avoid teaching them mistakes, you're way ahead of the game."¹⁹ Therefore, she wants to be sure students are not playing the wrong style for any extended period of time. Where the concept of balance falls into the listening hierarchy was not as clearly defined. Mr.

¹⁹ Ashbrook, Interview B, 124.

Petteway believes that balance is one of the last elements to address. If the other concepts are not in place (i.e. all the notes aren't learned) balance will be hard to adjust and it will change once everyone is playing the correct notes and rhythms. Conversely, Mr. Bradstreet begins dealing with the balance almost immediately. While no direct hierarchy emerged during the course of the interviews, the basic consensus was that without all these elements in place, it is difficult for one to consider a performance to be musical.

Summary of the Data Analysis

There was little dissent, if any, on the various elements of music that must be in place for a high-level performance to occur. Each participant has their own approach and rehearsal techniques they use with their ensemble, but they all address the same issues. There was a small difference in whether tone or notes and rhythms were the most important, or whether balance should be addressed from the beginning or later in the process. However, all participants largely approach their ensemble from a holistic viewpoint rather than from a hierarchical approach.

CHAPTER SIX

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary

The purpose of this document was to determine if participants selected for the study use a listening hierarchy to help prioritize their listening. Additionally, there was an attempt to determine if there is a listening hierarchy that allows these teachers to strip away the layers of music in a carefully thought out, logical way that assists in their teaching. While almost all of the concepts mentioned in previous chapters were discussed at some point by each of the participants, the amount of time spent discussing a given concept varied widely. In Mr. Ruckman's initial interview, he specifically states that tone quality is the most important issue. While the others may have implied what they believed was the most important given the amount of time they spent discussing a subject, they did not all categorically make the same statement. In fact, Ms. Ashbrook states, "it's pretty hard to separate any of those things [concepts] out, say that's...no we're not going to work on that."¹ Even after the second interview

¹ Ashbrook, Interview A, 82.

where the researcher asked direct questions about whether or not a specific concept is more important than another, the participants did not seem willing to assign a hierarchical value to a category or concept much beyond notes and rhythms or tone quality. Analysis supports that they appear to believe all of the elements must be simultaneously in place for a musical performance to occur.

Conclusions

While no specific listening hierarchy emerged during the course of this study, some conclusions can be drawn based upon responses during the interview process. First, the participants are all master teachers who have honed their skills over years of practice. As Mr. Petteway points out, there are no new concepts. However, understanding a concept and understanding how to teach a concept to a large ensemble are two very different things. The participants' concept of what constitutes an exceptional ensemble sound was and is an evolutionary process that takes time. One important quality of all participants was that they all continue to learn new things throughout their teaching careers.

Furthermore, there is evidence of intuitive teaching. As David Berliner notes:

They [expert teachers] have an intuitive grasp of a situation and seem to sense in nonanalytic, nondeliberative ways the appropriate response to make. They show fluid performance, as we all do when we no longer have to choose our words when speaking or think about where to place our feet when walking. We simply talk and walk in an apparently effortless manner.²

This is somewhat in contrast with Dr. Pasquale's dissertation. Pasquale addresses the various elements of music and suggests a framework for preservice undergraduate students to break down the various elements of music.³ In contrast, the participants in this study have been teaching for many years. In order to qualify for the current study, participants needed to be veteran teachers with many years of experience. No one in the first part of their teaching career would have ensembles consistently ranked high in the honor band process, simply because most people do not begin their teaching careers in Texas as a head band director. Additionally, as noted in the first chapter, the honor-band competition

² David C. Berliner, "The Development of Expertise in Pedagogy" (Charles W. Hunt Memorial Lecture presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, New Orleans, LA, February 17, 1988).

³ Ibid.

only takes place every other year for any given classification of school. How they break down music in a rehearsal setting has become an internal part of who they are as a teacher.

With that in mind, all the participants were asked the same questions for both interviews in the same order. The fact that the first interview asked broad questions and participants guided the interview towards the topics they deemed important suggests that there may be a hierarchy in their approach. It is possible that their listening and the order in which they approach concepts have become so organic to their teaching, that separating and defining concepts into academic terms is difficult. The data were examined on one level by simply noting the number of times a participant discussed a given concept. While this method alone cannot provide a complete picture, it does serve to offer some insight into areas of concern. Ms. Ashbrook, she mentions pitch three times more than any other category, while Mr. Ruckman discusses almost every concept within the framework of the students' responsibilities. For Mr. Bradstreet, there are an equal number of mentions about both balance and fundamentals with student responsibility the third most mentioned category. However, when asked what he hears as

deficient in most groups, he briefly mentions intonation, but then quickly turns to balance. Therefore, it is likely that balance is a larger concern to Mr. Bradstreet. Finally, Mr. Petteway discusses the concepts of balance and the overall global concept, but not significantly more than other categories. Similar to Mr. Ruckman framing the concepts under the umbrella of student responsibility, Mr. Petteway frames most of the concepts within a global approach to the ensemble.

As stated in the previous chapter, there was consensus that notes, rhythms, and tone all are at the top of the list of concepts that must be addressed early in the learning process. When asked the first question, "what do you listen for during the warm-up period of your rehearsal?" each began with a slightly different answer. Ms. Ashbrook says characteristic sounds at first, but as the interview progresses keeps returning to ensemble sound and pitch. These are, of course, interrelated and yet slightly different. Mr. Bradstreet mentions characteristic sounds. While Mr. Petteway mentions sounds, this is mentioned a little later after he has discussed precision, articulation and correct notes/rhythms. Finally, Mr. Bradstreet mentions the students matching one another in all aspects. For all the

participants except Ms. Ashbrook, balance enters the conversation fairly quickly after these initial comments. Ms. Ashbrook discusses balance a little later in her interview but does not go in to great detail. As noted earlier, each participant discuss most of the concepts mentioned at some point, but how they isolate the elements of music for teaching purposes may be slightly different.

Finally, and perhaps ultimately, the research reveals the best teachers engage their students' critical listening skills. By using constant Socratic questioning, these master teachers ensure students are active participants in the learning process. Students in this environment are less likely to wait for the conductor to identify every problem and prescribe a solution. As Mr. Petteway points out, this makes the top tier of literature accessible for high school groups.

Much of the information gathered during the interview process reaches beyond the scope of this document. The author has attempted to extract the key points most relevant to answering the questions established at the beginning of the study. Over one hundred pages of single-spaced interviews are in the appendices of this document. These transcripts contain a

wealth of information that could not all be explored within the constraints of this document. By examining these transcripts, more insight into the participants' teaching styles and philosophies may be gained.

The participants selected for this study have honed their craft, evolved throughout their career, and learned how to teach the necessary skills to their students. There is also evidence of intuitive teaching. How they approach their ensemble is the result of many years of experience. Finally, these master teachers have a great ability to engage their students' critical listening skills allowing their students to feel a sense of importance and ownership in the ensemble.

Recommendations for Further Study

Recommendations for further study on the listening priorities of master teachers include recording and observing rehearsals to study how master teachers: break apart the various musical elements necessary to achieve a high level of performance, help their students learn their role within the ensemble, and link their warm-up or daily-drill period with the music they are rehearsing. Additionally, rehearsals should be recorded and observed to study psychological approaches to student motivation,

level of determination, and other sociological factors that contribute to consistent success. By observing and discussing teaching methodology with secondary school conductors, there is a vast amount of data that can be collected and studied that does not exist in the current literature. Furthermore, studies involving secondary school conductors can assist those in the field of music education by keeping their students informed of current teaching practices.

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Interview Transcript A

Chris Evans: When I was doing my research on existing literature, I noticed that a lot of people would only talk about what a director did in their rehearsal when they were rehearsing a piece of music they were preparing for a performance, but a lot of them specifically omitted anything other portion of the rehearsal so - What do you listen for when you first start your rehearsal during a warm-up period or a daily drill session? Are there certain things you listen for or - where do your ears go?

Marylou Ashbrook: One of the first things - I start looking for characteristic sounds, pitch, balance, blend, vertical alignment, breath support. All of those things are very important to me and it's pretty hard to separate any of those things out, say that's - "No we're not going to work on that."

CE: Sure.

MA: I try to work on all of that stuff my entire rehearsal, but especially during the warm-up.

CE: Ok. So how did you - are there some specific things you did? Exercises you did to work on those concepts?

MA: Well, the characteristic sounds - when you first go in to this business like I did in {Year}, I'm not sure that I knew the desirable characteristic sound of all of the instruments. I worked really, really hard. I mean, I worked really hard and my band made a second division rating. I said, "You know, if you have to work this hard to make a two, how hard do you have to work to make a one?" and what I really didn't realize as a young director - it wasn't about working harder, it was working smarter. So I had to really learn the characteristic sounds of all of the instruments and so - like you can take a person like Aubrey Tucker in the Houston area - he can take a pea shooter - he played at MGM in Las Vegas for, I think, seven years - but he can take a pea shooter trombone and make it sound really jazzy, or he could take a bass trombone and he could make it sound really jazzy too, or he could take his pea shooter and make it almost, *almost* like a symphony horn. It's all about concept. And

so - I don't know - if you don't have the ability to get that concept of what the instrument sounds like - and I know there are some people out there - I had a kid in {Former School} - {Name of Student} was his name - and {Name of Person I know} would know him - but {Name of Student} was a great guitarist. He liked the rock bands and he was *really* good at it. He played saxophone. And whenever he played saxophone, you would want to buy a one-way ticket out of town.

CE: [Laughing]

MA: He could get all of the notes and what-have-you, but he just couldn't get it down - what is an alto saxophone - what is the desirable sound. He *couldn't* do it. And I know that there are directors out there who can't do that. I know that there are directors who don't have a strong beat. I know there are directors who can't tell pitch. I know there are directors who aren't musical people. Everything's very metronomic. So I think it's *really, really* hard to separate the things that I've talked about, but - and how do you accomplish that? I guess it's okay if we talk about it again later in the interview?

CE: Sure. Sure.

MA: Characteristic sounds is what I describe - when someone plays something and someone else says, "Wow! That was *really* good." Then you try to remember what that sound was like that people called "*really* good". Like the french horn sound. There's the French sound and the German sound. Which one do you like the best? I mean - it's still french horn, but it's all about concept. The pitch - I'm not sure that I could *really* do pitch well whenever I started. I probably had more of an ability to do pitch than what I thought, but I had the little one window stroboconn.

CE: Right.

MA: And I relied on that a lot, and then later on they came out with the one with thirteen windows. And I think most people, most of the time, keep those running most of the time during a rehearsal. Because there are some pitches that are *really, really* hard. The pitches for me that are hard to hear or harder to hear are the extreme ones like the piccolo or the kettledrum. I can do the

tubas a lot better than I can the kettledrum. I got to the point where I could do that pretty well too.

Balance - that's a skill more than a talent. Blend - same thing. Vertical alignment - I didn't even know what that was in the beginning. But I learned that - you know [chuckling] - it's best to start together and stop together.

CE: [laughing]

MA: I've tried to explain it to my kids what vertical alignment is - I'll show them the score and I'll say, "Look. Here. All the way down the score - you can put a ruler on it. And all the notes start - count one starts in the same place. Count two is in the same place. It's perfectly lined up and that's the way we should play. In my opinion, the ensemble should play that way. It's easier to start together than it is to stop together. I have found that out. And some directors like longer notes than others.

In breath support, you hear people talking about - that has so much to do with your tone quality. There's so many people that - I hear band directors say, "Gotta use better breath support!" Well to a kid that doesn't mean anything. So I always went through this process of teaching kids how you get good breath support. And we talked about breath support later on. I didn't care whether they remembered the term or not, as long as they accomplished what I wanted. Now, for the last eight years I've taught nothing but beginners - and I probably never at one time had more than four or five kids taking private lessons. I didn't push the private lesson program really hard because I thought it was enough by the time they got all the right equipment and they were paying for their horn and this sort of thing and so - I felt like I was a good enough fundamental teacher that they didn't necessarily have to have that private teacher the first year. And I think that we did pretty well because out of eight years we won the {Name of Contest} contest in {City} and the {Name of Contest} contest in {City}. We won the outstanding beginners band thirteen times. So I think - not that the trophies were that important - but I think it was supporting - thirteen times and you multiply three judges times that. That's a lot of judges to say, "Hey. You're doing the right stuff."

CE: Right. Absolutely.

MA: "You've got it going." It was important to me. That's one of the reasons I like to go to the competition. I have saved every critique sheet that I ever had, starting from my very first year of teaching - and - in the beginning - at the beginning of every concert season - well marching season I'd read my marching critique sheets. "Hey. I don't wanna make that mistake again. What do I do to fix it?" Concert season "What do I do now to fix this?" And a lot of it - especially the concert part - was like learning more about the individual instruments. And do whenever I started to school at {Name of University}, I started taking private lessons on every one of those instruments - and they have a good faculty at {Name of University} - and so I learned a lot there as well as listening to solo recordings. I used to have a lot of albums of great soloists. So that's how I learned more about the characteristic sound. Now when it comes to pitch, I've always said that if you can get an ensemble in tune, it's going to sound pretty good. You can tune up a blacksmith shop. May not sound like a band, but you can get it in tune, which is one of the reasons I hated the metronome so much. I like to use the metronome to find out where my beat is - if I'm on beat - I think that an exact tempo like 118 - I think that's really hard to remember.

CE: Sure.

MA: 120 - so my best bet there would - I would learn certain pieces and I'd say, "Okay. Yeah." and I would sing it, "There is is. That's 120." They used to make us do that at {Name of University} so that worked, but that metronome has pitch and when the band's playing I did not want to hear that metronome clicking. Because to me it was - the sound of the metronome - it was clashing with the tuning of the band. And that was my philosophy. I've hardly ever used the metronome while the band was playing. But then too I was also very fortunate that I was one of those people that had a beat like a rock. Not everybody's that fortunate. Not everyone is fortunate enough to hear the pitches. So I learned that I did have a good ear by all the testing that we had to go through at {Name of University}. Same thing on rhythm stability. And then you learn that there are certain other things like maybe melody memory or chordal memory or something like that - you're not quite as good at - but I was

fortunate to have a good beat and I had ear for pitch. So I didn't have to rely on that metronome as much as some people did.

Anyway, that - those are the things that I worked on at the beginning of my rehearsals and I concentrated on most things all the time. What was the second question now?

CE: No that was - I was asking if you used any sort of exercises or daily drill type things to do that with.

MA: Okay. Exercises? I always started my rehearsals - *always* - whole note B-flat concert. I always start with B-flat concert. If I found something that worked, I stuck with it. I was always really anxious to find something new - and I found something new a couple years ago and I fell in love with it and it was so refreshing to pick up something new. It's called the CTC system - count, tap, clap. Debra Haburay, who teaches at one of the middle school in Lewisville came up with this. She was, I believe, a graduate from the University of Michigan, or maybe it was under John Paytner at Northwestern. I really got off to that and I taught my kids that and the kids enjoyed it too and boy could my kids read. I used the whole notes up and half notes down. Then I'd stay on a B-flat concert - quarter notes up and quarter notes down. We always stuck with it on those long tones because you're not on the short tones long enough to allow the kids to listen. That's the trick. You've got to get the kids to hear the pitches. It doesn't make any difference what your ability is. What makes the difference - are those kids learning how to hear pitch? And I know that children can learn how to hear pitch. In a way it's a skill. It's not just a talent, it's a skill. The kids have got to experience playing in tune before they can play in tune but at first it's a time consuming thing. So, we did this through scales. Also we stopped, even if we went quarter note eighth note and then, I went from quarter note, eighth, sixteenth tongued up and slurred down. And I do nine major scales which covered most any piece of music that you're going to play by the time you hit B-flat, E-flat, A-flat, D-flat, F, C, G, and D concert. I did them pretty fast too. I did it eighth note/sixteenth note equaling 104. We did those every day. I just felt like - I'd tell the kids, "You know what? You eat three meals a day. And that's good for your body. You do these scales everyday so that you don't forget your technique and so that you - when you hit that last note,

I'm gonna hold that note long enough for you to listen across the ensemble to get better in tune. Now, if someone's out-of-tune, I'm going to correct it. Then I'd have two people to play. And when you can hear that wa, wa, wa - everybody can hear that whether you've got a good ear or not. Everybody can hear that. That's two notes clashing. And so we'd have one to adjust - one way or the other - I mean - I knew what it was, but I wanted them to know what it was - so they would start - one would stay the same; the other would adjust.

CE: Right.

MA: If they got farther apart wa, wa, wa, wa [saying it faster] and the better it got, the closer it got, and finally - until it stopped. So, I did a lot of that. And my kids got quite good at it. And then after we did that we did the Remington warm-up. And I spent like - what was this guys name - {Name} I think it was - from {Name of University} - which one's at {Name of City}? Can't remember.

CE: {Name of University} is in {Name of City}.

MA: {Name of University} then. Anyway, when I was teaching in {Name of City}, I had him to come down to listen to my rehearsal. It was only like, less than twenty miles from {Name of City} - and he kind of gave me a hard time because of my warm-up - and I said to myself, "Well - he probably never had a really good high school band. He got enough of an education and he got to the college/university level and most of the kids that come into the college/university of that size - they're going to have pretty good players - and so they don't have to concentrate as much on that. I mean, when I went to {Name of University}, we didn't concentrate as much on the fundamentals of performance as we did in the public schools. So, he kind of gave me a hard time over that but I said, "You know what? I don't care because if this is what I feel that it takes to have a decent performing ensemble, then we're going to do it." It paid off. The band had not been to a contest in fifteen years and it was not a good band. After we did our performance in {Name of City and State} the president of the {Name of State} Music Educators came up and said, "You have an invitation to perform at the {Name of State} Music Educators Convention this coming February." Wow - but he didn't know how bad the program really was and how long

it really took us to get that music going. And it would have been difficult for that band to have performed, but that band performed that well *because* of all the fundamental work that we were doing. Then I took the job in {Name of City} which is where I did my practice teaching and that's where {Name of Student} is from. I really wanted that job and when it opened up and I was offered the position, I said, 'To heck with this performance at the {Name of State} Music Educators convention [chuckling]. I want the {Name of School} job.'" But that was because of the fundamentals. Now after we did the Remington warm-up I had a guy by the name of {Name} who taught at {Name of University} for ten years. He's originally from {Name of City}. He taught at {Name of School} for a number of years in the {timeframe} - and {Name} said, "You've got to play a Bach chorale every day. *Every day play a Bach Chorale.*" {Number} years later, even my beginners - we were playing the first eight measures of the Bach twelve chorale in three and four different ways - and I'm telling you, it made a humongous difference in every band program that I have had. Now in {Name of City}, I would play - of the sixteen Bach chorales - I didn't play the same one all the time which was a mistake. Now, good things - if you do things really well you have to do them a million times - and sometimes that gets boring, but you have to make the kids understand what you are doing. I took that first eight measures of Bach twelve and it was perfection plus. And my little 6th graders could sound like a high school band on that Bach twelve. When we'd go to a contest, I'd play through just one section that we had learned. Boy, we would milk that thing and the judges would just drool. They couldn't - a 6th grade band doing Bach 12?!? But they could do it. And because of having learned it, that transformed over to everything else that those kids play. We never got a criticism on intonation with a beginning band program. But my little 6th graders learned one octave of the Remington warm-up. Now in an hour-long rehearsal, every day I would spend at least fifteen minutes on the warm-up. Which is the same as I did with my high school bands. I'd taught nothing but high school up until {Year} then after that to get away from the marching band I said, "I'll teach beginners."

Anyway - so we did the Bach chorale and during that time, of course, I would make corrections if I heard something that was out-of-tune. Now another good thing to tell kids when you're doing the Remington warm-up - or anything

that's in unison, or the Bach chorale - if you can hear yourself, you're either out-of-tune or you're out-of-balance. I had that experience at {Name of University}. When I first went to {Name of University}, I played pretty stout trombone and pretty soon some people were turned around and they were looking at me and I thought, "Golly. They must think I'm pretty hot." As the rehearsal went along they said, "Would you mind playing within the ensemble?" [laughing] You talk about a low blow! That was a low blow. So I started fitting into the ensemble and it got to the point where I didn't know if I was playing or not. I could feel the vibration in my lips, but I was blending in with everyone else and I was in tune with everyone else and so I was fitting in to the ensemble. I always taught all my kids [if you can hear yourself you are out-of-tune or out-of-balance] - with the exception being a solo passage - and I'm going to tell you what, it *really* works. It paid off for me because I also had the first band in {Name of State} to play for the {Name of State} Music Educators Convention. We featured {Name} - who is the alto saxophone teacher at the {Name of University} - and he had just come off of tour with {Name of Conductor}. {Name of University} was the first band to play behind the iron curtains, and they featured {Name}. But we featured {Name} at the {Name of State} Music Educators Convention. Then I came to Texas. The competition is a lot stiffer. It took me awhile longer to get an honor band here but, once we - we always placed in the top ten, but boy, winning honor band here is - that's not real easy - not in Texas. You've got to have the right selection of music. You've got to have the panel that happens to like your programming. You could put another five people in there to judge the tapes and they may not like it at all because of your programming. There's a little bit of luck in winning honor band in Texas.

Anyway those are the things that paid off for me in preparing bands for performances.

CE: Okay. Regardless of what you're working on. Regardless of whatever literature is performed is there something specific or several concepts in terms of listening on which you focus? You've probably touched on some of these in some of your previous comments...

MA: I answer that by saying, "All of the above", but I didn't talk about technique any at all to speak of, other

than just playing the scales from quarter note to eighth notes.

CE: Well, you said vertical alignment.

MA: The vertical alignment really helps you with the clarity and transparency of the ensemble. I really like to hear a band that's clean-cut and you can't do it if your starts and your stops aren't together - and we'll probably hit somewhere on this later in the interview - I've been working with a band in {Name of City}. {Name of School} has an outstanding band program.

CE: Yes they do.

MA: They placed {Ranking} in the state marching contest this year. But I believe they had the highest number of All-staters in the state. At the Texas State Solo and Ensemble Contest last week, there were eight people in the state of Texas that were classified as outstanding. {Number} of them came from {Name of School}.

CE: Wow.

MA: And they had more people, they had 250 kids to qualify for the state Solo and Ensemble Contest this year. Now, solos have to be memorized but the ensembles don't have to be. We were fortunate, our granddaughter who is a freshman percussionist at {Name of School} was one of the outstanding players.

CE: Oh wow. Congratulations!

MA: So we were very proud of her. But - the clarity and the transparency of sound - I like that. I've already mentioned that I did the Remington warm-up every rehearsal and when I did this Remington warm-up, I kept doing it until we could create overtones on every one of them. If we couldn't create an overtone there was something wrong. Someone was killing it. And you kill it by someone being out-of-tune. I'm just a firm believer that it doesn't all have to be with compensating slides and head adjustment, barrel adjustment, and mouthpiece adjustment and all this. You can lip a note quite a ways up or you can lip it all the way down - you know - a long ways down. And if you hear the pitch, you do it automatically. No one has to tell you and that was my goal; is to get the kids where they didn't even realize

what they were doing to play in tune. And you can't do that if you don't take the time to do stuff like the Remington, to do scales in whole notes - that's for listening purposes. For kids to learn how to play in tune - and if the ensemble is out of tune, it's not a mature sound. It's immature - strident. Anyway, it may be boring to do that stuff - you certainly aren't accomplishing any technique but anyway. We would work on that until we were creating overtones on every note of the Remington warm-up. Starting on F concert, going down to B-flat concert, then working our way all the way up to B-flat concert. Covered one full octave.

CE: Sure. Does your focus change the longer you rehearse a piece of music or are these concepts - are they always at the - this is what I'm always looking for?

MA: Yes. You always keep this in mind. You can't afford to forget what you've learned. Sometimes it's a mechanical problem of the instrument. It's not the kid. Sometimes, it's just a bad reed or a leaky flute pad or something like that. But you've got to get it fixed and when I was teaching right here at {Name of School} - every week my wife and I - she was a full time volunteer with me - she taught elementary for twenty-six years - and when we retired in {Year} she said, "I'll help you from here on." And so she has. But every week - I can't stand for a kid's horn to not play well. We would load up the equipment and a lot of times we'd go to {Name of Store and location} on Fridays and {Instrument Technician} would repair all my horns. For a while, he was in {Name of City} and that worked out really well. That was before their bankruptcy. But {Name of technician} was a great repairman and my kids never went without a horn very long. And I always had at least one good horn that I could loan them while theirs was being fixed, but there's nothing like playing your own horn.

CE: Sure.

MA: My focus changed after we really got going on the music to the point to where - I used to tell my kids, "One or two beats per minute sometimes can make the difference in the performance of a piece of music whether it's good or just average or mediocre." So I really tried hard to find the tempo to produce the composer/arranger's intent and it had to be a tempo that worked with my group - and sometimes I have repeated a piece of music - and

maybe the same tempo didn't work exactly as it had before. Maybe another tempo would work a little bit better with that particular group. But I think that comes with experience. It certainly doesn't come with a beginning band director, that's for sure. But I did work really, really hard to build continuity. I think that's really important. You get to a point to where you've got enough experience already that you know that there are some mistakes in your music but you've got to go ahead and learn how to go through that music from the beginning to the end. Then when that contest is over with - I used to do marching band that way. Man, let's just get it good enough to get to the next level. Let's get it good enough to get to the next level. It always worked for us. But the concert season a little bit different. If you gambled very hard that way if you gamble that way sometimes you don't make it on the first level but if you had another two or three weeks you might be able to get it. Marching band worked a little better for me in that way.

CE: Sure. In what ways do these concepts affect how you approach rehearsal everyday? Basically, the things that you've mentioned - how do those things affect what you do in rehearsal? Which you've touched on that a little bit...

MA: I did all of those things for - the chorale and that sort of thing - of course I don't think you can make your music very warm sounding; you can't get that really professional sound if you don't play well in tune. You can't get a lot of warmth. The blending and the intonation - that's why I did that Bach chorale every day. I did the Bach chorale in different ways. I would do it real slow the first time. We're talking about just the first eight measures. Then we would come back and we would - same tempo - I ran 72 - then we would bop the notes. Just touching the beginning of each note. This also helps them with their timing - with their rhythm stability because when you come dotted half note, you're going to bop it, just like you would an eighth note - and then you're going to have the silence the rest of the time just like a snare drummer. That really helped me a lot. Then we would divide it into eighths which helped them to keep it like really, really steady. Once we did all that then sometimes - and most of the time with the high school band - not with my beginners - I couldn't do it - but with the high school band, then I would conduct that Bach chorale in one [begins to snap large 1 while

counting 1, 2, 3] - and that worked too - and then I'd go back and do number one again. I would go real slow...back to 72 - make it just as musical as I could possibly make it. And that's a pretty good warm-up by the time you do nine major scales, and you do the Remington warm-up, and then you do the Bach in several different ways. It takes you quite a few minutes to get through just that much. But I thought it was that important. If I had a thirty-minute rehearsal, I'm going to do fifteen minutes of warm-up. Unless I started on a piece of music - which I have before - started on a piece of music on Monday and the contest was going to be on Friday or Saturday. I've done that before.

CE: Wow.

MA: [Huge smile] When you do that - if it's got any technique in it - you better forget part of that warm-up and concentrate on getting everything else the best that you can get it.

CE: [Laughing] Sure.

MA: I even did this with my beginners' band. I played the Victor's March for {Name of Contest} and we had it one week. But that's because my kids could read. They could play in tune. And the band director from {Name of University} - he's a graduate. He played first chair trumpet under Revelli at Michigan - and he was one of our judges - and when we played that piece he stood up and he clapped the entire time. All the way through when we played the {Name of Contest}. And we won the contest hands down, but the kids deserved it. We beat all the {Names several school systems} - well, we beat everybody. At one of the contests - {Name}, do you know {Name}?

CE: Yes sir.

MA: He changed the rules of the {Name of Contest}. Because my beginners were beating all of the second and third bands at the {Name of Contest} contest. So we won the grand champion two years in a row and the third year - about two weeks before contest - he sent out a note to everyone: Beginners are no longer allowed to compete with 7th and 8th graders. [laughing] I said, "That's okay. We weren't going for the grand champion anyway. We were just going to do the best that we can do." But my little kids could do all this Bach chorale like I'm talking about

except they - I didn't want to take the time to teach it one beat per measure. But it worked. Those kids could play in tune.

Anyway, for the technique - like I said, I played the scales in eighth note/sixteenth note at 104 also - if I got a really, really challenging piece of music - cause if you're going to compete well, not only do you have to have the great sound, you've got to have technique. Because you can play the B-flat concert scale perfectly in tune - not a flaw in it - but you're not going to win any competitions. You've got to have more technique than "Come to Jesus" in whole notes.

CE: [laughing] Sure.

MA: I would pick a piece of music and I would say - based upon my experience I would say, "These kids can get this learned by this time." So I'd build a syllabus. *Every day* of the week the metronome marking went up - and I had it planned where we had to learn - gain - so many beats every day in order to - for me to put something together the week before the contest - make it more musical. I just handed the syllabus out to the kids. They put it in their folder. We were very religious about that. To me it's just good planning. You can't just fuss and gripe at the kids every day because they're not getting it down. If they know how much they're supposed to accomplish every week or every day, then they're more - more than likely they're going to get there. Anyway, that's about all I have on that number four.

CE: Okay. We can move on to number five.

MA: Yeah. Number five will be fine. Are you going to run out of film?

CE: No. It's got an hour and a half.

MA: Well, maybe...

CE: You're okay. I could record on this [laptop computer] if I had to.

MA: Okay. You're on number five...

CE: Yes. Since it's not feasible to fix everything you hear in one rehearsal, how do you prioritize what concept

is most pressing at the time?

MA: Well, I've always stressed ensemble sound and pitch as being my top priority. And I've already told you that I spend fifteen minutes in every rehearsal to accomplish my own expectations and standards of sound and pitch. Of course the amount of time you have to learn a piece will dictate the length of the warm-up. We've talked about that one too. But the notes must be learned first. That's all I knew my first year of teaching. But learning the notes for performing a piece of music is as basic as digits are to learning of math and the alphabet is to the learning of spelling. If you can't play the notes, you may as well forget everything else. My first year I went to contest my kids could play every note, but I didn't know where to go to from there - but I learned. I always stuck with the sound and the pitch. Of course the pitch is so closely related to the ensemble sound because you can't have a good ensemble sound if you don't have good pitch. Can't have a good ensemble sound if it's not blended.

CE: And how do you define blend? Because it's one of those words that everybody has just a little different take on it?

MA: Well - I'm like you. Everybody's got just a little bit of a different take on it but - to me - blending the sounds - every instrument has got to have its characteristic sound - but when you put all of these sounds together, it's going to become one unique sound. It's like dropping all of these individual sounds into a blender and you turn it on and it becomes one unique color - and that's your ensemble sound. That's where you're blending all of these instruments together. And that's my definition of blend. In fact, with my sixth graders I would take a blender and I would take powdered milk - and I would take a bottle of food dye - red - and I would teach kids, "Watch me." I'd put thirty-nine scoops of powdered milk into this blender. I said, "Now kids. Watch this." I'd turn it on. It'd be pure white. I said, "Now here's how important you are as an individual. You must be able to play your parts, because if you aren't - you can't play your part - you're going to do damage to the ensemble sound." I'd put one drop of food coloring in that blender and turn it on. It would turn pink. I said, "Now, you changed - because you played a wrong note, you changed the sound of the band. Don't tell

me you're not important. You're very important. You gotta be able to play your part." By contest time, if the kid couldn't play his part, I would edit him out of the parts that he couldn't play, because it changed the sound of the ensemble. But anyway...

CE: Okay. So does your focus change as the performance gets closer and if so, how?

MA: Yeah. I go for continuity then. I'm just saying, "You know. Regardless of where we are - whatever level we're on tuning and pitch-wise and everything, we've got to put together the best that we can do." Because there's a good percentage of the time that you have judges that don't have good ears. They don't have [laughing] good rhythm stability. You're not going to get a good panel every time. And I've seen panels that didn't recognize good! When it was really blended and when it was really well in tune they thought something was wrong! Because they hadn't heard stuff like that before - and to them, if they haven't heard it before, it's got to be wrong.

CE: Interesting.

MA: But that's unfortunate - but then to - there are a bunch of people out there who are not musicians - they're technicians. There's a university right here in Texas that for years, people just couldn't stand it because it was just so mechanical. I'm not sure that it ever changed a whole lot. But the guy was probably the best technician that I have ever known. Just incredible. And for my band he was one of the best clinicians that I could have. Because he didn't mess with my musicianship, but boy could he fix all the other stuff. Then there was a guy - again from {Name of City} - his name was {Name} who was at the {Name of University} for years. I would call {Name} in. I said, "{Name}, listen to my band." And {Name} would go through it. He would never say anything wrong about the technicality of the band, because there wasn't anything wrong with it. But boy could he make it musical. He could milk it [laughing]. And I learned a lot from that guy. So - anyway - later on I'm going to mention that if you want to be the best, you got to be associated with the best and not be hesitant to ask a bunch of questions.

CE: Has your focus changed over the years?

MA: Not really. It's been the same. When I first started in 1960 I did not know what to do as I told you. I only knew that the kids had to be able to play the technique. But I didn't know all that stuff about intonation. I kind of thought - you know - yeah - we had to tune up but, I'm not sure how well in tune I got them. Obviously it wasn't all that great, but I had a lot to learn about blend and balance and I had never heard the word vertical-alignment. But now then, I spend more time on analyzing a piece before I ever pass it out. Now with my sixth graders here, they - I would spend a lot of time listening to a lot of music because how many places can you go to hear a good sixth grade band? Nowhere. So what you do - you listen to professional people or college/university playing level one music composed by people like...what's his name? Owens - that does the sight-reading music.

CE: Oh - Willie Owens.

MA: Yeah. And all of your ASCAP composers. They do - there's really some great grade one music out there - grade two. Good music. My little beginner band last year played Arabian Dances. That's a pretty darn hard piece. It's at least a two plus. But we played it and we won outstanding band with it. I analyzed it before I passed it out. I said, "I've got the clarinets to do it and I think I can get everyone else to play their stuff their stuff pretty well." I'm better about that, because in the beginning stages I was short on literature. I mean, I can't go out - I couldn't go out to a small high school and play stuff that we're playing in college. In college no one wanted to play that level of music, so I was short on literature and that took me awhile to learn it. Even with all my experience - eight years ago when I started teaching beginners only - I listened to tons of recordings. When I'd go to a convention, I would've hit all the booths to find out if there were any new recordings of music - and I listened to a ton of it.

CE: Well, then it sounds sort of like your focus has changed a little bit even though you said it didn't. It sounds like it has a little bit because you said that all you knew at first was that the notes had to be right but then...

MA: As time went on it changed. Absolutely.

CE: So it did change.

MA: Yeah. It changed.

CE: Because you had said it didn't change but your answer sounded like it did.

MA: Okay. I guess my focus didn't change. My intention was still the same...

CE: Well then let me rephrase the question. Your focus on what you are listening for. Your listening focus evolved over time. Is that correct?

MA: Yes. Oh, absolutely.

CE: Okay. That's really what I was aiming for on the question.

MA: Because the stuff that I was doing produced a more sophisticated sound than when I started out.

CE: Sure.

MA: Also I had to ask myself in analyzing this music, "Do I have the soloist?" or "Do I have the time to develop a soloist to play a certain piece of music?" Like, if you don't have a good trumpet player, you don't want to mess with Lincolnshire Posy. That sort of thing. But I also had to ask myself, "Will we have the time to learn the technique?" In the beginning stages I just thought, "Hey, I'll pass out this piece of music and I can hammer it in to them" but it didn't always work.

CE: Right.

MA: Okay. Are you down to number eight?

CE: Yes. So does the age of your group change your focus - your listening focus and if so, how does it change it?

MA: Not really. I had Van Ragsdale - who incidentally was the supervisor of music in Arlington for a while...

CE: Yes he was.

MA: Van is a good musician and he made the comment - I used to have him to come down and judge my pre-Sandy Lake

contest - anyway, he made the comment he said, "You know what?" Van's had some honor bands too. He had a high school honor band and he had a junior high honor band. He said, "You know what? You operate this program just like you did your high school band." I said, "Pretty much. We just play less technical music, but pretty much. If it worked in high school and if these kids can get it, you know, I'm going to teach it to them" - and it works so I didn't - It's just the age - the older children who have not had a good experience - and you may have already experienced this - older children who had not had a great experience are sometimes harder to work with. The younger children are more inclined to learn your expectations. But, the older students who have had a great experience, and the director leaves, boy their expectations are probably like the one at {Name of School} High School. Something happened there. It just didn't pan out.

I think the experience of the group means more to me than the age. I know whenever I went to {Name of School} High School, it was pretty hard my first year or two.

CE: Sure. Always is. The best band director you ever have is your first one and the worst one is always the second one. That's the way it usually works.

How do you avoid podium deafness, particularly as pieces start to sound better over time?

MA: Well. I wasn't really sure what you were talking about here, but I do know - Do you know {Name}?

CE: No.

MA: That's {Name}'s brother. He is without a doubt, the best individual teacher on every instrument in the band program. He's like an Eddie Green, except he's a private teacher. He teaches a high percentage of his brother's {Name of School} High School Band. He's an awesome piano player and he was a darn good band director. Had some other issues, but he told me one time, "You can rehearse a piece of music too long and it will die on you." I really and truly believe that to where you can - you got to plan when that music - you think its going to peak out.

CE: Sure. And with the podium deafness - we've probably all been guilty at some point of standing up there and

not really hearing what they're doing when they're playing a piece of music. You think it sounds one way and then you record and listen to it and go, "Oh wow. That doesn't sound at all like what I thought it sounded like when I stood there." So that's what I mean by podium deafness.

MA: Yeah. Okay. When I was teaching at {Name of School} Middle School I had a - well I don't like to use the word zoo band, but that's kind of what it was - {Name of Colleague} used to say, "{Name of Interviewee}, you're taking it too seriously. This is one of those groups you look the other direction, think about something else and just wave the baton." And that's not what I was thinking. I don't think that's what you're referring to either. I think you're talking about maybe the music getting stagnant on you? Or tuning things out? Maybe you're tired of listening and trying to work on it?

CE: There's a lot of directors that I hear sometimes who - they're three weeks out from contest and their just doing run-throughs because they don't think it can get any better than it is right now. This is where we are. It's not going to get any better. They don't really have a perception of, "Okay. It's never perfect. There's always things to work on." But particularly I think younger directors - I know I was guilty of - as you stand up there and you're not really hearing the problems that are happening in the ensemble.

MA: It may be that situation where you really don't know like my first year. I wanted to do well, but I didn't know what to do - and there are directors out there who do not know what to do. Sometimes they'll have a good band by accident rather than being on purpose.

CE: And so then how do you - would you have a plan or recommendation for them if you have a director that wants to do well but they're just not hearing what they need to be or not addressing what they need to be addressing?

MA: Okay. If the director really wants to do well, that's a person that you can help. But a lot of those people on the podium really don't care that much as to whether they do well or not. They don't even want to be helped. They don't want to work hard enough - to have something really, really good it's almost a 24/7 job. I'll tell you how I believe. You're going to call some people in to

listen to your group; evaluate what you're doing. You may like it; you may not like it. But if it's wrong, it's wrong. You need to get it fixed. It's like if you're sick, you need to go to the doctor. You need to listen to the doctor. Don't put it off. There are people who died way early because they wouldn't go to the doctor. They didn't want to hear what the doctor had to say about it. In fact, if anything's wrong with me, I wanted it fixed right then. I'm going to go to the doctor right away. My wife, I have to push her. I'm going to make her go to the doctor - and band directors are like this. You can take a band student and you can make them better than what they really want to be. In fact, you might be able to make a region band member out of them when they really didn't want to be. Just because of the standards in your program and you hold the kids accountable. There are band directors out there who are the same way but you will never make a great band director out of anyone. I have never made an all-stater out of a kid. I think I've made some kids make region band, but I've never *made* an all-stater. An all-stater has to get there because he really and truly wants that. He wants the help. He's got the passion for it. Band directors are the same way. If you don't have the passion for it, you're not going to get there. If your passion is playing golf, it's fishing, that sort of thing you're not going to get there. I hope this doesn't pertain to you, but I have never seen a great golfer who was a great band director. The band has got to be number one and sometimes - with good band directors - it appears that band is more important than their family when it's really not, but it takes a tremendous amount of time. I would never allow anyone to do my section rehearsals. I would never - and I did my own section rehearsals - upper woodwinds, low woodwinds, high brass, low brass then percussion on Fridays. I also did individual listenings, Monday through Thursday. Boy, I was a tired guy at the end of Friday. Now, the reason I want to do my own section rehearsals; my own individual listenings, didn't want anyone else to do it? We go back, and there's more than one way to go from here to the post office and they're all the right way. I want everybody starting like I want them to start the note. I want everybody to phrase like I want to phrase it. I don't want someone else coming in - even though they're a good teacher - I don't want someone else teaching their concept of how that should be phrased. Then when we get in to a full band practice I'm wasting a lot of full band practice time in trying to get everybody to phrase

together. But if I do my own section rehearsals and I do my own individuals, then my full band rehearsals are going to go a lot better. It takes a tremendous amount of time to get it right. What's next?

CE: What ensemble and individual concepts do you see as absolutes when it...

MA: Which one is that?

CE: That's number ten - when it comes to having a good ensemble sound. This is probably the one you already touched on.

MA: Yeah. I put playing in tune is more important than characteristic sounds because you can tune up a blacksmith shop and it's going to sound pretty good, but I think playing in tune is even more important than that. However, an ensemble's not ever going to sound good without characteristic sounds that are in tune and blended. Never will sound like - you've got to have the characteristic sound of the ensemble. And we talked about a player who can hear himself which is probably either too loud or out of tune. Once you get that across to kids, they'll do a lot of their own correcting. An ensemble performer must have that experience of playing so well in tune and so well balanced that they sometimes wonder if they are making any sound at all unless it is a solo passage. At this point I've got to tell you something about {Former Student}. When I was teaching at {Name of School} High School, we went to the {Name of Contest} in {Name of City and State}. We won that contest three consecutive years - and I went from {Name of City and State} to {High School} because of the salaries and what have you and I thought - I had a better budget and everything - but {Former Student} was in the band and we go to {Name of Contest} and we're competing against {High School}. Well, we beat them [laugh], but we got in to the sight-reading room and {Former Student} holds up his hand - said, "Mr. {Name of interviewee}, what's this?" I thought, "Oh my God! {Name of Student}, that's tenor clef! I said, "I don't have time to teach you tenor clef in the sight-reading room."

CE: Wow.

MA: I said, "Just fake it" [laughing heartily]

CE: [laughing] Wow.

MA: I about died. I had never in my life seen tenor clef in the sight-reading room.

CE: Yeah. Who would put that in the sight-reading room?

MA: But we still got our first division. He faked it pretty well. But anyway - I just had to tell you that.

CE: Sure. Absolutely. I'll give him a hard time about that.

MA: Sight-reading room and he had tenor clef. {Name of Contest} in {Name of City and State}.

CE: Wow.

MA: Yeah. That was pretty neat. I said, "Just fake it, {Former Student}. I don't have time to teach you tenor clef." I believe he was a sophomore in high school at that time.

Something about - what is number eleven now?

CE: Of those absolutes that you've mention, what is it when you hear groups, when you clinic groups or you judge groups, what do you hear missing most often?

MA: Probably intonation, but a lot of times it's just musicality. I don't know what to say. I've seen people who've been in the business for a long time and they couldn't carry a phrase in a paper bag. I don't know. Just some people never get it, but they were pretty good technicians. In fact, real good, but I never did understand that. Then I've seen directors who every year their band sounded like a train wreck. I never understood that either. I don't know - I'd have to stick with the tuning and musicality. To me, that's really important.

CE: Okay. So then if you were able to work with these groups to help them achieve these - where would you begin or is there a hierarchy?

MA: Well. I'm going to tell you what - In Texas, if you're going to have a really, really great program, you're going to have to have the total program from the bottom to the top organized and it starts with the

beginners. I did an in-service in {Name of City} just on the beginning band - seven hour in-service. To me, that's the basic foundation and when kids go into the seventh grade, those fundamentals need to keep going. I never had an honor band in {Name of School} until my junior high program got solid. I went through three band directors to get to {Name of Former Junior High Director}. And {Name of Former Junior High Director} produced an honor band and when those kids starting coming in to the ninth grade, I'd take about ten of those 9th graders and put them in my Wind Ensemble - and I was only running about fifty in the Wind Ensemble - and then I'd have those ten kids for four years. Next year I'd take about another ten. Take the kids who had the real potential - the good players and had the real good potential of even going farther. A smart ninth grader will go a whole lot farther than an average senior. It's just the way it works out. You got to have some smart to go along with it too.

CE: Absolutely.

MA: My answer was, yes, first the organization must be maximized and the expectations clearly stated and understood because if your program's not organized and the parents and the children don't know what you expect of them, you're not going to go very far so you've got to get those things down - and then I would start by learning several scales in whole notes - I'm talking about going into a program and I have in mind that, you know what, one of these days this school's going to be an honor band - This is what I would do - I'd learn those scales in whole notes, half notes, eighths and quarters and sixteenths and quarter plus eighth and eighth plus sixteenth. I really believe in the scales. Lot of technique can be learned there and if you have kids who aren't willing to learn nine major scales at eighth plus sixteenth at a speed of 104, you're not going to have the kids who will work hard enough to learn Till Eulenspiegel or Don Juan or the Hindemith Symphony or whatever. They're just not going to do it. They don't have the desire to do it. You've got to have the kids who want to; they've got to be hungry to be in that ensemble - but you can't do it in a short period of time. Then I would add the Remington in whole notes and F concert; we talked about that. I'd do the Bach chorale in the several ways that I talked about. Then I select good, quality music and that's not all that difficult to do. North Texas has got a book that Eugene has done that's got a lot of

material in it. Back in the late forties, early fifties if you were going to play good music you had to play transcriptions. That's about the only good music that was out there, and then for years, there wasn't a whole lot of good published music for beginning band programs. Now there's a *ton* of it. You've just got to find the piece that fits your group.

CE: Sure. Absolutely.

MA: I would also start with section rehearsals and individual listenings right off the bat. I've done that every school system I've ever been in. I'll admit as I got older it got harder to do. I never felt like I was cut out to be a college or a university band director. I've been asked to apply for East Texas State University, Southeastern State Oklahoma, the assistant at UCLA - where else - several places, but I've never made the application. Not one single time. I didn't feel like that would be my bag. I never went that route so I always just stuck with the public school thing - but I will admit, when I hit the age of {age}, at five o'clock in the afternoon I was wanting to go home badly because I always got to the band hall at six o'clock. By five o'clock I was wanting to go home. As a youngster, [whew] man - I usually didn't do my jazz band until night after I got through with all my concert stuff. Then I'd do my jazz ensemble at night. My wife used to bring my dinner to me at the band hall. But I put in a lot of hours. But no matter what - if I went back at it next year - I would do my own sectional rehearsals. I would do individual listenings and I would utilize my other directors for memory work for the marching band or memory work for solos. I would do that. I wanted my assistant to take care of his own program and I had the same assistant at {Name of School} for eighteen years. {Name of Former Assistant} was my assistant for two years. The first two years I was in {Name of School}. Brought him down from {Name of City}. We went at it for two years. He decided he wanted to start working toward his Ph.D. and he did - and I'm glad he got it because this might have been his twenty-fifth year at {Name of School}.

CE: Yeah. He's been there awhile.

MA: Long time. I never had {Name of Former Assistant} to do my section rehearsals or anything like that. I always did my own because I wanted those kids phrasing like - I

always felt like I was good at getting the most out of a kid. When I do my individual listenings it was fifteen minutes with each individual every week. If I gave them assignment and the second week he came in and he couldn't play his assignment, we spent some time talking. The next week it was better. [laughing]

CE: [laughing]

MA: I think what you have to be careful about - and I didn't learn this - I took a job at {Name of School}. I was the sixth director in four years.

CE: Wow.

MA: I came in at midterm if that tells you anything.

CE: Wow.

MA: I said, "You know what. I'm going to build this program overnight." And I had a lot of experience! And I did what I'd always been taught. Don't try to do too much in one year's time. My second year there the superintendent calls me in and he says, "We're not going to renew your contract next year." I said, "Really? I've never been fired in my life. I've always gotten raises." He said, "Well, the people here at {Name of City} just don't want another {Name of Former School}. They just want their kids to just be in a band and have fun so we're not going to renew your contract." I said, "Well that's being fired." "Oh no. That's not being fired." [laughing] I said, "Well to me, that's being fired. That's okay." So I came to {Name of City}. I was expecting too much too soon. I was really pushing the kids hard and they got a standing ovation at the UIL concert contest. We did a piece called Russlan and Ludmilla by Glinka and that's a pretty hard piece. And we did the Russian Christmas Music and that was a pretty hard piece. Got a standing ovation. And that's the last time I saw the kids. I never went back. I had enough sick days. I sent my assistants back to {Name of City} on the bus. I never saw those kids again.

CE: Wow.

MA: I said, "I've had it." Well what's your last thing?

CE: Are there any other ideas about listening to

ensembles you'd like to mention?

MA: Well, I will say this. To get the concept down - whether it's of an individual or the ensemble - you need to listen to really good groups. It's hard to reinvent the wheel. It's already been invented. You just got to find it. You've got to go to good concerts - the symphony concerts - the good band concerts and listen to see where you are. I'm going to a region honor band listening for class CC's tomorrow. It's going to be in {Name of City} because I want to know where my standards are. And probably two of those bands may end up in the top fourteen in the state. I believe two of them will be. Two of the junior high bands from {Name of City}. But I want to know where my standards are. I want to see if I agree with the judges because if I don't keep up with that, I'm going to get behind. Like I mentioned earlier, if you want to be the best, you've got to be associated with the best and as my Dad used to say, "Son, you've got to keep your nose to the grindstone." And if you don't, you're going to get behind.

Interview Transcript B

Chris Evans: One of the recurring themes from the previous interviews was teaching students to hear. They have to be able to hear what is happening in terms of all the different aspects in the ensemble. How would you go about teaching students to listen for intonation?

Marylou Ashbrook: I may have talked about this before, but I could use myself as an example. Whenever I started teaching I didn't know whether or not I could hear pitches - and probably didn't as well as what I could have, but I know that my ear developed as the years went along. Whenever I first started teaching all we had was a 1 window strobocon and I used it religiously because I didn't trust myself - and it was not until maybe 5-6 years later that we got the one with the 13 windows in it. And I used it all the time. I kept it on in every rehearsal. If I heard a chord and it didn't sound right, I'm going to start searching and find out why it didn't sound right. And more than likely it was a tuning problem.

I think that kids can be taught to hear pitches and they don't even realize what they're doing. I had a guy that I followed at {Name of City}, well some years later after he was there - his name was {Name of former director}. He told me as a young band director, "Your band should play a chorale every day. If you don't do anything else, play a chorale every day." And that really helped the kids on their tuning, because that's four-part harmony. In my opinion, there's nothing that helps more than playing stuff in unison and now I know a lot of bands playing stuff in fifths. You all probably do up there, I don't know.

CE: We do an exercise around the room where the kids overlap a Concert F and a Concert C.

MA: Right. And see that's something that came about after I quit teaching in {Year}. In fact, at {Name of School}, I guess it was {Year}, people weren't doing stuff like that. They were doing the Remington and the F around the room, but getting back to your basic question here...I knew if kids were going to have any technique at all, they had to be able to play scales. I knew we were limited because they didn't have private teachers and on

how much time I could demand of them to be together as a group because that's when they really learn how to play in tune - in a group, not as an individual. Every time we would learn a scale - I'm thinking about [Former School] - they had never made a first division at the state level - and they couldn't play scales. Didn't know any scales. So we start out with the B-flat concert scale. We learned these scales in whole notes. As we started learning the nine major scales B-flat, E-flat, A-flat, D-flat, G-flat, F, C, G, D concert scales, which would cover most of the keys we were going to play in - certainly with a little school with 174 kids in the whole high school. That would cover everything. But what I did notice when we were playing those scales - kids were learning how to play in tune without me telling them. I might have had to help them in the beginning and we started by, if something didn't sound right, I would take someone who was in tune. I would have a second person to play. And I would tell the kids, "Look, you don't even have to have a good ear to learn how to play in tune. All you have to do is listen for the beats. When the notes are so far apart, the beats are going so fast you don't know what to do. But when you hear the beats start going Wa Wa Wa you know that you're getting close to being in tune. Now take your slide, or take the barrel - whatever - mouthpiece and you go one direction or the other. It doesn't make any difference. If the beats start going faster again, that means you went the wrong direction." This is what I did. I would spend 15 minutes in every rehearsal. If I'm going to have a 30 minute rehearsal, I'm would spend 15 minutes tuning up because I knew that had to be right. If characteristic sounds weren't right and if they weren't in tune, we may as well stay at home. We would get some ugly criticism and I didn't want that. I realized that we were creating overtones between the instruments. I never will forget this story. This was in [Name of City]. I was pretty much of a tyrant. I was a disciplinarian. I could here the overtones buzzing in the room but I didn't even know what overtones were, especially coming from a small college with our head band director being an organ teacher. I could here these sounds and I stopped and just chewed them out royally. "Someone is playing with me. Someone is playing different notes than what we're playing." And I really came down on them hard. Okay, so we start up again and I could hear the buzzing again. So it was really frustrating in the beginning and then pretty soon I had Eddie Green come up. He started working with me when he was still at Lake Highlands High School.

He learned from the professional people there in the Dallas area. He said, "Hey! Here those overtones!" "Is that what that is?!?" {Laughing} And then I started rehearsing hard to try to create those overtones. If you have very many people out of tune, you're not going to create any overtones. That changes the total sound of the ensemble drastically. So my kids were learning how to play in tune without much coaching because we were playing 9 major scales. Every rehearsal we played 9 major scales. We'd start whole notes and then we'd do the Remington warm-up once I learned how to do that and boy. We listened for overtones on that too and I'd ask the kids, "Can you hear the buzzing? Can you hear those other notes that don't sound like F concert?" I think a lot of my kids learned how to play in tune without a whole lot of coaching simply because of the exercises that we were doing and it certainly helped me a lot.

CE: So you would say it's definitely a matter of doing exercises where they're [students] are forced to listen when your teaching it. It's less looking at the tuner and more listening to what you are hearing and matching what your hearing. Is that correct?

MA: Yes. That's right, because you don't have time to stop and tune every chord. But once the kids learn how to play in tune they will start recognizing, "Boy. Something's not right." And I've had kids to really have some bad disputes in a rehearsal because someone is playing out of tune. I will never forget my daughter - she was my first chair flute player - she was an all-state flute player - and she turned around - I had my flutes as I'm standing in front of the band on my left side and my clarinets on the right side. My daughter turns around and I had like 8 flutes, so I had 4 flutes and 4 flutes or something like that. My daughter turns around and said, "You're out of tune" and I never will forget {Name of Student} took her flute and popped the headjoint in and said, "Well how's that!" Bitter words because of other children playing out of tune. It's no different than a marching practice. Some kid can't get it - other kids start coming down on him. You've got to dissolve it. In a way it's a good thing because kids can tell, at least some of the kids in the band, because if it's just the director that's got the good ear you're not going to have a good ensemble.

CE: That was one of the biggest things that was revealed

when I talked to everybody was making sure that the students can hear. It doesn't matter near as much what the conductor hears as it does what the players in the ensemble can hear.

MA: Same as it doesn't make any difference how good a player the conductor is. If the kids can't play you're not going to have a good ensemble. You know Bill Revelli was one of my idols. He was a violinist. I'm sure he had a really good ear because he took a lot of lessons in Chicago. His bands played pretty well in tune and the University of Michigan.

CE: They were alright. {Smiling}

MA: {Laughing}

CE: How do you teach your students to listen for balance or did you?

MA: Oh yeah. I always told my kids unless you're playing a solo, if you can hear yourself, you are either out of tune or you're too loud. That teaches them to listen. And I would tell them about another embarrassing experience whenever I first went to [Name of School]. I thought I was a pretty good trombone player. The band director put me second chair and I thought, "Well that speaks pretty well for me." We started rehearsing and I was getting on it. Pretty soon people started looking around and looking back that direction. I thought, "Hmmm. They must think I'm pretty good." So the rehearsal progressed and pretty soon someone said, "Would you mind playing within the ensemble?" {Laughing} Another embarrassing situation.

I've always told kids you can tune up a blacksmith shop. You can tune up any kinds of sounds. It helps if you have characteristic sounds if you're going to have a band program.

But that really did work for me. Plus the director recognizing that someone was out. Like even my little beginners back here in [Name of City], we were playing at [Name of Contest]. Joe Frank was judging. He was pretty much a hotshot in the state of Texas at one time. I had this really strong 6th grade trombone player and we were on stage at [Name of Contest] and I don't know what got in to the kids but all of a sudden he was ripping on it - hard! And Joe Frank just crucified us. The kid was out of

balance and being a 6th grader the kid didn't understand with me looking at him what this meant {palm of hand facing towards the player} because I doubt very seriously being a 6th grader if he was even looking at me. But it pretty well destroyed our performance and it was one of the best beginning bands we had ever had. And it was a contest that we didn't win. I think we won outstanding band 13 times out of 15.

So - balance is really important. I always told kids - brass players especially - sometimes you're playing so well in tune and you're playing so well in balance that you're not even sure that you're making a sound come out of your horn. You can feel your lips vibrating. It's that well in tune and that well in balance.

CE: Let me approach the question from another way. How did you teach students to understand their role within the ensemble? In other words, I have the melody or I don't have the melody. Here's how my part works with the other parts around me.

MA: Are you talking about the ability to play in balance?

CE: Yes. Because I think that is ultimately a part of balance.

MA: You're not talking about technique?

CE: No. I'm talking about knowing that, "I play the second trombone part and here's how my part works to make the overall piece work."

MA: Okay. The professional player of course already has learned to do that. The younger players - you have to tell them, "Up your volume a little bit. Back your volume down a little bit. And as you rehearse you can hear it and if it doesn't good to you then you're going to have to adjust the volume level." I used to tell my kids, "It's no different than going up to your stereo system and you like the treble turned down and the bass turned up. That's what you like to hear. And that's what I do as a conductor. I stand up here and then as I listen to you then I adjust the "knobs" to make it sound like to make it sound like what I think that it should sound like. And when you do that enough times, kids learn how to play in balance the same as they learn how to play in tune. But if the director doesn't hear the pitches or doesn't want

to be bothered - some people don't like the detail. I had a cadet band one time when I was teaching in a middle school and the head director said, "You're taking it too seriously with these kids. These are the kinds of kids that hey, just stand up there and conduct no matter what they sound like. Make them feel like they're having a good time. Let your mind drift off. Look the other way or something. Don't pay any attention to them because they're not going to be great players to begin with. It's just not within them." So I was doing a first band and the third band. Another person was doing the second band. I probably still haven't given you the answer that you want...

CE: No. It's open. I want to know what you know. Not what I think.

So it sounds more like, that you kind of view that as a little more of the conductor's role?

MA: It is the conductor's role on the balance in the beginning like it's the conductor's role in the balance for tuning. If you don't bring it to a child's attention, then they're going to continue to do what they've always done.

CE: Right. Agreed.

MA: It's just like the first clarinet section that I ever had, it sounded like a room full of birds. It was terrible. They chirped on every note. They chewed on every note. But this is back whenever band directors didn't have to do much to get a degree and this guy was a bass drummer in the band. That's the only band instrument he played. But he played honky-tonk piano and he played really good jazz guitar. So he didn't know what the clarinets were supposed to sound like. If the director doesn't know what the characteristic sounds of the instruments are, he's not going to get it out of the kids. Then when you get really detailed, when you come to say the french horn, do you want the French sound or do you want the German sound? But that's pretty far down the line.

CE: Sure. That actually leads me perfectly into the next question. How did you develop your concept of a characteristic sound for all the instruments?

MA: To this day I have every criticism sheet of every contest I've been to my entire teaching career, which was 48 years. Whenever I started out I didn't know. I just had to learn by the lesson of hard knocks. I was the only music teacher in the entire school system. So I would get it to the point where I'd say, "I don't know anything else to do." I knew that the kids had to be able to play the notes. That's all I knew for sure. And I knew that it would help if you would crescendo and decrescendo. I knew that. I could do the volume levels. But I wasn't positive about tuning. I wasn't positive about balance. I wasn't even sure that I was doing things musically correct because of my background. I didn't have a background - probably not anywhere close to the background you have. I came from a third division band and the college was pretty much third division. So whenever I started teaching I said, "You know, I want a good band program. I want my program to be respected." So I would take all the criticism sheets that I got from a contest and say, "Okay. I'm not going to make this mistake anymore." I would buy recordings. They used to have an "Educational Record Series" or something like that. It was orange and black cover. I believe it was put out by MENC and I would buy those recordings. If I knew of a good band program I would go listen to their concerts and I'd take a load of kids to go hear it. When I was teaching in {Name of City}, I have taken and driven the bus myself. Take a load of kids to {Name of University} to hear them play. So I just kept refining it that way and I would listen to other people's tapes and I just had to learn what to listen for. It wasn't all about technique. Listening to recordings - I loved to listen to the University of Michigan. I was really fortunate whenever I did my student teaching in 1960. I did it with {Name of School} In {Name of City, State}. That year they won the {Name of Contest} in {Name of City}. So I thought, "What they're doing must be right, because they won the whole contest." The choir program at that school won the choir division. The solos and ensembles - they totaled more points than anyone at that festival. See they don't do all that stuff down there now. At that time there were only two major contests, that was {Name of Contest} and {Name of Contest} in {Name of City, State}. So I was really fortunate. That year they played Lincolnshire Posy. I thought, "My gracious! I'll never have a band that will be able to do something like that." But I got help that way. And I would get my program as far as I could get it. Even my first year, I called my college band director

down and I asked him if he would come by. I said, "I don't know anything else to do. They're doing every thing I've told them to do." And he tried to help them but we made straight twos and in a {Name of State} contest, that's not very good. Then I had a guy by the name of {Band Director} who came from Texas and he's a former drum major from North Texas and he was more knowledgeable. When he was teaching at {Name of High School} in {Name of City}, he had the first chair All-State trombone player and the first chair All-State clarinet player, who also ended up going to school there at {Name of University}. I learned from people like that. It was a learning process. It wasn't because I was brought up in it. I would have at least one clinician a year to come in and listen to what I was doing. And sometimes you can get used to something. It'd be like a wart on your nose. You wear that wart long enough you get used to it. No one else may get used to it, but you will! So you can get used to tuning out mistakes if you don't want to mess with them. Or if you just flat give up on kids. Sometimes it might be better to give up on kids because you start ripping them so much [laughing].

CE: This is sort of a two-part. From a generalized view, how do you approach balance when you're standing up in front of a group and then how do you determine your balance priorities? For example, you can have multiple fine ensembles play the same piece and play it well, but it will sound different because the conductor has chosen different colors that they would like to bring out more than others. You talked about standing there adjusting everything, so how did you go about determining your balance priorities?

MA: I was never a college or university director so I don't consider myself to be as far along as what Bill Wakefield is or the band director at the University of Texas...

CE: Jerry Junkin.

MA: Jerry Junkin or Eugene Corporon. I don't consider myself to be that far along because they start at a level the first time through a piece of music that my group may not ever attain period. At the end. So they have developed different skills, but those same people - and I've known of people who have actually done pretty well at the university level who did not have good high school

programs. They were pretty weak. So they have a different listening skill or a different level to achieve, I suppose, than what I had. But I always like to have a good low part. I like for my band to have a dark sound and I've always thought that that was probably accomplished by - if you didn't have quality instruments at least quality mouthpieces. Because I've heard people take a piece of junk and have a good mouthpiece but if he had the concept he could produce a more characteristic sound than someone who didn't know that much about it - So I listen for the low sounds and I always felt that the tuning had a lot to do with not only the balance but the blend of the band. I don't know. In the beginning stages I had a tendency for my upper woodwinds to play too strong and so I started backing them down a little bit to get them better into the ensemble. When you have clarinet on a real high part and flutes on a real high part sometimes that balance is pretty hard to achieve. Sometimes you end up cutting people out, not because they can't play the part, but because you can't get the balance that you want. I thought at first I was doing something unique, but then later on I found out, "Hey, I'm not the only one doing that sort of thing." You have too many people on one part. You can almost, I've told people this a lot, you can almost imagine a first part. The clarinet part and the flute part. It doesn't take that many people to play it but if you get too many people on those top parts, you cannot achieve the balance that you need. So I always started - If I had say, six trumpets, and I had a really good player - now this is a gamble, but I've always said that competition is a gamble sometimes anyway - but I never liked to have just one person on a part like the Eastman Wind Ensemble because if you had someone sick on the day of contest you're in trouble. But say, if I had just five trumpets, I might go with one first, two seconds, and two thirds to try to get the balance that I needed. I always felt like you needed a lot more people on the bottom part of get it to balance out with the first part. Tubas you don't have any problems because they're all playing the same part anyway. But if I had say, six, I might go with two, two, and two - I might. The two people on the top trumpet part, they may not all be playing all the time. And you may do that purposely sometimes, especially if you're playing a piece where you're featuring your brass players. You get into the Morton Gould Symphony and you can wear a player out. By the time you get to your third piece, he may not have the chops to do it. So that's a

consideration too. But I always put more people on the lower parts than I put on the top parts. A lot of times I had just one person on the top part. I played Till Eulenspiegel one time. I had one first clarinet player but I didn't have but five clarinet players to begin with. It was just that sort of thing. I didn't have the players. I had one first, two seconds, and two thirds.

CE: Well, let's dig a little deeper on this. From the perspective of you ears and your listening did you go through your score, identify individual lines and then determine what you wanted to hear? Did you approach it that way and if you didn't that's okay...

MA: Well, I always studied my score before we started but if you go from a concert with me to the sight-reading room - I had a basic instrumentation of parts before I ever hit the sight-reading room - and - again according to the strength of the readers on that too. Sometimes I did a lot of switching around on that because usually your second best player is going to be a good sight-reader and your third best is going to be your next best and so I might put one of them on first, one of them on second, and one on third and double up the parts that way, rather than putting all my strong players on the first part because their goes your balance again. You're not going to achieve it. But when you have four or five weeks to work up a piece of music, you've got plenty of time to work that balance out because if the other players aren't getting it, you start moving people off the top parts. If I had fourteen clarinet players I would definitely not have more than three on the top part. And I might go with five and then six if that adds up to fourteen. But always more people on third part. A lot of times people on the third part might not get all the technique learned again and so there goes your balance again. So it's a gamble from the beginning.

CE: Would you even - and this may be too specific a question because the answer is probably different for any given piece - but did you have any sort of way that you determined what colors you wanted to bring to the front? How did you determine what color you wanted to hear the most of or was there a way? Did you simply adjust as the piece was played? For example, the flute, first clarinet and first trumpet are all playing the same line. I need a little less trumpet and a little more flute or whatever...

MA: I don't know any other way to do it. Your trumpet could pretty much dominate everybody else, especially the flute player. If the clarinet player's up really, really high he's not going to have any trouble cutting through, but I had those people to listen to each other. When we were working on balance and tuning and what have you, I would say, "Okay. You pick out someone else in the room - across the room from you and listen for that person." Sometimes I would tell them, "If you can't hear them, you might be too loud. There may be other people too loud." But what it did, it made them try really hard to hear that other person and they were constantly adjusting themselves on their volume to try to balance that out. I don't know of any other way to do that - if you had three people [parts] and they were doubling on the same thing. If you wanted all clarinet, there wouldn't be much need to have a trumpet and a flute on them. That mixture of a flute, trumpet and clarinet what you would try to do - and I've used this example, in fact, with my sixth graders, I used it as a visual - I would say, "Okay. I'd take this blender, because, if you can hear all of these individual sounds any time you got ready too, it's probably not going to be a very good ensemble sound. So what you've got to do - you've got to mix your sound with everybody else and not stick out above them." And I would take my wife's blender to school and I would say, "I'm going to put thirty-nine scoops of powdered milk in this water." And I'd turn it on and say, "Okay. What color is that?" "White." Like dummy - it's white! [Laughing] I said, "Okay. Here's what we're going to do now. Keep in mind, 39 scoops of powdered milk." And that's thirty-nine players. "Now what I'm going to do," and I had a little bottle of food coloring. I'd take just a little bit of food coloring. A tiny bit. I mean like, just a few drops and I'd put it in the blender and turn it on and I said, "What color is it now?" "Uh, pink!" I said, "So you can see now if you're playing too loud or if you're playing a wrong note, see what it does to the total sound of the band?" and that really worked with those kids. They really understood that if they played wrong notes - and they believed me - that it was going to change the sound of the band. And I used that with my sixth graders because I wanted them to win too. [Laughing]

CE: Well sure! You want them to be the best they can be.

MA: But I think some of these things are personal. My

band director at {Name of University} {Name of Director} used to say that a band director's band is a reflection of his personality. I don't know. Maybe. Maybe not. Maybe my bands might have been a little on the aggressive side. I don't know. Eddie Green's bands used to really be aggressive. I mean they could part your hair, but I like orchestral playing too. I've played a lot of transcriptions during my life. If you're going to play a transcription, I want it to sound like an orchestra. When {Name of former assistant} was with us at {Name of School}, we did Stravinsky's Firebird Suite and the band played pretty well. I've had some people ask me, "Do you purposely try to make your band like an orchestra?" I thought that was a compliment. I don't know. A lot of it's personal preference.

CE: Absolutely. Another person I interviewed pointed out that some play pieces of music and play it technically very well. Everything's fine, but I {the interviewee} don't like listening to it because they have chosen different colors or ideas to bring to the front, then what I would choose. That doesn't mean it's not correct, it just means it's different than what I would choose. It's different than how I envisioned the piece.

MA: And I have always prepared my kids whenever I would have a clinician to come in. I would say, "Look kids. We're bringing this clinician in to get his ideas on what he would do. If we like those ideas, we're going to use them. If we don't, we may not use them. Everybody doesn't do everything the same way. And I've used this example so many times. There are a lot of ways to go from here to the post office and no one particular way is wrong. They're all the right way, but they're different ways. But I've heard music played before and I said, "Man, I just don't like that piece of music." Later on I realized it wasn't the music, it was the band that was playing it and the conductor who was conducting it. I would hear another band play it with a different conductor and I'd say, "Wow! I like that." And if you listen to professional recordings of orchestras where these guys go from one orchestra and their going to be a guest conductor with another orchestra or - what do you call them? They go in and spend a couple of weeks with another orchestra?

CE: Conductor-in-residence?

MA: Yeah. He would play a piece of music and it would be the same conductor, but it sounded totally different. The same piece sounded different than his own orchestra. So everybody doesn't interpret the same piece the same every time they play it. They may be pretty close but it's not always exactly the same. I guess the way you were educated - the way you were brought up - They say here in Texas the West Texas bands have a different sound than the bands in the Valley. The bands in the Valley have a different sound than the bands in East Texas and I think it's the way you were brought up. I don't think it has a lot to do with the clientele you're working with. I think it has to do with the way the conductor was educated and what is accepted say, from North Texas State University. Or what is accepted at Kingsville or the University of Houston. The people who come out of that school have a tendency for their bands to play like their alma mater. I didn't because I didn't have an example to go by [laughing] except whenever I started school at {Name of School} at that was just during the summer months. But I attended concerts there during the long term. {Name of University} whenever it was under {Name of Former Director}, it had a different sound than what it's got now. Did you ever hear of {Name of Former Director}?

CE: I did hear of him, yes sir.

MA: He was a professional trap set player with {Name of professional big band} but he was doing band. And it sounded like he was still on the trap set. [laughing] Nice guy!

CE: Now we're to the point where I'm going to ask some real specific questions and you can feel free to agree or disagree. These are more direct.

MA: Okay.

CE: Would you agree that correct notes and rhythms must be the first priority and if not, what would you put as the first priority?

MA: There's no question about it. I even learned a lot during the {Number} years that I taught at {Name of School} teaching nothing but beginners. I would tell the kids that learning the notes - being able to play all the notes - is as important to music as digits are to math - as the alphabet is to spelling words and making

sentences. If you can't do that, you need to stay at home or at least not perform in public because that would make you want to buy a one-way ticket out of {Name of Current City} and I've lived by that. The first year I taught I knew I had to do that for sure. My kids could play every note. We were playing music that even the weakest kid could play all the notes. But that's the basic thing. You've got to have that. You can't play the notes - don't go there.

CE: The priority I'm listing here down these next three or four questions are based upon what everyone said and themes that emerged.

MA: Yeah.

CE: After notes and rhythms, would you say tone is next?

MA: I would say, some of these things are so close and there's such a bleed-over from one category to another.

CE: Agreed.

MA: This whole time that you're teaching kids how to play their notes and the rhythm, you are also...like every day you're talking about tone quality and characteristic sounds of the horn.

CE: Sure. Let me clarify. In asking these questions, I don't mean you don't talk about anything else until you get all the notes and rhythms. And then once you get all the notes and rhythms then you just do tone and don't talk about anything else. I'm not insinuating that.

MA: Yeah. Right.

CE: It's like we were talking about earlier, if you can't get everything done, these things need to be in place first.

MA: You can't make any music if the kids can't learn the notes. If the kids can play the notes, how are you going to be musical?

CE: Right. And that's what I'm getting at, that type stuff.

MA: There was a band that played, an honor band concert

under {Name of Conductor}, and {Conductor} was a wonderful bassoonist. But {Name of Conductor} was a little bit loose - kids could play all the notes but the starts and the stops - it was a little bit ragged sometimes. And people started {Identifies a group} calling it the sloppy but musical band. [Laughing]

You know, there's certain things that have to be a priority. You gotta have the notes and you gotta have the rhythms. I think articulations come in there too. You can do that without it being in tune. But the whole time you're doing this you're always talking a little bit - or a whole lot; like I said, I spent fifteen minutes of every rehearsal it wasn't on technique and it wasn't on rhythms. It was like tone quality and tuning.

CE: Right. And when you say articulation are you just referring to...

MA: I'm talking about tongued notes and slurred notes.

CE: Okay. So you're not even necessarily talking about the style. In other words, the end of the note. You're really talking about start of the note on things.

MA: Yes.

CE: Okay. That's fine. I just wanted to clarify.

MA: Right. Of course after you get the notes and stuff down you're going to talk about cleaning it up to get transparency - you're starts and your stops. But you can still do all of that and be well in tune and be well balanced and still it doesn't say anything because it's just not musical. And there are band directors out there who have developed a great skill, but their bands are very, very unmusical. Musicianship, I think, is one of the most difficult things to teach.

CE: So you said that all these things are pretty close. We talked about that tone is right there and then articulation...

MA: Tone and tuning.

CE: Right. And those sort of go together. It's hard to have one without the other. You can have notes that are in tune but if everybody is not making the same sound...

MA: Yeah. And you can have great sounds that are out of tune.

CE: Absolutely. And vice versa. You can stop the tuner if you looked at it but Johnny sounds different than Suzy. Both of them are stopping the tuner, but they don't make the same sound so there are beats in the sound even then.

MA: You know I had a saxophone player one time that, I don't care how hard you worked with him - and this was a brilliant kid and he had a good ear - he couldn't distinguish between a good sound and a bad sound. That just wasn't in him. Now I have not had that to happen very often. But {Name of Student} did not have it in him. But yet I could balance him and get him to blend in with everybody else. And he learned in a rehearsal what volume levels to play. We were never criticized on it. But I know it altered the ensemble band sound at least a little bit. It was minute because he was one out of the whole band.

CE: So my next question was is balance more important than any of those aspects, but it sounds like balance would probably fall maybe next below...

MA: I think balance comes after you've learned the notes and rhythms and the articulations and you get everybody going on it because sometimes in the beginning stages - let's see - this happened - oh there's a band that you're probably familiar with that is an honor band {year}. {Identifiable program information}. I judged them at their pre-UIL contest this year and oh my God. If that would've been a real contest they would've gotten a easy two. They were playing {Name of Grade 5 piece on Texas PML}. That's a pretty tough piece for a {classification} middle school.

CE: That's a pretty tough piece for most groups period.

MA: Yes. But they were peeling paint. And I ripped the director and he wrote me a letter. And he said I was right. It was a nice letter. He said I was right on target. But he said, "I let them blow in the beginning and then as we get closer to the real contest I start balancing them out. I want them not to be afraid to play and to really fill up with air in order to be an aggressive player and then I'm going to start backing

them down."

There was another guy that taught down in {Name of School System, Name of Director} just incredible middle school band. He did the same thing. His beginners - if you went in to his beginning trumpet class - and he was a trumpet player - you would not be able to stay in the same room with them. It would hurt that much. But boy did he end up developing some great players. So he balanced it out later. So I'm saying that balance shouldn't happen at the very beginning. It's somewhere down the line.

CE: Do you think that that falls as a higher priority than vertical alignment?

MA: I don't know. Vertical alignment - I started that in the very beginning whenever I'm teaching rhythm. I try to teach the rhythms and the style all at the same time because if you're playing a march and you have say four quarter notes in a measure, and I want them to play a march style, I'm not going to have them to learn the rhythm in a legato style and then switch to say later on, "Okay kids. We're going to make it marcato now." So started trying to teach the correct style in the beginning. I've always believed that if you can avoid teaching them mistakes, you're way ahead of the game. I think that's so true with marching bands. I worked so hard with marching band. I wanted the sets to be right in the beginning. If they weren't right in the beginning, I'm not going to let them march it very long. We're going to make some changes. I've always told kids it takes you as long to forget a mistake as it does to relearn it. So I don't want kids going through that. Same thing with music. I don't want them to learn one style and then have to go back and teach another style. I don't want that to happen unless I didn't know any better.

CE: With all those elements, do you think that in order for a group to truly be musical all those aspects must be in place? Do you think a group can be musical but like you talked about earlier, maybe let some things slide?

MA: Yeah. I think it can at least have musical tendencies but it's hard to give a group a standing ovation if all those elements aren't there. The tuning and the balance and the style and certainly the phrasing.

CE: Sure. Last question. What aspects do you view as the

conductor's responsibility vs. what do you view as student's responsibility when you're performing or as your learning? For example, the intonation is ultimately on the students. They have to be the ones to listen and adjust vs. maybe balance is a little more of the conductor's responsibility.

MA: It's my responsibility, and I've always told my kids, "If you do well. If you do a great performance the judges and the audience will say, 'What a group of talented kids!' but if you don't perform well they're going to say, 'What's that guy doing on the podium?'" So you do have a lot of responsibility in teaching the kids the right stuff. And some people will say, "All that guy cares about is the rating and the trophies." I have another feeling about that. The ratings and the trophies is an indication of what those kids have been taught. That way I think everybody gets credit for it. You know you don't see people going into the Phi Beta Mu band director's hall of fame that hasn't accomplished something. You don't see people receiving the Legion of Honor award sponsored by the John Philip Sousa foundation if they haven't accomplished something.

Now some people - in my opinion - and I'm thinking about one person in particular - who has played in an orchestra that was on it's way downhill, that's {Name of Orchestra} until they completely went under, and this person went out and started auditioning all over the country for other orchestras and could never make the finals and finally gave up on it because he couldn't financially afford it. This guy is a band director now and just puts everybody down who says anything about competitions. And now he says that the only people who can get a high school job anymore are just the drum corps people. That's all anybody thinks about - drum corps. So I didn't argue with the person or anything. I just let it go in one ear and out the other ear but I did think about it because at one time I was called a trophy hound. I'd been taught that when you go to a contest...it's called a contest! Don't go just to be going. Put your best foot forward. Try to win the darn thing! And if you don't win it, well you deserve sympathy because you tried. But learn by your mistakes and some people never get that far along. Their groups are just mediocre all the way through. But I think a lot of it is because - in this guy's case - is that he has been so unsuccessful in competition himself and he had to make a living, so he resorted to band directing.

So he had, I guess a performance major and an education major. And now he's doing band and hasn't won a single contest ever. And he puts everyone else down who does. And I never see those people winning any kind of an award: the Meritorious achievement award that they give in Texas, the Hall of Fame award or the Texas Bandmaster of the Year award. Those are people who have made significant showings in performance. Now, he says he's only interested in the music. But, do you know Dr. Tim Lautzenhauser?

CE: Yes.

MA: Okay. Dr. Tim says, "Only 5% of the kids that you're teaching have an interest in majoring in music. 95% have no desire to major in music. But yet those 95% have learned a lot of things by being in a quality program that was competitive that they would not have learned in any other organization in school." And I've always said that a bad band program is worse than no band program at all. That's like eating fish fat. That's worse than no fish at all. And for a kid to experience a bad band program, how is that preparing him for the future? We have a son who teaches at the {Name of Hospital}. And he will say, "What I have learned is different than the knowledge that I learned." But he said, "It's what I learned in band - how to accomplish something - that has made me successful as a medical teacher and as a doctor that goes into the operating room and guides other students on how to operate." He learned those skills - how to do that - by being in a quality band program. By learning how to detail.

Where were we now?

CE: What do you view as the conductor's responsibilities vs. the student's responsibilities?

MA: Anyway, the director's responsibility, a lot of that has to do with what does the conductor want to accomplish? Now it's not so much true anymore, but I have seen directors and people - and I don't know whether it's right or wrong - but they would say, "They're just using their band program as a stepping stone." They want to get to a higher, bigger program. They want to get into a college or university. And if their band program's not performing well, they're probably not going to get there. It's not that true anymore. It used to be most of your

college band directors at one time or another did not have a Dr.'s degree. Bill Revelli didn't. He had honorary doctorates. So it's according to how much responsibility do you want to take on? And the more responsibility you take on in front of that group, the more you want them to do well, the harder you're going to dig to get those kids to perfect what they're doing.

CE: Let's pretend we're performing right now. There are certain things you expect the students to do. Like you said, intonation: the students have to fix it on the stage. You can't fix it then. You can't stop in the middle of your performance and fix it. So that has to be a student responsibility.

MA: Exactly.

CE: So from that perspective, you could adjust balance from the podium in the middle of a performance if you need to, so maybe that's somewhat on the conductor. What else would you say would be the students' responsibility vs. your responsibility?

MA: The responsibility of the students, in my opinion, is to do exactly what they've been doing. What they've been taught in the rehearsal. And then when you get in to the room, {Name of director} used to tell us, "You're going to perform according to the acoustics and the attitude of the audience. You're going to respond to that environment." And when we would play a concert with him, we never knew whether we were going to play a stinger on a march or not. You might have rehearsed the stinger, but when you get into the performance you may not play...he may not conduct a stinger. So you had to keep your eyes on the conductor. And the acoustics of the room will have a whole lot to do with it. And kids - they need to - they say music is the universal language. So a baton is a baton and hands are hands and kids need to know what this means, what this means [showing various hand symbols associated with more, less, crescendo etc.] - what certain gestures mean. And that's the director's responsibility whenever you get into the performance. It's the director's responsibility - there may be an acoustical problem in the room where kids can't hear each other very well. That's the directors responsibility to grab on if you start to feel like you're falling apart in places or it's not quite together - it's the director's responsibility to go with that strong group - whoever's

dominating - you don't have a choice at that point - and to try to pull they lesser sounds with that group to keep them together because that's very important in a performance, that you stay together. You sure don't want to fall apart. But it's the director's responsibility too to know his music well enough that he doesn't misconduct in the performance. I never was good at really memorizing my scores but Col. Gabriel was always great at that. He could tell you what's going on.

It's definitely the conductor's responsibility to make those adjustments the best that you can in a performance. And you see people sometimes do this in a performance [points to ear]. I've been hesitant to do that because many times the judges are watching you and you are pointing out to the judges that, "Hey. This spot's not very well in tune." I'm not going to tell the judges anything that I don't have to.

CE: Sure.

MA: Because they might not hear it. They might be writing something at that moment and not even hear the mistake. So I don't know. It's the director's responsibility to set the mood before the contest and sometimes I might have set the mood a little bit too high. I'm not sure. I didn't want the kids to be so relaxed that whenever they went in to the performance that it was kind of, "Oh well. If we do okay fine. If we don't, that's fine to." No. My kid's not going to have that kind of an attitude. We were doing Til Eulenspiegel one time at {Name of School}. I had this 9th grade french horn player playing the third horn solo [sings solo] and she's just a 9th grader. Great player. And she had been used to missing that high note so many times in a practice, we got into the performance and Jill missed that high note and went back and started again on the solo. Now listen - that was some scary. We got a 1,2,2. Got on our busses and went to Corpus Christi and made straight one's. Same music. So anyways, director's responsibility to keep those kids together, but a lot of those things you just - I had a tuba player one time - {Name of student} was his name, never forget him - he did not - he couldn't hold a beat in a paper bag. {Name of student} would play a memorized tempo. I don't care where you went, {Name of student} was not going to change that tempo. And as a young director, first concert I ever did, I stood behind the curtains for more than a minute and I couldn't make my feet move I was

so uptight. And then when I brought my baton up it was like this [raises arm and mimics a baton shaking] you know. And nothing would budge {Name of student}. And this was my first band program. And I learned that when we'd go into a contest {Name of student} had the tempo we'd been practicing. And boy when the adrenaline would start flowing, I would get a little bit too quick - too fast and that's not good for the kids. And that's before they had pocket metronomes. They had the old pyramid you know - click, click, click - well you're not going to put that on the podium or you're not going to turn on an electric metronome. But now you see them all the time. At competitions you see the drum majors with them. They have them on the podium or a director's standing there giving them the tempo of the next piece because that drum major may kick them off too fast. You all may do something like that at yourself. As a young director, I needed that. And {Name of student} was my anchor. He had the tempo down [laughing]. My tempo was too fast.

CE: Thanks so much. That's all I have for now.

APPENDIX B — NEIL BRADSTREET

Interview Transcript A

Chris Evans: When I was examining the existing literature that was out there a lot of people talked about what a director would do during rehearsal working on a piece of music. But in a lot of cases they said they specifically ignored anything like warm-up periods or anything like that. So one thing I wanted to get that would be a little different would be the warm-up period, so what do you listen for during your warm-up or daily drill portion?

Neil Bradstreet: We do daily drill. We do it every day. What do I listen for?

CE: Yes. What do you listen for? Like, when you're up there and you say, "We're going to do F around the room" for example. What specific characteristics are you then focusing on.

NB: We do a lot of modeling. Nearly everything we do and just how they sound in matching the model. A lot of modeling.

CE: Okay. Can you go even more in depth, like I'm listening to - and I don't want to put words in your mouth - but say for example, we listen for clear starts to the beginning of the notes or...

NB: In the beginning of the year it's just quality of sound. A real vibrant sound without forcing and I...more than listen I watch how they play and I'm watching and commenting on how to look right as they play.

CE: Okay so you're as much looking fundamentally at what they're doing as listening to what they're doing.

NB: Yes. Very involved with how they look [points to embouchure]. How their face looks. Trying to get the balance of air and embouchure correct all the time on every instrument and then when they play, we'll have an individual play. I'll comment on that and then everyone will join in and match that.

CE: So regardless of what you are playing, whatever literature you are performing, is there something specific or several concepts in terms of listening on

which you focus? For example, I want to hear this, and this, and this, and this. You already mentioned you look at how they are set up, so things along those lines.

NB: Even in my daily drill we do different games with how we balance it. Is that what you're talking about?

CE: Absolutely.

NB: How to balance and how to prioritize. We play different games with it. We don't always do it the same way and different exercises I do different. Sometimes it's to play and make sure you can hear that person while you are playing and some other times we balance to the back of the band. Just different games with that because that's how we have to do our music. You're not always balancing to the same line. Sometimes you're balancing to the melody. You have to prioritize it. We do the same thing with our daily drill.

CE: You said that you have to prioritize it. Is there a way that you prioritize it?

NB: Everyday?

CE: Yes.

NB: Well, if I don't say it, they listen down to the tuba, but we do color groups. We have the bands where we play different groups and we listen - try to create different colors with our sound and do it different priorities with different exercises.

CE: Do you have any sort of concept in terms of...I'm trying not to lead the witness here...

NB: You'd better lead me [laughing].

CE: For example, one of the things that's already come out in some of the interviews has been that there has got to be a good sound. Which you've already mentioned. That's got to be number one. Would you agree with that, that that [good sound] has to be...

NB: The quality of sound has to be a very vibrant sound without being forced. Very clear. Always listening to quality of sound and helping them get that quality of sound so watching them play so you can give them

information on how to get that sound.

CE: Okay. So let's say that everybody has a great sound and sounds exactly like you want them to sound, is there a next characteristic that you would then be looking for? If everybody has a great sound then the next thing that needs to happen is...

NB: If everyone has the basic sound that I want, then the pitch center should come around real quick. So, that's usually not a concern.

CE: Agreed. There's things that I know you do such as, the vertical alignment on things or the phrasing on things or the articulation aspect of things. All that type stuff, is there any sort of...

NB: All of our daily drill - they have different exercises where we're focused on different note starts and note releases. I guess once we get a good sound you'd have to start with note starts so we work very hard on those note starts. Then we'd get to note releases. Just doing a square note. We work on dropping your tongue down without it causing any interference to the sound. We work very hard on that.

CE: I'm sure.

NB: I hear all my kids play individually throughout the year. And when a certain number of them are deficient in an area, that's where I know I had to work that a little bit extra.

CE: Okay, so that's definitely worthy of noting. That definitely helps you prioritize what for a given year, that ensemble...

NB: Yeah a given year, a given week.

CE: Right.

NB: And it changes. It's not ever the same. Hearing them individually helps me a lot.

CE: Makes sense. You sort of just touched on this. My next question is does your focus change the longer you rehearse a piece of music or are you always going back to the same things? You kind of said just now that it may

change every week.

NB: It may change every week. It may change every day. Certainly it changes a lot. When you're hearing them play individually and they all come in with a problem, you have to change. I think that's what is very important.

CE: Being able to adjust based on - So do you do individual listening then pretty much all year?

NB: Most of the year. Yes. Even in marching season last year we did that. We listen to the kids individually.

CE: That's tough to find time to do that with as much time as marching band takes up.

NB: Yes. Well we did them basically in small groups. Groups of 3 or 4. Small enough where you can have them play and be responsible for their own sound.

CE: The things that we've talked about - the concepts that we've talked about, in what way does that affect how you approach rehearsal or does it affect how you approach rehearsal everyday?

NB: Absolutely. It affects it [laughing]. What exercises do I focus on?

CE: Sure.

NB: I would create exercises and create different games to do based upon how they play or what they were having problems with.

CE: Can you give me some examples? If I heard this I would tend to do something like this or if we're having trouble with note starts we would do this or if we're having trouble making good sounds we would do this.

NB: If we're having trouble moving notes I would subdivide - do a game where we take apart what we're having trouble with and we'd subdivide it and work on keeping the subdivision smooth and constant. So we do that a lot. That would be one example. If we're having trouble - last year we were playing Colonial Song, so we segmented the scales and we did scale dynamics where we worked on that a whole lot. We played the scale very like - metronome marking 40. Played the first, just like scale

rhythm one, two te three te four te. Beat one double F, beat two mf, beat three mp, beat four p and then put a rest in and did that all the way through the twelve major scales. Had an individual perform in front of the band with a tuner and then had the whole band play. Individual perform, whole band. Different individuals. But that was an example of creating something to help our problem.

CE: Sure. So again, you're going back to modeling a lot.

NB: I'm a major modeler.

CE: That sounds like that's a major portion of what you do everyday.

NB: It's a major portion and they way that we use the model last year on that was like, we just did the scales in chromatic order so the first scale was like one day the flute player played the first scale and then as the band played the first chair oboe would come up and play the next scale, G-flat scale. Then as the whole band played the G-flat scale then [the pattern would continue]. All the first chairs would play it by themselves and then we add them and it helped them learn to match.

CE: Sure. Since it is not feasible to fix everything you hear in one rehearsal, how do you prioritize what is most pressing at the time?

NB: There comes a time where it has to get fixed and there will be something where I may lose my sense of time; stay with that one thing until it's fixed.

CE: Right. But you've obviously played hard enough literature and long enough literature you're obviously not getting bogged down to where you don't get past the first phrase.

NB: [Laughing] Obviously - I may get bogged down to where I don't get through anything. I don't know.

CE: Again, I guess going back to what we talked about earlier, if people aren't making good sounds you're probably not going to be saying, "You know the third 16th note in that run - I can't quite hear it" while somebody sounds like a chainsaw.

NB: Uh-huh.

CE: So do you have any sort of, "We've got to fix this before we can fix this?" We have to fix the sounds before we fix balance or before we mess with this. Or is it all - you deal with it all kind of at the same time?

NB: Maybe I deal with it all at the same time, but if someone really couldn't do it, the whole group would rehearse it with them. I would write it out or do something to get the whole group playing.

CE: Sure. Keep everybody engaged.

NB: Yeah. Engaged and I would use the group to help the person be able to hear and get to where they could play their part better.

CE: Okay.

NB: I'm not being much help for you. [laughing]

CE: No! That's okay. A lot of this is stuff you've done and you just almost instinctively know what to do, but it's not something that you sit down and go well today I'm going to make sure that everyone has a good sound and then I'm going to make sure that we're all vertically aligned and then I'm going to make sure - you just kind of do it.

NB: You're kind of doing all of it at once.

CE: Okay. Does your focus change - how you're approaching things - change as you get closer to a performance and if it does, how does that change or is it always kind of the same thing?

NB: It's always kind of the same and it's always just making sure that they can hear themselves, listen for their best sound and hear others. So it's not a whole lot different.

CE: So if I came into your rehearsal the first day you passed out UIL music versus the day before UIL contest, the rehearsal structure would basically be the same?

NB: We'd probably be playing through things a little bit more at that time. But we would set it up the same way

with how we do our fundamentals.

CE: Has your focus, in terms of what your listening for, changed over the years or is it pretty well the same. Has it evolved and if it has, how has it evolved?

NB: It's a whole lot the same. A lot of the way I do things probably is because I taught private lessons a whole lot. The way I use modeling, maybe it's because it was very easy for me to teach private lessons. The way I taught private lessons and my private lessons in college - my students did really well so it was easy for me to adapt the way of modeling individually with the group because especially when I first started teaching I could stand in front of a group and I couldn't hear anything. It was like, "I don't know what's going on." So I had to create a way for me to hear and a way for others to hear. And we've just taken it to different levels with the modeling because will model it that way. Model with all first chairs. We have different groups of how to listen to each other.

CE: Okay. So your approach has definitely kind of stayed the same but you obviously got to a point where - you said you couldn't hear when you first started...

NB: Oh yeah.

CE: ...and I think everybody goes through that.

NB: Yeah. Any first year teacher - you get up in front of a group and you're just going, "Wow. What do I do? I don't know what to do? Where do I start?"

CE: Okay. And so how did that evolve. How did you start to make it so that you could focus on individual aspects? Is that something you've ever thought about; how your listening evolved to the point where you are now?

NB: Basically we used to do a descending F scale as our warm-up a long time ago when I was first starting. My kids could never play that together. So we had to create a game. We did two note descending F scale. Then people who taught around here, like Mr. Green came to our school one time and said, "Ooh. That's a great idea. I'll call that the follow through exercise and get everyone to do it that way. But I did that because my kids could never play all the way through it and be together and end

together. So we had to do something - I had to create a situation where we could start and stop together.

CE: So you're talking about, in that particular exercise, you're talking about the vertical alignment. Everybody moving and changing notes together.

NB: Yes.

CE: So that was just something you recognized - the vertical alignment was off...

NB: Yes. It's because the kids didn't have any skills playing in the low part of their horns so we had to help them with their skills so they could play together.

CE: So it was okay at the top part of the scale but not at the bottom part of the scale?

NB: Yes. They would force their sounds so much they couldn't play in the bottom of their horn. So every day we would start and work on how to develop playing in the low part of their horn because they just couldn't do it.

CE: Does the age of the group change your focus? In other words, if you were to go work with the junior high versus with your high school group, does that change your listening expectations or how you would approach fixing things with them?

NB: No. It's a whole lot the same. I go to all of our middle schools every day and they do the same type things we do. Their kids can't hear and respond as quickly as the high school kids, but as far as what I do and what the middle school guys do, we're basically the same. But at that level, the middle school guys have to tell the kids how to do more things. At the high school level I can create a situation where the kids can hear it and respond by themselves. They will hear it and respond to themselves real quick and they'll respond to others. But as far as the approach, it's very similar.

CE: We touched on this just a second ago; podium deafness. How do you avoid that particularly as you...well with the level literature your group plays, it starts to sound pretty good, even a month out from contest it starts to sound "pretty good"...

NB: No. It sounds worse. [laughing]

CE: [laughing] How do you avoid falling in to the trap of we're three to four weeks before contest and it starts to sound pretty good and it is what it is?

NB: That's not the case. It always sounds worse to me. The better we get, the worse it sounds. Where I can't hear is at the very start. I'm like, "Oh. This sounds pretty good" but as we start getting it better and better and better, it just gets to where I can't handle it.

CE: So what do you think makes it sound "good" at the beginning?

NB: Because I really don't pay attention I think. I don't listen as carefully as I should.

CE: Are you just letting...

NB: Yeah. We just kind of play through and see what they can do. And then when we start refining, you get more of the kids matching more elements - when they get to where they can match more elements, then when someone doesn't, it just sticks out and it's really, really not good.

CE: We kind of have hit on this a little bit, but what ensemble and individual concepts do you see as absolutes when it comes to having a good ensemble sound? If you're going to have a good ensemble sound, these things must be in place.

NB: They have to have a great sound. They have to have great balance. Balance is not always the same thing all the time depending on the literature you're playing and what you're doing. I think people don't balance and prioritize their stuff enough to where it sounds right to me. It sounds too muddy and it doesn't have the clarity. My goal is to hear - like listening to a great orchestra - you can hear every part with clarity so that's how we try to create our balance and what we do to hear all the parts - but then to prioritize the order in which you want to hear it. It's overwhelming.

CE: And that could be - your balance is sort of subjective anyway. Everybody balances a little differently.

NB: Yes.

CE: But there must be...

NB: It must be balanced to where you can hear all the lines.

CE: Sure.

NB: As opposed to balance to where you cover the lines. When you balance to hear the lines, that creates more clarity that is often missing.

CE: And when you say clarity, can you define clarity as you see it. That's probably one of those words that doesn't mean the same thing to everybody.

NB: I want to hear all the parts. All the instruments. And hear them to where they don't interfere with each other or cover each other. Then I have to prioritize how I want the order - depending on what we're playing - to be heard. But mostly if I'm doing a basic exercise I'm going to balance to the low. Sometimes you don't hear with a lot of groups the middle of the band or the certain sections.

CE: You just sort of answered this. What concepts are most often missing in the groups that you hear?

NB: With most groups, balance is a key issue. Just balancing chords.

CE: So that you hear every color...

NB: You hear every color and then the chord balance where tonic and the fifth and not the third overshadowing it. There's a lot of responsibilities that the kids have to learn to do.

CE: Balance is the number one thing. Is there a number two?

NB: With a lot of groups?

CE: Just when you're clinicing or you're judging or whatever. The really outstanding groups do this but the next tier, they don't quite have the concepts down.

NB: The outstanding groups have a great sense of balance. The outstanding groups have a clarity about their sound that you can hear the parts to where the kids don't sound like they're forcing. You just hear all the parts being played. The great groups, I think, have great contrast.

CE: Contrast in terms of....

NB: Dynamic, stylistically. Like great orchestras, the music is just fun to listen to. They have the skills to contrast the music and create neater music.

CE: So, then if you were able to work with those groups and you heard that they're not balancing things or that the style is not correct or dynamics or whatever, how would you help them achieve those concepts?

NB: That goes to their daily drill. They have to create in their daily drill more exercises and more responsibilities. Sometimes you hear people say, "F around the room" and that's their daily drill. That's just one way of listening to it and maybe balancing. They have to create ways in their daily drill...create exercises where they can work on contrast. Work on different styles. Work on different dynamics. Often people don't do that and often people would, "ehhhh, this is our warm-up. We're just kind of playing it here" and not teaching them how to do styles and to do dynamic changes at a high level.

CE: It sounds like you're basically putting a lot of the responsibility on the student to hear it and respond to it.

NB: Right. It is a lot of responsibility on the kids. And they accept it and they like it. When they get skills they have opinions like you would not believe.

CE: [laughing]

NB: I'll say, "That sounds pretty good to me." And they will say, "Uh...no." Usually my kids have more opinions about that stuff than I would ever.

CE: The second half of that question: Is there a priority or hierarchy to any of those concepts you talked about? Balance you've obviously said is one of your top priorities. Good sounds. Anything else?

NB: Once you get your good sounds and then you would have to work on your technique of course; everyday on how to move technique.

CE: You're talking about moving as an ensemble.

NB: Yes moving individual and yet as an ensemble. They have to know how to lead notes and move notes forward and that has to be a part of your daily drill too. That is very hard for us. We work very hard on that. Then I would work on - we could just do different exercises. We work very hard on articulation too. Not just how to tongue but how to contrast the articulations.

CE: Sure. Are there any other ideas or concepts about listening to ensembles that you would like to mention? Basically, is there anything we haven't covered that kind of sticks out to you?

NB: Or what problems that bother me with groups?

CE: Any of that. Anything in terms of listening.

NB: Coming out of silence together. Coming out of silence with our best sound is often - it really bothersome to hear. We have a hard time doing that. Once we start getting our music learned, that is one of the things that I'm going, "Why haven't I taught them how to do that at a higher level?" That takes a long time with us. Once we get to where we can kind of play to come out...just coming out of silence with the most vibrant sound, together, with a responsive sound, without being - if it's lyrical - without being a bump. It's just hard and we spend a lot of time working on that. And our daily drill will change and evolve to where that is - a lot of the exercises will be how to come out of silence.

CE: Alright. Well that's all I have.

Interview Transcript B

Chris Evans: One of the things that was discussed previously when I talked to everybody was about teaching students how to listen so, how do you approach teaching students how to listen for intonation?

Neil Bradstreet: Of course I use lots of modeling, and then we have small groups matching each other. Then we'll use a pedal and have them match the pedal as we do our intervals and stuff like that. But mostly it's more teaching them how to get their best characteristic sound and then matching that. If they're doing everything with their face and air, the basic sense of pitch begins to happen and when they are doing their most vibrant sound, their pitch comes around and then how they relate to others is the next level.

CE: So do you talk to them about beatless tuning when they're matching?

NB: Mostly I do a lot of individual things to get them to do their most vibrant sound. More than anything. It's not matching the machine at first. With our level of students, it's more get the most vibrant sound you can. If the kid does that, it takes care of most of the pitch. Then you teach them to listen to others and listen down and balancing and all that stuff.

CE: Okay. Do you discuss with them, or how do you teach them to listen balance-wise? For example, you're working on a piece, how do you help them understand their role within the ensemble?

NB: We do a lot of adding on where I would have just the lows play and add the higher sounds to it and learn to fit with that. I probably didn't answer your question.

CE: No. That's okay. This was kind of a tricky question for someone else too. Let me give you an example, this person has the melody vs. this person has the counter-line...

NB: We prioritize. I prioritize all the parts - who has the lead part, second and third. Everyone has priority responsibilities.

CE: So is that something you tell them when you are

working on a given piece of music?

NB: I would tell them that and I would tell them that in sections. Priority one is first trumpet here. Priority two is the second and third trombones. Priority three...tell them what their role is in the piece and then I would have the priority one people play and we would listen and add people. Play games with it that way.

CE: Okay. So largely isolating those lines so they can hear what's going on and make sure they know...

NB: Un-huh. Yeah. A lot of that.

CE: That's perfect. How did you personally develop your concept of a characteristic sound for each instrument?

NB: I guess a lot of it is just being around those sounds. I've always been around pretty good players. Growing up, the kids in my high school band were good players and most of it is just through experience and then I do listen to professionals play a lot. I listen to a lot of recordings of orchestras and stuff. When I first got started, there were so many kids that I went to high school with, {Name of classmate} sounded like a trombone player - his brother sounded like a french horn player. Just all those kids I grew up with. Then when I went to college I was surrounded by so many great players. And then that's what I expected of the kids when I was growing up. I taught a lot of lessons on {principal instrument} and stuff, so that's the first thing I did; taught them how to sound. Then when people like Mr. Green have come in to work with me a whole lot, he would help me learn what a good sound was. Like we would hear kids play and identify the characteristics of a good sound. When I first started teaching, my boss was {Name of boss}. He followed me every other Friday to every class I taught and we'd make sure we knew what a good sound was on every instrument.

CE: That sounds like that's probably - I mean, I guess if you buy a professional recording of something you kind of assume it's going to be good. But even then someone - if you didn't know - somebody could - There's kids that don't play with good sounds because they just don't know that that is not a good sound.

NB: Yeah. They don't.

CE: So obviously if you buy a recording of the Chicago Symphony, you know it's probably okay.

NB: Yeah. That's a neat sound but showing a kid how to get it when they're a beginner and expecting that and expecting them to carry it through the rest of their instrument, that is what you have to do.

CE: Sure. You talked last time in your interview that you approach balance in terms of listening to the lowest voice. That was the first part of this question: how do you approach balance from a generalized view? But I think you kind of answered that last time. Part two is then how do you then go about determining balance priorities, which we touched on a little bit earlier.

NB: Well, it depends on what time piece you are playing and what you're trying to achieve. If you're playing something choral, how to balance to the lows and how to try to balance your fifths and add your thirds and all that. There's some things where you're just balancing a one-note unison one way and then when you're balancing your chords, you open the fifth and add the others and balance that way. If you're doing a section of your music where you prioritize the responsibility of lines is a third way to balance.

CE: Is that third way, is that just through your own personal score study that you determine that?

NB: Mostly through score study.

CE: And then, say within a given line, for example the melody...

NB: How do I balance person to person?

CE: Yeah. How do you decide - and this may be too broad a question...

NB: Depends on the music. But if I'm doing a basic march, I would want to balance to the brass. If I'm doing a tutti section, I try to get the woodwinds to balance to the brass more. Basic ensemble, I would try to get more of that type of how I would want it to sound. I would be careful not to let the soprano parts dominate and then I would try to get the woodwinds to balance to the brass.

If I'm playing a piece of music where the woodwinds are the lead, I can do that. But basic march, basic tutti band, I would try to get the woodwinds to balance a tutti section to the brass and then if you do a different segment of the march where the woodwinds have this or a feature then I'll say, "Okay. Let's prioritize that to level-one for the woodwinds there."

CE: Okay. The next few of these may seem sort of obvious, but I want to make sure that I'm not assuming anything with everybody and you are welcome to disagree with this. Would you agree that correct notes and rhythms have to be your first priority?

NB: You try to develop it to where that's a basic expectation of the kids. Like, that's not something you're trying to work on. That should be kids fixing that on their own by themselves. Of course it doesn't always happen, but you need to approach it where your kids are developing that standard for themselves. And you're teaching them to develop that standard.

CE: After that - let's assume all the notes and rhythms are correct - would you say tone is next?

NB: As I'm teaching the notes and rhythms, I teach them how to get their most vibrant sound.

CE: Would you say that balance is more important than either of those or would you say that comes in the next layer?

NB: Ahhh - It would come in the next layer in some ways, but the way that I approach it, balance is happening at the beginning.

CE: Okay. Can you talk about that some more?

NB: Just the way I would layer in and if I'm having people play - or if we hold the first note before we play and then we play it. We hold the last note of a section we're rehearsing on. And I just build it the way I want it to be balanced by adding people to it. And then we would rehearse the section. Even in early stages you can do that.

CE: So - and understand I'm not saying that any of these aspects are something where - "We don't do anything until

we get all the notes and rhythms and then we move to..." I'm not insinuating that at all. We've all had those times where we have this many rehearsals left and everything that needs to happen is not going to, so if we have to prioritize - these things must happen - that's kind of what I'm trying to dig at.

NB: Basically, the way we do our daily drill, they have a sense of tone and balance from everything they approach. There's a certain type of expectation to their sound and balance that they want to get. And if I don't say anything, they're trained to achieve that tone and balance. So as we work on something there's a certain level of that that is always there.

CE: So where then do things such as vertical alignment of the ensemble fall in to place? In line with balance, ahead of balance, below balance? Or are you layering it in as you go?

NB: It's kind of there with how you approach your fundamentals. It's developed every day in your fundamental routine.

CE: Sure.

NB: Are you saying as you rehearse a new piece of music?

CE: Yeah. As you're rehearsing a new piece of music...

NB: There's certain standards that would be there from the start.

CE: Right.

NB: And then it depends on the piece of music you're rehearsing I guess.

CE: Sure. Is style something you approach the entire time or is that something that may be the next layer down after you achieve some of these things?

NB: Like articulation and stuff? We're always - that needs to go in really quick.

CE: With notes and rhythms you think?

NB: Yeah. And you should be learning how to contrast

style and articulation in your warm-up/daily drill type routine so you can tell them, "Okay. Here we want to think long-lifted notes."

CE: You've given them a frame of reference for what to listen.

NB: So they're trained to do those things from the beginning.

CE: Sure. But I don't get the impression you are by any means someone who makes sure everything in one phrase is correct before you move to the next phrase.

NB: You'd love to, but you can't do that with all the stuff you have to do. To play the literature you have to play.

CE; Just wanted to be sure. I didn't think so. Some people I think do that. They do one phrase and then try to get everything perfect and then go to the next phrase and try to get everything perfect. So even though you're working on everything you're still traveling through.

NB: You have to get through it because you have to teach the kids how to read too. And there are so many other things you have to teach them and if you do that, you're not doing all aspects.

CE: Okay. Last one. Out of all these fundamental type concepts we've talked about, and maybe ones we've haven't too - what do you view as the student's responsibilities, for example - pitch, and what is the conductor's responsibilities.

NB: You try to get them to all be student responsibilities. I'm trying to get my kids now to do some daily drill exercises on their own before they practice their music. And teach them an awareness and how to approach it. You're trying to teach the kids to be responsible for their own actions or behavior or whatever. Teach them a way to do it and a way to listen. Teaching the kids a way to think before they play and while they're playing. A way to feel. A way to listen. So that's a whole lot of what our daily drill is about. Trying to teach them how to be responsive and responsible for their sound.

CE: It sounds to me like you try to teach it to where everything is the student's responsibility but it's your role to train them and point it out to them at the beginning.

NB: You have to be interactive with the listening tool [points to head] - what they're doing. And if you see something that needs to be done, you have to make sure they have it. Then you may have to develop an exercise to help them get to where they can do that.

CE: Well even to a certain extent, in a performance you can adjust the balance if the room's different.

NB: Yes. You can adjust a little bit. But you're teaching them how to respond to you and how to listen and how to be responsive. You have to teach them how to do that.

CE: Okay. That's sort of what I'm getting at. Because in a performance you can't adjust pitch, the kids have to do it.

NB: The kids have to be responding to it. That's a hard thing. You have to create a situation where they're learning to do that.

CE: To me, balance is one of the few things that a conductor could adjust in a performance. I guess you can affect the pulse obviously, even though that's something you want the students to be responsible for.

NB: Yeah.

CE: Okay. That's it.

NB: That's it. That's good. I like that.

APPENDIX C – JAMIE PETTEWAY

Interview Transcript A

Chris Evans: One of the things I noticed when I was doing research on the existing literature is that a lot of people would only talk about what was happening specifically while they worked on the actual music but they omitted discussing the warm-up or daily drill portion of the rehearsal. Are there certain things listen for during the warm-up portion of your rehearsal?

Jaime Petteway: Yes. Our daily drill was as much as a third of the period. Since {Year} we've been working with Eddie Green, and we do all the "Green" materials - not from his book - the book came later. We do about a half a dozen "Green" exercises, and those are all designed to get students to listen to each other and to play with better characteristic sounds and better unison intonation. And to play more precisely within patterns of four and eight; and to be able to articulation without articulation causing noise in the sound and poor response. We have had periods of band as long as 105 minutes and we'd go as much as 25 or 30 minutes within 105 minutes with that kind of stuff.

CE: Regardless of what literature is performed, is there something specific or several concepts in terms of listening on which you focus?

JP: It's not a big mystery at all, it's number one, can everyone play the right notes and rhythms? Number two, do they all sound like their supposed to sound? In honor band competition, there is no such thing as adequate. There just is no such thing. Any band that plays and has a soloist or a section that sounds adequate is not going to win or do very well. Every section, every soloist has to sound as good as anyone you've ever heard. And so, in preparing an honor-band program the goal is to make sure that only those sounds get heard. It doesn't mean that you pick only pieces that display those sounds, because there is no such piece. It means that you make sure that you do whatever is necessary to avoid highlighting sections/soloists that don't have the most mature sounds. Those are the things that we listen for from the very beginning to the very end in preparing an honor band program. The very first day that we would play the music we'd be thinking by May the first, is that player, is

that section going to sound the way we want them to sound. If not, then what's plan B? Is it a rewrite? Is it re-scoring? Is it omitting?

CE: Sure. Just as an aside for your knowledge - basically the reason I chose honor-band directors is because that gave me something tangible to hold on to.

JP: This is not really about the honor band process then.

CE: No. It's fine to talk about it, but it was more a tool I used to select participants. If they have done it [won honor band] or at least been ranked multiple times - which is everybody that I'm interviewing, there are obviously some very good things that they are doing.

JP: Well, it's no different for any particular program or year. Are they playing the right notes? Are they playing the right rhythms? Do they sound like they're supposed to sound? Then there are other issues that we listen for like balance, but balance is really subjective. There are many people that don't like the way I would balance a band. There are many bands that I don't like the way they sound even though their kids are playing all the right notes and all the right rhythms and they are playing in tune, but I don't like the way they sound because they've chosen other colors of sound by the way they balance everything, than I prefer. There are many subjective decisions like that, that start from day one and when our staff or when we prepare a program it is always from the very beginning, "How are we going to want that to sound when it's done? How can we go about getting that done with these players?" because nothing is going to change.

CE: So you sort of touched on this I think, so this may be kind of the same thing: Does the focus change the longer you rehearse a piece of music or are these concepts always at the forefront? Obviously, right notes and right rhythms are always there, but does your focus change the longer you rehearse a piece or is it always back to the same sort of concepts?

JP: Right, that's actually a good question. One of the things that I think is hardest for a director to understand from the very first year that they teach throughout their career, is there are two different kinds of challenges in music. There are certain things that are not ever going to be fixed until the director fixes them,

but there are other things - and a lot of things - that are going to work themselves out over the course of time through repetition. Directors who begin a new piece of music and start in the first measure and try to fix *everything* in the first measure before they go to the second measure are failing to recognize that *two-thirds* of the things wrong when you first read a piece are going to work themselves out, so you're wasting a huge amount of time along with other problems associated with that kind of rehearsal and I've never bought into that kind of rehearsal, "Okay, we're going to fix this phrase before we go on to this phrase." I would tend to rehearse not every measure of every piece everyday, but I would use a grid approach to a piece, knowing that here, here, here, here, here, here [pointing to various "squares" in the "grid"] are the things that we're going to have to work on consistently from now to the end and then here, here, here, here, here, here [pointing to other various "squares" in the "grid"], these are the things that are going to be done within the next two weeks and then these things are going to simply work themselves out. You have to have, especially dealing with major works - a major work to me is a piece that approaches 20 minutes or more - you have to have that global vision of what is going to happen with it or else it will never get done. In Texas, in 5A, there are 250 or 260 bands and actually there are 50 or 60 of them that can play any phrase, in any piece, any day as well as anybody. But there are only, a handful, maybe 5 or 6 in any given year, that can play the entire Hindemith symphony or the entire Appalachian Spring or the entire Verdi Requiem and play every phrase at a consistent level. Part of that is a globalized approach to the piece from the very beginning, rather than a focus on this phrase and this phrase and this phrase.

CE: Right.

JP: And you'll here this a lot if you go to the honor-band competitions or you go to - well there really aren't any major festivals anymore where a half a dozen top-flight bands show up. You might find a couple, maybe, but if you hear a lot of the upper level bands that are competitive at the highest level every year, you can tell a real difference between those and the next level, because at the next level you'll here patches of brilliance, interspersed with patches of "What were they thinking?"

CE: [laughing]

JP: I think that's a big deal and it's hard for people to elevate their thinking beyond the localized problems to where you can get a picture of what's going to have to happen with that whole piece, because if you're looking at for instance, Appalachian Spring, it's about 26 minutes and over the course of a semester you might only get to play through that piece a few times, ever. Last spring, when I played {a major work}, we had never actually played the entire piece until that night. One time was all we ever played it straight through because there was no time. It was 39 minutes or something like that. So, that sort of global vision for what a piece is going to entail, not what it needs to sound like, anybody that listens to it...if it's the Hindemith Symphony for instance, everybody that's studied it knows what they want it to sound like. It's a matter of what are you going to do with all that to get that to happen and not just a few phrases here and there and not just most phrases or not just 99% of the phrases but every single phrase.

CE: You may have touched on this next one too, the concepts that you hold close to, that these things are important, how does that affect how you approach rehearsal every day? And that may be kind of what you just said.

JP: Well, that's a bigger question even, because playing, like the Hindemith Symphony - which is the classic 5A Texas band piece. If you've never played the Hindemith Symphony then you're not in the upper echelon.

CE: Sure.

JP: Okay, so in looking at the Hindemith Symphony, there's more to it than just teaching the notes and rhythms and then getting all to sound "good" [air quotes], where nothing sticks out as being bad. If you really want to play the Hindemith Symphony, then there are certain colors and textures that are associated with a real rendering of the Hindemith Symphony that are difficult to achieve because of strengths and weaknesses within any given band and there are many, many bands that will attempt to play even just a movement of the Hindemith, not realizing that they're not going to get it

to sound they way that it should sound. They may get all the notes and rhythms down, but the balances and the textures are not going to be right because they're not doing anything about overcoming the weaknesses here and the extra strengths here. For instance, six trombones that all play too aggressively as opposed to seven clarinets that don't. It's a constant evaluation of what has to happen there in order to get that to be right. And I think that there are a lot of directors that think they're playing the Hindemith Symphony when they're not. They're playing all the notes and rhythms, but it might as well be a book - an exercise book - because they're only trying to accomplish the notes and the rhythms.

CE: You touched on this a little bit, since it's not feasible to fix everything you hear in one rehearsal, how do you prioritize what concept is most pressing at the time?

JP: Based on the last rehearsal and based on a general plan of what's got to happen. One of the things you develop as an older director is an understanding of - I've got this much time left, and I know what can change in that length of time and what can't. If you're within a month performance of the Hindemith Symphony and Suzy doesn't have an appropriate tone, the chances of Suzy changing her sound over the next month are slim and none, and so Suzy has to be dealt with and that's based on a knowledge of what can be done in six weeks and eight weeks and ten weeks. If it's twelve weeks, there might be actual changes in a skill level - articulation or even tonal skills over twelve weeks, that won't be possible in four weeks. Twelve weeks out of the Hindemith Symphony or the Verdi I might set up in sectionals and in warm-ups, and emphasis on trying to get clearer sounds in certain sections, but then four weeks out from that it's too late any longer to...it doesn't mean you wouldn't deal with the tone quality on a daily basis, but trying to imagine that there's going to be this major improvement - it's just not going to happen.

CE: So it's more about having the vision, sort of a long-term vision of what is realistic to get done versus what's not. And that's just - you kind of mentioned that's just over time that's kind of a skill you've acquired.

JP: Yes. Well - you do it wrong long enough you and you

start to do it right.

CE: [laughing] As the performance gets closer, does your focus change and if it does, how does it change?

JP: Yes. Absolutely. Like I said the {Name of a group of works} last year were the single exception. I had never gone into a concert, ever, not one time in {Number} years without having played the whole concert as a run through because with children - 16 year old children - they will just do the darndest things and when I realized that we weren't going to be able to do that, then I just told them, we're fixin' to do something that just isn't done and I'm going to need you to take up the slack for this because we've not had a chance to play all these movements in sequence all together and I would never do that again.

CE: [laughing] Right.

JP: Because it's just not the way to do it.

CE: Sure. Does the age of the group change your focus and if so, how?

JP: A little bit. We had {number} honor bands, we had {number} Midwest bands - one of those was one of the honor bands - and then we had {number} other top five groups. Of those ten groups or so, there was really only one super mature group and that was the very first honor band that won - not the one that played the concert, but the very first honor band that won in {year} - was the most mature group I've ever had. Then the other bands were all variations of that based on the musical maturity of individual players, like last years band - my last band - I took thirteen freshman in it - which I've never ever done - I might take one or two in the past, but thirteen last year because I knew that the band next year - two years away from last year - was going to be competitive for honor band again and I wanted those thirteen kids to all get a chance to grow up within that whole atmosphere rather than being in the second band for a year. So last year's band was maybe the most immature band I've ever had, but not in any sense other than they were just fresh out of middle school.

CE: Sure. To follow up, let's say if you're working with a junior high group versus a high school group. Do you

expect the same things out of both of those? Are you still looking for the same sort of concepts or is it maybe a little different because you're dealing with twelve and thirteen year olds versus sixteen and seventeen year olds.

JP: No. The same concepts, but with a middle school group or a younger group I would repeat things more often. I would stay after something a little bit longer knowing that if I didn't get enough input to them today, they likely wouldn't start anywhere near the same place tomorrow. I might go a little longer on a certain concept or a certain exercise or something.

CE: But the overall concepts - you still expect - a good sound is a good sound - and things like that?

JP: Right - to a point - there are certain physical skills that are not going to be available to any thirteen-year old. It doesn't matter how good they are. It doesn't matter who their private instructor is and it doesn't matter about anything else. They're just physically immature and I don't - I think it's pie in the sky to ever think you're going to hear a middle school that truly sounds as mature as a high school. If that was going to be possible, then everybody would do that. It's just not - so I would still want the middle school kids to play with clear sounds, but it's still a clear middle school sound as opposed to a clear high school sound.

CE: That makes sense.

JP: There are rare eighth graders that can sound like a high school player, but there's nearly always some physical reason for that, that they started early enough developing embouchure and physical skills that they really are not middle school students.

CE: Okay. How do you avoid podium-deafness, particularly as pieces start to sound better over time?

JP: I never trust that at all. What you hear from the podium, it has nothing to do with reality. Any band director has a self-fulfilling reality of what's going on. That's why all the assistants should be there everyday. That's why you have Eddie Green come in or whoever to come in and listen. It's not that the clinician's going to tell you something, "Hey. There's

this new thing called intonation."

CE: [laughing] Right.

JP: I mean - there's nothing new. There is *nothing* new. The only thing you can come up with new is a new set of analogies that might stimulate kids to pay more attention or a new gimmick of some kind, but there's *nothing* new. Clarinets have been playing in tune now for quite a while.

CE: Well...

JP: [smiling] Or can be played in tune...

CE: [laughing] Can be played in tune...

JP: That's not a concept that just came about recently and I teach people about - you know Eddie Green did not discover concert F under a rock in 1985 or something.

CE: [laughing]

JP: [laughing] It's just - you just have to stay after that stuff.

CE: Sure. What ensemble and/or individual concepts do you see as absolutes when it comes to having a good ensemble sound?

JP: Students have to be responsible for intonation and the only way they can be responsible is if they know what they're doing. And the only way they can know that is if they're told exactly what they have to do. Unfortunately, most kids respond to directors in that they're given measure specific instructions about what to do, but not usually generic instructions that would apply in more than one case. Many students just don't have fundamental skills. They may have skills that are applicable to the piece they're working on and that's fine. But if a student truly knows how to listen, then they don't have to be told every time how to listen for this phrase and how to listen for this phrase and how to do this. Then they can start to apply things, and that's when you can play major works within the scope of a high school program without starting a year ahead of time.

CE: You're basically talking about the transfer - that

they actually know the concept versus just being taught - rote, which is not the right word, but basically...

JP: Well, for instance, dealing with pitch - first of all, pitch takes care of itself if you deal with the major unisons and the major octaves. Chordal tuning rarely ever has to be done if students truly can match a unison and an octave. That doesn't mean that occasionally because of the complexity of a chord or the voicing of it that you don't have to dig in and find out what's wrong because sometimes you just can't hear in order to match. Students cannot hear because the chord is just too complex or the voicing is so bizarre with instruments tossed up into the middle of the chord that don't belong there. There's a lot of really bad orchestration in band music - *really* bad - and so students - they have to know what they're listening for and they have to know generically well-enough that they can apply that. It doesn't always work, but if they're trying it's going to work more times than if they have no clue and the band director's standing up there - okay today we're going to tune the chord here; and the chord here, and the chord here, and the chord here. Well how about let's just learn to match and see how many chords they play in tune just because they're listening in the first place. Most students don't truly listen. Most average students in most average bands don't truly actively participate. They just hope not to get discovered. Part of the program that we worked on for {number} years with Mr. Green was getting students to be really active without being threatened and he's the world's master at that. He's the only person I know that has the very deepest grasp of how to do that. It is absolutely impossible for a student to sit through a rehearsal where he's involved, for a student to sit through a rehearsal and not be actively engaged.

CE: Of these absolutes - the concepts that come to the forefront - what is most often missing in other groups you hear? Maybe outside, you go a judge and clinic - are there things you hear most often - this seems to be a consistent problem in a good percentage of the groups that you work with or hear?

JP: Well, we've already touched on it. Number one is unison pitch. It just amazes me how out-of-tune many bands play - and they play out-of-tune because students don't know how to listen and then there's no time for the

band director to go through there and physically manipulate every note. I was working with a group a couple of years ago and the director had passed out a tendency chart to the kids - and the tendency chart itself wasn't bad, but he thought if he gave every student every tendency - in cents plus two, minus two - and then he gave every one of them an individual tuner, that they were going to play better in tune. Well, it did nothing of the sort. It just made them all certain that they were correct. They stared those tuners down until I made them take them away for a while and we worked on just basic fundamentals of listening. It doesn't mean that you can't use a tuner, even an individual one, but the way they were going about it, it was not going to ever work. That's the first thing I hear lacking most often but then the second thing is just a complete disregard for the fact that the parts are all there for a purpose and there's a whole school of thought in band - as long as you make it sound rosy and good it's all right. That's not true at all. You can't play the Hindemith Symphony, you can't play most contemporary band pieces, and you certainly can't play any orchestral transcription just by making it all sound warm. By hiding technique and by hiding weaknesses and having disappearing parts just because the overall timbre of the group is not objectionable doesn't mean that it's correct, and I hear that a lot. There's a group I was judging a few years ago and the director asked me later, "I worked really hard on the Hindemith Symphony. I don't understand why we didn't come out first or second at area honor band." I said, "It's because every single group of sixteenth notes that you played either had a flaw in the rhythm or they disappeared in the middle of the pattern because the kids weren't making weak notes strong enough and you couldn't hear all the sixteenth notes. It was because the balance was so faulty that there were many times we couldn't even hear the primary line and I wasn't even sure that the kids knew what the primary line was." It's stuff like that that I hear wrong a lot, but the band sounds okay. They don't have a sound that makes you [hand motions]...

CE: Cringe.

JP: Cringe. But it's still not right.

CE: Sure. So if you were then able to work with these groups to help them achieve these concepts, is there a

certain spot you would begin or a priority or a hierarchy and it may be back to your unison octaves?

JP: Yeah. Absolutely. When I begin to work with a group - and I worked with about a half a dozen groups this year and several every month - we start with five or six tonal exercises and an articulation exercise and try to make them understand that they're responsible for that. Those are not things to get through at the beginning of the period in order to get to play the music. Those are the fundamentals that they need to apply to everything that they play and if they're really listening, they'll be able to make huge improvements. If they just sit there waiting for the band director to tell them what's wrong, they're only going to get to a certain level. And that's just about everybody in the second echelon of 5A bands in Texas - which is about thirty or forty bands or so. I always start with those five or six things and then when we get into music the things that I comment on are always - I don't care about the notes and the rhythms. If I'm teaching them I'll deal with that as a director but if I'm there to comment on what's important, I'm not going to mess with that because that's the director's - I mean - that just goes without saying.

CE: Sure.

JP: But, I'll ask questions of the kids like "Why does that chord sound so bad?" There are reasons and they're not mysteries and it's not a secret, and you don't have to be eighteen to know it and - what are the reasons? And in most cases kids have never thought about it because they've never been made to pause to think about it. So they're just waiting to be told what to do.

CE: Sure.

JP: And that's the main thrust of everything that I did for about the last twenty years of my teaching, especially the last fifteen - was just to get students to a point where they ask those questions of themselves rather than waiting on me to ask all the questions or to point out everything that had to be done. We played a few programs where there was - after the warm-up we would simply have to start at the very beginning to be able to play to the end of the program by the end of the bell and so there's not a whole lot of time there for me to stop and say, "Okay, flute needs to raise your note and the

clarinet needs to lower your note and so and so needs to do this."

CE: Right. Are there any other ideas or concepts you have about listening that you would like to mention? Just kind of an open ended...

JP: About listening?

CE: Because that's where we're focusing this [study] is on what you're hearing and what you listen to and what you listen for. Are there any other things that we haven't covered that you would like mention?

JP: Yeah. What I tell directors a lot is, when you hear your group or a group and there's something there that bothers you but you don't know what it is - you just can't tell what it is that's bothering you about the sound - then there are several places to go looking first because there are prime suspects. It's alto sax, and second trumpet - usually in combination - or third trumpet and second alto sax. It's tenor sax and euphonium and third clarinet. There are places like that to look and we focus on the melody or the bass or the rhythm or whatever it might be, but most of the time the problems that people hear that they can't identify are just buried somewhere in there in instruments that don't get a lot of attention.

CE: Makes sense.

JP: And so sometimes, when I'm rehearsing and I just don't know exactly what to do because I've tried everything and it's not any better then I'll think "Maybe I need to check these parts" and I'll go to look and it never fails. If you pull those out and you'll say "Let me hear the second alto sax and the third trumpet and the second clarinet" maybe - or whatever - and it's stuff like that and people go "O my God! I never heard that before!" Well - that's because you never heard that before!

CE: [Laughing] Right. That's all I have.

JP: Really?

CE: That's it. I appreciate it.

Interview Transcript B

Chris Evans: One of the biggest things that was discussed in the previous interviews with everybody I talked to was the concept of teaching students how to listen. Not necessarily what the conductor is hearing, but teaching the student's how to hear the same things. How do you go about teaching students to listen for pitch within the ensemble?

Jamie Petteway: It has to start with the most obvious pitches which are unisons and then go from there to octaves and then honestly, if students can learn to match unison and match octaves, chordal tuning isn't really much of a stretch from that. So when I teach students how to listen, it's a continual pointing out of where to listen. Most students that fail to listen don't do so because they're not interested or they're not paying attention. They don't know where to listen. They don't know what to listen for. And it's not just as simple as tuning to the person next to you. It's where do they fit in the music. Who else has that octave? Who else is matching? What are the tendencies? Who are you trying to match with? Are you matching another instrument that has similar tendencies to yours? Are they going to be going in opposite directions naturally? You have to counteract that. It's a thousand little things, but mostly it's just a matter of making sure that the students know where to listen in the first place. I go about that through continual questioning. It's not just a matter of looking at the clarinets and saying you're sharp, you're flat. It's a matter of saying, "What are you hearing?" Often it's not that they're not hearing, they're just not hearing the right things or they're not listening for the right things or the right people. All of the tonal fundamental exercises that we discussed earlier are based on individual students really listening to what's going on and it goes directly into the music. After they can do unisons and octaves, there really isn't much left to do because chordal tuning generally isn't nearly as critical as just matching unisons.

CE: Sure. That makes sense. So then along the same lines, what about balance? How do you go about teaching them where to listen in terms of balance?

JP: Well again, it's a matter of making sure they know who they're matched with; who they're paired with in the

scoring and phrase to phrase. And making them aware of some general concepts like, "Is that the melody? Is that accompaniment? Is that a rhythmic accompaniment? Is that a chordal accompaniment? Are those long tones as important as this part over here? Making them aware of where they might fit in. It's not always true because there are places where the chordal parts or the long tones are actually more important than the technical parts. It's just a matter of making them aware of where they fit in. And understanding also that if you're playing so loud that you cannot hear anybody else, then there's a 99% chance that you're playing too loud.

CE: Right. Would you have them mark those balance priorities?

JP: I would probably have students write in, "With clarinet. With trumpet. With low brass." Whoever they might be playing along with or, "Listen for this instrument right here. If you can't hear it, play less loud."

CE: How did you personally develop your concept of a characteristic sound for all the different instruments?

JP: Just from listening. I can't say that I had that concept when I left college and I can't say that I really had that concept for quite awhile after I started teaching. It takes a long time really to develop in your own ears exactly what you want to listen for as far as just basic tonal concepts. And part of it is just building your aural library. The sounds that you like the most. Listening a lot and hearing different people and then deciding, "Oh. I like that the most. That's the way I want my trombones to sound or my trumpets to sound" or whatever.

CE: Did you buy professional recordings or listen to colleagues' ensembles or all of the above?

JP: All of those things. And you get that some too from workshops and clinics. Like the first time that I really examined my concept of low brass sound was at a Joe Dixon clinic that he did with the brass from the Lake Highlands High School Band about thirty years plus years ago. And that day I decided, "Yeah. I want my low brass to sound like that. It sounds different than I've heard before."

CE: How do you approach balance from a generalized view? Regardless of the piece you're rehearsing, are there certain things that you try to strive for? And then within a specific piece, how do you determine balance priorities?

JP: It depends on the kind of piece, but in general I would look melodically for everything that matches and links. Parts of parts that link together to create larger melodic parts and then try to weigh those against the other things that are going on whether it's just a melody and an accompaniment or a melody and a rhythmic part and a counter-melody and another kind of accompaniment. It's hard to say generally, but in every piece I've worked on or work on, I look first and foremost for the kinds of materials that join and link up so that I know what the overriding major part is in each phrase. And then try to think how much of the other parts do I want to have heard. Do I want that one part to be totally dominant or do we want them to all be in equal parts? It's a continual questioning of what you want that to be. It's not just a matter of knowing that piece.

CE: And I know it's different for every piece you work on. You even pointed out in your last interview that some people balance things differently and you don't necessarily like the way that makes it sound. It's a personal preference. "I'd really rather hear more horn than trumpet hear or whatever."

JP: There are definitely different schools of thought about the way an ensemble should sound. That's never going to change.

CE: Sure. Do you have any personal rules about that for lack of a better term? For example, someone told me once if you have flutes and clarinets in octaves in the grade 3 to 4 realm, you probably want the flute sound to fit inside the clarinet sound but when there in unison the flute sound should be a little more dominant than the clarinet otherwise the band sounds young. Do you have anything along those lines?

JP: Not at all and I've never heard anything like that. I don't know who told you that but I'm not sure I agree with that at all.

CE: Well, the direction they were going was if the

clarinets are in the second register and they're playing louder than the flutes a lot of times that can make it sound like a rough junior high band.

JP: Well sure. But it also depends on how mature the clarinets are.

CE: Well, that's true.

JP: And how many of them are playing in that octave. And it depends whether they should be playing in that given octave in the first place. Just because a particular piece has the clarinets in that octave doesn't mean they have to stay there.

CE: True.

JP: And particularly if it's any kind of transcription. Even a new edition of an older band piece - it doesn't mean that that scoring is straight from the composer. It could very easily be - particularly right now we're getting all these watered down versions of famous pieces - Grainger pieces for instance - that have nothing to do with what Grainger originally wanted. And I would not hesitate for a second to change an octave on a clarinet part if the clarinets didn't sound mature enough in that octave. It's not just a matter of playing louder or softer. It just may be that that particular year the clarinets in that particular group are not going to be able to play in that octave, especially in unison with the flutes. I have real strong feelings about the number of flute players that should be above high D's, E's and F's. And piccolo. How much of that can you really deal with successfully with average players? Regular players?

CE: Sure. Still on balance - when you're approaching that do you typically have something like the woodwinds color the brass?

JP: It's different in every phrase. It's different in every piece. If 3/4 of the players playing are woodwinds, there's a good chance that the brass parts may be just there to add a different kind of color to the woodwind sound. If 90% of the parts are brass, then the woodwinds are likely just there to add a certain color to the brass sound. But it's different in every piece in every phrase.

CE: Sure. The next few of these questions may seem sort

of - I'm trying not to assume anything.

JP: Okay.

CE: Some of them may seem like, "Well, of course that's the case!" I want to be sure I don't go in with any preconceived ideas. Would you agree that correct notes and rhythms must be the first priority and if not what do you think should be?

JP: Well sure. You can't - there's no point in going anywhere else until you can play the notes and the rhythms.

CE: Sure. After notes and rhythms, would you say that tone maybe is the next most important category?

JP: No. That has to go along with notes and rhythms. That's just a technical fundamental like everything else. You can't wait until - if you're talking about true tone quality, you can't wait until they've learned notes and rhythms to deal with it because - well you just can't. When they're learning notes and rhythms they have to be making the type of tone quality that you want in the first place. I would never think of addressing tone quality later.

CE: Sure. Just to clarify, these questions are along the lines of not that you wait until all of one thing is perfect before you move on to the next - but when you're in a rehearsal and you can't fix everything, do we maybe start here and work to this next concept, realizing that some of those will happen simultaneously. That's the direction I'm headed.

Where does balance fall in? Is it pretty quickly or...

JP: Balance would be the last thing to deal with. Balance is basically adjusting all the parts to fit the music and to make the music really happen.

CE: Which I guess would be hard to do if everyone is not, for example, playing all the right notes and rhythms.

JP: Exactly.

CE: That makes total sense. Do you think vertical alignment then maybe falls above that? Making sure

everything lines up?

JP: That's part of knowing your rhythms. You don't really know the rhythms if things are not vertically aligned.

CE: Sure. What aspects do you view - out of everything we've talked about and maybe some things we haven't talked about - what aspects do you view as the conductor's responsibility vs. the student's responsibility. For example, a conductor could adjust balance, even in the middle of a performance, if he has the student's attention, but he probably can't adjust pitch. Who do feel the responsibility falls on in these different areas?

JP: Well, are you talking about in performance?

CE: Even from the time you start a piece.

JP: The director's responsibility is to make sure the student's know how to listen and where to listen and beyond that it's the director's responsibility to know what to tell them. The director has to know the piece and know the plan to be able to tell them what to do. But everything is basically the student's responsibility after that.

CE: Once the piece is learned?

JP: Yes. I've never adjusted balance in a performance.

CE: I guess I'm not talking about major changes, but maybe a kid gets excited or they're nervous and they don't play out like they have been in class or they play too loud. They get overexcited and so you have to...

JP: That doesn't really work though. You may think you're adjusting it, but you're not really going to. And so you start into a phrase and they're not playing loud enough so you motion for them to play louder. So then you end up with two different volume levels in the same phrase. That's better than being out of balance? I don't think so.

CE: Sure.

JP: That's a fake conductor's thing that we identify with professional orchestral conductors, just trying to

pretend that they really are having an effect on the performance.

CE: Okay. Well, unless there's anything else you'd like to mention, that's what I have.

JP: Okay.

CE: Thanks so much.

JP: No problem. Good luck to you.

APPENDIX D – NELSON RUCKMAN

Interview Transcript A

CE: When I did my review of related literature, there were a lot of people that would talk about things that would happen while the director was rehearsing the actual music. But in a lot of cases it specifically said, "We didn't pay attention to anything else other than that." For example, they omitted the warm-up period. I thought one of the things that would be good to ask in this is, "What about the warm-up period?" What do you listen for during your warm-up period in rehearsal?

Nelson Ruckman: Well, you teach students how to interact and play with other people. Like, I'll give you an example - I judged an honor band thing today and there were two really good groups in one classification. One of them, they had good players, but everything - you could tell - was organized. The students were trained what their role in the texture was, to listen within their section, and to understand matching intervals or octaves and unisons and everything else - and technically they played real well. The other band, they had incredible players for middle school - amazing. They were technically very proficient. They sounded - they did not sound like middle school kids. They sounded like high school kids, but they probably did not line anything up really and the pulse fluctuated a lot and it sounded frantic throughout the performance. Three people put the good player band first and me and somebody else put the good ensemble band first. So just like anything else, it's all about what you feel is important. If you're doing a professional organization, you're not going to do "F Around the Room." You assume that people understand that already and already understand how to do good ensemble. I don't think that's necessarily true. That's why some symphonies are better than others. It's all how they fit together. So you have to have exercises that make the group sound smooth, make the group sound effortless, and the students or professionals need to be conscious of what they're trying to hear. As far as warm-up, how I like to do ensemble sound, is I like to do a lot of one instrument at a time. It's like one on a part basically. Not even one on a part, one on an instrument like a true wind ensemble; one clarinet, one flute and listen to the transparency of that and how easy that is and how effortless it sounds and how you can hear

everything. So a lot of times in warm-up you do small group and then you can either add one group at a time and try to maintain that same transparency just with more people playing or you can go small group - everybody, small group - everybody. If you do small group everybody, there is such a huge numbers difference sometimes that you don't get your result. When an audience is listening to music, some of the things that distract them are things such as, "This sounds frantic so it makes me uneasy." Not talking about somebody like Hindemith or somebody that has dissonance in there - that's a different emotion - that's tension/release and that's planned. But sometimes - if people don't learn how to play within an ensemble, not just tonally but rhythmically and intellectually understanding what their roles are - then you get some very uneasy moments. And so as the audience is listening, when the good playing honor band candidate played today - actually the good individual - they were amazing. Your sitting there - this is really great - but it wasn't together. And they went about this much [little space between thumb and index finger] too fast because they kind of got caught up in the honor band thing a little bit and compromised maybe the ability of the kids to do it. We're talking about a middle school band playing Chester by Schumann.

CE: Wow.

NR: And technically they could sort of spit it out. It was amazing. It wasn't comfortable to listen to. And they'll probably make in the top three to five I predict because they're so amazing in that way. So they'll be a lot of people - they want their ensemble to sound like that because it's a little bit maybe more - professional - well it's just great players. To me that's like saying the all-state band is the ultimate ensemble. It's not. It's great players, but they haven't done the side-to-side work or the ensemble work. So you have to teach that in your warm-up and you have to respond to it. And a lot of times if you don't respond to it over a period of time - like if it starts to get noisy and it starts to be unbalanced and everything else, you have to sit back and remind yourself - or record it and have everybody hear it - or go back to one on a part and then everybody and then say, "Okay. What's the difference between everybody and one on a part?" "Well, the one on a part you can hear everything and when everybody's playing it's hard to hear through the ensemble. It's hard to be transparent." My

thing is working for transparency. That's definitely a part of the warm-up. Now you could bore people to death. You know that the really good people do that without boring people to death and find creative ways to get people to listen. I think Mr. Dick Floyd one time at TMEA talked about the trio concept - that you play where you can hear yourself and the two people nearest you - the two people on either side of you. What I've translated that in to with my students is level-one - which means I'm responsible for sounding good and playing my part. Level-two - I've achieved level-one. I can play my part. I can sound good on my part but I also can respond to the people on either side of me or the people nearest me. So I'm aware of the section or the line I'm sharing. It may be euphonium/trumpet. I'm aware of everybody who's playing my line. Then level-three is - I'm aware of the whole ensemble and what my role in it is. And of course the director's role - those kids aren't standing in front of the band they're within the band, so they're going to have a different perspective. That's why a lot of times directors will use switching, going alternating instruments and not having all the flutes hitting together but having flutes scattered out. You could do that small band a, small band b, small band c and that helps accountability too. If you play a phrase that's giving you problems, you go down to small band "A", small band "B", small band "C", those kids can hear themselves and they feel important. Like I'm the second chair third clarinet, I'm in band b. There's some pride involved and then their friends can help them too. If we ask their friends to make comments - raise your hand - they'll probably say some positive things like, "It was together." "All the notes came out." "It had a good tone quality." "It wasn't balanced." "I couldn't hear the melody." "I couldn't hear the sixteenth notes." "The articulation wasn't firm enough." or "The articulation was too heavy." You could do that forever. [pause] Okay.

CE: So do you mean you have people who physically move the players or everybody is still sitting in their section but you just split up the players?

NR: I've seen it to where you could sit in a circle or you can sit seven or eight players - like flute through tuba - on the first row. Then the second row has group b and group c. The third row is group d, e, and f if you have six groups. Or you have flutes in the back. You just mix it up a little bit.

CE: Right.

NR: The other thing is, if you rehearse or if you do even miniature groups like two woodwinds and two brass like a high brass, a low brass, a high woodwind, a low woodwind and have them play and interact - and if you do that in your pieces, first of all, usually you don't have major rests; somebody's playing when somebody's not and then we play together - just the different textures. It helps everybody learn what's going on in the piece and then sometimes you'll have a 2nd or 3rd clarinet and a first trombone and it's like, "Oh! We have the same part here" and usually it sounds really out of tune because the tuning tendency of the clarinet and the trombone are so different - and it just sensitized everybody, "Oh! That's there." It's kind of like having a clean house but it doesn't pass the white glove test, it's still kind of dirty. It's very tough to get people to have the patience to do that. It's so much on the teacher to make it relevant and entertaining in some way - especially kids, younger kids.

CE: Regardless of what music you're working on, is there something specific or several concepts in terms of listening on which you focus?

NR: Well, you have to teach them - as far as when you're talking about concepts, you are talking about starts, releases; that has to be part of the warm-up. I go to a lot of places. I hear a lot of groups now as a fine arts director, and almost every time people can get the front of the note - it takes enough just to get the front of the note to sound smooth and not sound like an explosion or not be negligible - not be articulated firm enough. And then a lot of times the middle of the note - you don't want to blossom in the middle of the note, so you get the front and the middle but they forget about the back - and they forget about the end. What does that sound like at the end? How is that released? I mean, you can come up with a thousand things and with kids; some kids might get frustrated with that if they're perfectionists because they want to move on. They get it. They're trying to subdivide. They're trying to release in time. If you ignore any of those facts: the front, the middle, the back of the note then you're going to have issues and it's going to creep into your music because that's how you've trained yourself. So that's a concept;

just starting a note. Keeping a sound steady. Playing with a characteristic sound. Understanding your intonation tendencies. That's a huge - we used to do the old - in the olden days you just get a fingering chart and a lot of times they'd have multiple fingerings on it so on the saxophone for example, you could play B-flat in the staff two and the side - that's flatter than the bis fingering - and then one and one is the flattest one of all. Well, in the middle of your horn you want to the sharpest fingering so you play the bis fingering. With the octave key up, that pitch is soaring sharp, so you have to do two and that [side key], and probably think the lowest part of your vibrato. Or on some instruments one and one works - that's the flattest fingering. And that can't happen during a band class when there's fifty people in the room. That has to happen in section rehearsals. Articulation and style. A lot of people think that playing legato and staccato and accented and a long lift that that's an articulation exercise. It is, but it's also a style exercise. You're trying to give them a vocabulary; what they're going to use in music. Then you'll see some special things that you don't see very much - well then you've got to go make up an exercise with it. Do it without music. When you do note lengths, you show them what it looks like - and there's a lot of music printed now that has that - but then you do it without them looking at the music so they can be completed focused on what it sounds like. Take away that visual distraction. They'll have an opportunity to, as a section, and you ask questions. If the woodwinds are playing by themselves - woodwinds and then brass - who is the most consistent, the woodwinds or the brass? In some exercises, it's a lot more easy for the brass to be consistent than the woodwinds and in some of the other exercises it's a lot easier for the woodwinds to be stronger than the brass. Learn from each other. When one's playing, ask the other: Did anybody play longer than anybody else? Did anybody play shorter than anybody else? So - tone, starts, finish of note, articulation, matching pitch, 8 count overlap - you play for eight counts, come in four after that person, come in four after that person [pointing around the "ensemble"], then go to fifths [pointing again], change to the fifth [play F four counts and the switch to C four counts - new player enters four counts after the previous player]. If you're playing an overlap exercise and you're coming in, you have to respond to the person who played right before you and how many times do you have to do that in music?

We do hand offs all the time in music and sometimes we drop that baton a little bit. There's not a smooth exchange so to speak. End of this phrase, this instrument; start of this phrase, this instrument. That's something sometimes that - when a band really knows their music - I have some really good bands in {Name of School System}, and the ones that are like really trying to make a recording or something - that's usually one thing that if you make them aware of it - and especially first band kids that are kind on invested pretty well, then they get fascinated by that. "Okay we traded off. The clarinet tapered down and then the end of the clarinet note was the same as the flute note that starts right here. Or the end of the clarinet note is a fifth from when the flute - and you could just go crazy with that. Then they'll want to know, "Who am I handing off to?" There's all sorts of exercises that you can do. Anything that you do as an exercise needs to be technically so easy that they can go mentally well beyond just getting the notes and the rhythms to come out. And then on the other hand, you do have to push your kids to be able to get around on their horns. So sometimes if you're doing a double-tonguing exercise, it's not going to sound beautiful. You're just trying to get the mechanism to work. To get the front syllable and the back syllable. Or if you're doing like virtuosity scales, thirds, arpeggios - you want every note to be perfectly in tune but that may not be your focus as you're going 140 beats a minute playing sixteenth notes. But we have to develop that part of our vocabulary too.

CE: Okay. So does your focus change as you rehearse pieces - the longer you rehearse a piece of music or are those things always where your focus is?

NR: Well, you don't have time in a day - what you can do is you have that vocabulary - you establish early all of those things. Not in one day because you'll really - that's like sensory overload. But then once you have established all these exercises - like instead of doing F around the room, do B natural around the room. That'll raise some eyebrows. But once you've gotten that mechanism going then you use it as needed and then you'll find that sometimes the students have enough training in that aspect that they do pretty well. That their first effort is pretty well and then we're just fine-tuning.

CE: And you've probably touched on this a little bit - In

what ways do these concepts affect how you approach rehearsal on a daily basis?

NR: Well, for example, you want every rehearsal to be slightly different. It's a good motivational thing. If it's the same thing everyday, then people tend to tune it out. Maybe as you plan your week, Friday used to be kind of a run-through day. No metronome, no electronic assistance so to speak. The other thing is - when you're rehearsing a section of music - you can use metronome or other devices to help. Then you can take that away and then you can take the conducting aspect away. Like for example, letter A to letter B there's only three parts going on. It's like a trio. Now there's fifty something people playing, but it's like a trio. So the director starts and then the director says, "You listen side to side and you play with what's in the room." The focus becomes incredible. Every time I do that with a group I'm clinicing I'll ask the question right after - and usually they're kind of successful. They can usually play, maybe not a long excerpt, but they can play eight to sixteen measures or a long phrase. I always ask the students, "Raise your hand if you thought you were going to fall apart on that" and almost all of them raise their hand. Or, "Raise your hand if that went better than you thought" and almost everybody raised they're hand. "That was better than I thought it was going to be." So you've got to trust your group too. You've got to trust your team. You vary your activities and then you vary your pieces. Take your music and chop it up in to big pictures like ABA. If you were analyzing a classical piece and it's ABA, well, sometimes you're going to work on just the B section that day. The closer you get to Friday, you play longer chunks. It just kind of builds that security because you didn't bite off more than you can chew. Now obviously that doesn't apply to region band or anything because that's like one and a half days so you really do have to rely on the players a lot. If you're doing some kind of clinic, as opposed to just rehearsing something then you keep it fast and furious. You keep the pacing going. You're going to be worn out because a region band - if you ever get bogged down in anything or if you picked something that's too hard, that can't be achieved in a day, then it doesn't become a positive experience. You do have to pick the right music even if it's your band and you're going to take six weeks to prepare it. You need to pick the right music. If it calls for a huge euphonium part and you've got an okay euphonium, you're

doing a disservice to that kid. Now, I'm not talking about picking something that is going to challenge them enough to make them a better player, but something that has like range or speed considerations in which, maybe only one clarinet can play "Molly on the Shore" and a half a bass clarinet. That becomes a negative experience because students are smart enough to know if it's going well or not. Or you have to play the piece so slow that it's not characteristic. If you select your music right, and you pace it right, and you vary your activities, then it should be good.

CE: Okay. Since it's not feasible to fix everything you hear in one rehearsal, how do you prioritize what concept is most pressing at the time?

NR: I think everything is in layers. So sometimes you're going along and your going, "Okay. We'll be getting to this later." You do address it and mention it at least like, "This is pretty good for March 1." But as we go through sectionals or other small rehearsals - or we start to play our music off - "These are some excerpts we might put in your music playoff so that we might feel more comfortable." In other words, we're not ready as an ensemble to achieve this yet. Or you go so slow that it works. Find a tempo that works and I'm not a big advocate of going up two beats a day. Some people - that works. The problem is you would have to be almost on a daily basis. I'd rather get it really good at this tempo and then go up ten. And if you map that out - you have to map that out as a conductor. When is this going to be ready? And that's why we had the Friday's with no electronic help. No metronome, no nothing. Everybody's in there. The percussionists are in there. Ask the private lesson teachers to teach on Monday through Thursday so we can have everybody for the run-through.

CE: Okay. Does your focus change as the performance gets closer and if so, how?

NR: Longer excerpts. And then Friday doing run-throughs - and this is real hard for perfectionists because they'll start the march and within the first strain they want to just stop, but that's not performance. We don't get to stop a million times in a performance to go back and do over. So longer run-throughs as we're getting closer and then on our performance days, making it a real performance. And I think using technology and recording

and everything, that always helps because you may be somebody who can remember everything that happened in rehearsal, but it becomes more real when you're playing it back on your iPod or something and it's like, "Oh, I didn't really hear that." So, bigger chunks when you get closer to festival or UIL or whatever you're doing.

CE: Has your focus - the concepts you focus on - has it changed over years and if so how has it changed and what maybe led you down that path?

NR: Well, I think listening to your own music - at the end of each project and each year, you listen to your music and you do a lot of self-evaluation. Then if you listen to other groups that are similar to yours - like if you're a college director, you just go to CBDNA and see what these groups do that were selected. And everybody's going to sound different and there could be ten terrific groups but they all do something different. You pick what you feel like is important and what you value and then you try to incorporate that in to what you're doing. So I think just self-evaluation is really big. How have I changed over the years? I think probably I've trusted the students more and tried to be a little less with the metronome or have more times without the metronome although I think the metronome is incredibly important in lining up an ensemble or working out any kind of technical individual thing. As I've gotten older also, if I played a piece - in thirty years, if you teach thirty years, you might play a piece more than once. You might be in more than one school. I've played Variants on a Medieval Tune at three different schools. I think that what you can also do there is take more risks or make the piece a little bit different. So I guess your musical vocabulary expands a little bit as you get a little bit older in your career and your career goes a little further. And you may become more efficient at teaching the technical aspect so that it can go well beyond that and really come to life. So mostly maybe more musicianship.

CE: Does the age of the group that you're working with, does that change your focus and if so, how? And I'm talking about your focus in terms of concepts.

NR: The same concepts, but - see I'm a big vertical alignment person - so from the sixth grade on through the twelfth grade and even beyond if part of our cluster was

a college, is that we do the same concepts, we just do it like the "big-note version" when they're younger. We get it faster or we get it even more focused as we get older. So I think within a cluster it's so important that everybody speaks the same language and we're not all going to hear the same things, but I think that's why attendance at other people's rehearsals are so important. Like, if a high school person can go down to the middle school and just be there for assistance but also to listen and to learn and to possibly help. If you're in a good enough situation to where there's a lot of trust there, then you can have a huge impact on their group. You can be like a free clinician all the time. And then when they get to high school - first of all, don't be bad cop when you go to the middle school, be good cop because you want them to sign up. I'm not saying that's being deceitful. "I'm going to be really nice here and then I'm going to kill them when they come to high school", but just being able to have those kids see you visible and then do the same concepts. If you have a good vertical alignment, that's why I moved up here from {Name of School}. We didn't have good vertical alignment in {Name of School}. That drove me crazy and we were very successful competitively with the high school band. But it's a lot more than that. It's understanding that everybody's working as a team from sixth grade on up. I think I might have wandered off your question.

CE: That's okay. No, that's fine. Basically what I got from that is that you're saying, "It's the same thing. You just expect it at a higher level when they get older."

NR: Right.

CE: Makes sense. How do you avoid podium deafness particularly as pieces start to sound better the longer you've been working on them?

NR: You have to get away from it. And sometimes you have to let someone else conduct it or you have somebody else come in and give you information. I don't think anybody has all the answers but one of the cool things about our job is that there's never perfection. Never! You just go get it the best that you can and then somebody in there or your associate directors or a middle school director if they come to your night rehearsal or a clinician - anytime you bring anybody it, they're going to hear,

"Okay. We need to articulate this differently." or "This wasn't smooth." or "Everything sounded really good except from C to D. That didn't sound as mature. Let's kind of figure out why what happens." So those are the types of things that can help you when you don't feel like you're progressing. When you're on a plateau. So you're going to need something to get you off the plateau. It may be something as simple as stepping away and letting them play or letting someone else conduct it and you just be commenting. Because it's so hard to be a conductor. You're responsible for the technical aspects of your performance. The visual aspects of your performance. You're responsible for making sure everybody's engaged. And then when you're looking at your music, you're doing that more for error detection and then, "What am I going to say?" There's so many things and I explain to the students that, which is why sometimes I might make mistakes or I might not hear everything. Because kids can get really frustrated. In college I remember going, "Is he going to address that?" There's something really bad in the room and I can hear it. Is he going to address that? Is she going to address that? Well sure they're going to address it eventually maybe, or maybe they just can't hear it. So, getting off the podium, walking around the room, getting back from the band, maybe having somebody conduct your band and you just get to look at the score, and of course listening to recordings. Listening to your rehearsals.

CE: Okay. What ensemble and individual concepts do you see as absolutes when it comes to having a good ensemble sound?

NR: Well, the individuals need to sound characteristic on their instrument. Number one is tone. That's for sure. Number one. In fact, there is no number two. Tone would be one, one A, and two and everything else because you cannot - and I like I said I just judged some honor band taping sessions this week and every band that sounded good individually advanced. Whether they're first or second. Every one. Everyone that did not advance, had some fatal tone issues or intonation. Tone quality or intonation issues. And many of them play their music technically just as well as the bands that advanced, they just didn't sound right. Then the second thing after tone is just being able to do ensemble. Or being able to do band because you're doing band, you're not doing fifty soloists. I used to talk about region band sound. Instead

of playing where you can hear the people on either side of you at region band, a lot of times you play where you can hear yourself and you're looking at the music and you don't want to hear the people on either side of you. And so, everybody's kind of trying to outplay each other. So that's not usually the - when people buy recordings of their region band, it's just because they were there and their name's on the thing, and the music was maybe kind of cool, and the commission was kind of cool, but it's not going to be something that is the finest thing you've ever heard. Even a band with zero all-region players, if they're taught right, will sound better than a region band that does it, because the region band is just a bunch of good players. I think that that's important that people are just as concerned about their ensemble responsibility as their technical responsibility.

CE: Okay. Of those absolutes, what concepts are most often missing in groups that you hear?

NR: Just being able to know your role in the ensemble. As a UIL judge, they have tone category, technical category, and musicianship. And the balance is in the tone one. I always have to write, please know your role in the texture. I could not hear the melody. Please understand your role. That's the toughest one. That's the most abstract one. It isn't like you're fingering this, you're tonguing this, this is that rhythm. Those are things that are very easy to fix. They're on paper. Just that abstract, "What are we listening for? What's your role? What's your hierarchy? How does your part relate to this part? Who are you supposed to be listening to?" As you know, there's a big difference between the word hearing and listening. Like, I hear what you say, but there's no brain matter going on and you're just hearing it. If you're listening, that means you're analyzing it and you're really trying to do that and it's really hard to be good listeners. It takes a lot of mental energy to be a good listener especially if you have an hour and a half rehearsal. That's why you have to vary your activities a little bit or else the kid's going to be like, "Oh I just was in calculus last period and this is ten times harder" and it can be depending on the level of your group, the technical demands and the listening demands.

CE: Sure. If you were then able to work with these groups to help them achieve any one of these concepts you perceive as missing, where would you begin and is there a

priority or a hierarchy to how you would do that?

NR: Well, being able to play as an ensemble you take something very simple like whole notes...you can address start, middle, end of note. You can do it with a small group first. Try to find somebody that does it. If the clarinet section does it better than everybody else then have it be clarinet [holding the word for four counts while conducting], [conducting four beats of rest], band [holding the word for four counts while conducting]. Or if it's one on an instrument, one on an instrument [then full band]. So I would give them something and then try to relate it directly to the music." Okay, we just did mini-band here and we same how transparent that was and how better in tune it was. Now let's go to our chorale or let's go to this slow part of your music or let's go this fast part of the music and let's have small band A play. Okay. Comments? Alright. Let's have everybody play. Try to make it sound as transparent and as proficient as small band A, just with everybody playing. Make it sound effortless." So I would establish something and I do this all the time because I do some one and done, where I go in and clinic somebody one time. I have two hours to try to get as much done as possible. So start with something that everybody can do. And sometimes you go into a place where there's some pretty rough players. So you find the best people, have them do it, have everybody else listen to it, and try to use that as a model and try to make that level of success. When they're more successful you say, "Did you hear how much different that sounded?" Now a lot of times a bunch of people will say, "I didn't really hear it" - how much different that sounded. But most of the kids will be able to hear and know that success so you take these little baby steps and then you stick it in to your music and then you say to the director, "Divide your music up into smaller mini-sections and get to maybe two a day" and then try to string it together toward the end of the week and see if any of it is retained. So I would try to give them some success, even if it's on concert F, to where you can honestly say - and be honest about it...don't patronize them and say that was better - this is what you should be doing. "You did a great job on this. Everybody was relatively in tune, more in tune. There was some sort of balance you could hear. There was transparency. You have to do that with all your music."

CE: Okay. Are there any other ideas that you have? Just

general ideas about listening to ensembles that you would like to share?

NR: Well, as far as when I'm listening as evaluating them or conducting or what?

CE: Yes. [smiling]

NR: Okay. As far as listening, you should admire the players. Notice how good the players are. That's evidence of great teaching. Even if the ensemble doesn't play together, you've got to give people credit for what they do well. Other times, this ensemble may be very well put together but it sounds a little grainy and what I would say to them is, "Keep working on your individual skills." Like, try to get the fuzz out of the clarinet sound. Try to have more vibrato in the flutes, more characteristic. Saxophones, make sure you get all the water off your reeds. Brass players, center the sound. Try to play right in the center of the horn. Try to keep a soft center [pointing to lips]. When I'm listening, I can tell right off the bat if they try to do ensemble or if they just do a glorified region band. I can tell because you can hear when there's not cohesion within the group. And I think that everybody's perception changes over the years. My first year out, we made six ones and I did a middle school first band - we made six ones. My second year we were sixth in the state in the {classification} honor band thing. What helped me more than anything else before I was finishing patting myself on the back was just listening to the tape. Relaxed and listening and just saying, "Okay. If I was a judge what would I say about this?" and I was horrified. So again, self-evaluation is a huge thing. I wasn't upset with myself. I was pleased with the success we'd had, but you're never done. Because it's never going to be the perfect performance and if you expect there to be one, then you're probably not going to live very long. You want to live into at least your seventies or eighties. But I wonder if band directors and coaches have a shorter life span because we just fret about everything. So self-evaluation without beating yourself up. That's kind of a big thing. And getting help. Having another set of ears. Even if you don't think the person is - they're a lot younger than you - they're going to make some very valid - there's no such thing as you have to be a twenty-year veteran to help anybody. You could be a first year teacher and probably hear stuff and help the group.

CE: Alright. That's all I have.

NR: That's good.

Interview Transcript B

Chris Evans: One of the common themes that emerged during the first interviews with everyone was making students responsible for listening. When you were in the classroom and had to teach students to listen for intonation, what kind of things would you do to help them learn how to listen for intonation?

Nelson Ruckman: Well, first of all, it kind of works through learning the tendencies on their instrument and knowing those because that's super important. Either semi-professionally or professionally and then sounding a constant and having them match it. And it may be their neighbor. It may be the Harmony Director. It could be anything to make them respond to that because when you're talking about matching pitch, if a kid is not bothered by the waves then they may have trouble hearing anything. So you have to get in an environment where it's quiet enough - maybe one on one or a small section to where they can make judgments, not only when they're playing, but when other people are playing. So ear training doesn't just apply to them stopping the dial or getting rid of the waves. It's also asking them questions. Let's say you have eight people and you do an overlap exercise [motioning with hands]. You ask which groups - which pairs were the smoothest? "Well, person four and person five." Which pairs were the furthest apart? "Person seven and eight." Those types of games and those types of things, you can kind of make it fun a little bit too. The other thing is, now that we're in to the technology age where in SmartMusic and maybe this new app that Phil Geiger has, that you can actually see - visualize - not just hear but you can see visually if you're playing centered sound and center pitch. So that's where technology is going to be helping us quite a bit, because I think that app is probably - there's probably four figures of people that have downloaded that app now.

CE: Including me. What about in terms of teaching students to listen for balance? Maybe generally and then within the framework of a piece.

NR: Well, they have to have a listening impetus. Like, listen for this. If they're just matching a tone, like a F, you listen for the lowest instrument in the room because they're sounding your overtone and then you balance to that where you can play and still hear - when

you're balancing, you play where you can still hear the primary line or the lowest pitch that shares your line.

CE: So did you go through and identify those lines for your student.

NR: Yes [emphatically]. I consider that, in the UIL box[es] of tone, technique and musicianship, I consider that musicianship, because it's students knowing their role in every phrase. And that's a common critique that I write on UIL sheets when I judge. Make sure students know their role in every phrase. Even with marching band. Outdoors. Know your role.

CE: Okay. How did you personally develop your concept of a characteristic sound for each instrument?

NR: Well, when you go through college you supposedly, if you make the top wind ensemble, you're going to hear what should be really, really good sounds, but as a young teacher, and being a {primary instrument} player, I brought in people maybe once a week, once a month – trombone – trumpet and I was actually a part of the class. When they would be in front of the class and they would talk about – they would demonstrate the characteristic sound – which is important that somebody demonstrates it – whether it's their private teacher or their instructor – and then the kids get that sound in their ear and try to demonstrate it. So you have to pick somebody that you think has a characteristic sound and then you start to be sensitized to what a great trumpet sound is. And not only what a great sound is, but if it's not great why it's not great. Like, there's not enough overtones in it, or their lips are not vibrating correctly, or they're playing high. They're playing pinch. They're playing stuffy. They don't have enough life in their sound. Could be an air thing. Could be an embouchure thing. It's a lot of diagnosis. Like, if you look at a great painting [motions to imaginary painting]. This is a great painting in the style of impressionism. Now here [motions to another imaginary painting] is a modern impressionistic painting. What are some similarities about this? So it's mostly diagnosis. Once you get what you want in your ear, then it's diagnosis and then communication to the student to help them to be able to hear it. It's not for you to be able to hear it because a lot of times the kids won't really – they don't want to disappoint you so they'll say, "Yeah. I hear it."

and they don't. I think help getting people - having really good people, whether it's your private lesson staff or a master class, and sitting in the master class - not going into your office and doing paperwork while they're doing your beginner class.

CE: Did you purchase recordings?

NR: Well, sure. I listened to the Chicago Symphony. Back when I was in college, it was records. [Laughing]

CE: [Laughing]

NR: So we would listen. That's how a lot of my music education was. In college, not in the classroom I had a mentor who got me interested in opera and all the major symphonies, because I was just a band kid and a jazz band kid. So yeah, listening a lot.

CE: Okay. How do you approach balance from a generalized view? I realize sometimes that's hard to define. It's so piece specific.

NR: Balance is, as long as you can hear what you're supposed to hear in the correct proportions - of course correct proportions is very abstract. But what I'm saying is that as long as you can hear what you're supposed to hear and the music communicates in the right way, then you've got good balance.

CE: Okay. And then how did you go about determining balance priorities, realizing it's probably different for every piece? If you go through and look through the score. Do you have any way you decide, I'd really like more clarinet here vs. flute or trumpet vs. horn...

NR: Right. Well, okay. When I did graduate studies, I got my masters in conducting. But I would say it was more score study rather than baton technique. So we would take a score and a recording and my mentor would help me. There are some rules that he taught me that I believe in now that I've taught it. For example, if brass and woodwinds are sharing a line, and especially in the woodwinds are in front of the brass, the woodwinds have to color the sound. Like, clarinet colors the sound of the trumpet - does not compete with. Saxophone colors the french horn if they're doubling - does not compete with. If a flute and clarinet are playing high, the clarinet

fits into the flute sound so it doesn't sound immature. If it's in octaves, the flute listens down to the clarinet. And so as far as that goes, that's what I've always communicated with all my students. And what my students began to figure out is if I say, "Bass clarinet on a march is playing the same part as the trombone. What do you really want to hear out in the audience?" If the bass clarinet or any low reed instrument plays louder than the low brass, it sounds buzzy in the audience. So what I tell them is they're coloring the sound and the kids would say, "Oh. I've got to play softer." {Laughing} "That's what that means." That means fit into the sound. And yes, it adds resonance. It adds color. It adds fullness. It adds support to the sound. But you have to also determine, "Is that supposed to be a low brass phrase?" Or if euphonium, trumpet - if there's three octaves of melody, then you go off the lowest octave. Like a euphonium. Trumpet fits in the euphonium because of the overtones, and then the flute will fit into the trumpet, which fits into the euphonium. So you can go through and do that in almost all your music because most music, even if it's written for thirteen parts - all the different band parts and the percussion - there's only two or three things really going on at once. So in that way, it's like chamber music.

The other thing is, to determine balance, is to do smaller groups, like maybe a wind ensemble - one first, one second, and one third on every part - which would be like a professional group would record it. And then have them hear that and you can hear everything. That's the first thing you ask the kids: "How's this different from when we play in full band?" "Oh, you can hear everything." You start doing that with just concert F, then they think it's kind of cool because if you divide your groups like one on a part, you may have band abcd, and when band c - that third chair second clarinet is all of a sudden going to feel super important and it gives you balance. It also gives you the accountability of the child that they need to know their part. Now the other thing about balance too, is sometimes - a lot of times - whoever wrote the music puts you in a hard situation because you may have seven people vs. thirty-five. And the seven are the melody. And we don't really want to, if at all possible, go through every phrase and have people cut out. And sometimes that's just the instrumentation of your band. You know Dr. Revelli wanted twenty-four B-flat clarinets. That's because he considered them like the

violin of the section. And if you're in an orchestra and you have five violins competing with a regular orchestral wind section, you're not going to hear them. So there are some...so that's another aspect. How many people in the room have this melody. And then sometimes there is not a melody and accompaniment. There's different types of music. Polyphonic - two lines going - you've got to be able to hear both lines. Then you have chorale texture - SATB - where the soprano, the alto, the tenor, the bass - most people think, "Oh. The soprano's the melody." It's not really. The bass can be melody too [singing bass line to a chorale]. That's just as important a line as [singing soprano line to a chorale]. It's just as important. You have to also expose your kids to what kind of phrase this is. This is SATB it's not melody and oom-pah-pah.

CE: Right. Absolutely. These next few questions are very specific and may seem sort of...

NR: No kidding?

CE: Exactly. But I wanted to make sure I wasn't assuming anything.

NR: Right. Go ahead.

CE: In terms of trying to determine if there's a hierarchy to your listening, would you agree that right notes and rhythms would have to be the first priority? Or if not, what would be?

NR: Well - [thinking for a minute], right notes and rhythms would be a priority as far as working on music, but if it doesn't sound good, I think the sound of the group is the most important thing. Tone quality is the most important thing. The notes and rhythms maybe the second most. Because if you get all the notes right on the Star-Spangled Banner when you're singing it, that doesn't mean it's going to be good. It could be excruciating. And you can be perfectly in tune but if your quality's not good - so I think the sound of the group - if we're talking about band. If you're talking about music, tone is the most important thing. The notes and rhythms are maybe the second most important thing.

CE: So would you say it would be less offensive if the group sounded good but had some wrong notes.

NR: Sure. If a group does not sound good or match pitch or play together throughout the piece, it's always going to feel uncomfortable because there's a certain aesthetic - things that make you calm and then things that make you uneasy. I sat through probably twelve orchestras today and some moments were fine and some moments made my skin crawl. And almost all of the times that made my skin crawl is because it was super out of tune or it just didn't sound good. So, I would say tone first, notes and rhythms second.

CE: Okay. So that eliminates my next question. So where does balance fall in? Is that below that?

NR: Well - yeah. Because I don't think it can be that musical if there's a bunch of mistakes in it. If you have a bunch of errors, it's obviously - you can have the best balance and the world and it just makes you hear the errors better.

CE: Right. Would you say that vertical alignment is more important than the parts being balanced out? Are those equal?

NR: As far as lining up this way [draws a vertical line with his hand], I put that in the category of right notes and rhythms.

CE: As part of your rhythmic...

NR: I think that's part of the - if you're talking about technical - right notes and rhythms - I think that's part of that.

CE: Okay. Tone, notes/rhythms, balance and of course musicality but all those things help make it musical.

NR: Right.

CE: And you can still have all those things - and I've heard plenty of groups where you have all those things and it's good balance and good sounds and it's still boring to listen to. There's nothing phrase-wise happening that makes it musical

Okay. What aspects do you view as the conductor's responsibility vs. the students' responsibility? I guess

you could start in rehearsal and then go all the way up to the performance.

NR: The students' responsibility is in levels. When they first get a piece, it's basically play the right stuff that's on the page. As you're able to master that, it's level-one, level-two, level-three responsibility. So level-one, I need to sound good when I'm playing this and it needs to be correct. Level-two means level-one plus being able to respond within your section [motions side to side]. Or within your shared part [motions front to back] like let's say you're playing something in octaves. And you're being asked to play in octaves with the trumpet. You can play your part, sound great and respond to the trumpet. The level-three means that you play with a great sound, it's balanced within your section, and you know your role with the whole band. So I think those are a lot of the student responsibilities as far as that goes.

CE: What about in terms of some of the categories we've talked about? Are there certain things that fall ultimately more on the conductor you think than the students, or does it all fall on the students?

NR: Oh. Well, now the conductor has to accept multiple responsibilities and this is something that we don't share with our students enough. As I got older, I felt comfortable about saying, if you're a conductor in a classroom - not a professional conductor - but you're in charge of classroom management, making sure people's on task, error detection, pulse, obviously conducting the right meter, giving cues, etc., etc. And then being the ears - like you're the only person that gets - because of where you're standing in front of the group - you get the total - the sound comes to you. And it's going to resemble what's going to go out into the ensemble [audience]. If you're on the third row playing trumpet, you don't have that perspective. So all of those things - and then in performance I think that the most important thing is just making eye contact and making sure everybody - it's trying to replicate what you actually did in rehearsal. And a lot of people - I saw this today - a lot of people become a different person on a performance. And you try to make it as much like your rehearsal as possible. It's just another time that you're going through the piece as in a rehearsal. And a lot of people put on a Superman suit when that happens. They

start over-conducting. They start overhyping. And the kids will do the same thing. So all those balances and things will go away. And they'll just play loud.

CE: So in performance, it's to keep things the way they've been...

NR: The way they've already been.

CE: But perhaps in rehearsal it's to be able to make them aware of what's happening.

NR: Okay. Yes. But I think there's two things here. There's rehearsing and performing. And I do think that the performing aspect is when it becomes more organic and you're not having to think so hard about it. And then the rehearsal part of it is analyzation while you're doing it which maybe sometimes it's more the left brain thing you're doing in rehearsal rather than the aesthetic or the right brain or the emotional because you're just trying to get it right. You're working it out. In performance - so you have to be able to do the emotional and aesthetic stuff in your rehearsal. Don't just save it for when you're in the Meyerson or something like that. That's why a lot of people have strong opinions about, well the performance before the rehearsal was horrible. No. They just got pickier. You know how one of the famous sayings is we had the terrible rehearsal right before the performance and the performance was great. I think two things happen there. On the rehearsal that was terrible, everybody was more aware about what's going on and had higher expectations and on the performance, they were just in the moment performed, and it could have been way worse than the rehearsal that was bad, but you emotionally just went ahead and said that was great. Because you can talk yourself into about anything. So if you can have some of those magical moments in rehearsal, just like "aha" moments and "wow" moments, then you're going to have a better chance to have them on stage, and they may be even more enhanced because most people get up for performing with the lights. And then some people are frightened. Sometimes that creates a balance thing because you have somebody who becomes timid when the lights are on. You know when you have those stage lights on you as opposed to the comfort of their band hall. And some people that thrive on it. It creates a whole new dynamic, which becomes a learning experience when you listen to the recording and say, "What happened to the

oboe there? I don't really hear the oboe anymore?" [Oboe player] "I was a little nervous." Okay. Well that's a learning experience. And so next time, for that person - some people when they're in performance over-play. Some people under-play. So what you have to do is tell the real energetic over-players to calm down. You're doing fine. You're doing more than you think you are. And then for the timid people, you have to encourage them to play what they perceive as bigger on performances than they do in rehearsal because they tend to be shrinking violets a little bit.

CE: Alright. That's it.

APPENDIX E - INTERVIEW PROTOCOL A

1. What do you listen for during the warm-up period of your rehearsal?
2. Regardless of what literature is performed, is there something specific (or several concepts) in terms of listening on which you focus?
3. Does this focus change the longer you rehearse a piece of music or is it always at the forefront?
4. In what ways do these concepts affect how you approach rehearsal every day?
5. Since it is not feasible to fix everything you hear in one rehearsal, how do you prioritize which concept is the most pressing at the time?
6. Does your focus change as the performance gets closer? If so, how?
7. Has your focus changed over the years? If so, how? What led you to this change?
8. Does the age of the group change your focus? If so, how?
9. How do you avoid "podium deafness" (i.e. struggling to hear what is actually happening in the ensemble), particularly as pieces sound better over time?
10. What ensemble and individual concepts do you see as "absolutes" when it comes to having a good ensemble sound?
11. Of these "absolutes", which concepts are most often missing in groups you hear?
12. If you were then able to work with these groups to help them achieve these concepts, where would you begin? Is there a priority or hierarchy to these concepts?
13. Are there any other ideas you have about listening to ensembles that you would like to mention?

APPENDIX F - INTERVIEW PROTOCOL B

1. How do you teach students to listen for pitch?
2. How do you teach students to listen for balance?
3. How did you develop your concept of a characteristic sound for each instrument?
4. How do you approach balance from a generalized view? How do you determine balance priorities?
5. Would you agree that correct notes and rhythms must be the first priority? If not, what should be?
6. After notes and rhythms, would tone be the next priority? If tone was number 1, would notes and rhythms be next? If not, what should be next?
7. Is balance more important than notes/rhythms/tone?
8. Is it more important to play in balance or to play together? Or are both of these of equal importance?
9. What aspects do you view as the conductor's responsibility and what aspects are the student's responsibility?

APPENDIX G - IRB APPROVAL LETTER



The University of Oklahoma

OFFICE FOR HUMAN RESEARCH PARTICIPANT PROTECTION

IRB Number: 13057
Approval Date: July 14, 2010

July 14, 2010

Christopher Evans
Department of Music
2404 Richmond Cir
Mansfield, TX 76063

RE: Approaches To Wind Ensemble Listening

Dear Mr. Evans:

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), I have reviewed and granted expedited approval of the above-referenced research study. This study meets the criteria for expedited approval category 6 & 7. It is my judgment as Chairperson of the IRB that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected; that the proposed research, including the process of obtaining informed consent, will be conducted in a manner consistent with the requirements of 45 CFR 46 as amended; and that the research involves no more than minimal risk to participants.

This letter documents approval to conduct the research as described:

Consent form - Subject Dated: July 14, 2010 Revised
IRB Application Dated: July 14, 2010 Revised
Other Dated: July 13, 2010 Recruitment Email - Revised
Protocol Dated: July 13, 2010 Revised
Survey Instrument Dated: June 18, 2010 Interview Questions

As principal investigator of this protocol, it is your responsibility to make sure that this study is conducted as approved. Any modifications to the protocol or consent form, initiated by you or by the sponsor, will require prior approval, which you may request by completing a protocol modification form. All study records, including copies of signed consent forms, must be retained for three (3) years after termination of the study.

The approval granted expires on July 13, 2011. Should you wish to maintain this protocol in an active status beyond that date, you will need to provide the IRB with an IRB Application for Continuing Review (Progress Report) summarizing study results to date. The IRB will request an IRB Application for Continuing Review from you approximately two months before the anniversary date of your current approval.

If you have questions about these procedures, or need any additional assistance from the IRB, please call the IRB office at (405) 325-8110 or send an email to irb@ou.edu.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Laurette Taylor".

E. Laurette Taylor, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board

