UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

FLUTE CHOIR AS A PEDAGOGICAL WORKSHOP: CASE STUDIES IN YOUTH, COLLEGIATE, COMMUNITY, AND ADVANCED ADULT SETTINGS

A DOCUMENT

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

By

JESSICA PISO
Norman, Oklahoma
2023

Downloaded from SHAREOK. Persistent Handle URL: https://hdl.handle.net/11244/338738

FLUTE CHOIR AS A PEDAGOGICAL WORKSHOP: CASE STUDIES IN YOUTH, COLLEGIATE, COMMUNITY, AND ADVANCED ADULT SETTINGS

A DOCUMENT APPROVED FOR THE
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

BY THE COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF

Dr. Valerie Watts, Chair

Dr. Christopher Baumgartner

Mr. Rodney Ackmann

Dr. Alison Palmer

© Copyright by JESSICA PISO 2023
All Rights Reserved.

Dedication

This document is dedicated to my family.

Acknowledgements

I am extremely grateful to my professors at the University of Oklahoma. Thank you to my flute professor and committee chair, Dr. Valerie Watts, for your wisdom, patience, and encouragement. The time spent under your tutelage will be some of my most cherished moments and will guide me as I continue down my path. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to my committee. I have enjoyed working with you for the past couple of years. Your time, insight, and advice have been greatly appreciated.

I gratefully acknowledge the profound contributions of interviewees Dr. Rebecca Poole, Wendy Kumer, Alison Brown Sincoff, Dr. Jennifer Grim, Sara Nichols, Patricia George, and Christina Steffen. Without their valuable experiences, knowledge, and willingness to collaborate and share their stories, this document would not exist as it does today. I can think of no teaching strategies more useful and authentic than the lived experiences and wisdom of people just as passionate about music education.

I also wish to thank my first flute teacher, Linda Habig. Linda, from the moment I entered your studio I was touched by the love and care you give to each of your students. I have carried that feeling the rest of my life and hope to continue that legacy with my own students.

Finally, I very much appreciate the love from my family, including my grandparents and brother, who have never wavered in their support. Most of all, I cannot begin to express my thanks to my parents, who have walked beside me and believed in me from the very beginning. Mom and Dad, I would not be the person I am today without your unending love and support.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements v

List of Figures ix

Abstract x

Chapter 1: Introduction 1

Need for Study 1

Scope and Limitations of the Study 1

Directors Involved With Study and Their Ensembles Chart 3

Related Literature 3

Chapter 2: Biographical Information of Involved Individuals and Ensembles 7

Introduction to the Directors of Flute Choir Involved With This Study 7

Flute Choirs 1-5 Biographical Information Chart 12

Flute Choirs 6-11 Biographical Information Chart 14

Chapter 3: Ensembles Organized By Setting 16

Youth Flute Choirs 16

Collegiate Flute Choirs 18

Community Flute Choirs 19

Advanced Adult Flute Choirs 22

General Goals By Setting 24

Ensembles Organized by Setting Chart 24

Chapter 4: Pedagogical Strategies 25

Warmups 25

Rhythm and Tempo 29

Articulation 32
Intonation 33
Balance, Blend and Dynamics 37
Vibrato 45
Progress Retention 47
Art of Conducting Flute Choir and Baton Use 50
Literature Selection 54
Part Assignment 58
Rubrics to Measure Literature Difficulty 61
Chapter 5: General Takeaways 72
For Flute Choir Directors 72
Repertoire 72
Literature Selection 72
Part Assignments 74
Seating Arrangements 76
Social Benefits 79
Benefits for Professionals 82
For Middle and High School Band/Orchestra Directors 83
Provide a Creative Outlet 83
Applicable and Streamlined Learning 83
Unique Opportunities 84
Student Leadership and Specialist Collaboration 85
For Composers 86

Limits of the Flute 86
Collaborative Conversations 88
Ensembles Eager to Commission and Premier 89
For College Music Programs 89
Conducting Requirements for Performance Majors 89
Benefits to Music Program 90
Chapter 6: Conclusion 92
References 94
Appendix A: Interview Protocol 98
Appendix B: Institutional Review Board Approval 100

List of Figures

Figure 1: Directors Involved with Study and Their Ensembles 3

Figure 2: Flute Choirs 1-5 Biographical Information..... 12

Figure 3: Flute Choirs 6-11 Biographical Information..... 14

Figure 4: Ensembles Organized by Setting 24

Figure 5: Rhythm Exercise Ties Example..... 31

Figure 6: Rhythm Exercise Accents Example..... 31

Figure 7: Dynamics Exercise Example 44

Figure 8: Flute World Sheet Music Grading Rubric 62

Figure 9: Pellerite Music Grading Rubric 64

Figure 10: Kniebusch Noe Music Grading Rubric..... 65

Figure 11: National Flute Association Selected Repertoire Guide to Levels Rubric..... 67

Abstract

Across the United States there are many flute ensembles that perform and rehearse with varying levels of experience. The purpose of this document is to argue the ultimate purpose of flute choir: to create a space for the development of flute musicianship and technique regardless of setting. The document provides flute pedagogy suggestions to aid in ensemble and individual member improvement utilized in ensembles across the settings and highlights transferable teaching points for flute choir directors, middle and high school band and orchestra teachers, composers of flute music, and to college music programs.

This resource provides a compilation of specific teaching ideas regarding ensemble and flute fundamental strategies gathered from seven reputable flute choir directors across the United States. Through interviews, these experienced directors described their groups, the goals they set, and the pedagogical strategies implemented to accomplish them. This compilation of pedagogical suggestions is organized by director and corresponding category of ensemble (youth, collegiate, community, and advanced adult). This resource will help flute choir directors of various settings establish their own workshops of flute pedagogy using suggestions that suit their style of ensemble to assist in achieving their goals effectively.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Need for Study

During the preparation for this study, there was scant research regarding homogeneous instrumental ensembles, particularly those comprised of flute. More research on this topic was necessary to advance flute pedagogy across solo and ensemble playing. One of the advantages of flute choir is the opportunity for participants to hear themselves clearly. The flute is comparatively softer than other instruments in the concert band and flutists often cannot hear themselves during *tutti* ensemble playing. The transparent texture, unclouded by other instrument timbres, make it easier for flutists to develop musical maturity and awareness through participation in flute choir. This homogeneous group provides the nurturing environment for group exercises that specifically address flute fundamentals that are useful for the improvement of all participants, unlike in a mixed instrument group. At the time of this writing, no other study had formed a connection between the purposes of flute choirs across settings. Given the rising popularity of flute choir and growing number of highly regarded directors of this ensemble, my document was a great opportunity to expand the existing resources.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

In order to discuss the scope of my study on flute choir pedagogy, I first needed to establish what constituted a flute choir. As an ensemble, flute choir has no official configuration. Flute choir is generally described as an ensemble utilizing five or more flutes. Any combination of C flutes, piccolos, alto flutes, bass flutes, E♭ flutes,

contrabass flutes, or other instruments may be implemented. Some flute choirs prefer to use the synonymous titles flute ensemble or flute orchestra. Flute music retailers, including Flute World,[1] The Flute Center of New York,[2] J.W. Pepper,[3] Flute Specialists,[4] and Carolyn Nussbaum Music Company,[5] provide the following categories of flute music combinations: duet, trio, quartet, and flute choir which supports this configuration of flute choir.

This document was primarily based on 11 case studies and not representative of all configurations of flute choirs. Seven flute choir directors were interviewed regarding their ensembles which represented different age and experience levels. Four settings of flute choir were addressed: youth, collegiate, community, and advanced adult. Rather than conducting a survey of groups across the country, I dissected the pedagogical approaches of a handful of directors more closely. Only flute choir directors were involved. These directors were interviewed using a case study format to gather information. This case study research provided highly detailed and comprehensive information from each participant and allowed for the collection of qualitative data to compare.

As a teacher at heart, I was interested in finding active flute choirs in different settings and learning about what their goals were and how they worked to achieve them. This led me to search for directors who worked with different membership constitutions

[1] "Flute Choir," Flute World, June 3, 2023, https://www.fluteworld.com/product-category/flute-music/flute-choir/.
[2] "Music for Multiple Flutes," Rose Music, The Flute Center of New York, June 3, 2023, https://www.flutesheetmusic.com/collections/music-for-multiple-flutes.
[3] "Flute Ensemble," JWPepper, June 3, 2023, https://www.jwpepper.com/sheet-music/search.jsp?setStickyDepartment=true&suggested=&keywords=flute+ensemble.
[4] "Sheet Music," Flute Specialists, June 3, 2023, https://www.flutespecialists.com/product-category/sheet-music/?_music=sheet-music.
[5] "Sheet Music," Carolyn Nussbaum, June 3, 2023, https://www.flute4u.com/Sheet-Music/.

(See Figure 1). I carefully chose directors with groups that demonstrated success in a variety of ways including performances at the regional, state, and national levels, commissioning the creation of new flute choir music, providing community engagement with music, and finding ways to document or advertise activities in multiple methods. The directors of the selected flute choirs provide a wealth of experience, training, and teaching styles.

Directors Involved With Study and Their Ensembles Chart

Figure 1

Director	Flute Choir	Location
Dr. Rebecca Poole	Austin Youth Flute Choir	Austin, Texas
Wendy Kumer	Fluteloops, Flutations, City Flutes, Pittsburgh Professional Flute Orchestra	Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Alison Brown Sincoff	Ohio University Flute Choir	Athens, Ohio
Dr. Jennifer Grim	Frost Flute Ensemble	Coral Gables, Florida
Sara Nichols	Baltimore Flute Choir	Parkville, Maryland
Patricia George	Fox Valley Flute Choir	Appleton, Wisconsin
Christina Steffen	DEF Community Flute Choir, DEFproject, DEF Chamber Choir	Mesa, Arizona

Related Literature

There were few academic dissertations written about homogeneous ensembles. The current research covered the pedagogical benefits of trumpet ensemble playing,[6] teaching and performing clarinet choir music,[7] chamber music fundamentals for string

[6] Jonathan Todd Borsarge, "An Overview of the Pedagogical Benefits of Trumpet Ensemble Playing," D.M.A. diss., (Ohio State University, 2010).
[7] Edwin Douglas Danfelt, "The Clarinet Choir: A Means of Teaching and Performing Music," PhD. diss., (University of Rochester, 1965).

students,[8] a performance guide for the trombone quartet,[9] and exploration of the benefits of the tuba/euphonium ensemble,[10] to name a few. While research regarding homogenous groups was sparse, this topic was even more scarcely covered regarding the flute.

The most closely related dissertation was written by Adah Toland Mosello in 1989 at Ball State University. In her project titled "The University Flute Choir: A Study of Its Viability as a Performing Ensemble and Instructional Medium With a Compendium of Recommendations and Warm-up Exercises," Mosello examined aspects of flute choir formation, participation, and performance at the collegiate level.[11] In the first part of her work, she analyzed the data she collected from the 120 of the 499 questionnaires she received back from the flute choirs formed with National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) accredited colleges. The survey asked about profiles of their affiliated school of music, reason for forming their group, rehearsal structure, and importance of warmup exercises. The second part of her dissertation discussed the advantages of a college flute choir and problems maintaining the group. The final part of her work presented warmup exercises for flute choir rehearsal. This dissertation highlights why college flute choirs around the country were formed, how they structure their rehearsals, and warmup ideas. This document did not discuss other

[8] Gabrielle Padilla, "Chamber Music Fundamentals and Rehearsal Techniques for Advancing String Students," D.M.A. diss., (West Virginia, 2021).
[9] Robert Carlisle Parker, "A Performance Guide for Trombone Quartet: An Application of Pedagogical Concepts and Techniques for Developing Ensembles," D.M.A. diss., (University of Iowa, 2018).
[10] Benjamin H. Vasko, "An Exploration of the Benefits to Student Musicianship and Wellbeing of the Collegiate Tuba/Euphonium Ensemble," D.M.A. diss., (Boston University, 2022).
[11] Adah Toland Mosello, "The University Flute Choir: A Study of Its Viability as a Performing Ensemble and Instructional Medium with a Compendium of Recommendations and Warm-up Exercises," D.M.A. diss., (Ball State University, 1989).

forms of flute choir: youth, community, and advanced adult, and did not provide pedagogical strategies applicable to flute choir outside of the context of warmups.

The other dissertation that mentioned flute choir was by Yoon Hee Kim. Her 2013 document was called "The Commissioned Flute Choir Pieces Presented by University/College Flute Choirs and NFA Sponsored Flute Choirs at National Flute Association Annual Conventions with a Brief History of the Flute Choir and Its Repertoire."[12] The purpose of this composition was to document commissioned repertoire for the flute choir, more specifically music for five or more flutes, presented by university flute choirs and National Flute Association sponsored flute choirs at NFA conventions. Kim presented the composer, title, premiere and publication information, conductor, performer, and instrumentation for each work. They included a brief history of the ensemble, its repertoire, and the NFA sponsored flute choir. Rather than a pedagogical focus, this document proffered a compilation of works appropriate for the collegiate flute choir.

The research on existing academic writing concerning flute choir included informative articles and books regarding flute choir warmups, repertoire lists, how to start a flute choir, how to build a flute choir concert program,[13] considerations for music adaptation,[14] seating arrangements,[15] ideas for flute choirs to improve with online

[12] Yoon Hee Kim, "The Commissioned Flute Choir Pieces Presented by University/College Flute Choirs and NFA Sponsored Flute Choirs at National Flute Association Annual Conventions with a Brief History of the Flute Choir and Its Repertoire." D.M.A. diss., (Ohio State University, 2013).
[13] Sara Nichols, "Selecting Flute Choir Repertoire," *Flute Talk* (December 2018), July 5, 2023, https://theinstrumentalist.com/articles/FluteTalk/December-2018/Selecting-Repertoire/. As well as Patricia George, "A Collection of Recent Flute Choir Programs from Across the U.S," *Flute Talk* (December 2018), July 5, 2023.
[14] Amy Rice-Young, "Adapting Music for Your Ensemble," *Flute Talk* 4, No. 2 (October 1984):7-8.
[15] Carol Kniebusch, "Flute Choirs Are the Answer," *Instrumentalist* 35, No. 9 (April 1981): 32-34.

sessions,[16] tips for flute choir members,[17] and more. Articles, catalogued in *Flute Talk Magazine*, *NFA Quarterly*, and *The Instrumentalist*, were great resources for short, concise opinion pieces written by flutists on topics connected to flute choir.

[16] Patricia George, "Keeping the Dream Alive," *Flute Talk* (July 2020) https://theinstrumentalist.com/articles/FluteTalk/July-2020/Keeping-the-Dream-Alive/.
[17] Patricia George, "Tips for Flute Choir Members." *Flute Talk* (December 2018), July 5, 2023, https://theinstrumentalist.com/articles/FluteTalk/December-2018/Tips-for-Flute-Choir-Members/.

Chapter 2: Biographical Information of Involved Individuals and Ensembles

Introduction to the Directors of Flute Choir Involved With This Study

Dr. Rebecca Poole was the director of the Austin Youth Flute Choir. Dr. Poole received her bachelor's degree from Stephen F. Austin State University and held a master's degree and a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Houston. She acted as a freelance flutist, teacher, masterclass artist, and flute choir director. She was on the private lesson faculty at Westwood High School and Walsh Middle School in Round Rock ISD.[18]

Wendy Webb Kumer founded a music program called the Flute Academy. This program provided music classes, flute lessons, chamber music, piano lessons, and flute choirs. The flute choirs connected to her academy were Fluteloops, Flutations, and City Flutes. She also organized, recruited, and secured performance opportunities for the Pittsburgh Professional Flute Orchestra. Ms. Kumer was a veteran flute teacher, performer, director, clinician, and masterclass artist with more than 22 years of experience on faculty at Duquesne University. She was selected as the Director of the National High School Flute Choir in Washington, DC, and served as an Artist/Clinician for the Selmer Corporation for five years.[19]

Alison Brown Sincoff was the director of the Ohio University Flute Choir. Professor Brown Sincoff has served as the Professor of Flute at Ohio University since 1997 and was named the Ohio University School of Music's Outstanding Teacher of the

[18] "About Me," Dr. Rebecca Poole's Flute Studio, May 2, 2023, https://pooleflutestudio.mymusicstaff.com/About-Me.
[19] Flute Academy.com

Year in 2009. She performed with faculty members from Ohio University and various other universities within the state of Ohio as part of established chamber groups: *Lyric Duo, Athenia,* and *PANdemonium4*. Professor Brown Sincoff was a featured soloist on several recordings with Ohio University premier ensembles including Joel Puckett's *The Shadow of Sirius*. She frequently performed as a substitute flutist within Columbus (OH) and West Virginia Symphony Orchestra. She served on the Board of Directors for the National Flute Association from 2011-2013 and performed and presented at several music conferences. Professor Brown Sincoff held the Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Illinois, the Master of Music degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and completed doctoral studies at the University of Cincinnati.[20]

Dr. Jennifer Grim was the director of the Frost Flute Ensemble. Dr. Grim was the Associate Professor of Flute at the University of Miami Frost School of Music. She was an active soloist and chamber performer with national acclaim. She performed with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble, and performed throughout the United States, China, Colombia, Panama, and many other countries. She served as the Principal Flute of the Mozart Orchestra of New York. At her previous teaching post, she was honored with the 2017 Teacher of the Year Award from the UNLV College of Fine Arts. She provided masterclasses across the country and served on the Board of Directors of Chamber Music America and the National Flute Association. Dr. Grim held a Bachelor of Arts degree from Stanford University and the Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees from Yale University.[21]

---

[20] "Alison Brown Sincoff," Ohio University School of Music, April 19, 2023, https://www.ohio.edu/fine-arts/music/browna2.
[21] "Jennifer Grim," University of Miami: People, March 14, 2023, https://people.miami.edu/profile/31a167007d6645350c8814fc4bdbd853.

Sara Nichols was the director of the Baltimore Flute Choir. Ms. Nichols has curated a diverse musical career through her work as a teacher, soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral flutist. She was principal flute of the Baltimore Opera Orchestra for 22 seasons and has performed as principal and guest principal flute with the Baltimore and St. Louis Symphony Orchestras, the National Gallery Orchestra, Wolf Trap Orchestra, the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra, and more. She served as a faculty member at Towson University and the Baltimore School for the Arts. Many of her students have won positions in youth orchestras, regional and national competitions, including high school flute choir competitions, and have been awarded scholarships at major universities and conservatories. While most former students currently pursue professional careers as performers and music educators, many continued to play for enrichment and enjoyment. Ms. Nichols has been published in *Flute Talk Magazine* and the *NFA Quarterly*, and hosted Flute Spa masterclasses for esteemed flute pedagogue, Patricia George. The Baltimore Flute Choir was selected to perform at the 2018 and 2022 National Flute Association Conventions.

Patricia George was the Fox Valley Flute Choir director and an award-winning author. Ms. George has served on the Eastman School of Music Preparatory Department, Brigham Young University, Idaho, and Idaho State University faculties. She was an artist teacher at the Sewanee Summer Music Festival for 19 years and performed with the Elkhorn Music Festival/Sun Valley Summer Symphony as Principal Flutist for 13 years. She was the editor of *Flute Talk Magazine* for 10 years and shared her teaching wisdom through her work writing the monthly column “The Teacher’s Studio.” Her major teachers included Frances Blaisdell, Joseph Mariano, William

Kincaid, and Julius Baker. Ms. George held Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees and was awarded the Performer's Certificate in Flute from the Eastman School of Music. She has presented over 200 Flute Spa masterclasses across America and Europe and co-owned the Fabulous Flute Music Company with her colleague Phyllis Avidan Louke. Their mission was to provide quality publications to promote an improvement in the standard of teaching flute and a lifelong love of music.[22]

Christina Steffen was the director and founder of the Desert Echoes Flute Project. This program included the DEF Community Flute Choir, DEFproject, and the DEF Chamber Choir. The chamber choir performed chamber works without a conductor. Ms. Steffen was a well-rounded musician with experience teaching, conducting, and coaching. She served as an applied music instructor at Mesa Community College and has performed in many parts of America and Europe. She gave the southwest premiere performance of the Bohmler "Sonata Celebre" and was featured as the soloist for the world premiere of Freedman's "On the Other World" for alto flute and flute choir at the National Flute Association Convention. Ms. Steffen has performed with the Phoenix Symphony, local orchestras for national Broadway Tours, and released her recorded album, *Paradisa*! She presented clinics and has taught at several summer music camps, including the Mesa Community College Summer Flute Project. Ms. Steffen was invited to conduct the 2022 NFA High School Flute Choir and was scheduled to direct the High School Flute Choir for the Mid-Atlantic Conference in

[22] "About Us," Fabulous Flute Music Company, May 17, 2023, https://fabulousflute.com/about-us/.

2025. She held bachelor's and master's degrees in flute performance from the University of Arizona School of Music.[23]

The following charts (Figures 2 & 3) describe the biographical information of all 11 flute choirs directed by the seven participants interviewed. The charts are structured to display the differences and similarities in characteristics across the groups:

[23] "Christina Steffen-Flute," azflute.com, February 21, 2023, http://www.azflute.com/christinasteffenbio.html.

Flute Choirs 1-5 Biographical Information Chart

Figure 2

	Austin Youth Flute Choir	Fluteloops	Flutations	City Flutes	Pittsburgh Professional Flute Orchestra
Director	Dr. Rebecca Poole	Wendy Kumer	Wendy Kumer	Wendy Kumer	Wendy Kumer
Year Founded	2019	1980's	1980's	1980's	1998
Audition (for acceptance or placement)	Yes, send in recording of 2 major scales, chromatic scale, and region music or part of a solo	No	No	No	No, admittance by invitation
Group Composition	High schoolers, 8th graders welcome with teacher recommendation	Middle schoolers (grades 7-8)	High schoolers (grades 9-12)	90% adults, a couple of kids	Professional flute players/teachers
Size	15 students	5 students and 2 adult learners, This past year Fluteloops and Flutations combined due to small numbers post-covid and were supplemented with 3 college interns	4 students	45 members	25 members
Rehearsal Location	St. John's Methodist Church	First Trinity Lutheran Church	First Trinity Lutheran Church	First Trinity Lutheran Church	First Trinity Lutheran Church and other areas north of Pittsburgh to accommodate members
Rehearsal Length and Frequency	Sunday afternoons for 1.5 hours (1x a week)	Saturday mornings for 1 hour (1x a week)	Saturday mornings for 1 hour (1x a week)	Saturday afternoon for 1.5 hours (1x every other week)	Meet for 3 rehearsals (1x a week) before a gig
Rehearsal Structure	Students warm up and tune on their own before rehearsal, long tones unison F scale to get the air moving and students listening, F scales in rounds to listen to harmony, work on repertoire	Choose a piece from the binder (each student has a book of pieces they bring each time in each group), tune, work on repertoire	Choose a piece from the binder, tune, work on repertoire	Choose a piece from the binder, tune, work on repertoire	Choose a piece from the binder, tune, work on repertoire
Recruitment	Local flute teachers advise their students to join, advertised on the Austin Flute Society email newsletter	Local flute teachers and band directors advise their students to join	Local flute teachers and band directors advise their students to join	Director reaches out to flutists in the area and adds people to an email list if they are interested, word of mouth	Director reaches out to flutists in the area, word of mouth

	Austin Youth Flute Choir (cont.)	Fluteloops (cont.)	Flutations (cont.)	City Flutes (cont.)	Pittsburgh Professional Flute Orchestra (cont.)
Active Seasons	Takes place in spring, 10-13 rehearsals per season	2 semesters (September-December and January-March)	2 semesters (September-December and January-March)	2 semesters (September-December and January-March)	Whenever there is a gig (like National Flute Convention or pre-concert performances for the Pittsburgh Symphony)
Financial Support	Part of the Austin Flute Society budget is devoted to funding the youth flute choir, participants purchase student membership to Austin Flute Society ($50 per student)	Tuition per semester ($100 per student)	Tuition per semester ($100 per student)	Tuition per semester ($85 per member)	Free to participate, director owns music and rehearsal spaces are free to use
Available Auxiliary Instruments	(Provided by director, Austin Flute Society, local flute teacher, student, or band program) 2 piccolos, 2 altos, 2 basses	Occasional use of 1 alto (provided by director)	Occasional use of 1 piccolo, 1 alto, 1 bass (provided by director)	1 piccolo, 6-7 altos, 6-7 basses, 1-2 contras (provided by director and participants)	1 piccolo, 2-3 altos, 2-3 basses, 1 contra (provided by participants and director)
Seating (From conductor's point of view left to right)	Front row: flute4 and flute5, altos, and basses. Back row: flute3 flute2 flute1 parts. Students will change seats according to the piece they play to maintain part set up	All stand in one row: flute1, flute2, flute3, flute4, flute5, (occasional alto), with minimal movement between pieces	All stand in one row: (occasional picc), flute1, flute2, flute3, flute4, flute5, (occasional alto/bass), with minimal movement between pieces	Members sit during rehearsal (stand for performance), altos and basses in front row, C flutes wherever they choose, (less experienced players are placed next to a mentor of same part)	Members stand by part with minimal movement between pieces: picc, flute1, flute2, flute3, flute4, flute5, alto, bass
Ways to Find Them	Website at https://www.austinflutesociety.org/ayfc	Website at www.fluteacademy.com or videos under YouTube channel: Flutecompultions, or announcements on the Pittsburgh Flute Club Facebook page	Website at www.fluteacademy.com or videos under YouTube channel: Flutecompultions, or announcements on the Pittsburgh Flute Club Facebook page	Website at www.fluteacademy.com or videos under YouTube channel: Flutecompultions, or announcements on the Pittsburgh Flute Club Facebook page	Announcements on the Pittsburgh Flute Club Facebook page

Flute Choirs 6-11 Biographical Information Chart

Figure 3

	Ohio University Flute Choir	Frost Flute Ensemble	Baltimore Flute Choir	Fox Valley Flute Choir	DEF Community Flute Choir	DEFproject
Director	Alison Brown Sincoff	Dr. Jennifer Grim	Sara Nichols	Patricia George	Christina Steffen	Christina Steffen
Year Founded	Unknown (professors before her founded) she began teaching at OU in 1997	Unknown (professor before her founded) she began teaching at UM in 2019	2004	2011	2016	2006
Audition (acceptance or placement)	No, not for the flute choir (auditions held to become part of the studio- don't need to be part of the studio to be part of flute choir)	No, not for the flute choir (auditions held to become part of the studio- required to be part of the studio to be part of flute choir)	Yes, fill out application, prepare a fast movement and slow movement of applicant's choosing to play for director and librarian in person	No auditions for current members of her private studio, others are asked to play anything they want for director for admission	No	Yes, play in person for panel of 3 or 4 members. Audition asks for specified excerpts, any major scales full range, chromatic scale full range, sight reading.
Group Composition	4 master's students, 12 undergraduate music majors, 4 non-music majors	3 flute DMA students, 2 multiple woodwind DMA students, 2 MM students, 11 undergraduate music majors	Age span from 16 to seniors	Age span of 17-late 70's, some students from Lawrence University	High schoolers-professional level players	Professional flutists, music educators, college students, members of the community
Size	18 students	18 students	12-14 members	16 members	31-40 members	23-31 members
Rehearsal Location	Classroom in the OU School of Music	Classroom in the University of Miami Frost School of Music	St. Ursula Catholic Church	First Congregational UCC Church	Classroom in the Mesa Community College Music Department	Classroom in the Mesa Community College Music Department
Rehearsal Length and Frequency	Friday afternoons for 55 min (1x a week), might use 1 or 2 studio classes for further rehearsal if needed before a performance	Wednesday 1.5 hours (1x a week), might use 1 or 2 studio classes for further rehearsal if needed before a performance	Sunday evenings 1.5 hours (1x a week)	Monday evenings 1.5 hours (1x a week)	Wednesday evenings 2 hours (1x a week)	Monday evenings 1.5-2+ hours (1x a week)
Rehearsal Structure	Start with tuning exercise "Pass the A" and 3-part rounds, rehearse repertoire.	No warmup, tune, rehearse repertoire	First 10-12 minutes selected warmups Tuning accomplished with adjusting intervals and chords in all octaves. Tuning to drones encouraged outside of rehearsals.	First 30 minutes: warm up using exercises out of *The Flute Scale Book* and *The Art of Chunking* to work on improving flute technique and expressive skills. Next hour: rehearse repertoire	Warmup exercises and tune as a group, rehearse repertoire	Tune, rehearse repertoire (currently does not rehearse every piece each week- uses a rotation of pieces)

	Ohio University Flute Choir (cont.)	Frost Flute Ensemble (cont.)	Baltimore Flute Choir (cont.)	Fox Valley Community Flute Choir (cont.)	DEF Community Flute Choir (cont.)	DEFproject (cont.)
Recruitment	Announce opportunity to join to the Symphonic and University bands, some students email her inquiring about flute opportunities, occasionally set up a table at resource fairs on campus, all members of the flute studio join the flute choir	Required for studio members to participate, no outside members at this time	Open to new members. Inquiries made through our website www.baltimoreflutechoir.com	By word of mouth, newspaper articles, online news articles, concert attendees enquiring about enrollment	By word of mouth from current members, website, posters on social media, Arizona Flute Society newsletter announcements	By word of mouth from current members, website, posters on social media, Arizona Flute Society newsletter announcements
Active Seasons	University fall and spring semesters	University fall semesters	Fall semester: post Labor Day to holidays, Spring semester: January-early June	September-June 10	University fall, spring, summer semesters	University fall, spring, summer semesters
Financial Support	OU School of Music allocates a budget for all flute repertoire (solo, duets, trios, flute choir, etc.), OU Flute Club can help fund projects if voted worthwhile	Frost School of Music allocates a budget for all flute repertoire (solo, duets, trios, flute choir, etc.)	Semester dues, music is purchased from the dues and by the director, no fees to use rehearsal/performance space	No dues, director purchases music, no fees to use rehearsal/performance space	Members required to sign up for university credit hour course to participate ($100), budget from MCC, generous endowment donated by family member in honor of a former member of DEFproject	Members required to sign up for university credit hour course to participate ($100), budget from MCC, generous endowment donated by family member in honor of a former member of the DEFproject
Available Auxiliary Instruments	School owns 3 piccolos, 3 altos, 2 basses	School owns 2 piccolos, 6 altos, 4 basses	(Participants own) 1 piccolo, 3 altos, 3 basses, 1 contra	Participants own 16 piccolos, 10-12 altos, 5-6 basses (rotate auxiliary every piece)	Provided by college, director, and participants, varies by semester and piece (largest in summer- 4 piccolos, 7 altos, 4 basses, 2 contras)	Provided by college, director, and participants, varies by semester and piece (largest in summer- 5 piccolos, 3 sopranos, 6 E♭ flutes, 11 altos, 5 basses, 3 contras)
Seating (From conductor's point of view left to right)	Front row: flute4, flute5, altos, and basses. Back row: flute1, piccolo, flute2, flute3 parts. Students will change seats according to the piece they play to maintain part set up	Front seated line: (flute4 flute5 alto2 alto1 bass1 bass2) back line standing: (flute1 piccolo flute2 flute3) It varies depending on the repertoire and how many harmony parts	Front row: C flutes. Middle row: contra, C flutes, piccolo. Back row: altos, basses (special attention to angle of chairs for best projection)	Front row: flute1, flute2, flute3, flute4, flute5, flute6. Back row: picc, alto2, alto1, bass1, bass2, contra.	Members sit wherever they choose, not necessarily by section, director occasionally assigns seating on particularly challenging works	Members sit wherever they choose, not necessarily by section, director occasionally assigns seating on particularly challenging works
Ways to Find Them	Ohio University Flute Studio Facebook page	YouTube studio page: frostflutestudio9755, Facebook page: FrostFlutes, Instagram: frost_flutes, https://instrumental.frost.miami.edu/areas-of-study/flute/index.html	Website at https://baltimoreflutechoir.com/ and Baltimore Flute Choir Facebook page	Fox Valley Flute Choir Facebook page	Websites at http://www.defproject.org/ accounts on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, website https://www.mesacc.edu/flute-events	Websites at http://www.defproject.org/ accounts on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, website https://www.mesacc.edu/flute-events

Chapter 3: Ensembles Organized By Setting

Youth, collegiate, community, and advanced adult settings were determined by the age and experience level required of members in ensembles. After consulting with the seven directors, one main common purpose emerged within the four settings. All of their goals regarding performance, musical fundamental work, and extra-musical opportunities at various levels of sophistication ultimately fell within the purpose of improvement: as a flutist and as a person.

Youth Flute Choirs

Youth flute choirs were defined as ensembles with membership either entirely comprised of children, typically middle school and high school aged, (like the Austin Youth Flute Choir), or comprised of children and adult learners or adult assistants sitting in the ensemble (like Fluteloops and Flutations).

Dr. Poole's goals for the Austin Youth Flute Choir included providing opportunities for the students to collaborate and learn ensemble skills, meet flutists from other schools, practice professional deportment, and learn repertoire that bridges the difficulty gap between flute solos and band literature. She expected students to prepare and learn their music prior to rehearsal and work to become engaged and accountable members of an ensemble. Students supported the growth of the ensemble by showing up ready to collaborate. She stated that flute sound can be lost in the large school band programs in Texas. She wanted to provide an opportunity for students to build collaborative ensemble skills in an environment where students can hear themselves well. This allowed students a chance to become comfortable with playing exposed and

independent parts. Students could not hide their sound within a small flute choir. They had to do the work and play with projection to demonstrate confidence and understanding of the part assignment hierarchy. Their goals and growth were demonstrated in their concert at the end of each season. Questions that Dr. Poole worked to answer included: “How do we sound as a group? Are we performing this music? Are we making dynamic choices? Are we stylistically correct? And then relying on those private lesson teachers to keep developing them in that way, as well.”

Wendy Kumer’s two youth groups also focused on building part independence in a gradual manner. The Fluteloops students were middle school students, adult beginners, or adults re-entering music later in life. She prioritized teaching two- to three-part harmony because the majority of students either came from middle school bands where the whole flute section played in unison or they played solos by themselves in lessons. She incorporated practice with simple harmony starting with small amounts of split parts to build confidence. For the middle schoolers, according to Ms. Kumer:

> Practicing a part that's not the melody is earth shattering to them. If they play it at home, their mom asks, ‘What is that piece?’ ‘It's flute three on X.’ It is important to get them to understand that they're not always going to be the melody and to get them to play the harmonic parts and to do it in tune and in time and play together.

Another goal for the Fluteloops was to learn about roles within an ensemble. She introduced background roles, melody, harmony, rhythmic motor, and more. With the high school group, Flutations, she expanded the understanding of roles by relating to instruments in an orchestra and how their timbres and dynamics contributed to ensemble sound. She started to introduce the alto and bass flutes by occasionally

choosing repertoire with one low flute part. A student might play it with support from an adult helper. The harmony expanded to six- to eight-part and is orchestrated with polyphony rather than homophony. One of Flutations' goals was preparing for their end of semester concert. Ms. Kumer also educated the students on "how pieces are arranged, how they're orchestrated, not just for flute choir, but for band and orchestra, any ensemble." All of Ms. Kumer's ensembles that rehearsed by semester (Fluteloops, Flutations, City Flutes) performed on one concert per semester.

Collegiate Flute Choirs

Collegiate flute choirs were created using students attending a college or university school of music flute studio. The Ohio University Flute Choir was mainly comprised of the members of the university's flute studio and, at the time of this study also included four non-music major students enrolled at the university. Ohio University was a NASM-accredited public state institution and the School of Music resides within the Fine Arts College. The Frost School of Music was an independent Conservatory of Music within the University of Miami and was also NASM-accredited. The Frost Flute Ensemble was entirely comprised of members of the Frost Flute Studio.

Professor Alison Brown Sincoff's performance goals for the Ohio University Flute Choir included playing on the Flute Studio Recital and as a showcase during the Ohio University Woodwind Day. The OU Flute Choir also performed as part of the massive flute choir in the grand finale of Woodwind Day alongside the high school student participants. Professor Brown Sincoff outlined her general hope for the students: "Through the things that we do, community performances, performances at schools, and

teaching at schools and meeting other flutists and networking and all of those things, it's all a part of the package that I would hope would empower their own flute playing on an individual basis." She worked toward the students' growth as both players and educators. For some, this started with getting the students on the stage for the first time. Ms. Brown Sincoff shared, "One of the reasons I like to begin the studio recital with the full flute choir is because it allows everyone to get comfortable on that stage before moving on to a smaller ensemble or solo performance."

Dr. Grim used the Frost Flute Ensemble as an opportunity to break the ice and foster a positive environment right from the start of the fall semester. This incorporated the new members into the group dynamic, created a sense of community, and provided a collaborative opportunity for the studio. Aside from building relationships, she wanted to "work on practical and technical skills of intonation and blending and they get a chance to do that with each other, across different degrees, you know, younger students and older students together." Jennifer Grim believed the environment in flute ensemble was so important because "there's a different environment in studio class, and it's a little bit more competitive because people are playing in front of each other and people are a little more nervous in studio class, but in flute ensemble, it's a total democracy that puts everyone on the same playing field. I think it just humanizes everyone a little bit more."

Community Flute Choirs

The community flute choirs were made up of a wide variety of membership. These groups may or may not use an audition as part of the admittance process. Community groups tended to have the largest age and experience range compared to the

other settings. The City Flutes and the DEF Community Flute Choir did not utilize auditions. The Baltimore Flute Choir did include an informal audition in which the prospective member selected a slow, lyrical movement or etude plus a fast movement or etude. Although the DEF Community Flute Choir was sponsored by the Mesa Community College and members were required to sign up for one credit hour to participate, this group was not considered a collegiate flute choir. The membership was not made up of the Mesa Community College flute studio, the members included a wide variety of community flutists, and they were a self-described community group by name.

Wendy Kumer's goals for her community group, City Flutes, included performing on the end of semester concert, highlighting exceptional members with solo features, and performing engaging music. Ms. Kumer explained: "I want to encourage flute playing for life, not just until the end of high school or college." She did this by having all ages and levels play together in the finales of concerts to inspire, remind, and encourage every flutist to have fun and improve all skill levels. She promoted flute friendships and being a team player. She described taking her community flute choir on a "preparation" journey, from printing the music to being at a concert-ready level. This group's sense of community was so strong, she said, "We would still gather and play even if there were no concerts. We all love the flute, each other, and playing. It's a magical world on those Saturday mornings." Ms. Kumer worked hard to create a welcoming environment for members to work on improving themselves.

Christina Steffen worked toward providing an educational experience for the DEF Community Flute Choir. Her goals for the players included enjoyment of playing,

broadening musical horizons and knowledge, and working hard to improve individual and ensemble skills in a nurturing, engaging environment. They rehearsed intonation, balance, rhythm, and many other musical ideas. The group members nurtured and encouraged one another musically and enjoyed the social connections formed. Their improvements and work were highlighted in their concerts. They perform two concerts in the fall semester, two in the spring, and one in the summer. All of Ms. Steffen's ensembles (DEFproject, DEF Community Flute Choir, DEF Chamber Choir) performed on each concert with the exception of some summers when the chamber choir is inactive.

Sara Nichols and her Baltimore Flute Choir valued collaboration and elevating the skills of each individual member. The goal of the group at its conception was purely to provide an opportunity for flutists to play together. As the group evolved, they have raised the standards of performance and strived to improve technically and musically to produce polished performances. Ms. Nichols encouraged members to "develop their best tone or 'voice' so they can be as expressive and flexible as possible in any genre of music." The performance goal was about three concerts a semester. Sara Nichols said:

> While I'd consider the BFC a Community group, it's also a highly committed community group. I'm proud of my players' enthusiasm, good humor, and diligent preparation which has contributed to our surpassing ever-increasing technical challenges and, most importantly, created artistic and emotionally charged performances for us and for our audiences. It's a powerful gift for all.

This group performed at two national conventions in five years and prepared for these performances with increased rehearsal hours and several preparatory concerts. Ms. Nichols shared that

> The Baltimore Flute Choir presents a wide variety of repertoire from the Renaissance to contemporary works utilizing extended techniques and

> everything in between including original flute choir compositions, selections representing diverse cultures and underrepresented composers, classical transcriptions, popular and show tunes, and their own flute choir commissions.

Advanced Adult Flute Choirs

The advanced adult setting included groups that were comprised of professional flutists, music educators, advanced college students, and/or experienced members of the community. There was usually a comprehensive audition or special invitation to become part of a group in this setting. The DEFproject and the Fox Valley Flute Choir both utilized auditions for new members and had defined seasons unlike the Pittsburgh Professional Flute Orchestra.

Christina Steffen and the DEFproject prioritized choosing sophisticated repertoire, expanding their knowledge and application of musical style, and enjoying music making at a high level. In addition to performing on the concerts with Ms. Steffen's other ensembles, DEFproject sought out other opportunities like performing at the Musical Instrument Museum in Phoenix, AZ. DEFproject members were required to sign up for one credit hour at Mesa Community College to participate in the ensemble, but this group was not considered a collegiate group because the membership was not comprised of the Mesa Community College's flute studio. Overall, Ms. Steffen said her goal for DEFproject was: "I want everybody to enjoy playing. And to be challenged."

Patricia George and the Fox Valley Flute Choir valued improvement of technical and musical abilities for all members and performing concerts with quality repertoire in a polished and educated manner. The group rehearsal schedule or priorities were not oriented around gigs. Ms. George focused on developing the group into a serious and reputable ensemble. They maintained a dedicated rehearsal schedule and

performed five well-programmed concerts per year. Put most simply, the overarching goal was "to play the flute better." The group membership included a mixture of community members and professionals. Ms. George said: "Professions include accountant, family practice doctor who has Bachelor of Music, a social worker, several band directors, a realtor who plays in several community bands, a college band director, a stock broker, several Masters of Music and a couple of DMA's, and a prof of nursing." Due to the high number of members in the group with formal music training and the extensive lessons built into the rehearsals for the betterment of all, but especially the community members, the Fox Valley Flute Choir was included in the advanced adult category.

The Pittsburgh Professional Flute Orchestra, coordinated by Wendy Kumer, was an orchestra that came together when a worthwhile project or performance emerged. This group was brought together by invitation and consequent availability of the professionals in the area at the time of the performance. Ms. Kumer described how her ensemble formed:

> I noticed there were quite a few music teachers who played the flute and students who graduated from Duquesne and from Carnegie Mellon University. They were students of Jeanne Baxtresser and now Lorna McGhee. And they were hanging around Pittsburgh and doing whatever, getting some students auditioning all over the place, but they were living here and I thought we should take advantage of all these great flute players.

One event they have performed for a number of times is concerts at National Flute Association conventions once selected by the NFA after an audition and proposal process.

General Goals By Setting

The 11 groups involved with this study were not representative of all ensembles that may fall into each setting. Several general goals surfaced within each of the settings of the ensembles. The youth flute choirs generally supported individual playing ability and introduced collaborative skills starting from the fundamental elements of music. The collegiate ensembles used collaborative skills to build a sense of community and confidence as a performer at a higher level. Community group goals varied, but usually included valuing the enjoyment of music and collaborating with fellow musicians. They often prioritized educational enrichment during rehearsal due to diverse levels of experience. Members often had day jobs in careers other than music. Advanced adult groups had membership mostly made up of individuals with professions in music and/or extensive training. The advanced adult flute choirs had two main styles: groups with established seasons and groups that formed ad hoc for the purpose of a meaningful performance. Both approaches shared the requirement of membership experience and interest in sophisticated repertoire and elevated performance execution. All of these goals filtered into one main purpose: flute choirs use their rehearsals as a workshop to improve various musical elements. With these guidelines in mind, the 11 ensembles were organized into the four settings (see Figure 4).

Ensembles Organized by Setting Chart

Figure 4

Youth	Austin Youth Flute Choir, Fluteloops, Flutations
Collegiate	Ohio University Flute Choir, Frost Flute Ensemble
Community	City Flutes, Baltimore Flute Choir, DEF Community Flute Choir
Advanced Adult	DEFproject, Fox Valley Flute Choir, Pittsburgh Professional Flute Orchestra

Chapter 4: Pedagogical Strategies

Many approaches were utilized in flute choirs to improve the flute technique of ensemble members. This chapter focused on common pedagogical ideas that flute choirs incorporated into their rehearsals and the various ways flute choir directors addressed them. In particular, the directors mentioned tempo maintenance, articulation, dynamic contrast, vibrato, and repertoire quality represented the most common challenges to this type of ensemble. Directors of flute choirs involving all levels of experience dealt with warmups, rhythm and tempo, articulation, intonation, balance, blend, dynamics, vibrato, progress retention, conducting style, and literature selection. The purpose of this collection of strategies was to demonstrate that these elements are present regardless of experience level and provide approaches varying in complexity. Youth players and less experienced members of community groups may have needed an introduction into some of these topics while college groups would have benefited from a deeper understanding and the advanced adult groups may have utilized collaborative ideas to improve these elements as a group.

Warmups

Flute choir directors had different perspectives on warmups within the context of rehearsal. Some groups chose to utilize formal warmup procedures while others began with tuning and then jumped right to repertoire rehearsal. Directors using the second approach either expected ensemble members to arrive before rehearsal starts to warm up on their own or understood that the members will warm up during rehearsal of the first piece. All directors, with the exception of Patricia George and Sara Nichols,

commented that due to their limited rehearsal time, they preferred to spend their time working on repertoire rather than including a formal warmup portion of rehearsal. Depending on the context, most directors relied on lesson teachers, personal accountability, or their own private lessons with the flute choir member to address warmups unless a concept is helpful for the entire group or is necessary to address for the success of the piece.

Wendy Kumer's groups (Fluteloops, Flutations, City Flutes, and Pittsburgh Professional Orchestra) and Dr. Grim's collegiate ensemble did not utilize warmups during rehearsal time. After the group has spent time playing the first piece and have centered their sound, they had the ensemble tune and continue with rehearsal.

Groups that used a condensed warmup include the Austin Youth Flute Choir, the Ohio University Flute Choir, and the DEF Community Flute Choir. Dr. Poole asked her members to arrive before rehearsal to warm up and tune on their own time. At the start of the rehearsal, she continued the warmup process by having the group play long tones using a unison F scale to encourage them to open their ears beyond their own sound quality. She then moved to F scales in rounds to bring attention to harmony. F scales were familiar material for her students, due to its common use in school band programs. This familiar scales were not challenging for them to play and allowed the group to focus on sound instead of technique.

The OU Flute Choir warmed up with tuning exercises like "Pass the A" or scales in rounds. "Pass the A" started with the entire ensemble singing an A, then playing it. Then, the person at the far-right side of the room passed the A to the person to the left. Once the second person is in tune the first person dropped out and the third person

joined and so on. The scales in rounds were rehearsed by having one student in the ensemble choose the scale and another student choose a rhythm and/or a particular articulation. This allowed the students to isolate less familiar key areas or difficult rhythms from the repertoire.

The DEF Community Flute Choir has used *The Flute Choir Warm Up Book* by Amy Rice Young.[24] The director, Christina Steffen, also created her own exercises based on the needs of the group. Particularly coming out of the pandemic and starting in-person rehearsals again, she used exercises for tone, use of air, listening, balance, rhythm, and finding a tonal center at the start of rehearsal. If the group struggled with a passage of a piece, Ms. Steffen might have brought in a related exercise or use the music itself to address that concept or skill during the following week's warmups.

Sara Nichols and Patricia George devoted the most time to warmups amongst the directors. The Baltimore Flute Choir dedicated 10-12 minutes to a group warmup. Ms. Nichols selected warmups using harmonics, scales in rounds (by rows or sections), chord progressions, and exercises involving vibrato, articulation, scales in various speeds and rhythms. Ms. Nichols further described the warmups used by the Baltimore Flute Choir:

> The time and materials used are adjusted to accommodate factors including our upcoming performance schedule, if we are returning from a holiday break, or facing specific challenges (such as a particular articulation) in our current repertoire. All members of the choir are expected to purchase *The Flute Scale Book*[25] and *The Art of Chunking*[26] by Patricia George and Phyllis Louke. Members are also encouraged to utilize these warmups between our rehearsals.

[24] Amy Rice-Young, *The Flute Choir Warm-Up Book* (n.p.: Alry Publications, 1998).
[25] Patricia George and Phyllis Louke, *The Flute Scale Book: A Path to Artistry* (n.p.: Theodore Presser Co., 2011).
[26] Patricia George and Phyllis Louke, *Advanced Flute Studies: The Art of Chunking* (n.p.: Theodore Presser Co., 2015).

Ms. Nichols sometimes augmented with selected handouts. The warmups she created vary according to the goals and repertoire to be addressed later in the rehearsal. She believed in providing a variety of approaches to learning or reinforcing concepts and continued to seek out new books or exercises by attending NFA or Mid-Atlantic Music Conferences.

The Fox Valley Flute Choir devoted the first 30 minutes of their rehearsal to warmups using exercises out of *The Flute Scale Book* and *The Art of Chunking* to work on improving flute technique and expressive skills out of context from the repertoire.[27] As the co-author of the books and director of the flute choir, Patricia George was well equipped to utilize these resources to the fullest potential. On warmups, Ms. George said:

> They warm up on C flute. I'm opposed to letting somebody play alto for 13 years in a flute choir because what happens if you let somebody play alto and bass or contra all the time? They don't practice C flute and their skills go down. The place where you don't need the skills to go down are with the low flutes, because the low flutes control pitch and rhythm tempo.

She treated the first part of the rehearsal like a group lesson and worked to improve the members' musicianship.

Further warmup ideas beyond those presented by the seven directors in this study were found in Adah Toland Mosello's dissertation "The University Flute Choir: A Study of Its Viability as a Performing Ensemble and Instructional Medium With a Compendium of Recommendations and Warm-up Exercises."[28]

[27] *The Flute Scale Book* and *The Art of Chunking* were written by Patricia George and pedagogue Phyllis Avidan Louke.
[28] Mosello, "The University Flute Choir: A Study of Its Viability as a Performing Ensemble and Instructional Medium with a Compendium of Recommendations and Warm-up Exercises."

Rhythm and Tempo

In order to address rhythm and tempo problems, flute choir directors employed a variety of strategies. The use of clapping, snapping, and turning on a metronome during rehearsal were standard practices for ensembles. The directors highlighted additional methods that have proven successful in the context of the experience level of their players.

Dr. Rebecca Poole

- Clap or snap to the beat as the group plays.
- Send tempo marking expectations by email or verbally during rehearsal with the expectation of practice at home.
- Break into sectionals to rehearse part-specific material slowly and build speed as is comfortable.
- Listen to recordings at the desired tempo.

Ms. Wendy Kumer

- Play tricky tongued passages slurred to demonstrate true speed.
- Encourage members to simplify parts to downbeats if the tempo or technique is unattainable at current level of technical proficiency and add more of the material as is comfortable.
- Play goal tempos during the first rehearsal, even if just a few measures to set expectations. The rest of rehearsal can utilize a learning tempo.
- Turn on metronome and see how long the group can stay with the tempo.

Ms. Alison Brown Sincoff

- Verbalize the rhythm patterns using ‘lah, bah, or dah’ or numbers (ie. 1e+a) without the melodic material to isolate the rhythmic information.
- Play ‘Pass the Rhythm,’ another version of the ‘Pass the A’ game, where students establish a tempo and each recite the rhythm by themselves going down the line to try to match not only the rhythmic accuracy, but the phrasing, as well.
- Have all members of the ensemble play a rhythm simultaneously even if it is not included in all parts to provide support to members of the group struggling with the rhythm to avoid putting students on the spot in front of the group and allow them to match in the comfort of group sound.
- The director can sing the rhythm over the group while they play.
- Turn the metronome on, turn it off, and turn it back on later. Ask the group to assess if the tempo has been maintained.
- Play subdivisions, for example, fill in all eighth notes with sixteenth notes in a passage.
- Use an active ictus from the first movement in preparation to play to demonstrate tempo and energy.

Ms. Sara Nichols

- To address challenges faced in multi-meter works or extended passages with syncopations, Ms. Nichols “will conduct at a more moderate pace while the group utilizes a ‘sing-speech’ technique, much like scat singing, to reproduce their part. When the instrument is eliminated, players can more readily shift their focus to the pure rhythmic content which creates a deeper understanding of how

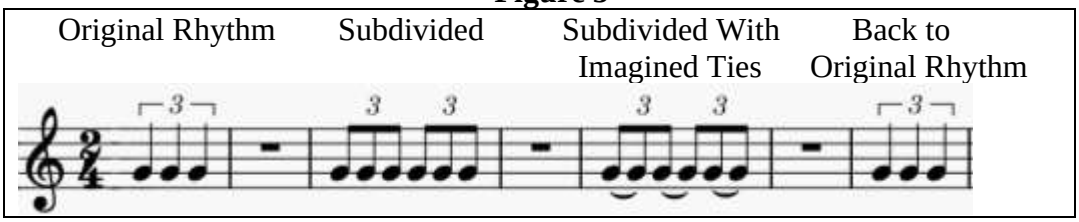
their part fits into the whole ensemble. Each person is encouraged to project their voice to the best of their ability."

- "Alternate fingerings may be suggested to improve awkward passages or remedy intonation issues. A helpful resource for both piccolo and flute is *The Complete Piccolo Book* by Jan Gippo, published by Presser."[29]

Ms. Christina Steffen

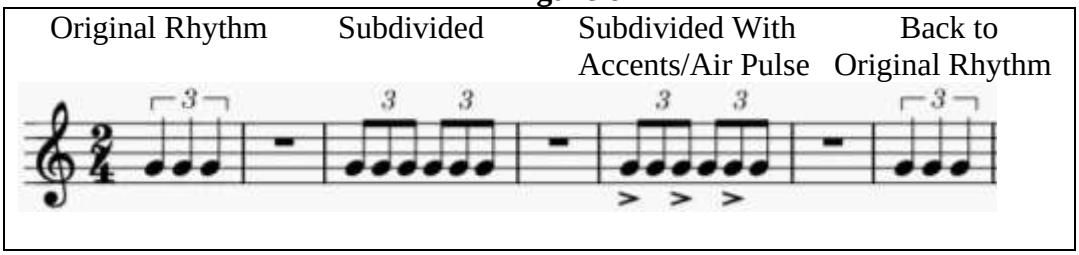
- Use subdivision and then imagine ties. For example, subdivide quarter note triplets into eighth note triplets and then tie them in two's so that they're really exact (See Figure 5).

Figure 5



- Place air pulses or stronger articulations within subdivisions to outline the written rhythm (See Figure 6).

Figure 6



- Provide simplified rhythms as needed and adjust accordingly to improved technique.
- Plug in a metronome to a speaker system.

[29] Jan Gippo, *The Complete Piccolo: A Comprehensive Guide to Fingerings, Repertoire, and History*, University of Michigan: Theodore Presser Company, 2007.

Articulation

Due to the homogeneity of flute choir, articulation played a large role in clarity. The style of the onset of sound had a direct impact on tempo and rhythmic alignment. The directors outlined that when flutists play with the same articulation used in solo flute playing, the flute choir sounded unclear. On articulation, Wendy Kumer believed: "The secret to a vibrant flute choir isn't the intonation or tempo, it's the articulation." In general, articulation used in flute choir needed to be shorter and more defined. There were many syllable options used in flute articulation to achieve different levels of crisp and soft attacks. Some mentioned included ta, tu, toh, ti, te, da, du, la, ka, ga, ha, and pu. These syllables were utilized in exercises and flute choir repertoire to achieve clarity in different musical contexts.

Dr. Rebecca Poole

- Use passages from the pieces the group works on to highlight when articulation is "too mushy and legato."
- Explain to the students that "articulation can also prepare you for the next note. You need that space in between the notes to prepare the clarity of the next note."
- Explain to the students the longer a figure is played, the more the player should exaggerate articulation to offset physical or mental fatigue.
- Come to an agreement on what syllable to use as an ensemble to establish clarity and continuity amongst 15 people.
- The director can demonstrate on their own flute.
- Use students as models to keep them engaged, reward students who are doing well, and encourage them to listen to one another.

Ms. Wendy Kumer

- Create intensity in the music using diaphragmatic accents. This is done by using a big push of faster air with the right attack and release of the note. She explains, "You have to make space between the notes."
- Explain the difference between the short length necessary when 50 people play flute at once versus solo playing.
- Have the group sing their parts using the syllables agreed upon, and then immediately apply it to the flute tonguing.

Intonation

All 11 directors interviewed advocated for the discussion of general tendencies of the flute during flute choir rehearsal. Members of the ensemble could hear themselves due to the volume capabilities of the instrument and could improve their pitch matching by tuning to the same instrument. Learning to tune amongst flutes presented an opportunity without a timbral difference in instrument found in mixed groups like bands or woodwind quintets.

Dr. Rebecca Poole recommended diving further into the additional tendencies of the piccolo, alto, and bass flutes with her youth group. When a part was out of tune during repertoire rehearsal, she advocated for tuning the whole chord, not just the wrong note. She introduced treatment of the root, third, and fifth of chords and had the students experiment with lowering and raising members of the chord until the tuning sounded right. She had them incorporate this new information into their repertoire and apply it. Wendy Kumer's youth groups received assistance with tuning one at a time.

They discussed as a group how to determine if a note is out of tune. She asked guiding questions like, “Do you sound lower or higher than the previous person?” Ms. Kumer explained if they are consistently out of tune, she advised them to push the head joint in or out. If a note in particular was out of tune, she demonstrated how to blow the air higher or steeper or more deeply to adjust the pitch that way. She also addressed posture because it can easily impact intonation. With her youth groups, she explained, “If they start turning in on themselves, they'll get very flat. And if they just pull their shoulders back and stand taller it often helps the flatness. They're usually flat, not sharp because they're a little shyer.”

Alison Brown Sincoff also encouraged her collegiate group to write arrows on notes that needed an intonation adjustment. She addressed air speed and ensured the group used an airstream that was moving and alive. When playing a piece during rehearsal, she prepared the group while she conducted by telling them, “Here comes our octaves,” or any other interval to get their ears focused on the problem spot in ahead of time. She also instructed the group to listen to difference tones. Sometimes, rather than listening to one single note, she had the group adjust until the difference tones were audible to provide another method of listening. She explained that this creates an “aural experience as opposed to just tuning the one note that's awry in the whole section.” This intonation concept would be an extension of the chordal tuning discussed earlier, appropriate and accessible for collegiate flute choir members.

Ms. Wendy Kumer’s community group, City Flutes, was much larger than the youth groups. According to her, “Intonation, surprisingly, when there's that many people, six or seven people on a part, it reaches a medium.” When there was an

occasional note that sticks out, she addressed the tendency and asked the members to draw an arrow above the note to indicate how to direct the airstream to adjust tuning.

Ms. Christina Steffen encouraged her groups to dive into the intonation tendencies of not only the type of flute they play, but also the specific player's tendencies and how they interact with the instrument they play on. She asked members of her community group to go home and explore their personal tuning by playing through passages slowly with a tuner. In rehearsal, she tended to use a D minor triad for tuning, with altos tuned separately due to their differing key on their D minor triad. Occasionally, she devoted rehearsal time to play through repertoire slowly and methodically by playing each note on her cue to figure out what is necessary to allow the chords to settle. Ms. Steffen recommended tuning from the bottom voice up by having the ensemble members create their intervals off the bass line and think about intonation chordally. When she spent time working through intonation as an educational concept rather than a singular piece of feedback, she went down the line one at a time, just like with the youth groups, and helped each person assess what they were and how to fix it.

Intonation issues were different in Ms. Steffen's advanced adult group, DEFproject. They needed more subtle corrections to adjust slight discrepancies across the ensemble. Rather than having the director explain how to improve intonation, this group listened to one another and came to an agreement on how to match either as they play or after a problem is pointed out. Ms. Wendy Kumer believed intonation presented a more frequent issue in her professional orchestra where there's only one on a part than in her community group. However, the members self-corrected more quickly due to

their professional experience and worked collaboratively to reach a consensus on intonation when necessary. Ms. Patricia George pointed out that: “In an ensemble, the worst players play early on the beat. The best players play on the beat or later on the beat. You have the weakest players in your group setting intonation, and that's not what you want. So, if you can get them rhythmically aligned, then your intonation will be a lot better.” With this alignment, the most experienced players led the onset of sound with stable intonation and the less experienced listened and melded into that sound. Ms. George also argued the setup of the flute choir also influenced intonation. For many years, low flutes were placed in the front because they were perceived as soft and lacking the ability to project. The alto and bass flutes made today can play at full volume and can be positioned anywhere in the group. She believed that when the low flutes are placed in the first row, “everybody behind that is playing off of reflected pitch. That means the front row pitch is going to the back wall and coming back, and then that's what they're setting their pitch on. That's not such a good idea, so I think we should take the cue from the string quartets or from the orchestra.” Ms. George placed low flutes and piccolo in the back row so that all members of the ensemble could clearly hear and base their tuning from the lowest pitch. Ms. Nichols also placed the low flutes in the back row, but the piccolo is placed in the middle row on the conductor’s right side. The single contrabass is placed in the middle row on the conductor's left so that player can “best blend with the altos and basses and project most effectively to the audience.”

Balance, Blend and Dynamics

Balance, blend, and dynamics were elements of music that all ensembles strived to excel in. Alongside intonation and dragging tempos, dynamic contrast was highlighted as one of the most common problems flute choirs face. Balance was achieved when the dynamics were observed in a manner that makes each part's musical role obvious and cohesive in the group sound. All flute choirs focused on creating balance in order to bring the musicianship of the collective to a higher level beyond correct notes, rhythms, and tuning.

At the youth level, Ms. Kumer believed repertoire selection made a positive impact on blend. When the repertoire was challenging enough to provide an educational experience, but familiar enough technique-wise, she was able to draw their attention to higher level musical interpretive ideas. Students were able to sound fuller and louder when they were not afraid to play their part. They had the confidence to execute their part and had the mental room to consider and listen to other parts simultaneously. Dr. Poole worked to introduce this concept, as well. The students may not have played repertoire that required them to perform a support role to melody before, due to the typical part writing for flute in band. She mentioned that tone production can be in its earliest stages at the middle and high school levels. Blending tone colors within a part or as an ensemble may be challenging at this point. Her technique suggestions included:

- Use drones to improve matching pitch and matching tone.
- Use student modeling when one particular person is playing with good style or dynamics.

- When encouraging the rest to blend, mention the amount of air, confidence, and opening or shaping inside the mouth.
- Find the fine balance between “creating a group sound and respecting that everyone has their own style.”
- To work on balance, she likes to isolate the melody and have the other parts listen to it while they follow along in their music.
- Ask the students to play if they think they have the melody to get them thinking about what role they play in the ensemble during a specific passage.
- Discuss part hierarchy and the places in the repertoire that dynamic change is necessary to clearly demonstrate it.
- After the students play, stop and see if they can determine who they should listen for, without prompting beforehand, to see who is actively listening.
- Acknowledge that the students’ experience in band has not provided many opportunities to play middle voices. Relate material in flute choir repertoire to what instruments in band would receive it and how they would perform it.
- Remind the group to check on ensemble sound quality if they become consumed with playing their own part.
- If the group sound becomes unstable or harsh, have a discussion with the group to decide on a different color.
- Encourage students to back away in volume after the onset of sound during long, sustained notes to make room for other parts.
- Reaffirm after the students made a change that they heard it. Have the director or the students themselves explain how they achieved it.

- Ask the students what they would like to improve on, especially starting midway through the season.
- Break down the physical changes necessary to play dynamics with proper intonation, for example how to create a forte without rising in pitch or how to play softly without going flat.
- Understand the capabilities of the ensemble members' experience levels. Dr. Poole said: "My group's dynamic range is smaller than an adult choir's dynamic range because the students are still building their dynamic range. They may not be able to play that soft yet. So being okay with it, as long as I'm hearing a change, then we're making dynamic contrast and being musical."

City Flutes, Wendy Kumer's community group, worked to maintain a cohesive and blended sound through consistent membership. This group did not utilize warmups, but the returning members created a core group that all new members learned from through discussion and observation. Some of the core group members had been participating in City Flutes for 20 years. They knew the depth and limits of dynamic contrast that Ms. Kumer asked for. Another way the ensemble developed a blended group sound was the practice of having all groups (Fluteloops, Flutations, and City Flutes) combine into one massive flute choir to perform the finale work of each concert. Although the repertoire may have been outside the scope of ability for the least experienced members of the combined group, they were paired with a mentor to sit with during the concert. They listened to the other groups during the concerts, and they got a small opportunity to perform alongside more advanced players. This immersive experience built quality group sound through participation and aural exposure.

College students can take balance and blend to a more advanced level than youth groups who are just starting to understand these fundamental ensemble skills. Alison Brown Sincoff and Dr. Jennifer Grim gave their students the opportunity to explore the extremes of volume capability and listening that were developed in their college training. Just like in youth groups, the college directors respected that each individual has a unique flute sound, but they worked together to adjust the group's collective blend. This uniqueness often stemmed from different approaches to flute playing rather than a lack of experience or tonal consistency at the collegiate level. Alison Brown Sincoff used:

- "Pick one note or one chord, especially in a piece. If you're at the loudest dynamic, just pick one note and have them play that one note. And be insistent about it, getting louder and stronger and look at articulation to get that note to respond and resonate the way that you want it to, and then build on that." After the sound has been achieved start adding more of the musical material in the measure and the measures around it.
- Discuss airstream speed manipulation. For example: play a loud note and analyze the speed of air. Then, take that same speed of air and play the note softly. Have the students figure out what physical changes need to occur to make both dynamics possible.
- Have the students demonstrate that the angle of the airstream during soft playing needs to be adjusted to avoid the tendency to be flat and the opposite is true for loud playing.

- The director can demonstrate the full capacity of dynamics to display the physical changes.
- Balance can be improved through score sharing/highlighting. Many students learn how to read more than one melodic line at a time in college. Give them the opportunity to see what part is the most important and active at a given time through score study.
- The director can play or sing along to highlight the moving or important lines while the group plays through a passage.
- Prompt and ask for feedback on what the ensemble members are hearing. For example, Ms. Brown Sincoff asked: “What are you hearing that we need in the other section? Or does that note sound a certain way? Or sound short enough? Or loud enough?”
- Build a cohesive group sound through pitch balance within chords independent of and using the repertoire in rehearsal.
- Use descriptive words to create mood or characterization of sections and pieces to start to utilize tone color changing. to encourage listening.

Dr. Jennifer Grim approached balance with another technique:

> I often will not conduct and just have different parts playing alone and have them really hear how they interact with each other. So that it's not necessarily about following the conductor skills. It's not those kinds of skills. It's the other kinds of chamber music skills. So just listening to different lines, listening to parts, listening to the baseline, listening to the other parts.

By relinquishing control of the conducting, she created an opportunity for the college students to workshop their own thoughts about balance. Dr. Grim also asked leading

questions like: “What is flute three playing when you're playing this section?" to see if the students were listening to what the other parts are playing. If necessary, she went through the section again to allow the group to focus their ears on the highlighted part.

Community groups included a variety of ability levels with regard to ensemble awareness and dynamic flexibility. Sara Nichols valued creating dynamic interest. In her opinion, “expression is paramount.” Some of the methods to advance her ensemble’s expression included:

- Develop contrast through incorporation of subito pianos. Ms. Nichols says, “To create the most effective subito piano, play the previous passage louder.”
- Encourage the ensemble to look up while playing to receive instant feedback and make immediate adjustments, when necessary.
- Refer to techniques utilized in warmups to integrate into passages, including air speed and flexibility. When the group is flexible with air flow and movement, she can help them sculpt the air and therefore the phrase with dynamics.
- “Assign a number to each note of a selected phrase to encourage a beautifully shaped phrase. Remember to utilize a faster vibrato for louder notes and less vibrato (or none) for softer notes to exaggerate the contour of the phrase.”
- Share excellent recordings of featured repertoire for inspiration. "If it's a transcription, also listen to the selection in its original form." Listening together in a rehearsal may be possible, time permitting, but preferable outside of the rehearsal.

Christina Steffen’s DEF Community Flute Choir maintained a friendly, joyful, and nurturing atmosphere. This made it easy to comfortably address the group with balance

issues. Some of the ways she encouraged the group to blend and balance their parts included:

- Call out the group as a whole when a part is buried.
- Address if a heavy articulation is causing an unintended increase in volume.
- Have the part that is hard to hear demonstrate their featured passage for the group to point out what to listen for.
- Assign parts with the knowledge of what experience members have in controlling the different registers on the flute. It is hard to control the loud volume the highest register naturally speaks in and the opposite in the low register. Assign members to parts that include pitches in their reasonable and personal range. “People who are not comfortable playing mezzo piano on a high A most likely are going be on a lower voice part with more people on the part. And that alleviates the issue even coming up in the first place.”
- Balance can also be addressed by assigning fewer people to the highest parts and more people in the lowest to aid in projection and blend.

In the advanced adult group, Ms. Steffen works on balance and blend, as well.

- Simply reminding the group of dynamic level or going back through the section with dynamics in mind is sometimes enough.
- If a dynamic level is not extreme enough, go back to the previous section and reassess the volume. Many times, the problem is solved when the section before is adjusted to create the desired contrast.

- Discuss timbral color as a means of characterization of sound. Set the mood and expression of a piece using tone and vibrato to achieve varying levels of transparency and richness.

Patricia George's advanced adult group incorporated dynamic practice into their warmups and repertoire rehearsals, just as Sara Nichols did. The group lesson at the start of the rehearsal was spent playing in unison. According to Ms. George, "learning to play in unison is huge and so many people don't take the time. Directors may be concerned that their group will protest if they are asked to play scales." This worthwhile investment of time improved the group sound and intonation. Flute choirs have a tendency to play moderato and mezzo forte. To add more dynamic depth and improve blend, she suggested the following methods:

- Rehearse the Mannheim sigh two-note slurs to juxtapose strong and weak volume.
- Harmonic exercises like "Blooming the Tone" from *The Art of Chunking* and further harmonics exercises from the book on pages 132 and 118 to learn to manipulate the embouchure effectively.
- Difference tone studies "where you have two pitches going, but you can hear the third lower pitch" to fine tune the ensemble's ears.
- Play tone color scales from *The Flute Scale Book* to practice exercises that turn on the dime (See Figure 7).

Figure 7

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 *forte*	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 *piano*	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 *subito forte*

- Another exercise that requires an immediate shift is playing four bars full and then play the next as an echo and “take the core out of the sound.”
- Find etudes that are public domain that include a skill or musical element the group needs more improvement on to isolate and take the issue out of the context of the ensemble repertoire.
- The configuration of the group can greatly improve balance in addition to its benefit to intonation. By placing the low flutes in the back, the entire group is directly exposed to the lowest part and can adjust accordingly to keep balance if necessary.

Vibrato

Vibrato was another important expressive tool used by flutists outside of dynamic, articulation, and tempo. This technique added another layer of depth to lyric playing. After careful study, all groups preferred certain types of vibrato in the flute choir setting but pursued the end product differently. The youth groups contained students at different stages of learning how to create waves in the sound. Dr. Poole talked with her students about matching vibrato speed across the ensemble. She also mentioned that many young flutists joining her ensemble did not use enough vibrato because the band programs they came from did not seem to teach it.

At the collegiate level, Alison Brown Sincoff addressed when to use straight tone and vibrato. The group discussed how to adjust passages from a lyrical perspective through opening up, using vibrato, and mentally ‘singing’ as they played. Some collegiate students had incorporated vibrato so often that it became difficult to take it out of the sound. Some students had a style of vibrato that stuck out of the ensemble.

During these cases, she had each member play their interpretation of the vibrato for a piece and the group had a discussion to decide what style is most appropriate for the context and why. Rather than framing this activity as putting people on the spot, it became a group experiment. Dr. Grim also addressed vibrato at the collegiate level. Her group discussed whether flutists who share the same part should match vibrato and if that uniformity is appropriate across the entire ensemble in different piece contexts.

The Baltimore Flute Choir, under the direction of Sara Nichols used vibrato as an extension of color and expression. She advised the group to play non-vibrato during extreme soft sections to de-emphasize the sound or to respect expressive markings like sotto voce. She encouraged the players to widen or quicken the vibrato during solo playing or to feature the melody part more strongly. Ms. Nichols often demonstrated the style or effect she requested on her flute and suggested various practice strategies to experiment with at home.

Christina Steffen's community group varied in terms of vibrato knowledge and execution. The topic came up occasionally, but it was addressed less often because of the level discrepancy. If everybody on a part played with straight tone and it stuck out or if the vibrato was distractingly fast, she took a moment to address the issue. In these cases, she introduced a group exercise to work on controlling the speed of vibrato waves. This benefited all members of the group to isolate this technique and it prevented singling out a few individuals. She started the exercise by explaining what vibrato was and how to use air to achieve it. She had the group play waves of air and set a slow speed at first. Once the ensemble could achieve clarity in the waves at that tempo, she gradually sped it up. This could be done in reverse order if the issue called

for it. This helped the members who were not aware of their vibrato style and those who just needed a reminder. Typically, she took melodic material that is specific to the part or those players who were having trouble and everybody participated.

Ms. Steffen's advanced adult group addressed vibrato with reference to the style era the piece is composed in:

> There are reminders for the auditioned group about style, like a Baroque era piece versus a Classical era piece versus a Romantic era piece. I will ask them to play with less vibrato or no vibrato in places. If I hear that someone is sticking out within the context of their part or the ensemble because vibrato is too fast or slow, I will address it. So far that really hasn't been a big problem with the group.

These recommendations were more focused on performing with period-typical style and occasionally suggested changes to ensure continuity of the group sound. The Fox Valley Flute Choir spent time during the 30-minute lesson defining vibrato. Patricia George had the group differentiate tutti vibrato and solo vibrato. She reminded the members of the group to know when they have the melody and adjust the style accordingly. When a part included a solo or soli, the vibrato was different than when playing something else, like a compliment figure. The time spent style matching vibrato during the unison portion of rehearsal made for a very easy application in the repertoire when distinguishing between a soloistic feature or blending vibrato. This style tool was used in conjunction and to enhance the balance and part hierarchy.

Progress Retention

Although each flute choir had specific individual goals, all strived to improve the flute abilities of its members. Each rehearsal worked toward the overarching goal of improvement. There were several factors that created issues with progress retention.

Length of time between rehearsals, absenteeism, and need for more thorough explanations of concepts all led to delay or lengthening of time to progress. All of the ensembles met once a week, with the exception of the Pittsburgh Professional Flute Orchestra, a gig-oriented group. This standard long gap between rehearsals can lead to progression patterns that stray from linear. Dr. Poole mentioned that the students are pretty engaged with the learning process each week. She said: "If you are going to take the time to be here, you are probably going to learn your part. You are not going to audition for something if you are not really going to give it your all." Dr. Poole had found that absenteeism was not a problem with her youth group. She organized the rehearsal schedule around holidays and school events to ensure the students were able to attend with little conflict. Rather than absenteeism, the youth groups' progress was largely determined by how quickly and effectively they grasped concepts and continued to incorporate them into the repertoire.

At the collegiate level, Ms. Brown Sincoff believed in setting realistic expectations when it comes to the learning pace of repertoire due to the limited time and rehearsal frequency. Flute choir was not the only ensemble college music majors participated in and had music to prepare for. She suggested creating a regular rotation of repertoire to make sure too many weeks had not passed before coming back to a piece. This approach involved doing shorter snippets of each piece on a regular basis. Another strategy was to bring a piece in a couple of times in a row, learn it to completion, and move on to spending the majority of rehearsal time on something else with small reviews of the initial piece. She usually had an opportunity to have an extended dress rehearsal prior to the concert. Sometimes if the group's progress was moving more

slowly than expected she was prepared to switch to a different piece or postpone a work until the following semester to fully prepare it.

Community groups like City Flutes or DEF Community Flute Choir struggled more with the absentee issue than the youth or collegiate ensembles. Ms. Kumer acknowledged the rehearsals took place on the weekends and the members in her group were “adults with stuff to do and places to go.” Ms. Steffen mentioned that people were more prone to missing rehearsal in her larger group, especially in the summer with vacations. When new people show up after the group has worked on a passage, she was persistent and continued to rehearse that technique or concept until the full group is secure with it. Other times, concepts took time to sink in and needed repetition. The learning was gradual and became more consistent as the group progressed in these cases. One way she addressed absenteeism or the need for more review by specific members was by conducting sectionals split by part or grouped by related parts. This allowed the time to be focused on the specifics of that part. And the other people who were not on the part that needed work didn't have to sit there. Other times, she ended the full group rehearsal early and asked that certain groups of players stay the full time to give them the opportunity to receive extra support.

The Pittsburgh Professional Flute Orchestra scheduled their rehearsals around the availability of its members and the date of the agreed performance. This sometimes led to more than one rehearsal per week. Their rehearsals were gatherings of professionals with the goal of preparing for a particular gig relatively close to the performance date. Retention was generally not a major cause for concern. Patricia George’s ensemble did not follow the gig mindset and dealt with retention week to

week. Her passion for flute, flute education, and her belief in her students and ensemble directly tied into her tenacity for improvement.

> I think if you ask any one of the people in any of the groups I've ever done, they would say that I have high standards for musicianship. That's what the important thing is: being musical. I just don't want people to come up and say, 'Oh we really enjoyed your concert. That was great.' I want them to come and say, 'Wow, I love that piece. That made me weep.' Then you've done something. So you just keep on it no matter what. Each week, I keep on it all the time in lessons.

Her philosophy was to never give up. Once they achieved a goal they set as a group, she set a new one.

Flute choirs regardless of setting, assessed how their progress developed. Members' ability to remember concepts may have been impacted by the length of time between rehearsals, attendance at every rehearsal was not always possible, and concepts varied in time required to learn, but the directors were relentless in their pursuit of improvement and reviewed as necessary.

Art of Conducting Flute Choir and Baton Use

None of the flute choir directors received extensive training in conducting. All seven directors were well-regarded and trained flutists who translated their musicianship to their conducting with the goal of being as clear as possible.

There was not a standardized approach to conducting flute choir with regard to baton use. Many of the directors tried conducting with their hands and with a baton and made their own determinations for what is appropriate for them and the needs of their group. Dr. Rebecca Poole, Wendy Kumer, Alison Brown Sincoff, Dr. Jennifer Grim, and Christina Steffen all used their hands to conduct their groups. Patricia George led

her ensemble using her flute, as she played in the group. Ms. Brown Sincoff and Ms. Steffen have gone back and forth on this decision, but ultimately decided to use their hands to conduct. Ms. Steffen said: “My hands are more expressive without holding a baton. Having the free use of both of them is my preference, but especially if a piece is faster, having the stick can help with clarity and maintaining the tempo. So I'm not opposed to using it. But I haven't used it with the groups in years.” With the Pittsburgh Professional Flute Orchestra and the Fox Valley Flute Choir, Ms. Kumer and Ms. George occasionally recruited a conductor with more formal training to conduct complex works. Depending on the individual, they may or may not have used a baton. Ms. George’s colleague used a baton. She believed that it was necessary to use a clear ictus at the end of the tip of a baton to prevent sloppy rhythm.

Dr. Poole, Ms. Brown Sincoff, and Dr. Grim felt their group was intimate in size and the ensemble was close enough to them to see details well without a baton. Dr. Grim explained that her collegiate flute choir was limited to the size of the flute studio she accepted to the university. “Because of how the ensemble functions, it will never be a huge group. So that's why I'm also wanting to treat it more like a chamber music ensemble rather than an orchestral kind of ensemble.” Ms. Kumer believed that she had the highest level of freedom and ability to gesticulate effectively without the baton in the way. Ms. Brown Sincoff, Ms. Wendy Kumer, and Dr. Grim mentioned that they formed a common language and understanding of movement with their groups at the beginning of the year. For example, Ms. Brown Sincoff explained that her closeness relative to the group demonstrated increase and decrease in volume expectations through leaning in and away.

Wendy Kumer's City Flutes and Pittsburgh Professional Flute Orchestra, as well as Christina Steffen's DEF Community Flute Choir and DEFproject all contained memberships larger than 23 people. Although these groups took up significant space on stage, both conductors preferred to use their hands rather than a baton. Ms. Steffen felt this preference allowed for more freedom of expression and worked better with music written for flute choir.

Dr. Poole's main concern in conducting was showing information regarding style, dynamic changes, and other expressive elements. She discussed instrument response time to the conductor with her students. The group played with an instant response to her beat due to their middle and high school band background. Dr. Poole explained that piccolo will respond more quickly compared to alto and bass. They devised solutions as a group to combat these natural tendencies. She typically counted the group off rather than breathing to start a piece to allow the students to collect themselves and play with their best sound in time. Alison Brown Sincoff believed the group worked best following the conductor when there was a delay in sound from when the ictus is given. "You have to conduct ahead of the beat a lot. You have to conduct faster. You have to start tempos faster than what you might think." Ms. Kumer's group also played with a delay in sound from the conducting. This was largely created by the acoustics in the cathedral where they performed and how far away from the group she had to stand in the space. They used this venue during dress rehearsals to become familiar with this feeling. According to her, "it doesn't usually change my conducting style. I'm usually preparing for that during rehearsals." This variance in sound delay across groups was tied to either pedagogical approach, like with the young students who

are unfamiliar with responding with a lag in time, or a desire to present information before it is necessary to perform the material or deal with venue acoustics.

Most flute ensemble directors mentioned occasionally choosing pieces written for smaller flute chamber ensembles for the group or part of the group to perform unconducted. These duos, trios, and quartets allowed groups to focus on different ensemble skills without the security of a conductor. Flute choirs that employed these types of pieces provided an additional opportunity to improve part independence, eye contact, and communication throughout the group. Due to Dr. Grim's chamber music approach, one teaching technique she used was starting the group by conducting and dropping away to let them continue with the music to learn to rely on each other and take personal accountability for their part. Patricia George's flute choir nearly always operated without a conductor. Their musical director often led while playing the bass flute part rather than standing in the front waving her hands for rehearsals and performances. Ms. George, like Dr. Grim, believed this method places the responsibility back on the player, but it also meant ensemble members might have to do some score study. Ms. George mentioned:

> When we first started, someone had to start a piece with a pickup. That turned out to be more of a challenge than you thought, because they'd always played with a band conductor and they just waited for him to unfortunately count off a whole measure and then come in. We all know if you ever took conducting, there's only one beat prep. We switch things around so everybody has that chance of having to lead.

The "no count off" approach required ensemble members to be aware and engaged with one another. She encouraged eye contact through practicing passing scales. They called this activity "Pass the Hors D'oeuvres." One person played part of the scale, made eye contact with another person, passed it, and that new person continued the scale pattern.

Although the directors differed in motivation to conduct using a baton or with their hands, they all shared the same desire to communicate clearly to the utmost of their ability. They used flute choir as a means to advance the skill and knowledge of its members rather than as a demonstration of conducting skill.

Literature Selection

All directors recommended attending the National Flute Association conferences as a way to find new flute choir literature. These events hosted flute choir concerts and workshops, provided opportunities to network with current directors and composers of this genre of music, and ran competitions for flute choirs to perform and composers to submit new works. These conferences have remained the most popular method to find new literature for flute choir directors for many years. In addition to investigating recommendations from her colleagues, Ms. Nichols researched using online resources such as Wonderful Winds,[30] Just Flutes,[31] Alry,[32] Flute.Net, and Sheet Music Plus.[33] Most selections can be previewed by mp3 excerpts or by links provided to view a live performance. Dr. Poole occasionally searched for new repertoire by composer rather than genre. She started with composers she likes off the NFA Selected Repertoire Guide online and looked up their composition lists on their websites or music publishing sites to see if they have written for flute choir, as well.[34] Ms. Steffen also received repertoire suggestions from other directors.

---

[30] www.wonderfulwinds.com
[31] www.justflutes.com
[32] www.ummpstore.com
[33] www.sheetmusicplus.com
[34] https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1b7qo7PQadqoQ3xO4VcwfqHeO8v0r2UvMWrKJba7a0QY/edit?pli=1#gid=78318158

Directors considered several factors when selecting literature for their groups. The ability of their membership, quality of the music, use of auxiliary instruments, variety of style or musical periods, providing opportunities to learn a new concept, the venue and audience engagement, suggestions from the ensemble, and original music versus transcriptions and arrangements.

Some directors liked to consider the venue during literature selection. Alison Brown Sincoff's flute choir occasionally went out into the community to perform. This past semester they prepared to perform at a farmer's market on Earth Day and had chosen repertoire that aligned with that theme. Ms. Steffen has created programs around a theme. Generally, she tried to choose pieces that contrast each other even within a theme. "I will try to balance fast, exciting pieces and something that's really pretty. Sometimes it's a mix of genres. We have done theme concerts, as I mentioned before. We did a 'Water' concert years ago, an 'Asian or Asian-inspired' concert, a concert of only classical transcriptions, a jazz fling, and holiday concerts." Wendy Kumer and Sara Nichols both found inspiration from the recent coronation in England. They went on the internet to find what pieces were selected for the ceremony and looked to see if there were musical arrangements available or pieces that were connected in some way to this event. They recommended looking for inspiration in everyday life, just as they did when creating themes.

Other groups did not consider the audience or venue during the repertoire selection process. Instead, they prioritized other aspects like validity of literature and enjoyment and improvement progress for the flute players. Christina Steffen used this approach but said, "I do keep the audience in mind in terms of program order and

structure. Mostly, I want to challenge the groups. I want to do music they enjoy playing. I'm always trying to do new things, although we will bring back things that we've done before." Dr. Grim mentioned that one of the main purposes of her group was to advance the abilities of her students. The Frost Flute Ensemble performances were hosted within the university concert series rather than out in the community. According to Dr. Grim, "This is really an academic activity, and so I pick pieces that are good for them. I don't know if the audience likes it. It's more about choosing pieces the students need to know and can benefit from." For example, her ensemble was selected to be part of the series of premiers for Julia Wolfe's flute choir piece, *Oxygen.*[35] During their preparation of the piece, she realized the group needed a click track. She organized creating one and acquired earbuds for all of the members of the flute choir. This provided a learning opportunity for the students with regard to preparing a never before performed work and how to navigate a form of technology used in performance.

Patricia George had a general structure in how she chooses the repertoire for a concert program. She usually started with some kind of an overture or a Baroque piece, then the next piece is a longer, more substantial work that might be 15 to 20 minutes long. In the past, they have done the Reicha Quartet, quartets by Fürstenau, or music by Kohler or Kummer. She mentioned: "I think it's nice not to have every piece on the program use bass and alto or piccolo. It makes your group better if everybody has to learn something like that." The use of C flute pieces required that all members of the group maintain their abilities on the standard flute. She also included a folk song, a piece that featured a member of the group as a soloist, and one final big piece. Ms. George believed that "when you feature different people in your group, they take pride

[35] *Oxygen* by Julia Wolfe (Red Poppy Ltd., 2021)

in that group, plus they really practice. So, it's a way of raising the level." This program format usually lasted around 60 minutes with the moving around. Her literature selections were meant to contribute to the establishment of her group as a reputable chamber ensemble rather than a gigging group. This kind of program is "a musical experience for the group. And then when people come in the audience, it's interesting for them. They're not nickled and dimed with 12 five-minute pieces."

All of the directors generally chose all repertoire for their groups. They were open minded to feedback from the group about what literature they liked and disliked. If the group absolutely disliked a piece most of the flute choir directors were willing to make a change to the program. However, if the chosen piece presented a necessary challenge, the directors found ways to assist the group through the growing pains. In groups that were paid to enroll or volunteer enrollment, the directors were more inclined to be flexible. Directors who had membership with a requirement to enroll, like in Dr. Grim's flute studio, did not necessarily have to follow the desires of the group. Even still, Dr. Grim fell in line with the other directors and listened to her students. She only insisted on repertoire when it was absolutely beneficial to the students' growth. If the college students in the OU Flute Choir disliked a chosen piece of repertoire, Ms. Brown Sincoff tended to encourage them to listen to recordings before passing judgement. She also liked to explain why she liked the piece and why it was worth it. Typically, hearing the reasoning was enough to inspire open mindedness to work once again. Christina Steffen and Wendy Kumer's advanced adult group members often made suggestions for pieces or had feedback on the chosen pieces, like on the quality of a new transcription. With a group this size, Ms. Steffens said, "There will always be complaints. You can't

make everyone happy." The best course of action was to find a balance between preferences and provide contrasting works for different people to learn to enjoy.

Dr. Poole liked to include folk songs and movie music arrangements for the students to relate to and enjoy working on. Those pieces tended to balance the works that the students had to grow to like. On the other hand, Dr. Grim said:

> I try to promote original compositions for flute ensemble rather than transcriptions, even though transcriptions do offer an important sort of role. And I can use it for pedagogical purposes. One year we did the last movement of Mendelssohn IV, and we talked about triple tonguing. Since these are all music majors, we talked about tonguing and articulation and triple tunneling and things like that. So, sometimes I'll use a transcription if there's some sort of other additional pedagogical benefit from it.

Alison Brown Sincoff kept track of her repertoire use by keeping a library catalogue of all the flute choir pieces she owns. She wrote down the date of the previous performance next to the name of the works. She took notes on the pieces in the margin of the catalogue to mark down what about it worked and what did not. After reading through the library, she might pull out pieces that were well-suited to performing at the NFA Convention or the Central Ohio Flute Association conference.

Part Assignment

Part assignment was an important part of the development of the members' musicianship. The youth groups had to strongly consider the number of parts and complexity of harmony during literature selection. Dr. Poole tried to assign two to three students per part. This provided support for all members of the group to learn part independence gradually without feeling isolated on a part. Many directors from youth, collegiate, and community groups mentioned using buddy, mentor, or partner systems.

This pairing of players with differing strengths and weaknesses allowed flutists to feel more secure and play parts that may not be accessible to both alone. These partnerships tended to only last for one piece before they were paired with a new partner. This allowed members of the ensemble to benefit and learn from all of their colleagues. In the Frost Flute Ensemble, Dr. Grim liked to utilize her graduate flutists as leaders for these pairings. According to Dr. Grim:

> This gives the younger student a little bit more comfort to play out because they're feeling very secure in their part because they have a more experienced player playing with them. And then to make sure that the older students are engaged, I tend to have one piece that just they do so that they can have a different, high level interactive chamber music experience.

Ms. Kumer tried to assign parts in a fair way with room for flexibility if a member of the flute choir preferred something else. In her experience: “Sometimes people will ask me, can I have a different part on this? Or I'll say, is anybody uncomfortable on any of their parts and you want me to switch? Or, I've discovered that we don't have enough thirds. Is there anybody? We have too many seconds too, we need another third. What second is willing to move? I have a new part for you today.” If she needed one on a part, she had them audition for the spot. These questions framed the necessary delegation of parts in a gentle and approachable way.

Part rotation was important to each director to allow the members of their groups to experience performing different roles within the ensemble, spend time playing in all registers, and create variety and interest for the players. Due to flute choir serving as a workshop for the advancement of skill, all of the directors stated that they did not assign the parts in order of technical proficiency from most experienced on part one and down. Instead, each director found a way to place strong players on each part and paired

them with members who needed a little bit of support. Additionally, all groups had the players switch parts throughout a concert program. Dr. Poole worked to avoid boredom in the rehearsal process: “I don't want somebody to be stuck on flute five or flute six their entire time.” Dr. Grim considered the strengths of her students and their seniority in the studio when assigning parts:

> I would like to give opportunities to younger students. And if someone has expressed a fondness for one of the auxiliary instruments, I try to honor that. If someone is in their last year, they're probably going to have a more prominent part than someone who is going to be here for four years. So, I give more solos and more responsibility to people who are closer to the end as opposed to the beginning of their time at Frost. Basically, since there's no audition, I just try to have a new, different person on the first part every time.

Alison Brown Sincoff at Ohio University also considered seniority with regard to part placement. She believed in having strength in the low register of the ensemble. Sometimes, when a strong player was assigned to a flute five part, they felt like they were being demoted. She tried to alleviate that feeling with part rotation. This allowed the student to be featured on some pieces and spend time playing parts that cumulatively utilize the entire pitch range of the flute. When it came to the lower harmony parts on C flute, in agreement with Dr. Grim, she said: “I probably would put a strong freshman or sophomore on a third, fourth, fifth flute part a bit more often than I would an upperclassman. They know that their time on higher, more difficult parts is coming.” Conversely, she has found that “there are some strong players that are happy with playing mostly on auxiliary” and she tried to respect their preferences in assignment.

Christina Steffen and Wendy Kumer both took part rotation very seriously. They each maintained a chart to keep track of who was assigned what part on all pieces in

their groups. Ms. Steffen double checked that each individual has a variety of parts throughout the program of pieces. She said: “If someone is on flute five all the time, I try to change it. Now because of level discrepancies, there are people in the ensemble who basically are playing the lower voice parts. They're really not going to be on a flute one because their expertise is not conducive to sounding fantastic on that part.” Essentially, she tried to provide a variety of experiences but made decisions that set each player up for success with their strengths and weaknesses in mind.

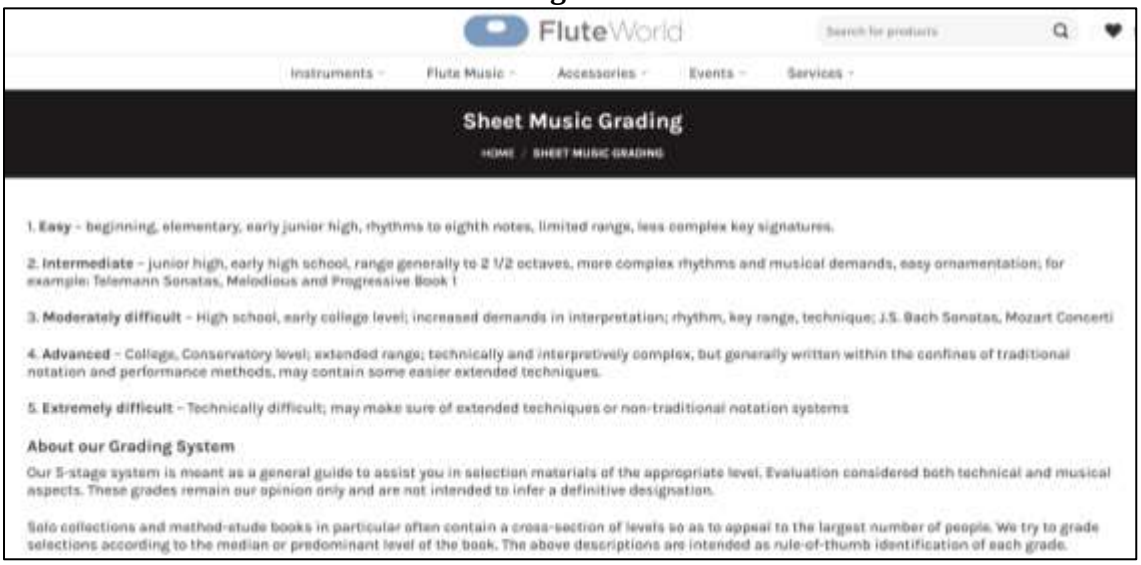
Rubrics to Measure Literature Difficulty

None of the flute choir directors utilized rubrics measuring difficulty when choosing repertoire. A rubric was a helpful tool in the literature selection process if the resource was specific and standardized. Unfortunately, at the time of this writing, no published rubric with an updated catalogue of flute choir repertoire existed. Many music publishing companies that carried flute choir music provided a grading system for difficulty on their websites. However, those rubrics were generally based on number of years of experience and did not include flute-specific techniques or information.

Wendy Kumer mentioned using the Flute World grading system when ordering music from their sheet music publishing company when she was a new flute choir director. This numbering system gave her a general idea of how difficult new pieces of literature would be if she did not know the work. The Flute World rubric provided very basic information to stipulate the levels of difficulty. The levels were first attributed to progression and stages of school: beginning, elementary, junior high, high school, college, and conservatory. There was no guarantee that all high schools present the

same level of difficulty in repertoire, so this system was not specific enough. The rubric included rhythmic complexity, range, key signatures, ornamentation, technique, interpretive demands, extended techniques, and non-traditional notation in addition to school levels. However, these characteristics were not measured by specifics. For example, range is included as a determining factor to difficulty but is merely described as limited without including a defined pitch parameter in Grade 1 (See Figure 8). [36]

Figure 8



Another music publishing company that sold flute choir music was Hal Leonard. This company provided a literature grade level rubric that was solely based on the number of years of playing experience. The grading scale included levels 1-5 and then P for Professional. Without any musical elements attributed to each level, the music purchaser was left to their own interpretation of what a flutist is capable of after one year of study and so on.[37] Although it was helpful to have some system to compare the literature on this company's website, there was a lot of uncertainty unless the consumer

[36] This image came from https://www.fluteworld.com/sheet-music-grading/, and was provided here with permission from Flute World.
[37] The Hal Leonard Grade Level and Series Guide was found at https://halleonard.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/360009867993-Grade-Level-and-Series-Guide-.

is already familiar with flute choir repertoire. This base of knowledge would allow the customer to judge new pieces by comparing new pieces to pieces they knew using their grade level and the challenges they pose.

Hal Leonard owned and operated ArrangeMe, a company designed to provide a platform for songwriters, composers, and arrangers to see their works. Within the blog section of this platform, an article entitled "Guide to Rating Your Music: Where Range and Grade Level Intersect" provided suggestions to arrangers and composers. This article provides a link to a grading rubric for band composers called the "American Band College Music Grading Chart." The specific parameters suggested may not be utilized across the music publishing companies, but they could inform a new flute choir director on what to look for while considering a score for their ensemble. The rubric included complexity of meter, key signature, rhythm, note values, and scoring, as well as the variance in tempo speeds, dynamics, ornaments, length, and pitch range as important characteristics to regard in the literature selection process with specifications for the grade levels 1-5. Below the musical characteristics, the chart included instrument specific information broken up into the five levels of difficulty. Although instruments other than the flute were included in this chart, the information relevant to ensemble grading and the flute category was still useful to flute choir directors. [38]

One collection of music that utilized a rubric that was entirely flute specific was *A Handbook of Literature for the Flute* by James Pellerite. This book was written in 1965 and only included some of the limited flute choir repertoire that existed at the time of publication. Second and third editions were published over the next two decades.

[38] The American Band College Music Grading Chart was available at https://www.bandworld.org/pdfs/GradingChart.pdf.

The National Flute Association, along with numerous flute clubs, flute choirs, and flute societies have since started hosting composition competitions and commission projects for the flute choir literature genre. Mr. Pellerite used the same grading system for all categories: methods, solos, collections, duets, trios, quartets, flute choirs, ensembles with different types of flutes, and orchestral and band excerpts. His system was divided into grades I-IX and aligned with school year like the Flute World rubric, but also included alternative levels of experience for different majors at a university school of music. For example, he categorized music for high school school flutists in the same difficulty level as music appropriate for students who took flute as a secondary or elective instrument, as well as some music education majors (See Figure 9).[39]

Figure 9

Grade I-II	Very Easy to Easy
Grade III-IV	Moderately Easy to Intermediate
Grade V-VI	Intermediate to Moderately Difficult
Grade VII-VIII	Difficult to Very Difficult
Grade IX	Extremely Advanced—Virtuoso Level

The above, then, will apply to the classifications according to academic levels. There will always be exceptions to this categorization, and the flutist's advancement must be revieweed periodically. The grading system is adaptable as follows:

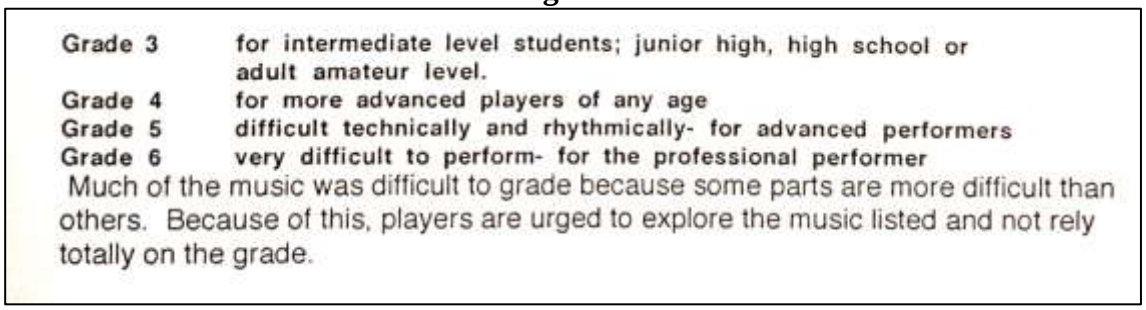
Grade I-III	Elementary; also beginning instrumental techniques classes at the university level.
Grade III-V	Intermediate (Middle School); also classes in instrumental techniques at the university level.
Grade IV-VI	High School; instrumentalists in secondary or elective levels of university activity; also some music education majors.
Grade VI-VIII	University performance majors, or conservatory level; advanced music education majors; also some graduate students.
Grade VIII-IX	University performance majors, or conservatory level; graduate majors; professional and advanced conservatory groups.

The first collection entirely consisting of flute choir music with an associated rubric was written by Carol Kniebusch Noe in 1996. *A Guidebook to Flute Choir*

[39] This image came from page vii in the 3rd edition of *A Handbook of Literature for the Flute* by James J. Pellerite and was provided with permission from the publisher: Alfred Music.

Literature included repertoire using six or more flutes. The works presented in this resource were organized into two categories: works that were originally written for flute choir or arrangements available for flute choirs. Each work was listed with its composer, instrumentation, publisher, length, grade, any accolades the piece has won, and a brief analysis (See Figure 10).[40] All of the composers mentioned either won the James Madison University Flute Choir Composition Competition or gave their permission to be included in the guide. Just like Flute World and Mr. Pellerite, her grading system corresponded to schooling level rather than outlining particular skills. Mrs. Noe began with works a grade three or higher because in her opinion, "ensemble playing of this type is not usually accomplished at a beginner level."

Figure 10



Grade 3	for intermediate level students; junior high, high school or adult amateur level.
Grade 4	for more advanced players of any age
Grade 5	difficult technically and rhythmically- for advanced performers
Grade 6	very difficult to perform- for the professional performer

Much of the music was difficult to grade because some parts are more difficult than others. Because of this, players are urged to explore the music listed and not rely totally on the grade.

The National Flute Association Pedagogy Committee already released several editions of the Selected Repertoire and Studies Guide in 2009 and 2021. Submissions were collected on an ongoing basis for additions to the guide with deadlines for suggestions to be considered for the 2024 update. The committee reviewed suggestions for additional repertoire, etudes, methods, and daily studies. The guide to levels ranged from difficulty A-K. This guide was written by committees of highly trained flute professionals and teachers and included categories considering pitch/key range,

[40]This music grading system is included in *A Guidebook to Flute Choir Literature* by Carol Kniebusch Noe on page vii and is included in this dissertation with permission from Kendall Hunt Publishing Company.

rhythm/meter, articulation, musical symbols, and pedagogical focus of music written at this level. The rhythm and meter elements as well as the musical symbols applied to the learning progression of any instrumentalist. However, the other categories contained flute-specific challenges. This 2021 guide was used to consider flute choir repertoire although it lacks categories that include ensemble elements (See Figure 11).[41]

[41] The Guide to Levels from the 2021 Selected Repertoire and Studies Guide was published by the National Flute Association at https://www.nfaonline.org/publications/other-publications/selected-flute-repertoire-and-studies and provided here with permission from the Executive Director of the NFA.

National Flute Association Selected Repertoire Guide to Levels Rubric

Figure 11

Level	Pitch and Key Range	Rhythm and Meter	Articulations	Musical Symbols	Pedagogical Focus
A	G1- A2 Occasionally extended to D1 – D3. Major and minor key signatures using up to 1# (occasionally 2#) & 2b. Limited use of accidentals beyond key signature. Possible use of accidentals within composition to establish key en lieu of key signature.	Basic rhythms using whole, dotted half, half, quarter, eighths in 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4. No syncopation, dotted rhythms, or partial beat pick-ups. Restricted use of 2/2 and cut time. Cut time may be treated as 4/4 .	Basic single tonguing techniques. Simple slurred, legato, and staccato articulations.	Treble clef pitch notation; accidentals; symbols for repeat, D.C., D.S, and dynamics.	Basics of position and posture, tone production, fingering, articulation, and notation reading (where applicable). Rudiments of playing softer and louder (p and f). Performance of short phrases and successful handling of predominantly conjunct melodies with occasional leaps of up to one octave.
B	D1-D3 Occasionally extended to Eb3. Major and minor key signatures using up to 2# and 3b . Limited use of accidentals beyond key signature. Possible use of accidentals within composition to establish key en lieu of key signature.	Basic rhythms using whole, dotted half, half, quarter, eighths in 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4. Isolated appearances of rhythms designated for higher levels, such as triplets and dotted notes. No syncopation. Basic rhythms using dotted half, dotted quarter, quarter, eighth in 6/8 and 3/8. Limited use of 2/2 and cut time.	Basic single tonguing techniques. Slurred, legato, and staccato articulations.	Treble clef pitch notation; accidentals; symbols for repeat, D.C., D. S., and dynamics. Limited used of ritardando, accelerando, and fermatas. Symbols for simple ornaments including grace notes, trills, mordents; small cadenza-figures.	Basics of position and posture, tone production, fingering, articulation, and notation reading (where applicable). Rudiments of playing softer and louder (p and f). Performance of short phrases and successful handling of predominantly conjunct melodies with occasional leaps of up to one octave.
C	C1-F3; occasionally extended to G3. Major and minor key signatures using up to 3# and 3b . Moderate use of accidentals. Short chromatic passages. Change of key signature within a piece.	Basic combinations of whole, dotted half, half, dotted quarter, dotted eighth, eighth, sixteenth, and eighth-note triplets in 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, and 6/4. Basic combinations of dotted half, dotted quarter, quarter, eighth, and sixteenth in 6/8 and 3/8. Basic combinations of whole, half, quarter, and eighth in 2/2/ and 3/2. Use of cut time. Possible changes between meters in which the beat note remains constant. Isolated appearances of rhythms designated for later grades. Possible use of simple syncopation, use of ties and rests resulting in syncopated rhythms and dotted figures, and thirty-second note pairs designating terminations of Baroque-type trills.	A variety of single tongue articulation patterns (legato, staccato, and detaché). Possible use of articulated eighth-note slurs.	Symbols for standard rhythm, meter, treble clef pitch notation, dynamics, articulation, repeats, D.C., D.S etc. Symbols for simple ornamentation including grace notes, mordents, and trills: small cadenza-figures.	Basics of position and posture, tone production and dynamics, fingering, articulation, and notation reading (where applicable). Extension of rhythmical and metrical understanding. Control of dynamic spectrum p and f and crescendo/diminuendo over short phrases of two bars. Performance of phrases approximately four measures long incorporating leaps of up to one octave.

Level	Pitch and Key Range	Rhythm and Meter	Articulations	Musical Symbols	Pedagogical Focus
D	C1-G3; occasionally extended to A3. Major and minor key signatures using up to 4# and 4b. Free use of accidentals and enharmonics, accidentals signaling temporary modulation, and forms of the minor scale or chromatic scale.	Basic combinations of whole, dotted half, half, dotted quarter, dotted eighth, eighth, sixteenth, eighth-note triplets, sixteenth-note triplets, 32nd notes, quarter-note triplets and note groupings up to quintuplet in 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, and 6/4. Basic combinations of dotted half, dotted quarter, quarter, eighth, dotted eighth, and sixteenth in 3/8, 5/8, 6/8, 7/8, 9/8, and 12/8 time in both slow and fast counting systems. Basic combinations of whole, dotted half, half, quarter, and eighth in 2/2 and 3/2. Use of cut time. Possible changes between meters in which the beat note remains constant. Possible extended syncopations & hemiola.	A variety of articulations, including flutter-tongue, and exploration of multiple tonguing.	Symbols for standard rhythm, meter, treble clef pitch notation, dynamics, articulation, repeats, D.C., D.S. etc. Symbols for simple ornamentation including grace notes, mordents and trills; small cadenza figures; notation of simple harmonics, multiphonics, and flutter tonguing.	Tone development. Ease with the lower 2½ octaves of the flute range. Extension of rhythmical understanding. Control of dynamic spectrum and p and f crescendo/diminuendo over short phrases of 2 bars. Increased stamina and breath control in phrases of four measures and more. Introduction to harmonics, multiphonics, and flutter tonguing.
E	C1-A3; occasionally extended to Bb3. Major and minor key signatures using up to 5# and 5b. Free use of accidentals and enharmonics, accidentals signaling temporary modulation, and forms of the minor scale and chromatic scale.	Moderately complex rhythmic combinations using values as short as thirty-second notes in slower tempos, and note groups of up to the sextuplet in faster tempos. Full spectrum of most common simple, compound, and mixed meters. Counting patterns for both slow and fast tempos. Possible changes between meters in which the beat note remains constant.	Free use of basic articulation patterns and techniques. Moderate use of multiple tonguing and flutter tonguing.	All standard notational symbols including free use of all the basic symbols for ornaments (trills, graces, grupettos, mordents), and limited use of notation designating basic extended techniques. Limited use of cadenza passages.	Tone development (vibrato study is appropriate). Ease with lower 2½ octaves of the flute range. Extension of breath control. Control of dynamic spectrum pp to ff with extreme dynamics confined to moderate registers, terraced dynamics and crescendo/diminuendo over four to six bars. Use of harmonics, multiphonics, and flutter tonguing. Increased ease with varied musical styles.
F	C1-Bb3; occasionally extended to B3 Major and minor key signatures using up to 6# and 6b. Extended chromatic passages and complex patterns of accidentals.	Complex rhythms using values as short as thirty-second notes in slower tempos and note groups of up to the septuplet in faster tempos; extended passages of sixteenth notes or triplets. Full spectrum of most common simple, compound, and mixed meters. Counting patterns for both slow and fast tempos. Possible changes between simple and compound meters.	Free use of moderately complex patterns of standard articulation and multiple tonguing, sometimes mixing double and triple tonguing.	All standard notational symbols including free use of symbols for ornaments (trills, graces, grupettos, mordents, appoggiaturas), alone or in combination. Very moderate use of notation designating basic extended techniques. Moderate use of cadenza passages.	Tone development with appropriate variations in tone color and vibrato. Use of expressive tempo changes and rubato. Control of dynamic spectrum pp to ff with extreme dynamics confined to moderate registers, terraced dynamics and crescendo/diminuendo over four to six bars. Fluency with the upper register of the flute. Ease with symbols for ornamentation. Familiarity with extended techniques. Focus on managing the challenges of piano as equal partner.

Level	Pitch and Key Range	Rhythm and Meter	Articulations	Musical Symbols	Pedagogical Focus
G	C1-Bb3; occasionally extended to C4 Major and minor key signatures using up to 7# and 7b. Extended chromatic passages and complex patterns of accidentals.	Complex rhythms using values as short as thirty-second notes in slower tempos and note groups of up to the septuplet in faster tempos; extended passages of quick notes. Full spectrum of most common simple, compound, and mixed meters. Counting patterns for both slow and fast tempos. Moderately complex changes between meters, including change of beat note. Possible absence of meter signature or established meter over limited sections .	Moderately complex patterns of multiple tonguing and complicated mixed articulation patterns.	All standard notational symbols including free use of symbols for ornaments (trills, graces, turns, mordents, appoggiaturas), alone or in combination. Moderate use of notation designating basic extended techniques. Free use of cadenza passages.	Tone development with appropriate variations in tone color and vibrato. Ease with phrasing that presents technical and musical challenges. Appropriate use of expressive tempo changes and rubato. Control of dynamic spectrum pp to ff in all registers, terraced dynamics, large-scale crescendo/diminuendo, dynamic accent markings, e.g. fp, fz, sfz. Focus on managing challenging issues of ensemble. Understanding and incorporating elements of period style. Familiarity with a full range of extended techniques.
H	C1-C4 Major and minor key signatures using up to 7# and 7b as well as alternate forms of key signatures (mixed sharps/flats in unusual combinations). Complex patterns of accidentals including unconventional carrying of accidentals throughout sections of music. Extended chromatic passages.	Free use of complex rhythm combinations with the possible addition of complicated accent patterns over and above implications of the meter. Full spectrum of most common simple, compound, and mixed meters. Complex changes between simple and compound meters. Possible absence of meter signature or established meter.	Moderately complicated mixed articulation patterns. Moderately complex patterns of multiple tonguing (e.g. mixing double and triple tonguing with legato).	All standard notational symbols including free use of symbols for ornaments (trills, graces, turns, mordents, appoggiaturas), alone or in combination. Frequent use of notation designating extended techniques. Free use of cadenza passages.	Tone development with appropriate variations in tone color and vibrato. Ease with phrasing that presents technical and musical challenges. Appropriate use of expressive tempo changes and rubato. Control of dynamic spectrum pp to ff in all registers, terraced dynamics, large-scale crescendo/diminuendo, dynamic accent markings, e.g. fp, fz, sfz. Focus on managing challenging issues of ensemble. Understanding and incorporating elements of period style. Familiarity with a full range of extended techniques and with free ornamentation.
I	(B0) C1-C4; occasionally extended to D4. Major and minor key signatures using up to 7# and 7b as well as alternate forms of key signatures (mixed sharps/flats in unusual combinations). Complex patterns of accidentals including unconventional carrying of accidentals throughout sections of music. Chromatic scale patterns through extended range.	Free use of complex rhythm combinations with the possible addition of complicated accent patterns over and above implications of the meter. Full spectrum of most common simple, compound, and mixed meters. Complex meter changes. Possible absence of meter signature or established meter. Possible use of graphic or spatial notation systems or both.	Complex patterns of multiple tonguing and mixed articulation patterns at faster tempos.	All standard notational symbols including free use of all symbols for ornaments, alone or in combination. Free use of notation designating extended techniques. Use of extended cadenza passages.	Familiarity with and interpretation of standard literature. Development of mature tone with expressive tone color and variety in vibrato use. Control of dynamic spectrum niente to fff in all registers, terraced dynamics, large-scale crescendo/diminuendo, dynamic accent markings, e.g. fp, fz, sfz. Control of extreme, sudden dynamic and range changes within stylistically, technically, and musically challenging phrases. Ability to sustain passages in extreme ranges. Comfort with the challenging and complex issues of ensemble. Increased emphasis on elements of period style, including use of free ornamentation, rubato, and extended techniques.

Level	Pitch and Key Range	Rhythm and Meter	Articulations	Musical Symbols	Pedagogical Focus
J	(B0) C1-D4. Major and minor key signatures using up to 7# and 7b as well as alternate forms of key signatures (mixed sharps/flats in unusual combinations). Complex patterns of accidentals including unconventional carrying of accidentals throughout sections of music. Chromatic scale patterns through extended range.	Free use of complex rhythm combinations with the possible addition of complicated accent patterns over and above implications of the meter. Full spectrum of meters. Complex meter changes. Possible absence of meter signature or established meter. Possible use of graphic and spatial notation systems or both.	Unexpected and complex articulation patterns with internal accents, multiple tonguing, flutter-tonguing, and other contemporary flute techniques. All of these may occur at very fast tempos.	All standard notational symbols including free use of all symbols for ornaments alone or in combination. Extensive use of notation designating extended techniques. Free use of extended cadenza passages. Possible use of chord symbols as the basis for improvisation.	Mastery and interpretation of works from the standard literature. Learning and interpreting both standard and less familiar complex repertoire. Mature tone development with expressive tone color and variety of vibrato use. Control of dynamic spectrum niente to fff in all registers, terraced dynamics, large-scale crescendo/diminuendo, dynamic accent markings, e.g. fp, fz, sfz. Control of extreme, sudden dynamic and range changes within stylistically, technically, and musically challenging phrases. Ability to sustain passages in extreme ranges. Increased emphasis on elements of period style, use of rubato, and of extended techniques.
K	(B0) C1-Eb4, occasionally extended higher Major and minor key signatures using up to 7# and 7b as well as alternate forms of key signatures (mixed sharps/flats in unusual combinations). Complex and unconventional use of accidentals. Chromatic, whole tone, quartertone, microtone, nononic, octatonic, tritone, blues, modal and other scales or patterns used throughout the extended range of the flute. May possibly require ability to transpose.	Free use of complex rhythm combinations. Full spectrum of meters. Complex meter changes. Possible absence of meter signature or established meter. Possible use of graphic and spatial notation systems or both. Possible use of rhythmic notation from earlier musical periods which requires interpretation in an historical context, e.g. over- and under-dotting, inégal, and apparently incomplete rhythmic figures.	Use of complex articulation patterns, tonguing strokes, and other articulation syllables including multiple tonguing, flutter-tonguing and specialized techniques employed in contemporary and world musics (e.g. tongue-stop, tongue-click, tongue-pizzicato). Full range of expressive articulations including color-accents, legato-tongue (slur-plus-dot family of notations), and various styles of staccato.	All standard notational symbols. Free use of common symbols for ornamentation, complex articulation styles, and contemporary flute techniques. Possible use of notational systems from earlier musical periods requiring interpretation in an historical context, e.g. Baroque period ornamentation symbols, implied cadenzas or other free ornamentation. Notation expressing multiple voicing for performance by a single player. Notation for specialized tonal qualities such as tone-colours, vibrato speed, and dynamics. Possible use of chord symbols or figured bass as the basis for improvisation. Extensive use of notation designating extended techniques. Compositions employing no notation whatsoever over large sections of the work thus requiring free improvisation. Notation for synchronizing the use of electronic media in performance.	Mastery and interpretation of works from the standard and non-standard literature. Acquisition of complete flute skills leading to informed interpretation and compelling performance of works in all styles with a variety of media. Development and use of mature tone with a full range of expressive tone color, a variety of vibrato speeds, and the necessary tonal tools to convey the subtleties and meaning of a musical phrase. Development and use of timbral techniques including shakuhachi-style playing, extended multiple-sonorities, residual tones, jet whistle, and a spectrum of tone qualities ranging from diffuse to very bright. Control of dynamic spectrum niente to fff in all registers, terraced dynamics, large-scale crescendo/diminuendo, dynamic accent markings, e.g. fp, fz, sfz. Control of extreme, sudden dynamic and range changes within stylistically, technically, and musically challenging phrases. Ability to sustain passages in extreme ranges. Application of informed historical understanding in the performance of music from earlier time periods. Spontaneous and effective performances of such historical works with unique choices of phrasing, articulation, dynamics and ornamentation. Ability to create a musically appropriate cadenza for works in which cadenzas are usually included. Ability to perform comfortably with electronic media. Ability to improvise as required by the literature. Ability to apply all known techniques to other instruments of the family (piccolo, alto or bass flute), transposing as required.

The NFA Flute Clubs Committee was currently developing a new Selected Flute Choir Repertoire Guide and was accepting submissions for works through May 31, 2023. This new guide will provide a much-needed resource for rating difficulty in this genre and a comprehensive and continuously updated list of repertoire. It will provide a more accessible method of finding repertoire than traveling to the NFA Conventions and attending the concerts and workshops to hear new literature. Until this new guide is published, the NFA Selected Repertoire Guide for solo literature, Ms. Kniebusch Noe's guide to literature, and Mr. Pellerite's literature handbook can provide ideas on what challenges are appropriate for flutists at certain proficiency levels. The music publishing companies' grading systems can provide a means of comparing the literature they offer in-store.

Chapter 5: General Takeaways

For Flute Choir Directors

Repertoire

For a long while, flute choir did not have a large selection of repertoire. Through the efforts of the National Flute Association, local and regional flute clubs, university ensembles, and community ensembles, commissioning and composition competitions have inspired the creation of many new works. Now flute choirs have had the opportunity to grow into a respected and legitimate ensemble with meaningful literature and goals. Patricia George mentioned in the beginning of the establishment of flute choirs in America, the lack of quality literature held back its progression. One way to elevate the perception of this genre, in Ms. George's opinion, was to use the title 'flute ensemble' rather than flute choir. Her efforts to build the reputability of her group were furthered through her approach to performances. In her words: "We don't do gigs, we do concerts."

Literature Selection

As more music is written for the flute ensemble, a greater variety becomes available for directors to choose from. Music publishing websites, convention performances and workshops, composition competitions, and the future repertoire catalogue crafted by the NFA provide excellent starting points for encountering new literature. Directors generally score study, find recordings, or utilize grading systems provided by the publishing companies while deliberating purchasing music. Additionally, it could also be worthwhile reaching out to local flute choirs to see what others are doing and learn about the new repertoire they have just performed. Wendy

Kumer mentioned the grading systems were particularly helpful in the beginning of her flute choir directing career when she was still learning about the levels of difficulty presented in the ensemble repertoire. It is clear after researching what resources directors use, that a standard rubric with specific technique and skills divided into a gradation would be helpful to the music selection process. This would enhance and provide depth and specificity to the current standard difficulty levels of using school years (elementary school, middle school, high school, collegiate, and professional). The suggestions presented in this document for locations to find flute choir repertoire and ideas on how to evaluate the music using characteristics from a rubric provide a solid foundation for choosing repertoire. Each flute choir is different and comprised of different personnel with varying interests. A director with the ability to locate music and determine its accessibility to the group's skill and needs is poised to successfully select music that benefits the learning and performance of their group.

There are many worthwhile priorities to consider when choosing repertoire. Some pieces are chosen to provide learning opportunities or specially selected to target a particular technique. Ms. Kumer was very passionate about choosing repertoire that simultaneously benefited the improvement of her players and created excitement and a joyful musical experience in performance. She made an effort to keep her programming far from boring. Directors may want to create variety in timbral color, polyphonic complexity, tempo, character, dynamic, historical period, or other musical elements within a concert program. Other times a piece or composer may resonate with the ensemble members' experiences. Some directors may prioritize pieces based on difficulty levels relative to the amount of rehearsal time the group has until a

performance. Depending on the context of the group, audience enjoyment may or may not take precedence in literature selection. For example, Dr. Grim used the Frost Flute Ensemble as a workshop for improvement on the flute and made her literature selection choices based on the learning opportunities presented to the students. The flute ensemble performed on campus to an academically oriented audience. In contrast, community groups like City Flutes performed repertoire that was selected, in part, for the enjoyment of the audience and ensemble. Due to the collaborative environment of flute choir, individual preferences or recommendations from within the ensemble are usually balanced and taken into regard alongside the director's suggestions. The ensemble's access to auxiliary flutes (altos, basses, contrabasses, and piccolos) also factor into the music selection process. All of these factors are worthy of consideration when choosing repertoire. Directors should evaluate the needs and priorities of their group and determine what method is most effective for their ensemble.

Part Assignments

Flute choirs always benefit from including more low flutes when possible. Ms. Christina Steffen always appreciated the addition of more low flutes in her ensembles. The altos, basses, and contrabass flutes add depth and a slight variance in timbre to the group sound. In order to balance out the high sounds of the C flute and piccolo, a large number of low flutes is preferred. The ensemble sounds fuller and presents a larger pitch range with the inclusion of the piccolo, alto flute, bass flute, and contra flute. These auxiliary flutes present new challenges and opportunities to expand a flutist's technique. When an ensemble has access to more of these instruments, the members are provided more occasions to widen and improve their skills. This personal growth

contributes to their participation in the ensemble as a whole. The inclusion of these instruments not only deepen and balance the sound of the ensemble, but their greater accessibility also creates opportunities for growth on an individual level.

Part assignments are most effective pedagogically when rotated. Members of a flute choir will enjoy their rehearsal and performance experiences when given the opportunity to play multiple parts. This variety reinvigorates the mind and encourages a fresh approach to each role. Generally, the director will assign parts to the group. There are some contexts where ensemble members choose their own parts, like in Wendy Kumer's groups. Each flute choir is different, but whatever approach is taken, the ability and enjoyment of each player should be considered. In order for the members of the group to play to their fullest potential, the pitch range, intonation, experience, and confidence of the players should be considered when choosing parts. Some directors, including Christina Steffen and Wendy Kumer, keep a spreadsheet to keep track of their assignments to ensure no one is trapped on one part for an entire concert.

It is important not to sequester all of the most experienced flutists in the first and second parts of the ensemble. Assign or encourage strong players to traverse all parts. There may be players that would perform most successfully on all or mostly lower parts as they improve their skill and expand their range. Experienced players can deepen the sound of the low register often written in parts flute four through six. They may achieve a clearer articulation or have the endurance to play through a longer phrase. The presence of these skills are necessary in every part. It also provides the opportunity to create a buddy system when doubling parts. Most flute choir pieces work well with more than one person on a part. Occasionally, a piece is written with a chamber

approach requiring solo playing. Usually, it is perfectly acceptable to assign several people to each part, as long as it is balanced throughout the score. With a piece appropriate for doubling, flutists can be paired up with each other. Dr. Poole often used the buddy system to allow for musicians with differing strengths to work together to cover a part. The part must still be within the capability of the players to learn, but it can be a 'reach' piece for one flutist if paired with a more experienced player. It is helpful to keep buddies rotating so that members of the ensemble have the opportunity to collaborate with multiple people. Unless there are multiple piccolo parts, it is usually better to utilize one piccolo for the sake of intonation and blend.

Take auxiliary requests from members of the ensemble seriously. Members should be encouraged to follow their preferences to create an enjoyable experience. There are few opportunities for flutists to play the big flutes in any other context. The desire to play these instruments may lead to further practice and time spent improving their technique. From the director's perspective, it is beneficial to have competent and experienced players in the low flute section as they control the intonation and tempo of the group. For example, the Fox Valley Flute Choir did not use a conductor, and Ms. Patricia George often directed from within the group using her bass flute. It is helpful to motivate members who particularly enjoy playing the low flutes to continue to play C flute parts in order to maintain all technique and stay well-rounded.

Seating Arrangements

Seating arrangements can vary depending on the size of the flute choir. Generally, standing is preferable to sitting while playing the flute. Standing allows for freedom of movement and creates a sense of engagement visually for the audience.

When a flutist is standing, it is easier to feel connected with the floor and produce a grounded and full sound. This position frees up the player to turn, cue, and communicate with the director and ensemble members. Playing in a chair can feel confining to some, and chairs are not always the proper height for each person to sit comfortably with good posture and alignment.[42]

A larger group will benefit from some sitting and some members standing in order for all to easily see the director. This might involve the first one or two rows seated and the next one or two rows standing. For some performances, the Pittsburgh Professional Flute Orchestra, as a large ensemble, took advantage of an all-seated configuration in order for all members to view Ms. Wendy Kumer as she conducted. In a smaller group, it is best for all members to stand. A small- or medium-sized group might also benefit from all sitting or using the configuration described for a large group. The Frost Flute Ensemble and the Ohio University Flute Choir, both medium-sized groups, used the first row seated-second row standing approach. Another factor to consider is the comfort of the players performing on the large flutes. These instruments are heavier and can feel awkward to hold up for long rehearsals. These flutists may prefer to play seated. The ensemble arrangement depends on what is most comfortable for the group as a whole. Regardless of ensemble size, rows placed in arches rather than straight lines, creates the opportunity for better eye contact between players and with the director.

[42] Susan Fain's dissertation "An Application of the Principles of Anatomy, Physiology, and Neurology to the Balancing and Playing of the Flute" featured information and suggestions regarding body alignment for seated and standing postures to create maximum comfort, best quality sound, and longevity of player health. Chapter VII (pgs. 167-185) focused on stance and the legs while playing the flute.

Many flute choirs traditionally keep the low flutes seated in the front row with the C flutes standing in the back row. However, this set up leads to the group hearing the reflected sound created by the low flutes rather than immediate sound. Low flutes also have the slowest sound response time of the flute family instruments. Members try to listen to the lowest voice for intonation and pulse, so these delays can lead to dragging tempos. Placing the low flutes in the back row helps resolve this problem, making intonation and tempo easier for the group to maintain. Patricia George and Sara Nichols both placed the low flutes toward the back of their groups. When placed in the back row, low flutes remain capable of projecting their sound to the audience. It is still possible to perform with the low flutes in the front row if that configuration best suits the group. The group would need to be aware of this inherent sound delay and anticipate accordingly. Director Rebecca Poole rehearsed this concept with her youth group and taught the students about the natural response time of the different flutes, as well as how to anticipate the onset of sound.

Piccolo players often feel most comfortable in the middle of the group. This puts their sound in the pocket of the ensemble and enhances the blend of group sound. This position is more ideal for balance than placing them on the end or directly in front of the director. Piccolo players are often asked to back off when performing in other kinds of ensembles which can instill feelings of fear or intimidation to play in a group. The best quality tone and intonation is achieved when the player is comfortable and inside the ensemble sound. This can be difficult to achieve due to the pitch range written for the instrument part. Placing the piccoloist in the middle of the group can help the player hear all of the parts and blend accordingly without fear of sticking out. Ms. Brown

Sincoff experimented with where to place the piccoloist in her ensemble and found that the group blend was best achieved with the piccolo in the middle of the second row (to the right of the first flute from the director's perspective). The C flutes can be placed anywhere in a setup. There are many effective ways to configure this type of ensemble, so each group must experiment to find their optimal setup.

Social Benefits

Flute choirs bring together people from vastly different backgrounds. When a group has clearly defined its goals and attracted a membership that aligns with those, a community is formed. Several directors called their ensemble their 'flute family.' Youth flute choirs provide a space for adolescents to feel like they fit in and belong somewhere. Youth groups can take the opportunity to work in conjunction with the private lesson teachers of the students participating. Both Ms. Kumer and Dr. Poole mentioned leaving some elements to the private teachers and dealing with relevant or pressing issues in the ensemble.

Take the opportunity to communicate with the local lesson teachers and to build friendly professional relationships. The education of and care for students are unifying priorities to bond over. These friendships will lead to potential collaborations and the further enrichment of the students' musical experiences. Creating symbiotic relationships can form opportunities in recruitment for both parties. The flute choir director can recommend quality teachers to their students and, inversely, the flute teachers can advise their students to participate in the local flute choir. Friendships between professionals, once strengthened, can become formalized in flute clubs. This creates a hub for collaboration and generates opportunities and venues for students and

flutists to play for and with each other. These flute clubs allow a pooling of resources for the purposes of worthwhile programs and projects like flute festivals and hosting guest artists and teachers. Many flute choirs are sponsored or formed by flute clubs. The Austin Youth Flute Choir was sponsored by the Austin Flute Society. Dr. Poole was able to advertise the youth ensemble through the society's email chain and often made connections with new students through the teachers involved in the society. The Austin Flute Society owned and donated the use of one alto and one bass; members of the society also lent their big flutes for the use of the students involved with the youth ensemble. This generously provided pool of resources was possible because of the flute society and the connections formed by flute professionals in the Austin area. The establishment of flute clubs or active and inclusive flute choirs lead to the improvement of flutists overall at the local and state levels due to their ability for outreach.

Collegiate flute choirs offer an environment for flute studios to bond and collaborate without the inherent competition built into music school, like in auditions for concert ensemble placement or concerto competitions. Dr. Grim believed this cooperative setting created a safe place for students to learn from themselves, their teacher, and their peers, as well as form friendships. College students can build positive experiences in flute choir and find collaborating with their studio mates much more enjoyable for the duration of their degree in other ensembles, class, and beyond. Students are offered an informal opportunity to learn how to share knowledge, mentor, and teach each other. Flute choir is a more democratic environment which gives students more individual agency to impact the success of the ensemble with their feedback. They are freer to provide input on artistic decisions like trying a different

tempo, dynamic, or seating arrangement. Students can develop leadership skills through their participation in roles like section or part leader, as well as rehearsing without a conductor. Students with less experience are immersed in an ensemble sound that includes the skills and tone quality of more experienced players. Depending on the college, there may be players from freshmen to doctoral candidates playing alongside one another. Through exposure, younger students will learn and benefit from listening and matching the sounds they hear.

Flute choir is also a setting for flutists to work on improving their inner pulse without the aid of percussion. It is important for students to nurture their sense of inner beat in order to develop independence and confidence in their playing. Flute choir allows its members to listen deeply to the group and learn to identify what parts to listen for in order to propel tempo. Ms. Christina Steffen mentioned this skill is further developed when members of a flute choir were not seated by section. When ensemble players were free to sit anywhere, they had to be confident to execute their part independently and accurately. Flute choir does not have as many individual parts in its orchestration as a band or orchestra which provides a middle ground for the students' listening and analysis skills compared to playing with piano accompaniment.

Community flute choirs come in a variety of skill proficiency levels but all value the social and emotional benefits of forming connections with fellow musicians. The wide variety of ages and experience levels accepted by community groups creates a space for anyone willing to look. The connection built by these groups can instill a sense of loyalty and desire to contribute to its success. If there are individuals in these groups that want to offer the use of their special skills and knowledge, directors should

embrace the opportunity. Christina Steffen was proud to discuss members of her groups that had expertise or offered their time in other areas like graphic design, librarian, social media managers, videographer, and concert recorder. According to Ms. Steffen, these individuals "donate their time or they're quite underpaid for what it is they do for us." Flutists who participate in a community flute ensemble are provided the opportunity to enjoy and create music making regardless of age and alongside musicians who are equally enthusiastic. Wendy Kumer included all of her ensembles on each concert. All of the players across the groups performed the final piece together. Rather than telling the students in her youth groups that they could continue with music throughout their lives, she created an opportunity for them to experience and observe that possibility by playing alongside adults with varying years of involvement in flute. Communities should embrace opportunities to build intergenerational experiences. There are many avenues for adults in communities to mentor youth like in clubs, religious groups, coaching sports, and more. However, there are few organizations and groups that allow for people of different ages to work together in such a collaborative way. Community flute choirs create spaces that inspire all membership to equally participate and contribute toward a common goal, regardless of experience level or age.

Benefits for Professionals

The advanced adult flute choir offers another laboratory for the improvement on the flute. Although members of these groups are experienced musicians, they come together to improve themselves and create beautiful, sophisticated performances. All of the collective experience brought to the ensemble rehearsals provides opportunities to creatively share strategies for improvement. Members of the ensemble offer solutions

when an issue arises rather than solely the conductor. Presented ideas can be taken home from the advanced environment and implemented into the professional members' teaching or performing careers.

For Middle and High School Band/Orchestra Directors

Provide a Creative Outlet

Flute choirs can offer so many benefits to your students. This ensemble can provide an avenue for students to express themselves through composition using an instrument they know and can participate in the creation of their ideas. Rebecca Poole reminisced about one particular student from this past season's flute choir that had a passion for composition who wrote a flute choir version of the "How to Train Your Dragon" theme from the popular animated movie. A school flute choir would have the flexibility to incorporate student compositions into rehearsal time.

Applicable and Streamlined Learning

It is easier for students to learn how to differentiate articulation, tone, vibrato, dynamics, and blend in the context of a homogeneous instrumental ensemble without the added difficulty and distraction of different timbres. The information is helpful to all members of the flute choir and those fundamentals can be addressed more quickly. The flute choir director and the peer group will have the time to model proper flute sound, embouchure, posture, and more. Alison Brown Sincoff advocated that flute choir rehearsal time can be spent talking about the tendencies of the flute intonation. Later, when the students go to band or orchestra rehearsal, they can apply this knowledge and become more in tune in other contexts.

Unique Opportunities

Band and orchestra music is composed such that the flutists play melodic material and often rest or double when other instruments are featured with the melody. Rebecca Poole mentioned that flute choir is a great opportunity to introduce flute players to playing a different role other than a melody part. This skill is important to round out a musicians' ability to collaborate in any context and a flute choir director can spend time talking about instrument-specific approaches to musical elements. Part assignment, usually determined by the director, in flute choir is almost always switched throughout the repertoire which ensures the student is performing music that reaches the full range of the flute and role in the ensemble (melody, harmony, bassline, background material, et cetera).

Flute choir can also give students the chance to play on auxiliary instruments that test and refine their ability to manipulate embouchure, breath, and posture. In some programs, some flute students may be placed by audition into a middle or bottom band who could benefit from exposure to repertoire of a higher grade in difficulty. Due to the nature of part doubling in band, flute choir can also help students improve independence and confidence leading as a section or part leader.

In addition to range, the flute choir sets up opportunities to learn to blend and listen in a different context. This size of youth ensemble (around 10-20 students) can serve as a middle ground between a large band and a small chamber ensemble. The students learn to tune to another flute on the other side of the ensemble in flute choir and acquire a different depth of listening. Students also work on projection to learn to send their sound from the back of the ensemble to the audience. Dr. Poole believed that

this projection practice will aid in playing flute in an orchestra and the student must send their sound through all of the strings in front of them.

Student Leadership and Specialist Collaboration

Establishing a flute choir provides opportunities for students in a band or orchestra program to improve their leadership skills. Acting as section or part leader within a rehearsal context gives students experience in collaboration and guidance of their peers in an interactive environment. Dr. Grim assigned parts such that students received opportunities in flute choir to serve as leaders within their part or section, but all members of the group were invited to contribute. There is more freedom for feedback and discussion in this small ensemble amongst the students compared to a large ensemble rehearsal. This allows the students to think critically and discuss their ideas in real time regarding the ensemble. Wendy Kumer's advice to band directors entailed: "One way to keep your flute players in your band from driving you totally insane from not being active enough during your regular rehearsals is to send them off once a week to their flute choir practice where they will be able to indulge in their flute geekiness." This frees up time for band directors to work with other sections who need support without having the flute section sit and have the temptation to talk during rehearsal. The students would appreciate learning from one another and they could self-police. This ensemble could be run by a senior or section leader if bringing in an outside person is not possible, which creates another built in leadership opportunity for the students in the music program.

If it is not feasible for the program to buy alto and bass flutes, choose repertoire for five or more C flutes or some configuration of C flutes with piccolo. This ensemble

still offers many benefits without the big flutes. In fact, even when the auxiliary instruments are available, Ms. George found it beneficial to continue to program works that were written exclusively for the C flute to develop and maintain each player's skill on the primary instrument. Not only can forming this ensemble benefit the students all year, but they could also be encouraged to take a flute choir piece to solo and ensemble contests. If the program can afford to outsource, it would be a wonderful addition to the students' educational experience to work with a professional flutist in the area as a coach. Sara Nichols advised that having a flute choir coach would also be helpful in assisting the students to differentiate marching band posture and concert band posture.[43] She also recommended providing two sets of school-owned piccolos: those that go outside and those that don't (including all wooden piccolos). An outdoor piccolo's pads are prone to leaking, which makes it incredibly difficult to learn to play with nuance in the concert band or flute choir setting.

For Composers

Limits of the Flute

All directors mentioned that composers need to be very familiar with the limits of the instrument. It is important to understand the limits and general tendencies of dynamics, articulations, timbre, and breath capacity played in the low, middle, and high registers of flutes. Dr. Poole believed this knowledge should inform musical and practical decisions in compositions including flutes. Compositions that are sympathetic

[43] Susan D. Fain's dissertation "An Application of the Principles of Anatomy, Physiology, and Neurology to the Balancing and Playing of the Flute" provided a wealth of information related to posture and supplied picture diagrams to display balanced flute stance on page 164 and the marching band posture on page 208. She discussed the anatomical positions required for a balanced, healthy, and comfortable body while playing the flute in different contexts.

to these tendencies are more frequently performed and enjoyed by the performers throughout the rehearsal and performance process.

Alison Brown Sincoff recently took part in a young composer's composition competition hosted by the Ohio Music Education Association with three other flute professors from the state of Ohio. What she and her colleagues found was that composers need to respect the limits of pitch range on each type of flute. If the composer wants a low or high sound that is uncomfortable or impossible on the C flute, incorporate a piccolo or low flute into the music instead. She encouraged composers to not fear using the auxiliary flutes. Check fingerings for low register notes below E♭4, many are controlled by the pinky, which is the weakest finger on the hand.

Dr. Rebecca Poole mentioned that, especially for the youth group difficulty level, "when voicings are all very similar to each other, things get lost." Carefully choose the register for the melodic line in flute choir pieces when the material around it is naturally resonant and loud. The homogeneity of this ensemble requires effective register choices for clarity of melody. Regarding difficulty, Patricia George was strongly against pieces where "one part has the melody all the way throughout and everybody else plays oom pahs. You look at your part and it's all low C's. That's not one I'm interested in. I select pieces where everyone has a good part." Flutists are accustomed to playing melodic and challenging pieces. When a flute player sits down to play a flute 6 or bass flute part, the material should still appeal to their ear and ability. Be sure to read through the individual parts after a score is completed. If a part within a work is repetitive or purely accompanimental, it may be helpful to reassess if there is another way to orchestrate the musical material in the score.

Conversely, it would also be helpful to write optional parts for flute choir works, especially for pieces appropriate for youth and community groups. Many flute choir directors, including Ms. Christina Steffen, find it beneficial to simplify parts for less experienced members to make music accessible when choosing literature that challenges the rest of the group. Altered parts can include replacing a beat or two with rests for a longer, more comfortable breath while a player is building breath endurance, changing four fast sixteenths into playing the first and third sixteenths into two eighth notes, altering musical material to registers that are more comfortable for the flutist's experience, and generally including less technical demands. These optional parts would make pieces more approachable for groups with a wide range of experience or skill.

Collaborative Conversations

Many flutists are excited to engage in conversations with composers before, during, and after the composition process. Ms. Brown Sincoff advised composers to check in with the flutists who commissioned a work to see if there is something they want to highlight or avoid, especially regarding extended techniques. She also said: "Oftentimes we get the final details of what constitutes a tenuto, what constitutes a certain dynamic marking or an articulation. It's not always so with the sound." It would be helpful to provide more information about timbre, tone colors, and characteristics of the sound in general. Some flutists have never composed or arranged music and may feel unsure what to request at the start of a composition commission. In this case, they may have more specific feedback in the middle or the end of the composing process once they can see music written down. Regardless, it is worth opening a conversation

between composer and flutist to see what level of involvement or feedback best suits the pair.

Ensembles Eager to Commission and Premier

The growth of flute choir as an established ensemble creates new opportunities for composers. Wendy Kumer appealed to composers to compose for the flute choir genre. “It's a huge phenom in America right now. So, you could get your pieces played multiple times, not just by one group, but by many groups. That should be a draw.” She wanted the music to be accessible to the player difficulty-wise and entertaining for the audience with a catchy rhythm, texture, or melody. She acknowledged composers will not become rich from only selling flute choir repertoire, but many groups are willing to commission, feature, or premier new works which would publicize and circulate a composer’s work and name. Dr. Grim’s ensemble performed *Oxygen* by Julia Wolfe after being selected to be part of the series of premiers. This experience was challenging and inspiring for the ensemble and allowed the students to experience what a premier entails for professional musicians. Flute choir literature provides a new creative outlet that includes different demands and advantages for composers to consider.

For College Music Programs

Conducting Requirements for Performance Majors

After interviewing seven successful flute choir directors, it became clear that a standardization of conducting course requirements for music performance majors across all universities and colleges is necessary. This would prepare performers not only to understand conducting for the betterment of their participation in ensembles, but also to

ensure those who receive a graduate degree in performance are prepared to lead and conduct their homogeneous ensemble as part of working for a university or college as an applied professor. All of the directors are accomplished musicians and conductors of their groups, but they did not want to claim expertise on the art of conducting. Christina Steffen, on conducting, stated, “Yes, I am comfortable with conducting. Having said that, I haven't studied conducting other than a one semester course in college and don’t consider myself to be a conductor, but I am perfectly comfortable conducting in front of the group.” Wendy Kumer called her conducting “a bit emotional” and sometimes “looks like I’m doing Tai Chi rather than the music.” Dr. Jennifer Grim said: “Every DMA program is different, but I never took conducting. If we're getting a DMA degree, which is designed for college teaching, flute ensemble is going to be probably what you do, but I've never had a single conducting lesson. One semester of conducting should be part of the curriculum for all DMA students because we all need that skill at some point.” Jennifer Grim was doing her part in the academic realm to ensure her students came away with more preparation and experience with flute choir by allowing her teaching assistant to conduct the rehearsals and performance and do the part assignments for one of the works on the program. If conducting courses or lessons are not available through the music program for students pursuing a flute performance degree, flute professors should consider creating opportunities for their students to conduct.

Benefits to Music Program

University or college music programs considering approval for the purchase of alto flutes, bass flutes, or other auxiliary flutes should be aware that having a university

flute choir provides many benefits. First of all, the auxiliary flutes are used in smaller chamber works, orchestra works, and band works, as well as flute choir. The instruments will have plenty of opportunities for usage and the music program would benefit from having these instruments on hand. It is becoming more common practice for band literature, chamber ensembles, and musicals to use these auxiliary flutes. Large ensemble directors would be able to choose literature with these instruments included with greater freedom.[44]

The large university ensembles typically perform at the concert hall on campus without much divergence from its typical venue. A flute choir or small flute chamber ensemble is much more mobile than an entire orchestra or band. A university flute choir would be capable of advertising the school with ease of travel logistics. The physical capabilities of volume of the flutes allow for performances at more intimate or small venues like school classrooms or nursing homes and hospitals for community outreach. In addition to the benefits to the school, flute choirs provide invaluable learning opportunities to the university students enrolled in them.

[44] A few examples of auxiliary flutes used in ensemble repertoire include: Alto flute is featured in orchestral pieces *Daphnis et Chloé* by Maurice Ravel and *The Rite of Spring* by Igor Stravinsky. The Third Symphony for Symphonic Band by James Barnes and Symphony No. 4 by David Maslanka use alto flute. *Frozen Cathedral* by John Mackey uses alto and bass flutes. The musical *She Loves Me* with musical score written by Jerry Bock includes parts for piccolo, C flute, and alto flute. Chamber work *Vermont Counterpoint* by Steve Reich calls for 3 alto flutes, 3 C flutes, 3 piccolos, one solo pre-recorded on tape, and one live solo part. *Butterfly Effects* by Elizabeth Vercoe calls for harp and the flutist to play piccolo, C flute, alto flute, and bass flute. Divertimento No. 2 (Hob. II:22, Op. 2, No. 5) by Franz Joseph Haydn arranged for flute quartet by John W. Pratt uses 2 C flutes, alto, and bass flute. "Auf dem Strom" Op. 119 by Franz Schubert and arranged by C. A. Vater uses piano, voice, and bass flute.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Flute choirs and their directors set many goals and include a wide range of ages and experience levels in the different settings. Regardless of if a group includes youth, collegiate, community, or advanced adult players, all group aspirations are connected to the desire to improve its members' abilities. The methods used to achieve that development may differ and become more advanced as the level of experience rises, but ultimately flute choir is used as a workshop that serves as an environment for the advancement of knowledge and skill on the flute. Youth groups tend to introduce fundamentals, collegiate groups expand on fundamental topics and present higher-level concepts, and community groups vary in experience level but usually incorporate and prioritize the joy of music making alongside the musical development of its membership. Even advanced adult groups strive to improve and develop the members' flute skills. This benefits the members themselves, but also includes learning new approaches to understand or teach flute concepts from their colleagues to take with them to their own students. The wide scope of opportunities for flute players of any level presented in flute choirs makes improving on the flute possible for a lifetime.

This document focused on the overarching purpose of flute choirs: using flute choir as a workshop to improve members' abilities. The seven interviewed directors provided pedagogical methods and approaches to facilitate the improvement in many musical elements. Further research could continue in several directions. An investigation into how flute choir conductor feedback styles vary and their impact on members' progress would be fascinating due to the diversity in teacher training experience amongst flute choir directors. Another possibility to explore is how people

with self-described and attributed learning styles react to group learning in the context of flute choir. Flute choir academies with multiple levels of ensembles could be compared to the Suzuki flute method with respect to progression through immersion and exposure. A survey could collect information on conducting requirements for performance majors at university schools of music, as well as produce statistics on what percentages of university music students who do and do not receive conducting experience ultimately use the skill in their work. Mentorship and teaching assistant opportunities within established flute choirs could be documented as a resource for musicians interested in becoming directors. Additional research could further explore and compare rubrics of flute repertoire.

Flute choir is a legitimate ensemble with popularity that continues to grow. These ensembles provide opportunities in many forms and will continue to benefit flutists of all ages. The four categories I presented (youth, collegiate, community, and advanced adult) span the course of many age and experience levels of playing the flute. Flute choir is proof that music making and playing the flute can last a lifetime. Moreover, this ensemble provides an environment to strengthen the abilities and techniques of its members, as well as fostering a musical connection between generations of people. Flute choirs are the building blocks to create a dynamic and meaningful flute community which combines experts, students, and amateurs. Further research will only help enhance the way this worthwhile ensemble operates for the betterment of future flutists.

References

Books and Articles

"Adapting Music for Your Ensemble." *Flute Talk* 4, No. 2 (October 1984): 7–8.

Blumenthal, Amy Rice-Young. (See also Rice-Young, Amy) "Flute Choirs and the National Flute Association: Coming of Age." *The Flutists Quarterly* 27, No. 2 (Winter 2002): 48-60

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

George, Patricia. "A Collection of Recent Flute Choir Programs from Across the U.S." *Flute Talk* (December 2018). July 5, 2023.

George, Patricia. "Keeping the Dream Alive." *Flute Talk* (July 2020). June 16, 2023. https://theinstrumentalist.com/articles/FluteTalk/July-2020/Keeping-the-Dream-Alive/.

George, Patricia. "Tips for Flute Choir Members." *Flute Talk* (December 2018). July 5, 2023. https://theinstrumentalist.com/articles/FluteTalk/December-2018/Tips-for-Flute-Choir-Members/.

George, Patricia and Phyllis Louke, *Advanced Flute Studies: The Art of Chunking* (n.p.: Theodore Presser Co., 2015).

George, Patricia and Phyllis Louke, *The Flute Scale Book: A Path to Artistry* (n.p.: Theodore Presser Co., 2011).

Gippo, Jan. *The Complete Piccolo: A Comprehensive Guide to Fingerings, Repertoire, and History*. University of Michigan: Theodore Presser Company, 2007.

Kniebusch, Carol. "Flute Choirs Are The Answer." *Instrumentalist* 35, No. 9 (April 1981): 32–34.

Merriam, Sharan, Elizabeth, Tisdell. *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*. 4th ed. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 2016.

Miles, Richard, Larry Blocher, Ray Cramer, Eugene Corporon, Tim Lautzenheiser, and Edward S. Lisk. *Teaching Music Through Performance in Band*. Vol. 1. Chicago: GIA Publications, 2010.

Mosello, Adah Toland. *The Flute Choir Method Book*. Charlotte, NC: ALRY Publications, 1997.

Nichols, Sara. “Selecting Flute Choir Repertoire.” *Flute Talk* (December 2018). July 5, 2023. https://theinstrumentalist.com/articles/FluteTalk/December-2018/Selecting-Repertoire/.

Noe, Carol Kniebusch. *A Guidebook to Flute Choir Literature*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1996.

Pellerite, James J. *A Handbook of Literature for the Flute*. 3rd ed. (n.p.: Alfred Music, 1988).

Rice-Young, Amy. *The Flute Choir Warm-Up Book* (n.p.: Alry Publications, 1998).

Veblen, Kari K., ed. *Community Music Today*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2013.

Dissertations

Bosarge, Jonathan Todd. “An Overview of the Pedagogical Benefits of Trumpet Ensemble Playing.” D.M.A. diss., Ohio State University, 2010.

Danfelt, Edwin Douglas. “The Clarinet Choir: A Means of Teaching and Performing Music.” PhD. diss., University of Rochester, 1965.

Fain, Susan D. “An Application of the Principles of Anatomy, Physiology, and Neurology to the Balancing and Playing of the Flute.” D.M.A. diss., University of Oklahoma, 2009.

Kim, Yoon Hee. “The Commissioned Flute Choir Pieces Presented by University/College Flute Choirs and NFA Sponsored Flute Choirs at National Flute Association Annual Conventions with a Brief History of the Flute Choir and Its Repertoire.” D.A. diss., Ohio State University, 2013.

Mosello, Adah Toland. “The University Flute Choir: A Study of Its Viability as a Performing Ensemble and Instructional Medium with a Compendium of Recommendations and Warm-up Exercises.” D.M.A diss., Ball State University, 1989.

Padilla, Gabrielle. “Chamber Music Fundamentals and Rehearsal Techniques for Advancing String Students.” D.M.A. diss., West Virginia University, 2021.

Parker, Robert Carlisle. “A Performance Guide for Trombone Quartet: An Application of Pedagogical Concepts and Techniques for Developing Ensembles.” D.M.A. diss., University of Iowa, 2018.

Vasko, Benjamin H. “An Exploration of the Benefits to Student Musicianship and Wellbeing of the Collegiate Tuba/Euphonium Ensemble.” D.M.A. diss., Boston University, 2022.

Websites

“About Me.” Dr. Rebecca Poole’s Flute Studio. May 2, 2023. https://pooleflutestudio.mymusicstaff.com/About-Me.

“About Us.” Baltimore Flute Choir. Accessed January 20, 2023. https://baltimoreflutechoir.com/

“About Us,” Fabulous Flute Music Company, May 17, 2023, https://fabulousflute.com/about-us/.

“Alison Brown Sincoff.” Ohio University School of Music. April 19, 2023. https://www.ohio.edu/fine-arts/music/browna2.

“American Band College Music Grading Chart.” Bandworld.org. May 12, 2023. https://www.bandworld.org/pdfs/GradingChart.pdf.

“Christina Steffen-Flute.” azflute.com. February 21, 2023. http://www.azflute.com/christinasteffenbio.html.

“Competition Winners by Competition.” National Flute Association. Accessed January 20, 2023. https://www.nfaonline.org/convention/convention-archives/competition-winners/competition-winners-by-competition

“Desert Echoes Flute Project.” defproject. April 1, 2023. defproject.org.

“Flute Choir.” Flute World. June 3, 2023. https://www.fluteworld.com/product-category/flute-music/flute-choir/.

“Flute Ensemble.” JWPepper. June 3, 2023. https://www.jwpepper.com/sheet-music/search.jsp?setStickyDepartment=true&suggested=&keywords=flute+ensemble.

“Frost Flute Ensemble.” Frost School of Music. Accessed January 20, 2023. https://instrumental.frost.miami.edu/areas-of-study/woodwinds/ensembles/flute-ensemble/index.html.

“Grade Level and Series Guide.” Hal Leonard. May 12, 2023. https://halleonard.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/360009867993-Grade-Level-and-Series-Guide-.

"Jennifer Grim." University of Miami: People. March 14, 2023. https://people.miami.edu/profile/31a167007d6645350c8814fc4bdbd853.

"Music for Multiple Flutes." Rose Music. The Flute Center of New York. June 3, 2023. https://www.flutesheetmusic.com/collections/music-for-multiple-flutes.

"Sara Nichols, flute." May 3, 2023. https://www.snicholsflute.net/.

"Sheet Music." Carolyn Nussbaum. June 3, 2023. https://www.flute4u.com/Sheet-Music/.

"Sheet Music." Flute Specialists. June 3, 2023. https://www.flutespecialists.com/product-category/sheet-music/?_music=sheet-music.

"The Austin Flute Choir." Austin Flute Society. Accessed January 21, 2023. https://www.austinflutesociety.org/flute-choir

"Welcome to the Flute Academy." Flute Academy. April 21, 2023. http://www.fluteacademy.com/.

National Flute Association. "Selected Flute Repertoire and Studies updated 2021: Guide to Levels." Accessed January 20, 2023. https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1b7qo7PQadqoQ3xO4VcwfqHeO8v0r2UvMWrKJba7a0QY/edit#gid=78318158.

Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

Date:
Time of Interview:
Location:
Interviewee:

Biographical Information

1. What are the goals of your group?
2. What is your acceptance process (do you host auditions)?
3. What does your group's population look like and how do you recruit them?
4. When was your ensemble founded?
5. What do your rehearsals look like in terms of length, frequency, and structure?
6. How is the organization financially supported?
7. What auxiliary instruments do you have access to and how did you acquire them?
8. Are there materials or a website to share that reference your group?

Pedagogy Information

Preparing/Planning Rehearsal Structure

1. Do you have rehearsal strategies specific to flute?
2. How do you balance reinforcing flute pedagogy with overall ensemble goals?
3. How do you foster a cohesive group sound?

Pedagogical Goals for the Flute Choir

4. Do you find a difference in goals for flute choir versus private lessons?
5. Does flute choir offer different opportunities or benefits from traditional large ensembles?
6. Are there elements of your conducting that are flute specific (representation of entrance prep, cut offs, style, choral versus band visual approach)?
7. What are the learning experiences students gain from flute choir compared to other ensembles? (band, marching band, orchestra, mixed chamber ensemble)
8. How do you formally and informally assess member ability?
9. How do you inspire group interest in the music?
10. Do you employ other artistic forms in your performances (visual art, dance, poetry, etc.)?
11. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Literature Selection/Part Assignment

1. How do you choose literature for your group and decide part assignments?
2. Aside from ability and size of your ensemble, what other aspects do you consider in literature selection (venue, genre, audience engagement)?
3. Do you adhere to or reference any rubrics when selecting literature?



IRB NUMBER: 15600
IRB APPROVAL DATE: 03/07/2023

Appendix B: Institutional Review Board Approval



Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects

Approval of Initial Submission – Exempt from IRB Review – AP01

Date: March 08, 2023 **IRB#:** 15600

Principal Investigator: Jessica Piso

Approval Date: 03/07/2023

Exempt Category: 2

Study Title: Pedagogical Strategies for Leading Flute Choirs: Case Studies in Youth, Collegiate, Community, and Professional Settings

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), I have reviewed the above-referenced research study and determined that it meets the criteria for exemption from IRB review. To view the documents approved for this submission, open this study from the *My Studies* option, go to *Submission History*, go to *Completed Submissions* tab and then click the *Details* icon.

As principal investigator of this research study, you are responsible to:

- Conduct the research study in a manner consistent with the requirements of the IRB and federal regulations 45 CFR 46.
- Request approval from the IRB prior to implementing any/all modifications as changes could affect the exempt status determination.
- Maintain accurate and complete study records for evaluation by the HRPP Quality Improvement Program and, if applicable, inspection by regulatory agencies and/or the study sponsor. Notify the IRB at the completion of the project.

If you have questions about this notification or using iRIS, contact the IRB @ 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

Cordially,

Lara Mayeux Lara Mayeux

Lara Mayeux, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board