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1. To promote scholarship applicable to performing arts leadership
2. To provide juried research in the field of performing arts leadership
3. To disseminate information, ideas and experiences in performing arts leadership

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THE ARTS ARE FOR FREEDOM: CENTERING BLACK EMBODIED MUSIC TO MAKE FREEDOM FREE

*You don't know a thing about our story, tell it wrong all the time
You don't know a thing about our glory, wanna steal my baby's shine!*
—Jamila Woods, Baldwin

When whiteness is centered as the normative curriculum and expression in art and artistic spaces, there is the inability to value the Black, Indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC) lived experience or 'stories'. When the 'glory' of BIPOC embodied artistic expression is excluded from our arts spaces, it not only undermines equity, it undermines freedom itself.

In this writing, the metaphor of 'poetry' will be used to relate to Black lived experiences and history in artistic spaces. Poetry not only represents our stories, but the legacy of embodied art. I assert that the embodied meaning-making from the Black lived experience is necessary to shape the very *definition* of freedom, and that the arts are the *embodiment* of freedom. Therefore, without the Black embodied art, freedom is not free. I draw on the work of Audre Lorde's 'Poetry Is Not a Luxury'²³, with poetry here as a metaphor for Black embodied music and art more broadly.

In our society, in institutions of higher learning, and in arts spaces, historically marginalized or underrepresented groups have had to navigate certain dominant gazes, with dominant gaze described here with the narrative, "*Standing at the center, as the reference point; the definition of normal, your view gets to shape the definition of my 'belonging'; my value grows as you view and recognize it.*" In our society, there are historically dominant gazes such as white, male, 'able-bodied', middle-class, cisgender, and 'straight'. Talking specifically about race and Black disembodiment in arts spaces, it has occurred due to navigating the white dominant gaze.

The further people exist away from these 'sites of societal power and privilege', they have to negotiate their existence around the dominant gaze. Understanding intersectionality, people can have multiplied marginalization, having to negotiate their personhood around multiple dominant gazes. It is those that have been most marginalized that particularly have had to name themselves and take up their own space in order to live an embodied existence. They have not been named/affirmed, seen, valued, storied, or given space in

¹ Jamila Woods. Baldwin. Legacy! Legacy! Jagjaguwar. 2019, <https://open.spotify.com/album/16SqPFQesSwuJ0iohsxIbF?highlight=spotify:track:4Kfdvb8Qgq892AhIpG1fN3>

² Audre Lorde. "Poetry is not a luxury." (1977): 36-39.

³ While making sure not to misappropriate this work away from its original context, there is also an understanding of the importance of Lorde's role in the Combahee River Collective, and its' influence on foundational concepts of intersectionality that shape embodied experience.

institutions. Recent works have spoken very deeply and foundationally about the centering of whiteness⁴ along with the violence and erasure this has caused on Black⁵ and Indigenous⁶ expression in the arts and music institutions. Our arts spaces are entrenched in the white gaze.

Foundational Framework

In examining the idea of the arts as freedom, this article is philosophically rooted in critical race theory (CRT)⁷, with a critique of liberalism, the permanence of racism as built into the fabric of institutions, identifying curriculum as ‘whiteness as property’, and using counter story telling. I also privilege an identity framework of embodiment as rooted in feminism⁸ and Black queer feminist tradition^{9 10}. From the latter, there is an understanding that those who have been most marginalized in society have the greatest ability to define what freedom and belonging are and from whom definitions of inclusion and community should be shaped- in all university spaces, but particularly in the arts.

After grounding the understanding and importance of embodiment in the arts and how that is connected to freedom, I give some brief history for understanding exclusion within society and institutions; exclusion as both so-called ‘separate but equal’ and what I call ‘together and unequal’- a basis for grounding structural racism. The article concludes with one present-day example from popular music of how Black aesthetic experiences are rooted in embodiment and are for the purpose of freedom.

The critique of together and unequal is an intentional divergence from the disembodiment that exists from arts spaces rooted in whiteness, prizing white memory and worldview to the detriment of progress, truth, and authentic freedom. I advocate for the reshaping of our arts spaces toward holding space for embodied classrooms, where “links between historical memory and tenderness... support students as they understand better where they come from *and* who

⁴ Philip Ewell. “Music Theory’s White Racial Frame.” *Music Theory Online* 26, no. 2 (2020).

⁵ Matthew D. Morrison. “Race, Blacksound, and the (Re) Making of Musicological Discourse.” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 72, no. 3 (2019): 781-823

⁶ Dylan Robinson. *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies*. U of Minnesota Press, 2020.

⁷ Payne Hiraldo. “The role of critical race theory in higher education.” *The Vermont Connection* 31, no. 1 (2010): 7.

⁸ F. Cachon. “Unsettling the mind/body dualism: Exploring the transformative potential of feminist pedagogy for justice-oriented citizenship education.” *Citizenship Education Research Journal (CERJ)* 5, no. 1 (2016): 43-58.

⁹ Combahee River Collective. *A Black Feminist Statement*. na, 1977.

¹⁰ Keeanga-Yamahatta Taylor, ed. *How we get free: Black feminism and the Combahee River Collective*. Haymarket Books, 2017.

their people are”¹¹. I promote the idea that freedom is not free without the full inclusion of Black persons’ lived experience, but also that this freedom shapes the belonging of everyone. As Bragg¹² states, ‘we are our own monuments, and we can be theirs, too’.

Grounding Embodiment

We can trace the discourse of Black disembodiment to DuBois’ analysis of having a double consciousness in ‘The Souls of Black Folk’¹³, originally published in 1903. The idea of double consciousness has subsequently been used by many marginalized communities beyond the Black experience:

It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One feels his two-ness, — an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife, — this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. ... He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of opportunity closed roughly in his face.

Freedom is not free¹⁴. Here, I suggest the idea of freedom not living up to the ideal of being free without centering the lived experiences and full inclusion of Black, Indigenous, Immigrant, Women, Queer, and other historically marginalized communities. When the words were penned that “all men are created equal” with unalienable rights of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,” they weren’t talking about anyone other than white men.

John Locke, who authored the foundational doctrine for liberalism, stated that ‘power’ is rooted in the understanding that people are born into “a state of perfect freedom”¹⁵. Frederick Douglass said, “Power concedes nothing

¹¹ Becky Thompson. *Teaching with tenderness: Toward an embodied practice*. University of Illinois Press, 2017, 104.

¹² B. Bragg(2020). We are our own monuments, and we can be theirs, too. *CLA Journal*, 63(2), 174-178.

¹³ William Edward Burghardt Du Bois. *The souls of black folk*. Oxford University Press, 2008, 8.

¹⁴ We often hear this said in reference to veterans. This article will not reference this common conception of sacrifice for freedom.

¹⁵ John Locke. *Second treatise of government: An essay concerning the true original, extent and end of civil government*. John Wiley & Sons, 2014, 3.

without a demand. It never did and it never will”¹⁶. How can this discrepancy of power as inherent in humanity versus having to be earned be reconciled? Civic engagement within higher education is usually taught in a way that does not cause students to think critically about these conflicts to freedom¹⁷. Nor does it include narratives of critiques from those who have disembodied, conflicted, or excluded from freedom. In her 2008 speech, “The Meaning of Freedom”¹⁸, “Angela Davis asks “what has freedom meant to the Black world and others who’ve been differently racialized?”

Dictionary.com defines ‘embody as “to give a concrete form to; express, personify, or exemplify in concrete form”¹⁹. An embodied experience can relate to the connection between how one sees oneself and how one exists in the world. The more one can have congruence between who they are internally and externally, they can live an embodied existence.

The embodied concreteness of whiteness is dependent upon the ‘other’²⁰. The white dominant gaze exists through the socialization of white persons in a world that has been and remains in many ways “structurally dominated by white terror, white injustice, white microaggressions, white power”²¹.

In a life where an embodied experience can relate to how the way we think about ourselves corresponds to the way our story exists through expression and relationship in the external world, it stands that, within institutions, those who have experienced multiplied marginalization are disembodied by design. Particularly when the external world of our academic/artistic institutions promote, normalize, and incentivize whiteness, there is a message that the lived experience of Black people and people of color are not meant to survive. Within our arts spaces, Black people have limited agency to produce their freedom while negotiating through the dominant gazes of whiteness and capitalism. As Resmaa Menakem says, we need to interrogate ‘white body supremacy’²²; and how our institutions reaffirm it.

¹⁶ BlackPast. (1857) Frederick Douglass, “If There Is No Struggle, There Is No Progress” <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/1857-frederick-douglass-if-there-no-struggle-there-no-progress/>.

¹⁷ F. Cachon. “Unsettling the mind/body dualism: Exploring the transformative potential of feminist pedagogy for justice-oriented citizenship education.”

¹⁸ Angela Davis. “Angela Davis: The Meaning of Freedom.” SFAQ_NYAQ_LXAQ, June 18, 2016. <https://www.sfaq.us/2016/06/angela-davis-the-meaning-of-freedom/>.

¹⁹ “Embody.” Dictionary.com. Dictionary.com. Accessed March 6, 2021. <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/embody?s=t>.

²⁰ Carol Schick and Verna St. Denis. “Troubling national discourses in anti-racist curricular planning.” *Canadian Journal of Education/Revue canadienne de l’éducation* (2005): 295-317.

²¹ George Yancy. *Black bodies, white gazes: The continuing significance of race in America*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2016, xv.

²² Resmaa Menakem. *My grandmother’s hands: Racialized trauma and the pathway to mending our hearts and bodies*. Central Recovery Press, 2017.

“Western culture has been organized around the mind/body binarism and the assumption that mind is both radically distinct from and of greater worth than body”²³. Traditional learning is designed for the learner to be disembodied, dividing the “the body—including the activity, movement, and emotions associated with it—out of the mind”²⁴. However, centering lived experiences always supports embodiment. Counter narratives of personhood through self-recognition, self-definition, resistance, reclaiming of self, and world-making are what make freedom free instead of privileged; and the arts are what make freedom tangible and not abstract.

Freedom and Artistic Spaces

Our mainstream institutions of democracy and of the arts, including universities, have a value of liberalism— not in the strict political meaning of liberal vs. conservative. Liberalism, according to Wikipedia, “is a political and moral philosophy based on liberty, consent of the governed and equality before the law”²⁵.

While sometimes the ideas of freedom and democracy can seem abstract or intangible, the arts are one of the places where we experience the actual embodiment of freedom. Every single day in our concert halls, studio spaces, and stages, we experience equality, expression, and belonging. The arts are for freedom! Or they should be.

What happens when we have faulty conceptions of equality, the disembodiment of expression, and archaic definitions of belonging? Our stated value of equal access without equity means that in many ways, we are not together. Our value of freedom of expression whilst prioritizing and normalizing only certain modes and methods of expression means that some people must actively live with a double consciousness, trying to reconcile their marginalized culture and their ‘freedom’. Our value of belonging that is defined by sameness means we have a packaged, processed freedom.

In our artistic and music spaces, people can come and learn of music through a lens of whiteness ‘*regardless of their differences*’²⁶. They can learn about music from the white racial frame and the history of music that is largely rooted in whiteness and never learn about erasure of Black ingenuity in the creation of popular music.

²³ Deborah Orr. “The uses of mindfulness in anti-oppressive pedagogies: Philosophy and praxis.” *Canadian Journal of Education/Revue canadienne de l’éducation* (2002): 477-497.

²⁴ Kevin Rathunde. “Nature and embodied education.” *The journal of developmental processes* 4, no. 1 (2009): 70.

²⁵ “Liberalism,” Wikipedia (Wikimedia Foundation, February 22, 2021), <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberalism>.

²⁶ A classic phrase of ‘non-discrimination’ that, without equity, is discriminatory.

The relationship between the centeredness of classical music to other styles “reflects the modern world...in the sociocultural sense – the relationship of a dominant culture to its satellites or of a major power to third-world colonies”²⁷. Increased minority representation without shifting that centeredness has “largely left untouched the institutional structures that privilege the music of white European and American males”²⁸.

Separate But Equal

Freedom is defined in this article as equal access, full expression of one’s humanity, the agency of all people to have a livable life, and protection of liberty, without obstacles to participation and inclusion^{29 30}. While some of the conditions of individual racism have changed, the hierarchy of racism still exists. “A caste system shapeshifts and protects its beneficiaries, a workaround emerges, provisions are made, and hierarchy remains intact....this is how a caste system, it seems, manages to prevail”³¹. The racial capitalism of ‘separate but equal’ has shapeshifted into ‘together and unequal’.

It’s important to provide a brief post-Civil War account of ‘separate but equal’. These are some of the many instances of retrenchment of newfound Black freedom and belonging/inclusion/’Americanness’:

²⁷ Nettl Bruno, *Heartland Excursions: Ethnomusicological Reflections on Schools of Music* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 110.

²⁸ Loren Kajikawa, “The Possessive Investment in Classical Music,” in *Seeing Race Again: Countering Colorblindness Across the Disciplines*, eds. Kimberle W. Crenshaw, Luke C. Harris, Daniel M. HoSang, & George Lipsitz. (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2019), 156.

²⁹ Angela Y Davis. *The meaning of freedom: And other difficult dialogues*. City Lights Publishers, 2012.

³⁰ bell hooks. *Teaching to transgress*. Routledge, 1994

³¹ Isabel Wilkerson. *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*. Random House, 2020, 236.

Table 1. Instances of Retrenchment of Newfound Black Americanness

<p><i>Americanness-</i> The Reconstruction Era began at the end of the Civil War in 1865. It was decided that 400,000 acres of land confiscated from slave owners in South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, would be redistributed to formerly enslaved persons³².</p>		<p><i>Retrenchment-</i> After President Lincoln was assassinated in April of 1865, these reparations promised to Black people were given back to former slave owners.</p>
<p><i>Americanness-</i> The Civil Rights Act of 1875 was crafted and signed into law to eliminate racial discrimination in public accommodations.</p>		<p><i>Retrenchment-</i> It was sparsely enforced until it was challenged and ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in an 1883 decision³³.</p> <p><i>Retrenchment-</i> The Compromise of 1877 led to a removal from the South of troops that protected the rights of Black people during Reconstruction. This was the de facto end of Reconstruction and beginning of the Jim Crow era.</p>

³² Henry Louis Gates, Jr.. “100 amazing facts about the negro: The truth behind ‘40 Acres and a Mule.” PBS’The African Americans: Too Many Rivers to Cross. (2013), accessed March 3, 2021, <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/african-americans-many-rivers-to-cross/history/the-truth-behind-40-acres-and-a-mule/>

³³ John Hope Franklin. “The enforcement of the Civil Rights Act of 1875.” *Prologue Magazine*, 6, no. 4 (1974): 225–235.

	<p><i>Entrenchment into Law</i>– With the 1896 <i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i> Supreme Court Decision, the equal protections and access of Black people were further stripped as the Jim Crow era entrenched into policy of so-called ‘separate but equal’ in our society.</p>	<p><i>Retrenchment</i>– When Black Americans did show that they could thrive within their own communities financially, there was no separate but equal protection under the law. One salient example of this is the terrorism (termed the ‘The Tulsa Massacre’) of a thriving Black community in the Greenwood district of Tulsa known as Black Wall Street.</p>
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Together and Unequal

Separate but equal is not the value of a free democratic community, but neither is together and unequal. There has been a false equivalence that has often been attributed to justice and equality in mainstream American society. The belief in a post-racial society and colorblind ideology have actually masked the ability for people to see the need for equity. The false equivalency can be summed up with the passage:

If what Black Americans needed was equality and if equality is represented by integration, then perhaps we are a post-racist society, because integration is the law of the land. However, if what Black Americans needed was justice, and it was hoped that in most respects that integration would provide justice, then we must make a distinction between equality and justice, and gain a deeper understanding of equity. There must be an assessment of whether de jure equality brought about de facto justice.³⁴

Policy and structure built upon the belief of colorblindness functions to continue to entrench whiteness, ignore racist policies and the effects of racism, and causes retrenchment of equity initiatives³⁵. An important tenet of CRT is a critique of liberalism and the inability of equality (without equity), the neutrality of the law (and of institutional policy), and of colorblindness, to redress racism. Freedom is not actually free.

³⁴ Hakeem Leonard. “A Problematic Conflation of Justice and Equality: The Case for Equity in Music Therapy.” *Music Therapy Perspectives* 38, no. 2 (2020): 103.

³⁵ Jessica T. DeCuir, and, Adrienne D. Dixon. ““So when it comes out, they aren’t that surprised that it is there”: Using critical race theory as a tool of analysis of race and racism in education.” *Educational researcher* 33, no. 5 (2004): 26-31.

CRT has shown very clearly what many Black people know from lived experience. Being ‘together’ has not equaled justice. There is structural racism that plays out in healthcare^{36 37}, education^{38 39}, housing, criminal justice, banking, and other societal areas. “Higher education is far from serving as the key location for upward mobility and intellectual freedom. Its curriculum, pedagogy, and stratification reproduce the very hierarchies it is purported to undermine”⁴⁰. Scholar and activist bell hooks states⁴¹:

School changed utterly with racial integration. Gone was the messianic zeal to transform our minds and beings that had characterized teachers and their pedagogical practices in our all-black schools. Knowledge was suddenly about information only. It had no relation to how one lived, behaved. It was no longer connected to antiracist struggle. For black children, education was no longer about the practice of freedom.

While many schools of music and arts in the US have now created programs that include the art from marginalized or underrepresented groups, these efforts have not generally been accompanied by the holistic examination of priorities. Much of the coursework for American popular music “tends to be considered elective or geared toward fulfilling the general education requirements of nonmajors”⁴².

Embodied Art is Not a Luxury

If we value freedom, Black embodied art is not elective, and it cannot be a luxury. The relationship of historically marginalized persons with art is one that is intimately connected to freedom, self-recognition, self-definition, reclaiming of self, and world-making. What might we learn about being free from Black embodied art?

³⁶ Zinzi D. Bailey, Justin M. Feldman, and Mary T. Bassett. “How Structural Racism Works—Racist Policies as a Root Cause of US Racial Health Inequities.” (2020).

³⁷ Michael W. Sjoding, Robert P. Dickson, Theodore J. Iwashyna, Steven E. Gay, and Thomas S. Valley. “Racial bias in pulse oximetry measurement.” *New England Journal of Medicine* 383, no. 25 (2020): 2477-2478.

³⁸ Gloria Ladson-Billings. “Just what is critical race theory and what’s it doing in a nice field like education?.” *International journal of qualitative studies in education* 11, no. 1 (1998): 7-24.

³⁹ Payne Hiraldo. “The role of critical race theory in higher education.” *The Vermont Connection* 31, no. 1 (2010): 7.

⁴⁰ Becky Thompson. *Teaching with tenderness: Toward an embodied practice*. University of Illinois Press, 2017, 60.

⁴¹ bell hooks. *Teaching to transgress*. Routledge, 1994, 2.

⁴² Loren Kajikawa. “The Possessive Investment in Classical Music,” 165.

'Poetry' is fundamental as expression of embodied freedom and is also used here as a metaphor for Black art more broadly:

"Being free is as difficult and as perpetual — or rather fighting for one's freedom, struggling towards being free, is like struggling to be a poet"⁴³

For within structures defined by profit, by linear power, by institutional dehumanization, our feelings were not meant to survive. Kept around as unavoidable adjuncts or pleasant pastimes, feelings were meant to kneel to thought as we were meant to kneel to men. But women have survived. As poets. And there are no new pains. We have felt them all already. We have hidden that fact in the same place where we have hidden our power. They lie in our dreams, and it is our dreams that point the way to freedom. They are made realizable through our poems that give us the strength and courage to see, to feel, to speak, and to dare.⁴⁴

The privileged freedom of some in our society has come at the expense of the freedom of others. While freedom is manifest through ideas such as equality, expression, and inclusion, those are rather abstract in society. Audre Lorde speaks to the fact that her expression as a Black woman was never meant to survive. By institutional design, this seems to also apply to Black creativity. Even with diversity initiatives in music departments, they have:

...made attempts to diversify their curricula, but they have allowed their core requirements to remain wedded to relatively narrow ideas of music proficiency. Not only does this status quo stifle forms of creativity that might emerge from our schools, but it also sends the wrong message to students about the kind of music, culture, and by extension, people that really count.⁴⁵

When looking at the exclusion of Black expression from liberal institutions, one cannot help but wonder if the life of Black people is not meant to survive. The anti-Blackness is no longer in the form of segregation, but in the form of 'together and unequal'. The inequality includes the omission of Black expression as part of the essential curriculum and discourse, and the exclusion of all but select Black persons related to that. Our spaces are not for those planted in the beautiful gardens of Blackness- only the roses that grew through the concrete of whiteness⁴⁶.

⁴³ Bill Moyers, "A Conversation with Maya Angelou," *BillMoyers.com*, last modified August 13, 2015, accessed March 7, 2021, <https://billmoyers.com/content/conversation-maya-angelou/>.

⁴⁴ Audre Lorde. "Poetry is not a luxury." (1977), 373.

⁴⁵ Loren Kajikawa. "The Possessive Investment in Classical Music," 168.

⁴⁶ Tupac Shakur. *The rose that grew from concrete*. Simon and Schuster, 1999.

One wonders how values the are stated in mission statements such as rigor, nurture, and innovation might generate a type of inclusion where embodied art and excellence might be defined without negotiating whiteness? Cheng talks about how things like empathy in relation to listening might be used to understand musicality, and other new ways of valuing music, not merely limited to formal attributes and technical skill⁴⁷. Brantmeier writes of how educational spaces might be defined differently and disrupt whiteness through pedagogies of vulnerability⁴⁸.

One of the fundamental ways that musicality might be understood differently is as embodied art; for everyone, including those that have been historically marginalized, and as art embodying an authentic freedom, community of belonging, and full expression of humanity. I previously wrote about bebop as music rooted in freedom⁴⁹. Bebop artists were mindful of creating something with no hint of the legacy of minstrelsy and something that aligned more with their intuition than the entertainment of big band music. There is a long history of the arts being used as an expression of freedom in Black America, and with art reflecting the work of activists. The idea of the arts as the embodiment of freedom is fundamentally connected to the enactment of artistic freedom in Black, Indigenous, and other racialized and marginalized communities. Due to limited space here, I will not be able to detail the many historical examples of embodied Black art being used for freedom. However, I want to highlight a powerful present-day example.

Chicago, Poetry, Hip-hop, R&B, and Freedom

In present day popular music, the arts are being used for freedom. Connecting back to the metaphor of Black intersectional poetry as embodied art that makes freedom free, I want to end the article by highlighting the poetic foundation and musical art of a contingent of Hip-hop and R&B artists in Chicago. But first, I reference a quote for context. In a 2017 interview, white Hip-hop artist Post Malone was quoted as saying:

If you're looking for lyrics, if you're looking to cry, if you're looking to think about life, don't listen to hip-hop. There's great hip-hop songs where they talk about life and they spit that real shit, but right now, there's not a lot of people talking about real shit. Whenever I want to cry, whenever I want to sit down and have a nice cry, I'll listen to some Bob Dylan. Whenever I'm trying to have a good time and

⁴⁷ William Cheng. *Just Vibrations: The Purpose of Sounding Good* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016).

⁴⁸ Edward J. Brantmeier. "Pedagogy of vulnerability: Definitions, assumptions, and applications." *Re-envisioning higher education: Embodied pathways to wisdom and transformation* (2013): 95-106.

⁴⁹ Hakeem Leonard. "A Problematic Conflation of Justice and Equality: The Case for Equity in Music Therapy."

stay in a positive mood, I listen to hip-hop. Because it's fun. I think hip-hop is important because it brings people together in a beautiful, happy way⁵⁰

Though Malone tried to explain his comments after receiving criticism, they stand as an affront to the power of rap music and more specifically, Hip-hop culture, as a vehicle for depth of thought, emotion, complex personhood and expression, and reflexive growth.

Many negative attitudes about Hip-hop live in the academy as well. Kajikawa talks about how, at one institution, a photoshopped image of a piano narrowed from 88 to 5 notes with a caption saying, "Announcing Kawai's all new keyboard for composing rap arrangements," and how many faculty reinforced or piled on with statements such as "most rap music is trash" or saying that it can't compare to classical music⁵¹.

I provide these, not to get in a comparison between classical music and rap, nor to say that everyone thinks like this, but to show that both examples represent dominant gazes and the inability to even perceive the liberating heritage of Black music. While people have the very legitimate right to view Hip-hop as fun music (because it is), in the subsequent writing about Chicago artists, I seek to show a transformational example of power of Hip-Hop as deep Black embodied expression. The example of the faculty comments supports the idea that many faculty are rooted in a normalization of whiteness as property vis-à-vis curriculum (while Black culture and other content undergoes a metaphorical 'redlining') and seemingly could not even perceive the following example on a musical or socially transformative level. While that lack of perception is not inherently malicious, the structural exclusion connects it to the perpetuation of racist outcomes.

Black Embodied Artistic Example

In an interview with the rapper Kanye West from 2003, shortly before he released "The College Dropout," West recounted the time he met the poet Gwendolyn Brooks, at a dinner held for students in Beverly Hills, Chicago, when he was in "fourth grade or sixth grade." Brooks asked him if he had a poem to read, West recalled. "I said"—here, the interviewer writes, he put on a high-pitched boy's voice—" 'No, but I can write one real quick.' I went in the back,

⁵⁰ Ben Dandridge-Lemco. "Post Malone: 'If You're Looking to Think about Life, Don't Listen to Hip-Hop,'" *The FADER*, (November 20, 2017), accessed March 8, 2021, <https://www.thefader.com/2017/11/20/post-malone-polish-interview-dont-listen-to-hip-hop>.

⁵¹ Loren Kajikawa. "The Possessive Investment in Classical Music".

wrote a poem, and then read it for her and the 40 staff members.”^{52 53}

Some have referred to the 2018 ‘Care For Me’ album by rapper Saba as the best Hip-hop album in the last five years. The theme is one of grief as he reflects on the passing of his cousin and other things that have deeply impacted him. Along with Saba, many other Chicago artists consider themselves writers or poets or have been nurtured in the way of poetic tradition. Some of these artists include Noname, Jamila Woods, and Chance the Rapper, who were all connected to the Young Chicago Authors, an organization “cultivating artistic voices, critical thinkers and civically engaged youth”⁵⁴. The legacy of poets like Gwendolyn Brooks is deep in Chicago and the space between activism and artistry is small. These artists have released some of the most freedom-oriented and deeply expressive music in the industry in the last few years. Their art is rooted in local tradition, culture, and embodied expression of radical black vernacular⁵⁵, but also in certain mainstream Hip-hop aesthetics.

Along with local and poetic roots, Saba’s album has combinations of trap, jazz, and soul aesthetics and also what I like to call the auto-tune (and more broadly, a sung rap) aesthetic, which has been written about in various ways related to identity^{56 57}. While there is no indication that Saba is using much or any vocal correction or auto-tune, the impact of artists such as T-Pain, Kanye West, Lil’ Wayne⁵⁸, Drake^{59 60}, and others has shaped a generational sound that includes many rappers singing their own hooks and using sung-rap styles in song verses and as a general stylistic element. Like Drake, who “found a way in his natural voice to tap into that interiority without having to use that out of

⁵² Doreen St. Félix, “Chicago’s Particular Cultural Scene and the Radical Legacy of Gwendolyn Brooks,” *The New Yorker* (March 3, 2018), accessed March 8, 2021, <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/chicagos-particular-cultural-scene-and-the-radical-legacy-of-gwendolyn-brooks>.

⁵³ Thomas Golianopoulos, “Kanye West Talks ‘The College Dropout’ and His Relationship with Jay Z in 2003,” *Complex* (April 20, 2020) accessed March 8, 2021, <https://www.complex.com/music/2014/02/kanye-west-interview-2003-college-dropout-jay-z>. Quoted in Doreen St. Félix, “Chicago’s Particular Cultural Scene and the Radical Legacy of Gwendolyn Brooks.”

⁵⁴ <https://youngchicagoauthors.org>

⁵⁵ Doreen St. Félix, “Chicago’s Particular Cultural Scene and the Radical Legacy of Gwendolyn Brooks.”

⁵⁶ Jace Clayton. *Uproot: Travels in 21st-century music and digital culture*. FSG Originals, 2016.

⁵⁷ Michael Viega. “A humanistic understanding of the use of digital technology in therapeutic song-writing.” *Music Therapy Perspectives* 36, no. 2 (2018): 152-160.

⁵⁸ Staff, “Lil Wayne’s Impact On Hip Hop Is Much Greater Than You Think,” *Hypefresh Inc*, last modified October 3, 2017, accessed March 8, 2021, <https://www.hypefresh.co/lil-waynes-impact-on-hip-hop-is-much-greater-than-you-think/>.

⁵⁹ Jon Caramanica, “Rappers Are Singers Now. Thank Drake.,” *The New York Times* (November 25, 2019), accessed March 12, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/24/arts/music/drake-rap-influence.html>.

⁶⁰ David Renshaw, “How Drake Finessed Rap History and Made Singing the Norm,” *The FADER* (August 6, 2020), accessed March 12, 2021, <https://www.thefader.com/2020/08/04/how-drake-finessed-rap-history-and-made-singing-the-norm>.

body experience [*created by auto-tune*]⁶¹, Saba's vocal aesthetic is more naturally embodied⁶². The particular combination of the half-time rhythmic feel that is most prominently connected to a trap musical aesthetic and the vocal influence of the sung rap aesthetic create a canvas for depth of expression that generates a type of Hip-hop sound that is transformed and transformative; particularly when wielded by the most musical and lyrical artists, such as Kendrick Lamar (see 'Love'⁶³ on the DAMN album), J. Cole (listen to 'Brackets'⁶⁴ on the K.O.D. album), and Saba (listen to 'Life'⁶⁵ on the Care for Me album).

Each of these songs, while not all trap beats, have the half-time drum feel^{66 67 68 69} associated with the trap musical aesthetic, which to use a painting metaphor, allows them to have various texture and sized brushes to work with as they paint lyrics on a continuum between the half-time and common-time feel; they each also use a sung-rap aesthetic, which allows them to paint with levels and shades of color shifting back and forth with traditional verbal rap; each song represents a depth of feelings with love/vulnerability, contemplative/critical reflection, and grief/anger, respectively. These artists stand among those that have curated aesthetics that combine deep thematic exploration of humanity and embodied expression while shifting the sound of popular music in deeply musical ways. Saba has combined the various aesthetics in a way that provides the deepest of expression, embodiment, and symbiosis between authentic lyrics, music, and feeling. His acoustic painting from a deep Black embodied gaze,

⁶¹ Ty Harper "Ep. 4: The rise of the singing rapper". *This is Not a Drake Podcast*. Podcast audio, July 7, 2020. <https://www.cbc.ca/listen/cbc-podcasts/423-this-is-not-a-drake-podcast/episode/15785803-ep-4-the-rise-of-the-singing-rapper>

⁶² While there is a long history of singing rappers, it feels important to mention Bone Thugs-n-Harmony as important innovators in a naturally embodied vocal aesthetic. It's amazing how a song like Saba's Photosynthesis sounds like a Bone Thugs aesthetic.

⁶³ Kendrick Lamar ft. Zacari. Love. Aftermath/Interscope, 2017, Accessed March 7, 2021. <https://open.spotify.com/album/4Wv5UAieM1LDEYVq5WmqDd?highlight=spotify:track:5sWbwccBcyHsg5LEKWGZ09>

⁶⁴ J Cole. Brackets. Dreamville, Inc., 2018, Accessed March 7, 2021. <https://open.spotify.com/album/4Wv5UAieM1LDEYVq5WmqDd?highlight=spotify:track:5sWbwccBcyHsg5LEKWGZ09>

⁶⁵ Saba. Life. Saba Pivot, LLC, 2018, Accessed March 7, 2021. <https://open.spotify.com/album/6T-e11t5gDZ7W94myHRqUt?highlight=spotify:track:3au0pvHqcTtsysswan6AO>

⁶⁶ Trevor de Clercq. "Measuring a measure: absolute time as a factor for determining bar lengths and meter in pop/rock music." *Music Theory Online* 22, no. 3 (2016).

⁶⁷ Martin Connor, "Bone Thugs...Explained, With Rap Analysis!," *Rap Analysis: More Than Listening*, (February 27, 2016), accessed March 13, 2021, <https://www.rapanalysis.com/2016/02/bone-thugsexplained/>.

⁶⁸ Connor (in the above footnote) explains how Bizzy Bone rapped between the two different rhythmic feels. This is also important because Saba has stated that he first started rapping by listening to this exact Bizzy Bone verse on the Notorious Thugs song (See the next footnote for video citing Saba saying that)

⁶⁹ MTV News. "Saba on Chance the Rapper, Pivot Gang & His New Album 'Care For Me'" *That New New*, April 19, 2018. YouTube video, 5:31. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gJMXbzVVVAK>.

bending and blending the music to color the understanding of life and death, requires of the listener what bell hooks says in remembering the transformative artist Jean-Michel Basquiat, that “our gaze must do more than reflect on surface appearances....to move our eyes beyond the colonizing gaze. The paintings ask that we hold in our memory the bones of the dead while we consider the world of the Black immediate, familiar”⁷⁰. Therefore, Saba is not just riding the beat (on the surface) but working his way in and through it to *re-member* himself through embodied agency as he says, “we just trying to live our life”. The musical implications for music theory, music history, music aesthetics, music therapy, music composition, performance, and recording are immense, and I dare say rooted in institutional values like rigor, nurture, and innovation.

Chicago artists Jamila Woods and Noname explore soundscapes and themes of freedom, but also themes that delve deep into humanity and mortality, such as Noname’s ‘Shadow Man’⁷¹, featuring Phoelix, Smino, and Saba, which is a song with thematic depth of expression and reflection beyond most of any genre of music today. Jamila Woods’ *Legacy! Legacy!* album is replete with radical vernacular that sonically embodies what makes freedom free, and not only for Black people. One example is the song, ‘Eartha’⁷², in which Woods intersubjectively connects her liberation and meaning to a famous Eartha Kitt quote when she states that she would not compromise to have a man in her life. The crux of her response is, “I fall in love with myself, and I want someone to share it with me. And I want someone to share me, with me.”⁷³ Woods’ refrain in the song is “Who gonna share my love for me with me?”. It represents something Black women have understood through embodied experience that is now taught in the academy in a theoretical way as ‘The Platinum Rule’ from intercultural scholar Milton Bennett⁷⁴. As an anecdote, I recently taught a social justice music course which was rooted in critical race theory as well as many ideas of Audre Lorde, the Combahee River Collective, and others. We used the ‘Eartha’ song lyrics to establish empathy that included boundaries and resistance

⁷⁰ bell hooks, “From the Archives: Altars of Sacrifice, Re-Membering Basquiat,” *ARTnews.com* (June 15, 2020), accessed March 12, 2021, <https://www.artnews.com/art-in-america/features/from-the-archives-altars-of-sacrifice-re-membering-basquiat-63242/>.

⁷¹ Noname ft. Phoelix, Smino, & Saba. *Shadow Man*. Noname., 2016, Accessed March 7, 2021. <https://open.spotify.com/album/4Wv5UAieM1LDEYVq5WmqDd?highlight=spotify:track:5sWbWccBcyHsg5LEKWGZo9>

⁷² Jamila Woods. *Eartha*. *Legacy! Legacy! Jagjaguwar*. 2019. <https://open.spotify.com/album/4gItVJ-lkTpRT9CfQm8D89?highlight=spotify:track:6WvXEoktKEIO4fOc5gLbuA>

⁷³ Take a Leaf- Film Clips. “‘To Compromise? For What?!’ - All by Myself: The Eartha Kitt Story (1982) - REMASTERED.”, April 30, 2020. YouTube video, 2:57. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vyN3eBRYcDo>.

⁷⁴ Milton Bennett. “Intercultural Consciousness and the Construction of Citizenship.” Presentation/ Lecture at CFC/FSEA Conference, The Formation of Sustainable Citizenship. Monte Carasso, Switzerland February 5, 2015. Accessed March 7, 2021. https://www.idrinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/constructing_intercultural_competence.pdf.

as a way to value people across difference. When asked if they learned anything in the class, most students (including many white students) told me, ‘we learned how to have empathy for ourselves, something we were never taught’. They also learned how to have empathy for each other. And they did so primarily through the embodied art and lived experience of Black women who had to name themselves and take up their space in the world that is designed to leave them disembodied.

And yet, the academy seems to have no lens to see the study of Black music or Black lived experience in these ways. As Audre Lorde stated, our feelings were not meant to survive and the comment from Post Malone might represent a dominant gaze towards Hip-hop and subsequent inability to hold space for freedom as defined by the ability to fully express. It wasn’t necessarily that he had an aversion to the fullness of Black expression, but the concreteness of his gaze did not allow it to be foregrounded in his perception. Harkening back to Angela Davis’ question of what freedom has meant to the Black world and those differently racialized- in the arts, perhaps it means what the Jamila Woods’ Baldwin lyrics speak of? Arts spaces in higher education have not shown that they can see or be shaped by the ‘story’ of Black lived experience or disrupt the caste system of racial capitalism that defines the music canon through whiteness and justifies exclusion.

Despite the challenges of proscribed (i.e. ‘what is not allowed’) and prescribed (i.e. ‘what is allowed’) forces of racial capitalism within the music industry for Black artists that have been mentioned in writing and songs^{75 76 77}, in the words of Southern⁷⁸, as quoted in Ramsey, “The black musician has created an entirely new music- in a style peculiarly Afro-American.” Just as Black artists have done throughout history, this generation is creating new ways of music-making that embody freedom, which a privileged, exclusionary freedom cannot express. The connection to poetry is not merely a tacit one. It doesn’t seem to be a coincidence that these young Black artists who are all connected together in Chicago and all rooted in poetry are making art that is rooted in fully embodied expression of their humanity. As Saba sings in his song American Hypnosis⁷⁹, echoing the poetry of Langston Hughes, “I too

⁷⁵ Hakeem Leonard. “A Problematic Conflation of Justice and Equality: The Case for Equity in Music Therapy.”

⁷⁶ P.J. Morton ft. Keyon Harold. Claustrophobic. Morton Records, 2018, Accessed March 7, 2021. <https://open.spotify.com/album/6au0qzMOjqEgc79ntU2bf6>

⁷⁷ Saba. Grey. Saba Pivot, LLC, 2018, Accessed March 7, 2021. <https://open.spotify.com/album/6Te111t5gDZ7W94myHRqUt?highlight=spotify:track:3ym9gIBrWP3LKjiH2kxyr5>

⁷⁸ Eileen Southern. *The music of black Americans: A history*. WW Norton & Company, 1997, Quoted in Ramsey, Guthrie P. *Race music: Black cultures from bebop to hip-hop*. Vol. 7. Univ of California Press, 2003.

⁷⁹ Saba ft. Akenya. American Hypnosis. Saba Pivot, LLC, 2016, Accessed March 11, 2021.

am an American Dreamer...I too dream of American freedom... I too sing an American plea...I too scream 'til liberty rings."

Conclusion

What's most interesting is that this type of art is noticeably absent from the academy? With the music industry being full of capitalist pressures and manipulations, and universities and schools of music being rooted in the ideas of liberalism and democracy, one would think that the academy would be where this type of art as freedom (full of embodied expression, humanity, and inclusion) would flourish. If the academy cannot support this, due to a white racial frame of music theory⁸⁰, whiteness and exclusion as the dominant approach to musicology⁸¹, and diversity either as window-dressing or diversity used as anti-Blackness⁸², what are we other than a pipeline for continued oppression with our well-intentioned privileged freedom?

One of the ways dominance is perpetuated in 'together and unequal' spaces is how inclusion and belonging are defined. So many think of inclusion in the terms of people being able to join and participate *regardless of differences*. This is the definition of somebody who is standing at the center, who has always been included. The onus is not on them to decenter themselves, but for the value of those who are 'othered' to increase by virtue of getting closer to those at the center. This is inclusion defined through the agency of privilege and without disrupting the white gaze. This inclusion doesn't understand that freedom is not free, and art is not embodied as freedom without Black people and other people of color with intersectional lived experiences.

We have to ask some serious questions to answer, such as: What types of values do we have? How do some of values (i.e. freedom) still cause us to perpetuate racism? How can we make freedom free? Is it possible that my freedom and full humanity are tied to the freedom of Black people and other people of color? How does my denial, ignorance, inability to see, or unwillingness to change continue to cause oppression? Moving past a surface understanding of diversity—What type of knowledge do we need in the institution? How can we define freedom from an embodied intersectional location? How can people take up their space and name themselves in our institution? How can I create a culture that fosters that? How do the arts that I'm engaged in promote equality, full expression, and belonging? Are the arts for freedom or for oppression?

⁸⁰ Philip Ewell. "Music Theory's White Racial Frame." *Music Theory Online* 26, no. 2 (2020).

⁸¹ Matthew D. Morrison. "Race, Blacksound, and the (Re) Making of Musicological Discourse."

⁸² Wendy Leo Moore, and Joyce M. Bell. "Maneuvers of whiteness: 'Diversity' as a mechanism of retrenchment in the affirmative action discourse." *Critical Sociology* 37, no. 5 (2011): 597-613.

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TRANSFORMING ACADEMIA: THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTORING IN SUPPORTING AND SUSTAINING FIRST-GENERATION AND LOWER-INCOME FACULTY ENTERING PROFESSORSHIPS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

With colleges and universities increasing efforts to recruit and hire new faculty from culturally diverse backgrounds who are more representative of the diverse student populations enrolling at post-secondary institutions across the United States, higher education is in the midst of an expansive cultural transformation. As part of this transformation, increasing numbers of faculty members from historically marginalized groups, often identifying as first-generation academics, are entering into professorships at colleges and universities across the nation. In her research on the various obstacles and barriers that academics from marginalized groups most often face, Frazier (2011) reminds us that during this transformative process, it is imperative for colleges and universities to examine and ameliorate any discriminatory practices within the systems of the institution, in order to retain and sustain an increasingly diverse, multicultural faculty.

Looking back at the history of higher education admission practices in the United States, we are reminded that prior to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the implementation of Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, institutions that did admit women and racial minorities often had various formal and informal discriminatory practices in place, such as admissions quotas, limiting such enrollments. (Elfman 2020) In her research, Chase (2010) labeled the twenty years between 1970 and 1990 as the Era of Adjustment and Accountability in higher education, and as social integration continued to evolve over the next thirty years, women and minority scholars, who had been provided access by law, still had to navigate vestiges of discrimination, inequality, and cultural bias in dominant-culture environments. As cultural integration and reconciliation efforts continue in American society, and as institutions continue to increase efforts to recruit and hire a culturally diverse faculty, increased numbers of scholars new to the academy are identifying as first-generation academics.

First-Generation Identity

First-generation faculty are typically defined as being the first in their family to attend college and to pursue a professional, white-collar career in academia. Much like what is observed with many first-generation college students having to navigate higher education settings for the first time, first-generation faculty must often learn how to navigate careers in academia without the luxury of a safety net or the opportunity for guidance from trusted family sources. Prior to joining faculty ranks, first-generation academics often experience a number of potentially

trauma-inducing assimilation issues on their academic journey, as undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate students. (Chase 2010)

With vestiges of racism, sexism, and classism remaining engrained in American society and within institutional power structures, including institutions of higher learning, first-generation faculty can often harbor negative self-perceptions that manifest in various ways, throughout their careers. It is important to understand the ways existing social structures can potentially create hostile environments, including formal and informal practices, processes, and policies that create issues to achieving job satisfaction and career advancement. By identifying such issues and implementing strategies for their amelioration, institutions can promote constructive changes by updating processes of promotion, retention, and advancement when they appear no longer effective or relevant to the faculty that they serve. (Whittaker et al. 2015)

Lower-Income Identity

In venturing away from familiar environments, individuals from first-generation backgrounds are typically acutely aware of their social and personal identities, and of how multiple facets of their pluralistic orientations, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and socioeconomic background intersect and influence their thoughts, feelings, beliefs, words, and actions. First-generation academics, who are the first in the family to pursue a higher education, are more likely to originate from historically oppressed, marginalized, or working-class backgrounds, and more likely to have grown up in communities with few financial resources available. As a result of these experiences and contrasting perspectives, it can often be difficult for first-generation and lower-income faculty (FGLIF) to connect with peers and colleagues from privileged backgrounds, due to a heightened awareness of societal inequity and an underlying fear of rejection. Participating in intellectual engagements and social discourse can often cause increased levels of stress and anxiety for many FGLIF while adjusting to a new workplace and new expectations. (Zambrana et al. 2015)

It is interesting to note that generally most factors related to, or determining a sense of belonging are typically psychosocial in nature, which in turn have a profound effect on the perception of the merit of one's own abilities. FGLIF often perceive their environment as inward as opposed to outward, and can often exhibit a tendency to avoid investing emotional energy into the external long-term planning of others. As a result, FGLIF can often be susceptible to self-efficacy issues and to feelings of disconnect or invalidation due to various psychosocial factors affecting self-perception and merit. (McClain and Perry 2017)

FGLIF Integration Issues

For new FGLIF working in dominant-culture environments, mentoring and sponsorship can help with the contrasting emotional, social, and cultural integration issues, such as tokenism, imposter syndrome, and compounding effects of microaggressions that can often occur when working within a dominant culture, as is often the case in academia. Dominant cultures within a department or unit can greatly affect how individuals working in the unit outwardly respond to diverse perspectives. Dominant culture perceptions, attitudes, and expectations are often exclusive of diverse racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic perspectives, and are generally influenced by several elements, including the degree of structural diversity, the historical legacy of inclusion or exclusion at the institution, and the psychological and behavioral climates of the institution. (Hurtado et al. 1999)

According to Boyd, et. al (2017), tokenism is a psychological state, occurring when persons with visible racial, ethnic and/or gender distinctions work in predominantly white male environments. Feelings of tokenism can be exacerbated by intersections of race, ethnicity and gender, and can cause feelings of social isolation and issues with self-efficacy in the workplace. FGLIF, especially those new to the academy, may not have the experience or understanding to be aware of the effects of token status, or to understand how to minimize the negative aspects of this perception.

Negative self-efficacy can also lead new FGLIF to develop feelings of imposter syndrome, which according to Boyd, et al (2017) occurs when individuals doubt their skills, talents or accomplishments. This self-doubt can lead to a persistent internalized fear of being exposed as a fraud in the academy. It can also lead to stereotype threat for individuals, which involves a culmination of stress and a fear of proving true the stereotypes about one's demographic identities.

Adding to the challenge, many new faculty members also encounter instances of microaggressions, microinsults, and microinvalidations on a daily basis. According to Sue, et al (2007), microaggressions, microinsults, and microinvalidations are brief, commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and insults toward people from diverse groups. Over time, the build-up of these everyday mannerisms can contribute to emotional attrition among individuals from marginalized groups.

Mentoring: Opportunities for Connection

As we begin to better understand the complexities and challenges of being a new FGLIF member, we are able to see the importance of mentoring and professional development that encourages the continued acquisition of people-centered skills, to help address common issues that many new faculty members with limited

experience often encounter during the first few years of teaching. Crayton (2019) states that if institutions of Higher Education in the United States are to increase the retention of first-generation faculty, then institutions must put in place programs to assist new faculty members in becoming more connected to the institution. It is imperative to recognize how systemic discrimination in academia has historically restricted access and opportunities for individuals from marginalized groups, and to examine where higher education currently stands in the transformation to a more equitable environment, in order to support the professional growth, maturation, and retention of new FGLIF.

According to Gonzalez, et al (2008), all involved in higher education have the opportunity to support FGLIF as they encounter inherent challenges pervasive in the social fabric of the academy. These challenges can be dissipated by educating faculty and staff to understand the nature of the challenges that impede the progress of potential and current faculty from marginalized groups. By understanding the barriers, triggers, responses, and aftereffects, there is an opportunity for everyone to develop increased empathy and collaboration within the unit.

During the early orientation and acclimation stages, it can be difficult for new FGLIF to accurately gauge campus climate and institutional culture. Every college or university will harbor a set of unwritten rules that influence many aspects of academic life. One of the most important tasks that new faculty face, is determining not only what those rules are, but also how they are applied in their new workplace. Expectations can often be unclear to FGLIF, as they must often learn to decode cues and unfamiliar terminology in order to become acclimated to a new and unfamiliar environment. The language of academia can often be quite inference-based, open-ended, and foreign to what many FGLIF identify with, have experience with, or value. (McClinton et al. 2018)

In facilitating mentoring and professional development beyond what is available during general orientation and introductions received during the first few days on campus, new FGLIF are provided with additional support and resources to aid in acclimating to a new campus climate and environment. (Jayakumar 2008) Research has shown that campus climate greatly contributes to the retention of faculty from diverse racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds, and that facilitating extended opportunities assists in developing a sense of belonging, and builds stronger connections with experienced colleagues. (Smith 2000) Establishing mentoring connections with more experienced colleagues also helps when questions arise later concerning academic service expectations, scholarly research expectations, and promotion and tenure expectations, as new FGLIF are more apt to reach out to ask these sorts of questions after trust has been already been established.

When identifying mentors to work with FGLIF, it is important to coordinate

a good match and to make sure that mentors are ready to mentor. Mentors need to be carefully screened for existing biases and microaggressions, and need to possess the cross-cultural ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people from different identities and backgrounds. These abilities include being aware of their own world-view, and possessing open attitudes towards differing views and practices. Some senior faculty may surprisingly only have a cursory understanding and limited exposure to non-Western history, literature, or beliefs, and may not have experienced what is generally needed to be able to empathize with, understand, and appreciate the differences of individuals from diverse backgrounds. (Howard 2007)

By being aware of the history and traumas associated with marginalized groups, mentors are better able to identify and assist with racial, cultural, and gender biases present in academia. Mentors who convey a genuine interest in the academic, professional, and personal development of a new colleague can often help the new colleague to feel valued and supported. By listening intently, and asking questions, mentors can help expand a mentee's understanding, and are able to transmit knowledge accrued through personal experience.

Traditional mentoring usually involves a dyadic relationship between a senior faculty member and a junior colleague where new faculty members learn the language, acumen, skills, and necessary actions for scholarship development and retention. One of the main goals in the early stages of traditional mentoring is making sure that the mentee meets short-term milestones in their professional development and development of scholarship activities. In academia, these milestones commonly include defining a research niche or focus area, developing and attaining early metrics of success, and being socialized into an institution's culture and norms.

During the mentoring process, new faculty members are often encouraged to think deeply about their existence and surroundings. Self-reflection allows mentees to identify behaviors or beliefs in need of development, and to set goals for the future. One-on-one mentoring with an experienced colleague can help new faculty gain a better perspective on challenging situations, and an increased understanding of how a current situation may have developed, which actions prompted the conflict, and how certain emotions may have triggered or influenced predictable responses. (Crayton 2019)

In addition to working one-on-one with a mentor, group mentoring can also be beneficial to FGLIF members working in a new environment. Group mentoring involves a small number of mentors with a medium-size group of mentees, or vice-versa. This type of mentoring encourages a community conversation, where new faculty can try out ways of articulating thoughts, ideas, and feelings, and where a team of mentors, each possessing different strengths, can assist and interact with multiple mentees. Group mentoring will often progress into peer mentoring as new faculty begin to build their own professional networks. This type of mentoring

encourages a communal sense of collaboration and allows new faculty to share and compare progress and status. (Holmes et al. 2018)

The increased use of social media has spawned new opportunities for networking and mentoring through additional virtual and online mentoring applications where new faculty can receive the support necessary for professional development. Online group mentoring can take place in self-organizing, topic-based groups or leadership circles. Using an online platform, one mentor can work remotely with several mentees at a time on desired skills. The circles take advantage of platform features such as community forums, document-sharing spaces, group polling, and calendars that announce events and mentor availability. Since supporting applications often have built-in social-networking capability, mentees are able to connect to others with very little assistance.

Mentoring: Opportunities for Retention

Throughout the mentoring process, new FGLIF develop a greater understanding of how general processes at the institution work, and how processes for tenure and promotion impact their opportunity for advancement. With each institution having varied expectations and priorities for promotion, working with a more experienced mentor can assist new faculty with determining how much importance to place on the areas of teaching, service, and research, and can prevent potential missteps that FGLIF would be likely to experience. For example, some institutions prioritize scholarly research and external grant acquisition, in which case new faculty would want to start right away on researching, writing, presenting, and publishing within their specialization, in order to maximize their chances at gaining promotion and tenure.

As new faculty begin to display and use skills acquired during the mentoring process, many mentors continue to help their mentees by encouraging the submission of academic papers, pursuing independent grants, providing recommendations for talks or presentations at national meetings and conferences, and identifying co-authoring or editing opportunities for various journals. Such opportunities allow new faculty to better define their field of interest and increase their national visibility. As new faculty become more involved in the academic community, and more established in their respective field, their contributions and collaborations at their home institutions often become more meaningful and impactful as well.

In conclusion, by facilitating mentoring and professional development opportunities to offer safe spaces where individuals can meet, share ideas, and connect, FGLIF are more apt to feel welcome and valued as contributing members

of the academy. Mentoring provides the foundation needed for FGLIF to advance in both their professional and personal development, and encourages the development of the next generation of professionals who will chart new paths in research, education, and service well into the future. All faculty members want to feel valued, validated, and engaged in their work, and the way your institution answers the question “are we providing the institutional support necessary to sustain all of our faculty?” will often determine the success of efforts to develop, and to retain a diverse, multicultural faculty.

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EQUITY FOR LATINX STUDENTS AND FACULTY IN MUSIC IN HIGHER EDUCATION

As schools and colleges of music, conservatories and music departments respond with deliberate speed to calls for diversity, equity and inclusion, it is imperative that faculty and administrators address the status of Latinx students and faculty. Bolstering this suggestion, are data concerning the projected demographics of the U.S over the coming years. In this essay, I address current demographics of departments and schools of music and the related issue of climate, after providing a general overview of national demographics.

William H. Fry, in an essay issued by the Brookings Institution, states that by 2045, the U.S. will be “minority white” with 49.7% of the population, and that the largest minority group will be Hispanic/Latino at 24.6% of the population.¹ By comparison, Fry projects that at that point, African Americans will comprise 13.1% and Asians, 7.9% of the population respectively (with 3.8% of the total, identifying as multiracial). As indicated in Figure 3 of the chart Fry provides, white people become minorities (in terms of population) in the age 18-29 category in the year 2027, illustrating that the “tipping points” for the different age cohorts are different.

Even bypassing issues of social justice and ethics, it behooves music administrators to consider how music in higher education will respond not only to the projected enrollment cliff, which as many believe, has been only accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, but to the demographics of the college attending population in the latter part of this decade.

While music programs at Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) take pride in possibly higher enrollments in music, as well as in degree programs offering concentrations in Latin American Music studies, for other departments and schools, outreach to and retention of Latinx students poses a challenge. Indeed, Marcela Cuellar, now assistant professor at UC/Davis, suggests that in regard to Latina/o student experiences and outcomes in higher education, the status of the institution, whether HSI, emerging HSI, or non-HSI, matters.² Regardless of institutional status, we can all strive to make our classes, studios, and ensembles more welcoming for Latinx students.

In contemplating discussion with Latinx students, some colleagues might be unsure about the term to use: Is it Hispanic (a census category, generally held to relate to Spanish speaking cultures), Latino (which de-emphasizes Spanish heritage as opposed to indigenous and African heritages), or Latinx (a new term that is inclusive of the gender spectrum and used primarily in English-dominant contexts)? In a

¹ Posting by William H. Fry, March 14, 2018, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2018/03/14/the-us-will-become-minority-white-in-2045-census-projects/>. Accessed on September 27, 2020.

² Cuellar, Marcela. “Latina/o Student Success in Higher Education: Models of Empowerment at Hispanic Serving-Institutions (HSIs), Emerging HSIs, and Non-HSIs,” Ph.D. diss., UCLA, 2012.

June 2020 essay that appeared in *The Nation*, the author, Jack Herrera, joins activist scholars and musicians in suggesting that Spanish speaking ability is not integral to one's identification as Latino/a/x.³

Scholars have also addressed in compelling terms, racism and colorism within Hispanic and Latinx communities, with often, AfroLatinx and other dark-skinned people being disadvantaged or relegated to a type of second-class status. In an editorial that appears in *Insider*, Canela Lopez shares her frank assessment of anti-Blackness in Latinx communities and popular culture.⁴ If we add to this, the often underreported instances of police killings of unarmed Latinos, then we can understand some of the frustration of Latinx activists who feel that extra-judicial violence in their communities is often overshadowed by attention to the same in Black communities.⁵ All of these issues come to the fore as we consider the everyday experiences of Latinx students (regardless of race) in music, support co-curricular activities, and advise student organizations.

I begin with a higher level view of Latinx access on our campuses and then narrow the focus to music. In a recent 40- page study, Andrew Howard Nichols, a scholar associated with the Education Trust, addresses the underrepresentation of Black and Latino students in 101 of the most selective public colleges and universities in the U.S. Nichols studies college access rates, illuminating how they have changed since 2000.⁶ In particular, he was interested in how the enrollments of Black and Latino students compared with the make-up of these groups in the general population. (In an ironic twist, the title of his study, "Segregation Forever," conjures the memorable phrase from the speech that George Wallace gave on the occasion of his inaugural gubernatorial address in 1963).⁷ Over half of the 101 institutions included in the study earned D's and F's for access in regard to both Black and Latino students.

³ Herrera, Jack. <https://www.thenation.com/article/society/latinidad-spanish-exclusionary/>. Accessed on September 27, 2020. "Latinos Don't Need to Speak Spanish" in *The Nation*, June 18, 2020.

⁴ Lopez, Canela. June 26, 2020. Accessed on September 27, 2020. "It's time for non-Black Latinx People to Talk about anti-Blackness in Our Own Communities – and the Conversation Starts at Home." *Insider*. <https://www.insider.com/anti-blackness-non-black-latinx-spaces-racism-2020-6>.

⁵ Contreras, Russell. "Activists: Police Killings of Latinos Go Unnoticed, Underscoring Racial History." *Albuquerque Journal*, August 23rd, 2020. Accessed September 25, 2020. Contreras reports findings of a study that appeared in the *Washington Post*, stating that between 2015 and April 2020, Black Americans were killed by police at the highest rate in the U.S., at 31 per million residents. Latinos were killed by police at the second-highest rate, 23 per million residents. Both, Contreras adds, are disproportionate rates when matched against percentages of the population.

⁶ Nichols, Andrew Howard. "Segregation Forever: The Continued Underrepresentation of Black and Latino at the Most Selective Public Colleges and Universities." <https://edtrust.org/resource/segregation-forever/>. The Education Trust. July 21, 2020. Accessed on September 25, 2020.

⁷ NPR Diaries. 'Segregation Forever': A Fiery Pledge Forgiven but Not Forgotten. January 10, 2013. Accessed on September 27, 2020. <https://www.npr.org/2013/01/14/169080969/segregation-forever-a-fiery-pledge-forgiven-but-not-forgotten>.

Examining Nichols' report further, we learn that "only three institutions (i.e., the University of Louisville, the University of Maine, and the University of New Mexico) earned an A or B for both Black and Latino student access." It is imperative that we face our collective institutional challenge head on, if any of us are to be able to speak to future generations when they ask: "What did you do to ensure equity in music education writ large for all, when you had the chance?" A suggested next step for administrators and faculty, would be to compare the campus wide "grade" provided, with the demographics of their home institution's music department or school. I believe that this is where, in many instances, we will find discrepancies.

Now, I turn to address the status of Latinx faculty and students in music in higher education. Specifically, I draw from data collected from NASM affiliated institutions.⁸ Numbers of Latinx students enrolled in college and university music programs are culled from the 2019-20 HEADs (Higher Education Arts Data Services) report. I requested Chart 61 – "Music Students by Degree level and Ethnic Characteristics." Mine is a snapshot, given that the data is collected from only the 606 institutions that are NASM-accredited.

Chart 61 reveals 101,463 matriculated students at the 606 NASM accredited institutions that submitted the data. Programs range from the associate degree through the doctorate and include also, undergraduate and graduate non-degree programs (certificates and diplomas). The data show that 7,246 Hispanic male students (or 7.1%) and 5,108 Hispanic female students (5.0%) are included in the total number of music students. As might be anticipated, the largest cohort is comprised of students seeking the B.M. degree (4,543 Hispanic males and 3,360 Hispanic females, or 7.5% and 5.5% respectively, of the total number of music majors at reporting institutions). As we consider the academic pipeline for the music professoriate, chart 61 reveals a total of 193 Hispanic male students pursuing the DMA or performance degree (4.0%) and 102 Hispanic female students pursuing the same (2.1%). Chart 61 reveals also, 24 Ph.D. seeking Hispanic male students (3.2%) and 15 Ph.D. seeking Hispanic female students (2.0%).

Gender disparity amongst those who attain degrees remains salient. The only degree category in which the number of Hispanic students of either sex exceeds 10% is that of the associate degree. The percentage of Hispanic male students seeking the associate degree in music is 12%, whereas for females, it is 8.2%. The percentage of Hispanic male students seeking the associate liberal arts degree is 15.6%, whereas, for female students, the share is 6%. At every educational level, regardless of rank, the number of male Hispanic students outpaces Hispanic female students.

⁸ My appreciation to Nora Hamme of the National Office for Arts Accreditation, in Reston, Virginia, for facilitating my access to the HEADS reports, September 25, 2020.

There is still another way in which the HEADS data on student enrollments are partial. Ana R. Alonso-Minutti, associate professor of musicology/ethnomusicology at the University of New Mexico, addresses the matter of college access for undocumented students. She writes: “The demand to disclose migration status is, probably, one of the strongest obstacles for undocumented students who might otherwise enroll (regardless of nationality), or apply for assistantships. Another factor that comes into play are admissions requirements such as the GRE and TOEFL. The latter continue to present barriers for many international students (Latin American students included).”⁹

Chart 27, “Demographic Survey of Doctoral Students who Graduated in 2018-19” provides data from the 64 institutions reporting.¹⁰ Of the 1,097 students total, 39 were Hispanic men and 11 were Hispanic women. The chart enumerates all music areas, from the musicologies and worship studies, to opera, instrumental studies and music education. The total of these figures (50) is enough to make even the audience of a small recital hall seem sparse. Perhaps a more positive outlook is provided by Chart 28 which shows the demographic breakdown of doctoral students enrolled but who, in 2018-19, had not yet graduated. Of the 4,628 doctoral students in the 66 NASM accredited institutions reporting, there were 189 Hispanic males and 98 Hispanic females represented. Again, men outnumbered women by almost 100%.

Chart 60 provides a distillation of 2019-20 “Music Faculty by Rank and Ethnic Characteristics” from the 603 institutions reporting, with a total of 10,378 faculty, including all ranks. I will address precarity in employment shortly, but here are the percentages for the ranks of assistant professor through professor. Chart 60, for 2019-20, reveals 83 Hispanic men at the rank of Assistant Professor and 25 Hispanic women. There were 94 male Associate Professors and 30 female Associate Professors. Lastly, the data indicate 84 Hispanic male Professors and 28 Hispanic women Professors. The aggregated number of Hispanic men and women faculty at the ranks of Instructor, Lecturer, Unranked, and Visiting Faculty are as follows: 70 Hispanic men and 25 Hispanic women. I acknowledge that between data provided by chart 60 (faculty) and that provided by chart 27 (doctoral students), there could be overlap and that distinctions are not entirely clear. Again, however, we find 344 tenure-track Hispanic faculty at NASM accredited institutions in the U.S – enough to attend, in a medium size hall, a concert of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Gustavo Dudamel, conducting.

As revealing as these HEADS data are, I find them still lacking. In other words, for all of the discourse, within the academy, about intersectionality, these statistics don't actually provide enough information so that we can address

⁹ Private communication, September 27, 2020.

¹⁰ I wish to express appreciation to the music theorist and pedagogue, Cynthia I. Gonzales, recipient of the Regents' Teacher Award of the Texas State University System. Her presentation on music graduate programs at the inaugural conference of *Project Spectrum* in 2018 inspired me to cast a wider net for the discussion of the demographics included in this essay.

under-representation in music with nuance. I shared my frustration about the limitations of the HEADS reports and their inability to provide a more laser-like focus on the complex of race and identity, with Michael Birenbaum Quintero, ethnomusicologist and Chair of the Musicology and Ethnomusicology Department at Boston University.¹¹ He responded:

...The way Latinx people are counted is very complicated. Since we can be of any race, on the census and in government documents, Hispanic is an add-on. You check off your race and then check off “Hispanic.” So, you can check Black and then Hispanic, or White then Hispanic or (often) Other and then Hispanic. That’s why you sometimes hear statisticians talking about “non-Hispanic Whites” and the like.

It also means that it doesn’t do much for actually counting diversity in the way we are looking at it in the university. This is in part because of class (an issue that I wish people looked at more carefully for all races) but also because a scholar from Latin America, well-educated in their country’s best private schools, doesn’t necessarily bring the same perspective on race and ethnicity as the US-born child of a working-class immigrant. But they both count as “Hispanic” in the numbers game, which means that universities do not necessarily press very hard to make that important distinction...

A prominent scholar of Latin American music shared with me, privately, her amplification of Birenbaum-Quintero’s point:

“This is, in my opinion, a very important point. ... “Hispanic” is not a race, an ethnicity, or anything else. I am white, of Italian descent, speak Portuguese, but I share a lot in terms of culture and education (humanistic) with what is understood here as “Hispanic.” I am not Hispanic, but I am from Latin America. Brazil has the largest number of Japanese descendent people outside Japan in the world – they share more cultural experiences with the U.S. label “Hispanic” than with anyone in Asia. Not to mention that for the Native Americans in countries like Mexico, many Central American countries and south to the Andean region (Inca country), the term “Hispanic” does not include them at all.”

Birenbaum-Quintero’s observations bring forth the significance of class background

¹¹ My thanks to Michael Birenbaum Quintero, author of *Rites, Rights, and Rhythms: A Genealogy of Musical Meaning in Colombia’s Black Pacific*. (Oxford University Press, 2018) for the exchange.

and for me, recall also, the phenomenon of “privilege,” a lens that lends nuance to the discussion of heterogeneous Latinx experience. If I have learned one thing in the course of my interviews with colleagues and compiling of data, it is that Latinx/Hispanic cannot be regarded as a single homogenizing category.

Over the decades, a long line of musicians and scholars have advocated for our schools of music to become more inclusive of Latinx students. The critical interventions in scholarship and performance practice by Latinx scholars and others has propelled Latin American music studies forward, exposing students to a vast number of music cultures and familiarizing them with repertoire encompassing a wide range of musical styles and aesthetic values, from early modern to experimental music and performance art. This trend is amplified by Ana R. Alonso-Minutti, who explains: “In an effort to address the centuries of discrimination and invisibility of Blacks throughout Latin America, during the last decade, scholars have placed Blackness at the center of attention in studies of diverse music traditions.”

Professional societies, also, have a strong advocacy role to play in regard to bringing about equity and opportunity in music. For example, in summer 2020, the College Music Society hosted a webinar on music education’s response to the pandemic. The panel chair, Teryl Dobbs, moderated a panel of pre-eminent music educators, school district administrators, pre-service teachers, and recently minted Ph.Ds in music education for a discussion of both pandemics: coronavirus and systemic racism.¹² The panel addressed nuances that a reading of HEADS reports alone, cannot provide. Topics included: “What does the confluence of the pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement mean for music education? What processes and practices need to change in music ed at the higher education level and why? How do we create sustained conversations and advocate for change for the long haul? What ideas do you have for music education moving forward?”

Panelists devoted attention, also, to curriculum reform. In the passage below, Associate Professor Amanda Soto, School of Music at Texas State University, responds to a question about levels of freedom, restrictions, and support she has experienced at her institution in the process of adding a Mariachi track as a parallel offering to instrumental/choral emphases in the degree:

¹² Moderated by Teryl Dobbs (CMS National Board Member for Music Education, Professor and Chair, Music Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison), the panel discussed current issues in music education with focus on the pandemic and anti-racism initiatives. Panelists included Janet Barrett (Marilyn Pfleiderer Zimmerman Endowed Chair in Music Education, University of Illinois-Urbana/Champaign), Christian Bonner (2020 graduate in Music Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Music Educator), Constance McKoy (Marion Stedman Covington Distinguished Professor, Music Education, University of North Carolina-Greensboro), Amanda Soto (Associate Professor of Music Education, Texas State University), Tony White (Coordinator, Music and Entertainment Education - Los Angeles Unified School District-Beyond the Bell Branch), and JaQuan Wiley (Assistant Director of Bands, Asheville High School, North Carolina). A National Conversation on Music Education: At the Crossroads of Real Change?

“...Texas has a large Latino population and we have a vibrant Latin music studies area that John Lopez has been building for over twenty years (and now there are master’s degrees in Latin music performance). Faculty have seen how well our students have done...and we had thought we had gotten through a mariachi concentration... It’s frustrating that it hasn’t been passed since last year when we worked hard on it. Even with the number of [jr. high and high] schools that have full-time mariachi teachers and vibrant mariachi programs, it was still a struggle to get the concentration through. One can be band/choir/orchestra (meaning choral or instrumental) and now there is the mariachi track to go along with that... This is significant in terms of who can get into the program and who decides. In the past, a mariachi student could get in but they had to go through their private lesson studio, and their audition was in classical music and the faculty decided whether they were going to get into the School of Music or not. And so those were some of the barriers and the gatekeepers. With this proposal, this changes. The studio teachers are mariachi artists and so I’m very grateful for that.”¹³

The task of securing the futures of Latinx students – and faculty – in music, is not new; nor, can or should the venture be relegated to the discipline of music education alone. All barometers suggest that for music in higher education, providing access and opportunity is an all-minds-on deck enterprise.

Admittedly, the deck is stacked with inopportunity fueled by increasing student debt borne disproportionately, by those who are Black and Latinx; the devaluation of the music that students play and listen to in their home environments; the underrepresentation of Latinx faculty, and a curriculum that can be described as Euroamericentric¹⁴ Many were outraged by attempts of the Trump Administration to demean and demonize Mexicans and persons of Mexican descent. Irrespective of nationality, “Mexican” is deployed as a signifier for illegality and for living while brown. In an attempt to pursue corrective action, however, administrators and faculty might think twice before lobbying for additional “diversity initiatives,” which, as feminist writer Sarah Ahmad suggests, are designed more to self-replicate than to provide critical interventions that matter.¹⁵

Yolanda Martinez-San Miguel, the Marta S. Weeks Chair in Latin American Studies at the University of Miami, addresses the weakness of the “diversity”

¹³ (National Conversation on Music Education webinar, 7/24/20).

¹⁴ I invoke the term “Euroamericentric” after Steve Loza, in “Challenges to the Euroamericentric Ethnomusicological Canon: Alternatives for Graduate Readings, Theory, and Method,” *Ethnomusicology*, Spring/Summer, 2006, Vol. 50., No. 2.

¹⁵ See persuasive arguments made by Sara Ahmed in *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*. Duke University Press, 2012.

paradigm in an essay appearing in *LatinX Talk*: “Diversity and inclusion only allows for the assimilation of difference into the norm of U.S. American whiteness, and that is not enough... It is not enough to replace a white-centric knowledge with ethnic-, gender-, or class-centric knowledges. It is time to consider ways of transforming knowledges instead of adding more variables to a never changing disciplinary system.”¹⁶ An elaboration of the limits of the “add and stir” approach is found in an earlier observation of music educator and ethnomusicologist, and past-CMS president, Patricia Sheehan Campbell, one of the co-authors of *Redefining Music Studies in an Age of Change: Creativity, Diversity, and Integration* (Routledge 2017). Sheehan Campbell writes:

“The identification of new areas to be added to the existing model, however, is neither new to change conversations, nor is it-in itself -adequate to the kind of change needed. What must complement this approach is the identification of new premises that help guide individuals, institutions, and the field at large toward new ways of apprehending this broader spectrum as an integrative, self-organizing whole.”¹⁷

Along my journey of thinking through issues related to curriculum reform and change, I have benefitted enormously from the insights of the book’s co-authors (Edward E. Sarath, David E. Myers, and Patricia Sheehan Campbell). Like many faculty and administrators, I used what is informally referred to as the CMS Taskforce Report on the Undergraduate Music Major, as a launching pad for our all-faculty engagement of curricular reform several years ago.¹⁸

As faculty and administrators engage in efforts to effect a consequential change for music academe in regard to diversity, equity and inclusion, we might do well to heed the words of William Arthur Ward, writer of inspirational prose, who wrote: “*The pessimist complains about the wind; the optimist expects it to change; the realist adjusts the sails.*” In support of our discipline’s goal of furthering anti-racist initiatives in a more consequential and strategic manner, let us adjust our sails, so that Latinx students and faculty are purposefully supported by our departments, schools, conservatories, and colleges of music.

¹⁶ Martinez-San Miguel, *Latinx Talk*, The Underrepresentation of Latinx Faculty and the Future of Higher Education, September 18, 2018. Accessed September 27, 2020. <https://latinxtalk.org/2018/09/19/the-underrepresentation-of-Latinx-faculty-and-the-future-of-higher-education/>.

¹⁷ Campbell, Patricia Sheehan. *Redefining Music Studies in an Age of Change*. Routledge. 2017. Page 2.

¹⁸ https://www.music.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=233&Itemid=3665 Accessed on September 27, 2020. “Transforming Music Study from Its Foundations: A Manifesto for Progressive Change in the Undergraduate Preparation of Music Majors” (2016).

Endnotes

I wish to thank Cynthia Gonzales, Brenda Romero, and Ana Alonso-Minutti, for valuable suggestions on earlier drafts of this essay; thanks also to Michael Birenbaum Quintero and Amanda Soto for allowing me to reference their observations.

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Eileen M. Hayes serves as dean and professor of the College of Arts and Communication at University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. From 2012-17, she served as chair of the Department of Music at Towson University. Prior to that, she served as chair of the Division of Music History, Theory, and Ethnomusicology at University of North Texas for four years. She is the author of *Songs in Black and Lavender: Race, Sexual Politics, and Women's Music* (University of Illinois Press, 2010). She is the co-editor with Linda Williams of *Black Women and Music: More than the Blues* (University of Illinois Press, 2007). Hayes is a Ford Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow (UC/Riverside) and a DAAD Fellow (University at Göttingen). She is the immediate past president of the College Music Society.

EMPLOYING CREATIVITY TO OPTIMIZE BRAIN HEALTH

Overview

Increasingly, researchers are identifying a range of definable factors, fortunately many of them modifiable, that significantly increase our risk of developing dementia.¹ Unfortunately, the advances of the modern world, the increasing reliance on modern conveniences (prepared food, automated transportation, smartphones, technology) and our belief that modern medical advances, from pharmaceutical to implantable devices to bionic replacement parts, have taken us farther and farther from actually modifying these risks. As an example, while the advent of the printing press at the turn of the 16th century revolutionized humans' abilities to learn and communicate, these transformations occurred over a half millennium, allowing our minds to adapt to the revolution. On the other hand, the development of computers, the internet and smartphones in the past half century have brought on an exponentially more profound revolution that our brains and minds are struggling to fully deal with. In fact, if we look at the last 30 years as a single point in time, smart phones, climate change and COVID-19 represent the single greatest moment of adaptation in human history. Our minds and bodies are being asked to conform to an entirely different way of receiving information, of being asked to perform, and of being challenged. While turning to technology to support this adaptation, to repair and to restore the damage being inflicted is tempting, physical fitness, cognitive wellness and mental health research evidence simply does not support its success. Fortunately, inside all of us resides one of the most powerful preventive health and wellness tools available, a means of confronting the seeming chaos of the 21st century by drawing on the strengths that have allowed humans to come this far – Creativity.

What is Creativity?

While our general understanding of what creativity means to our society is typically quite narrow, in fact creativity can truly be anything that takes you outside of the bounds of your day-to-day journey. Diversity can be as straight forward as drawing, photography or painting. Or it can be as diverse as writing poetry, dancing or singing. The key to becoming creative in a proactive manner is to discover your interest, how do you express yourself, what defines you? Once you find your expression the creativity flows.

How Can Creativity be Harnessed for Wellness?

Research reveals that being creative or simply looking at art can be therapeutic.

Elements of creativity, in particular related to art therapy, have been shown to improve outcomes related to cancer, dementia, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorders, mental health disorders, and overall wellness.²⁻¹⁰ Music and song together can shift and synchronize an entire group into a physiologically restorative state.¹¹ Taking the notion of creativity and turning it proactively into a therapeutic agent even before there are specific difficulties is an approach that can be through of as “prehab.” For example, developing a creative habit that you participate in for at least 20 minutes each day can be both therapeutic and preventative. Regularly engaging in creativity is essential for unlocking the desperation and grip of the modern-day persistent stress response towards whole health. Regardless, whether one suffers chronically from prior injury, chronic physical or emotional disorders, or from external factors (e.g., socioeconomic instability or social isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic), there are hopeful holistic methods being developed. These integrative methods utilize a blend of the best of ancient wisdom, such as meditative focused breathing techniques, the latest in cutting-edge healthcare advances, including remote monitoring wearable technology and a judicious use of standard medical care to facilitate creativity for whole health.¹²

What Steps Can be Taken to Incorporate Creativity into Day-to-Day Life?

We are conditioned to think about exercising the body and the data (and our mirrors) show the health benefits. But we are rarely ever asked to exercise the mind. If we think of creativity as a practice, it becomes nothing more than a daily exercise which can be easily layered with daily physical exercise. And, the data (and brain MRIs) show the health benefits. The challenges of being an athlete (whether professional to amateur), in the military personnel or a business person are stressful. Through diet, daily physical and mental exercise (e.g., using a Daily Creative Training Journal) our mental wellness improves.

What Are Some Real-World Examples of Creative Affecting Wellness?

From its beginnings, The Abstract Athlete (TAA) has worked with professional athletes, military veterans (active and retired) and a wide range of others who seek to incorporate creativity into their lives to enhance the quality of their lives. A mainstay of the approach includes the routine use of a Daily Creative Training Journal that was created through discussions with these individuals and our own experiences to provide a touchstone that can be frequently revisited and that has demonstrated how creativity has helped and how we can all “find the flow” in our lives. The specific applications of creativity have been as diverse as the backgrounds of those who are a part of the programs (amateur to professional athletes, active

duty to retired servicemembers, healthy to medically-challenged, amateur to professional artists). Additionally, we discovered a common thread within every conversation. Every athlete and military veteran we work with uses their passion for art as a creative outlet and spoke about the mental health benefits of creating. In addition, many of the healthcare clinicians we've worked with have noted the restorative effects of integrating creativity into the treatment plans of the individuals that they help treat, with benefits seen in the management of both somatic (pain) and emotional (mental health) challenges.

Brett, a former MLB pitcher, said that even during the roughest of times he still had his painting. It was an "outlet of stress relief," he noted, or even more simply, "It's cool if things aren't going too well, and I want to lose reality for a while, I can work for six hours, and I get lost in time."

Vernon, a retired NFL tight end says, "Art is the foundation of my life." Like Brett, Vernon studied art in college and maintained his creativity throughout his playing career while also opening an art gallery in Washington, D.C.

Alicia, a former U.S. Servicemember, traded her pilot's helmet for a hand plane over a decade ago. While serving in the U.S. Army as an officer and Blackhawk Helicopter Maintenance Test Pilot, she had become reacquainted with woodworking through the military's Morale, Wellness & Recreation program. During the week, Alicia would study and attend flight school, and on Saturdays she would practice the art of woodworking as a way to relax. "It was my release from the stress of the week," she observed. Woodworking for Alicia is a nostalgic reminder of childhood hours spent playing in the wood shop of her father and grandfather. Alicia also explained that when she's working in her wood shop, the music is off, distraction are gone and the craft of working with wood takes me to a different level, "Art is a bridge."

Susan, a middle-aged classically trained painter, was overwhelmed with chronic pain from severe, inoperative spine deformities. The chronic daily pain broke her down physically and emotionally. In 2010, during one initial pain management evaluation she noted, "I am desperate" and felt that she was being judged as a drug seeker. A few months later her creativity was rekindled with a holistic integrative program,¹² stating, "I feel like I have a future again...sometimes I forget I have pain." By 2014, she was able to physically and creatively paint and entire wall mural for the Virginia War Museum in Newport News, VA (See Image 1). To date, she continues to effectively cope with pain but functions free of desperation and is an inspiration to others during these turbulent times.

Lindsey, a 37-year-old mother of two daughters with an aggressive cancer (20 percent five-year survival rate) and chronic low back pain, in part due to having had a number of operative interventions that left her with a nine-level back fusion, panic attacks and cancer-related fatigue was at a point of desperation when she was referred for care to an integrative pain clinic. Although still only a novice artist,

she began regularly engaging in creativity for about one year prior to the visit with variable efficacy on her pain management. Initially, she presented as being overwhelmed with how to deal with her situation. However, within a few visits of implementing a holistic and judicious medical treatment plan, that included objective focused breathing techniques¹² and emphasized the role of artistic expression as a means of both expressing and dealing with her struggles, she was able to eliminate ruminations about her fears of death and deserting her daughters, the expectations of ongoing pain, and the possibility of a loss of dignity. With time, she was able to eliminate her panic attacks and cope with pain while also reducing (and in some cases eliminating) her use of pain and anxiety medications. “I am now able to achieve that meditative wellness feeling” while creating artwork, she noted. The potential to expand safe and hopeful methods are limitless.

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Image 1
Reaching for Success
[Used with Permission of the Artist]

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David X. Cifu, M.D. is the associate dean for innovation and system integration and the chairman and Herman J. Flax, MD Endowed Professor of the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R) in the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine in Richmond, Virginia. He is also the senior TBI specialist for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. He has been funded on 49 research grants for over \$246 million, including currently serving as principal investigator of the VA/DoD's Long-term Impact of Military-relevant Brain Injury Consortium/Chronic Effects of Neurotrauma Consortium (LIMBIC-CENC), the nation's largest retrospective and longitudinal epidemiologic studies of combat and blast-related concussions in current and former U.S. servicemembers. In his more than 30 years as an academic physiatrist, he has delivered more than 580 regional, national and international lectures, published more than 230 scientific articles and 65 abstracts, and co-authored or edited 40 books and book chapters. He is the past president of the American Academy of PM&R and editor-in-chief of the 5th and 6th editions of *Braddom's Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation* textbook.

Raouf (Ron) Gharbo, D.O. is board certified in physical medicine and rehabilitation (PM&R) and neuromuscular electrodiagnostic medicine and a current PM&R faculty member at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia. In his more than 22 years practicing neurotrauma rehabilitation and integrative pain management, he has delivered a 50th-

anniversary keynote presentation for the Association of Applied Psychophysiology and Biofeedback (AAPB) in 2019, The Richard Baer Lectureship in 2018 at his institution of training, Ohio State University Medical Center, as well as numerous lectures and presentations both nationally and internationally. He serves as an authority pragmatically applying heart rate variability science using remote monitoring, wearable technology, and telehealth for research and whole-health trajectory change for the VA/DoD's Long-term Impact of Military-relevant Brain Injury Consortium/Chronic Effects of Neurotrauma Consortium (LIMB-CENC) and Riverside Health System's Performing Arts Medicine and physician burnout prevention programs. He was The Ohio State University's top male scholar-athlete in 1988 and their first walk-on All-American wrestler. He published a synopsis, "Autonomic Rehabilitation: Adapting to Change," in the *Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Clinics of North America Journal* in 2020 for innovative population health trajectory change for integration into health systems for the masses of individuals.

Ron Johnson is an internationally recognized artist and co-founder of The Abstract Athlete. He was a college baseball player at The Ohio State University. He received his bachelor of fine arts degree in August 2001 from The Ohio State University and his master of fine arts degree from Virginia Commonwealth University. After graduating in 2003 he became an assistant professor at VCU in the top ten-ranked Department of Painting and Printmaking. As an artist he exhibits his work nationally and internationally and has attended two artist residencies, the Cite Internationale des Arts in Paris France and Ucross Foundation in Clearmont, Wyoming. His work is in many public and private collections. He also has worked as a curator and has published multiple reviews of other artist's works in national art magazines. In the fall of 2016, he co-founded The Abstract Athlete with his longtime friend Chris Clemmer. The following spring of 2017, they launched an innovative class at VCU, parallel with The Abstract Athlete, titled Art and Athletics. The program is in line to become its own minor department called Creative Practices.

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT THROUGH A PROFESSIONAL ARTS PRESENTING SERIES

Collegiate communities that have the resources, access and structures to actively engage professional industries are often able to provide students with transformative pedagogical experiences that go far beyond traditional curricular boundaries.¹ The infusion of professional practices in the arts into a collegiate ecology has the potential to impact student engagement, curricular experience and career success in transformative ways.² A professional arts presenting series at a collegiate institution also helps bridge the commonly seen divide between academia and the professional practice, fostering opportunities for the profession to be infused with research and exploratory perspectives, while preparing students more holistically for professional careers in the arts.

Methodology

This empirical study conducted at a large American higher education institution- Kennesaw State University (KSU) attempts to understand the perspectives of a sample population of students in the School of Music and Department of Dance who have experienced the ArtsKSU Presents- Professional Series, engaging with a variety of nationally and internationally acclaimed professional artists and companies. Intended to inform future collegiate engagement with professional practices in the arts, an interpretivist perspective was engaged to develop knowledge through a protocol-guided dialogue with the student participants. This qualitative study triangulated data from respondents by transcribing recorded interviews, coding data highlights, and categorizing these codes to identify thematic experiences that are explored in this research report. The hour-long individual student interviews were conducted by a student research assistant instead of the faculty researcher to ensure data reliability. The names of all interviewees were withheld by mutual agreement based on IRB approval of this study of human subjects. The study resulted in a thematic understanding of the experiences of twenty anonymously interviewed students, sampled equally within the two disciplinary units to inform the findings that are highlighted and evidenced below.

Research Site

The College of the Arts at KSU is home to over 1700 majors within four distinct disciplinary units that include Art & Design, Dance, Music, and Theatre & Performance Studies. Located 20 miles north of downtown Atlanta, KSU serves a population of over 40,000 students and is one of the 50 largest public institutions in the U.S. The

¹ Davies. "Industry-University Collaborations: A Necessity for the Future" 24, no. 1-2. *Journal of Dentistry* 24 (1996): 3-5.

² Adams, Ricci-Jane. "Let's Give Them More Room: Arts Partnerships, Arts Education and the Australian Curriculum" 38, no. 1. *NJ: Drama Australia Journal* 38 (2014): 38-47.

ArtsKSU Presents season engages professional artists and companies across all four disciplinary units and infuses the creative ecology of Atlanta with diverse artistic voices, often new to the metro Atlanta region. The scope of this qualitative study was limited to music and dance students due to the parallels in their professional presenting seasons that differed in volume and focus from the other two disciplinary units in the College.

Transformative Impact

This study affirmed the transformative impact professional engagement activities have evidenced in similar studies that have reported students gaining “experience in understanding...and confidence in their own voice and abilities.”³ A dance student interviewed in this study expressed surprise at the impact the professional engagement had on them, stating, “I had no idea who they were [referencing a visiting international professional dance company,] they were broadening my dance knowledge and making me more curious. I think that it definitely expands your movement vocabulary and makes you understand, culturally, the differences that are so vast in dance.”⁴ Another music major interviewed highlighted the universality of impact stating, “getting more access to the arts world to see what’s actually going on, is a great opportunity no matter what your major.”⁵ For most students who experienced the professional engagement opportunity, the impact was aspirational: “It’s incredibly valuable to be able to meet the people who you’re aspiring to be. The position they have, to me, beyond being able to experience what they’re doing now [makes me realize] they were in our shoes at one point.”⁶ “Building connections, giving me more inspiration, being able to take concepts I’ve learned and apply them in a new way to my artistry... It’s taught me what I have to do in order to get where I want to be.”⁷

The transformational impact articulated by participants in this study was not limited to the professional inspiration that tends to come from an engagement with the professional practices within academia, but also extended to very personal spheres of student engagement and development. Empowered by a professional performance experience, a student revealed “there’s this powerful duet between two women...[at a time] when I’m figuring out that I’m gay, literally the time where I was figuring out I am in love with my roommate... There were moments that were just powerful, vulnerable, it was just beautiful!”⁸ Several students described

³ Grant, Jacqualine, and Delaney Patterson. “Innovative Arts Programs Require Innovative Partnerships: A Case Study of STEAM Partnering between an Art Gallery and a Natural History Museum” 89, no. 4. *Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas* 89 (2016): 144–152

⁴ Interview with a dance major, March 2020

⁵ Interview with music major, May 2020

⁶ Interview with music major, March 2020

⁷ Interview with dance major, March 2020

⁸ Interview with dance major, February 2020

their transformational experiences as being a product of personal connections with particular visiting professional artists. A dance student described a particular experience of working with a guest artist as “the most different experience [she had] ever had...she talked a lot about transcending stereotypes and labels...we were silent because no one had ever engaged us [vocally] before in dance.” She went on to describe the emotional charge of the choreographic work created as part of the residency by stating, “I cried both times I saw it. The adjudicators cried when they saw it.”⁹

Diverse Perspectives

It is to be noted that this study was conducted February-May 2020, prior to the national conversation on race relations in the U.S. that resulted from the death of George Floyd. A broad population of study constituents however highlighted the impact visiting professional artists and companies had in diversifying their artistic and curricular experiences at KSU. A dance student found the visual representation of racial diversity on stage personally affirming, stating, “...it’s more like seeing myself on stage that is more inspirational, it makes me feel like my dreams are not impossible... she looked like me, she was telling us about her career as a black ballet dancer, and I felt I can do this. I can do this!”¹⁰ Another student highlighted the lack of representation she experienced within the faculty demographics of the program that did not parallel her being Mexican and a Spanish speaker. This student therefore highlighted her experience with Spellbound Dance Company from Italy critical to filling this void. She went on to highlight the strong inspiration she felt from another visiting Latin dance artist and concluded that the racial representation validated her not just personally, but also made her proud of her racial heritage amongst her peers. Another dance major reflected her experience with the French-Algerian dance company Hervé Koube as a cultural watershed moment, stating, “that was [my] first time seeing language and culture, art and dance, all intertwined...I now choreograph with [an anthropological] perspective.”¹¹ Several music students affirmed similar findings in their disciplinary unit, highlighting the powerful impact a roster of diverse visiting guest artists had on their personal and curricular experience within their program of study.

A unique component of the Department of Dance at KSU is its professional partnership with the internationally celebrated Batsheva Dance Company in Israel. This partnership serves as the site for an annual education abroad program that was created around a physical, intellectual and curricular investigation of how the political and religious history of Israel has impacted the

⁹ Interview with dance major, February 2020

¹⁰ Interview with dance major, February 2020

¹¹ Interview with dance major, March 2020

development of contemporary dance in the region. A triangulation of student perspectives strongly evidenced the transformative impact this international partnership had for students. “I’ve only ever been around people from America, so going to Israel- and just the political turmoil that’s going on there- they have a completely different mindset going into a dance class than we have...and it is reflected in their movement,”¹² remarked one of the student respondents. Another student who had also experienced this education abroad program stated, “I think it’s changed me genetically. It’s molded me to becoming the dancer I am today... after I came back from Israel, I really became a different person.”¹³ These findings seemed to be consistent among students and thematic to the impact the educational partnership in Israel was having at KSU. Yet another student responded to the question about how engagement with professional artists had impacted their artistic and intellectual development by highlighting her experience in Israel, stating, “I can pinpoint when I became a different dancer- specifically when I experienced Ohad’s movement [referencing artistic director Ohad Naharin from the Batsheva Dance Company]...Nobody had worked with us like that before, no one had those expectations before...Gaga transformed me physically and emotionally.”¹⁴ It was clear that the impact for students was life-altering, providing an experience of diverse artistic voices that regular curriculum was limited in providing.

I think it’s honestly made me realize that I need to leave the country. I know that sounds drastic, but it’s really exposed me to so much. Seeing Spellbound [Spellbound Contemporary Ballet, Italy] for example, seeing Kibbutz [Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company, Israel], obviously being exposed to Batsheva [Batsheva Dance Company, Israel], seeing the work Ella did [Israeli choreographer, Ella Ben-Ahron]...researching other dance companies in the Netherlands or in Germany makes me realize okay, I need to get out of this country. Maybe I don’t need to, but I want to and I’m thinking it’s really extended my possibilities and the plans that I can have.¹⁵

Shaping Future Trajectory

A 2018 study conducted to assess student learning through College-Industry partnerships found that “Identifying and implementing industry engagement activities that enhance student learning will help students better understand the

¹² Interview with dance major, February 2020

¹³ Interview with dance major, February 2020

¹⁴ Interview with dance major, March 2020

¹⁵ Interview with dance major, March 2020

work environment they can expect to experience after college.”¹⁶ The findings from this qualitative study provided strong evidence of the value students placed in the various ways the professional season helped them prepare for future careers in the arts. A music major reflected this by saying, “I think the interactive workshops would just be the best thing for me...Let’s say if I was able to see how a composer creates a film score... as we don’t have a class in this area.”¹⁷ Another music major highlighted a similar value by stating, “I think the music business is just about who you know and being connected with the right people, so I just take every opportunity I can to network with people and get to know them. I make sure I am pretty well socialized around the School of Music.”¹⁸ Dance majors similarly reflected a strong awareness of how supplementary professional engagement activities were to the curricular offerings within their program of study: “If I didn’t meet Philadanco through [faculty member], it’s not like I would’ve met them... Working with the companies here and working with people who come in, and where we go because of KSU- I feel my education has been so well-rounded.”¹⁹

The impact of the professional engagement activities seemed to be psychologically positive in addition to their practical application. A music major underscored the motivational impact, stating, “I definitely think that it helps you think in a more creative way and working with new people makes you have a more open mind. You welcome the idea to trying new things so I think that’s what I’ve taken from those experiences the most...”²⁰ Dance majors reported similar experiences that were positively shaping their future trajectory, one stating, “It’s also given me more confidence in myself and when I present new work.”²¹

Advancement of Professional Engagement Opportunities

The reflections of study participants also highlighted several areas within the professional presenting season that could benefit from future strategic development, greater curricular intentionality and program expansion. The themes identified, were reflective of the value students saw in the professional engagement opportunities, providing additional perspectives pertaining to student engagement with the artists, their campus and curricular impact, and student preparedness, that could help advance future collegiate engagement with professional practices in the arts.

¹⁶ Burns, Caleb, Shweta Chopra, Mack Shelley, and Gretchen Mosher. “Utilizing Multivariate Analysis for Assessing Student Learning through Effective College-Industry Partnerships” 19, no. 3. *Journal of STEM Education: Innovations and Research* 19 (2018): 27–32.

¹⁷ Interview with music major, May 2020

¹⁸ Interview with music major, May 2020

¹⁹ Interview with dance major, February 2020

²⁰ Interview with music major, May 2020

²¹ Interview with dance major, March 2020

1. Expand Masterclasses and Talkbacks

The perspectives of students overwhelmingly highlighted the need for their studio engagement with professional visiting artists to increase in pedagogical depth. A dance major's reflection effectively captured this frustration with the limited duration and frequency of the opportunities to engage pedagogically with the guest artists:

I'm barely benefiting from the class. I only say this because I'm literally learning a couple things for a few hours. For masterclasses, I feel like it should be a longer length or series- like a three-day series. I feel after one day, for one hour and thirty minutes, you're not really benefiting... I definitely think that masterclasses should be longer so people can actually embody what they're being taught and have time to digest the content.²²

Student perspectives across both music and dance seemed to highlight a frustration with the limitations they experienced from the masterclasses that were finite in duration and frequency, leaving them unsatisfied with the pedagogical depth they had an opportunity to explore with each visiting professional artist.

An interesting finding of this study however went beyond the experiences students had observing professional performances and engaging pedagogically with the visiting artists in masterclasses, to highlight a strong desire to engage interpersonally with the visiting professionals by way of talkbacks and informal conversations that are not currently a major focus of the professional presenting season. A music major stated, "I still think the students don't get as many social opportunities with them [professional artists]. It's almost all rehearsing, so organizing an hour or two of something... I don't know, maybe like a cookout? Just any type of social opportunity to be able to mingle and really talk to the artist more one-on-one or even in small groups."²³ Another dance major reflected on the opportunity to interact with artists from a visiting company in the lobby following the performance and its impact on her not dropping out of school:

BodyTraffic [a visiting company from L.A.]...they came out and talked to us and she was so kind, so humble, and very soft spoken which reminded me of myself as well. She kind of just talked to us about going for it and seizing opportunities that you get because we are young now and not going to have these opportunities in ten years. She was talking about how it is very important to get your training now, and to get at your best and then go from there. That really inspired me because at that time I was [thinking] do I even wanna stay here? Do I want to move on and go audition for different places? And that kind of hit me- like no, I need to stay here, get the best that I can be, and then I can move on.

²² Interview with dance major, April 2020

²³ Interview with music major, April 2020

These kinds of comments were repeatedly reflected by students in both fields of study, making it evident that the professional presenting season had the potential to impact the student experience in both formal curricular and performance modalities, as well as by way of interpersonal engagement beyond the studio and performance arena.

2. Limited Campus Impact

The study revealed a disconnect that seemed to exist between the professional presenting season and its impact across campus. Several students expressed frustration with the lack of publicity that prevented stronger community participation in professional art presentations on campus. A dance major stated, “I really don’t think they [rest of the campus community] even know about us or what we do, so I don’t think it really affects anything on the broader campus.”²⁴ Another music major further highlighted this finding by stating, “I feel like the vast majority of people have no clue that this stuff is going on because it’s really only advertised in our classes. Only a few people are required to go for their grades and only a few are required to attend the masterclasses and performances, but most people on campus and around it have no clue that world-class musicians are coming to visit us.”²⁵ The study revealed that while the focus of the professional presenting season was intended to augment the curricular experience of students pursuing disciplinary majors in music and dance, there was a missed opportunity with not engaging the broader campus community with the ArtsKSU Presents- professional season, that could potentially lead to greater curricular connections, interdisciplinary collaborations and opportunity for student development through the arts.

3. Curricular Disconnect

It was surprising to note that while the professional presenting season was highly regarded by the students interviewed in this study, they experienced a curricular disconnect with their programs of study and the impact it was having on their faculty. A music major expressed this by stating, “I don’t think they [guest artists] necessarily impact the curriculum...Sometimes in the masterclasses we’ll play what we are learning for our juries for these professional artists, but it doesn’t necessarily do anything with our academic work.”²⁶ Another music major deconstructed the experience further to state, “I don’t think it impacts any of the core curriculum like any of my theory or history classes, but it definitely affects my private lessons and

²⁴ Interview with dance major, February 2020

²⁵ Interview with music major, May 2020

²⁶ Interview with music major, May 2020

ensemble work.”²⁷ Dance majors seemed to reflect similar concerns, one stating, “I don’t know how it would impact the faculty I guess I’d have to ask...I don’t see it change the movement for the faculty... their styles are specific to them and it shows through their work...I can’t even say the curriculum has changed...”²⁸ While the professional presenting season was not structured to dramatically alter the curriculum or faculty pedagogy, the study does highlight the need for more intentional curricular connections to be made between the professional season and pedagogy offered within each program of study. The reflections of the students highlighted the opportunity for greater strategic curricular engagement with the ArtsKSU Presents- professional season in the future.

4. Unprepared for Professional Engagement

It was interesting to note that not every student reflected a transformational learning experience from the professional presenting series. Some felt unprepared for the challenge of engaging with professional standards of performance and pedagogy, leaving them frustrated with their own technical and cognitive abilities. The data revealed the following thematic student perspectives that warrant reflection and consideration in planning future professional engagement opportunities:

- Need for curricular preparation to understand professional aesthetics and artmaking
- Feeling unprepared technically and intellectually to engage with visiting professionals
- Need for training on how to network and get the most out of the professional interactions
- Frustration with trying to balance work-life-school-guest artist schedules
- Need for greater racial diversity and representation on stage
- Opportunities for students to showcase their work to visiting professionals
- Frustration with mandatory attendance requirements
- Develop opportunities to observe rehearsals in addition to performances
- Need for more disciplinary variety in the professional presenting season

²⁷ Interview with music major, May 2020

²⁸ Interview with dance major, February 2020

Conclusion

It was clear from the triangulated perspectives that the ArtsKSU Presents-professional season was a defining characteristic of the educational experience for music and dance students at KSU. The recommendations for advancing their engagement with the visiting professionals grew out of the value they placed in the interface of academia with professional practices in their fields of study. Students repeatedly highlighted the infusion of new ideas, diverse voices, innovative techniques, disciplinary perspectives and points of view as valued assets of the professional engagement opportunities they experienced at KSU. The transformational professional engagement experiences led to greater questioning of disciplinary norms, an inquisitiveness about professional career options and a supplement to campus instruction that was thematic across the data gathered from the populations sampled across both disciplinary units.

This study serves as a foreground to future studies that can be focused on understanding the experiences of faculty as well as the visiting professional artists themselves within a collegiate professional presenting season. A student interviewed contextualized this future opportunity by stating, “We need to keep searching, we need to keep exploring, we need to keep collaborating, we need to keep expanding. There’s always room to do that and I think it informs people of the things we have going on in academia and the professional practice.”²⁹ The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic during the data gathering stage of this study highlighted the need for greater partnership between academia and professional practices in the arts that could be beneficial during periods of fiscal austerity and crisis. This study was started to understand student experiences within the ArtsKSU Presents-professional season, however it also highlighted ways in which academia and professional art practices could benefit from greater reciprocal engagement.

²⁹ Interview with dance major, March 2020

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Ivan Pulinkala is the dean of the College of the Arts at Kennesaw State University, where he founded Georgia's largest collegiate dance program in 2005. Originally from New Delhi, India, Pulinkala received his doctorate in higher education administration from the University of Alabama, a master of fine arts in dance from Mills College and a bachelor of commerce from Hindu College-Delhi University. He began his professional training and choreographic career in India, where he served as the artistic director of his own company from 1994-1998. Pulinkala served as the choreographer-in-residence for Delhi Music Theatre for five years and was named among the 25 Indian artists of the millennium by the *India Today Magazine* in December 1999.

Pulinkala has an extensive body of choreographic work produced in Israel, China, Spain, India and the United States, commissioned for the Israel Ballet, Shanghai Normal University, Atlanta Ballet, Fresco Dance Company, Washington University at St. Louis, Brigham Young University, Middle Tennessee State University, the Atlanta Gay Men's Chorus, Nirvana Films, University of Tennessee at Martin, Spelman College and Western Kentucky University, among others. Pulinkala's scholarship includes publications in *Research in Dance Education* and *Theatre Topics*. He is the recipient of several awards and grants, including the 2011 KSU Foundation Award, the 2010 NEA American Masterpiece Grant, the 2010 Cobb Symphony Orchestra Award for Artistic Excellence, the 2010-12 Kennesaw State University Clendenin Graduate Fellowship and the 2005 Murray State University Board of Regents Teaching Excellence Award.

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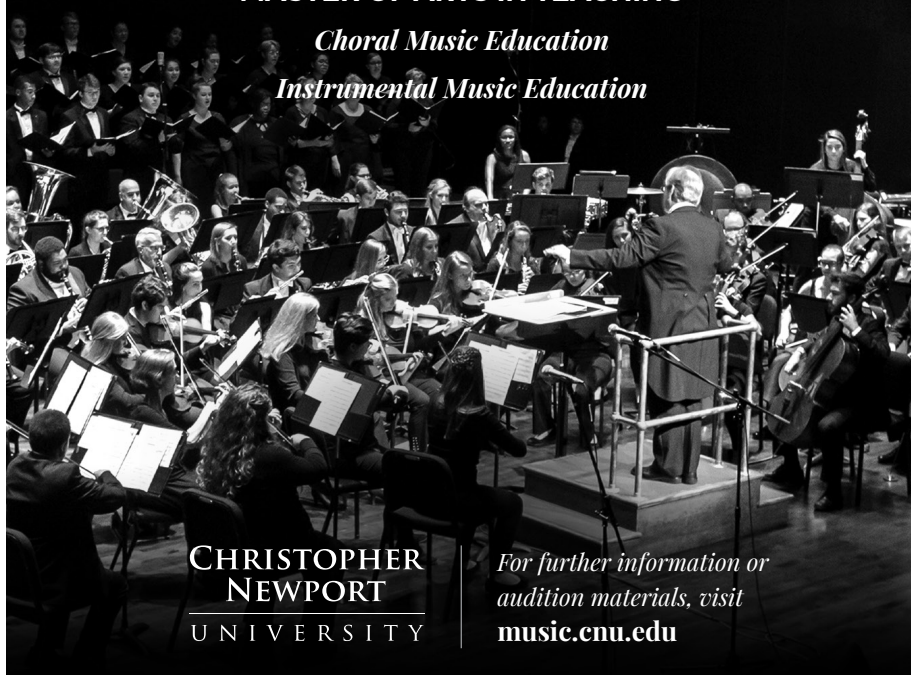
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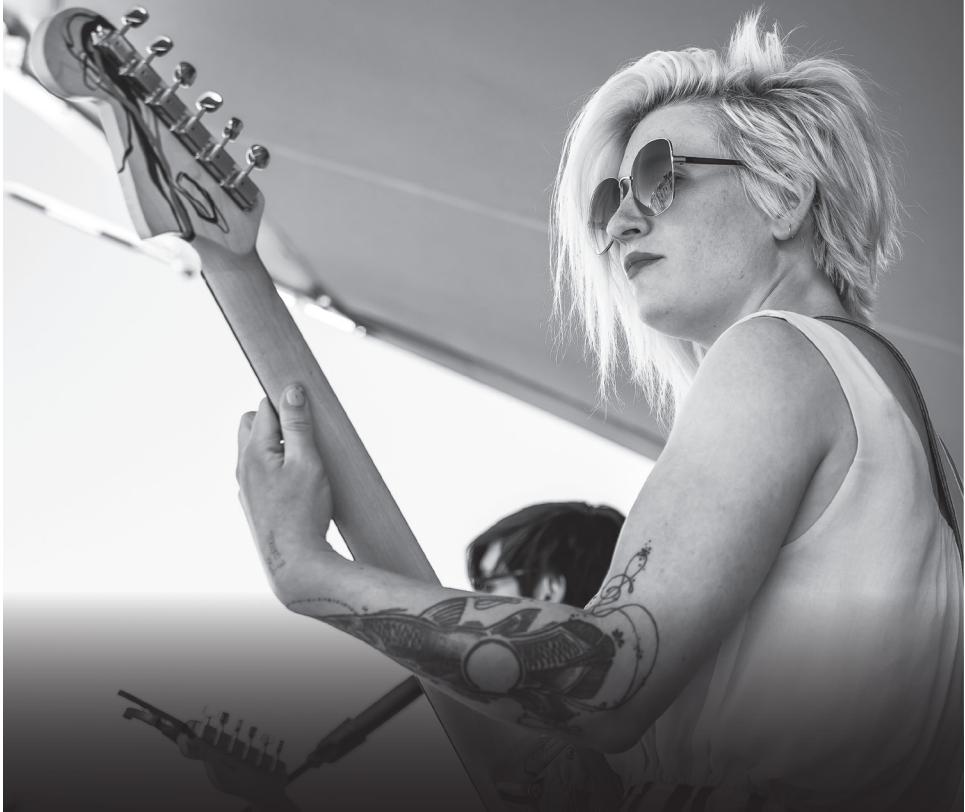
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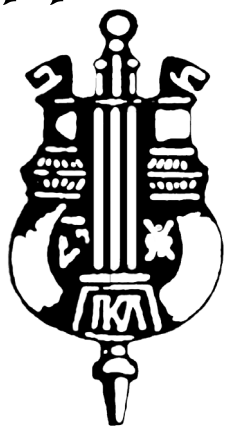
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