

Women Choral Conductors in the Academy: A Case Study

by

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Abstract

The field of choral conducting has been traditionally male-dominated. As more women enter the field, are they finding more challenges or encouragements? This qualitative case study explored the career paths women choral conductors in the United States have taken to find success. This study focused on in-depth, open-ended interviews with four women who have achieved success as choral conductors in collegiate settings. The data collection and analysis involved ascertaining rich individual profiles and searching for emergent themes in order to discover any connections among the women conductors. This study yielded rich discussion on main themes surrounding (a) Support Systems, (b) Biology versus Personality: The Source of Strength, (c) Be True to Yourself, (d) Focus on the Music, (e) Gesture: What They See is What You Get, (f) Balancing Act, (g) The Academy: Where Are the Women, and (h) Motivations and Encouragements. Ultimately the study resulted in three recommendations: each woman must know and be true to herself, support other women, and choose to pursue her goals as a choral conductor.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The field of choral conducting has been traditionally male-dominated (Bartleet, 2008b). As more women enter the field, what types of challenges or encouragements are they experiencing? The progression of women as professional conductors must be understood through the history of women in the professional sphere (Macleod, 2001).

Women conductors were unable to find stable jobs until the advent of women's orchestras in the early 20th century. Trailblazers in conducting such as Gena Branscombe, Ethel Leginska, Antonia Brico, Margaret Hillis, and Sarah Caldwell paved the way for future women (Macleod, 2001). Their stories help to enlighten us regarding the challenges women conductors face. Unfortunately, many current women conductors' stories mirror these of the previous generations. Hansen anonymously quotes a current woman conductor,

For as long as I can remember, singing in choir was an inspiring, uplifting experience for me. Because of my love for the choral art, I became a public school choral music teacher, and while teaching, received my Master's degree. I then found further inspiration in a role model with whom I studied during my

doctoral program. This respected choral mentor told me that it should not make any difference who was standing on a podium, male or female, and that what would matter is my ability – and wide-eyed and innocent, I believed him. I believed I would be evaluated in my university teaching according to my musical and academic skills, as I had been during my university training. It was actually very much more than just that. (Conlon, 2009, p. 183)

The quotation demonstrates that this topic is still relevant to women conductors. With so many discussions surfacing regarding equal rights and pay for women in the work place (Sandberg, 2013), this important conversation should be continued in the music profession.

Though many strides have been made in the rights of women, it is important to realize that this is a subjective point of view (Hesse-Biber, 2014). I am a white woman who was raised in a middle-class family and attended private institutions for high school and college. My parents recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. My mother was a successful insurance agent. She at times felt the discrimination of working in a male-dominated profession during the 1980s and 1990s, however she was able to overcome any obstacles. How would my view of women's success change if I were from a lower income or minority family, or if my mother had not been a successful businesswoman? What if a single mother working two jobs to

make ends meet had raised me? All of these factors go into my perception of the world.

This study is not concerned with a universal truth or law. The ideals of a social constructivist are that experiences and positionality shape beliefs. It is important to note my positionality in this study. My interest in this study began as a young woman in a masters program in choral conducting. I remember the exact moment. Our choral director had gone out of town for a conference, and he had left the choir in the hands of the graduate students, men and women. We were each assigned a piece of music to work with the choir. At 21, I was the youngest graduate student as well as being a woman. Our director had left one of the more difficult pieces with me to conduct. During the rehearsal, I overheard a male graduate student and a female undergraduate student discussing the situation. They believed that another male graduate student should have been left the piece to rehearse. I do not believe that they were consciously discriminating against me as a woman. They were my friends. However, I found myself wondering if they would have voiced the same concerns had the other young, male graduate student been assigned the same piece. To this day, I am still not certain.

When I entered the field of conducting, I was aware of the numbers. I knew that there were not as many women conducting at the collegiate level as men, but I was raised in a home where we were encouraged that if we worked hard we could achieve our goals. I still believe this, and I am working

to instill this belief in my children. Upon completing my masters, I accepted a position at a community college in Alabama at the age of 23. I was younger than many of my students, and I found it difficult to be treated as a colleague. I can recall one occasion where I was questioned about being in the copy room because another instructor thought that I was a student. Another funny incident occurred when I was pulled over for speeding to make a class on time one morning. The officer let me go with a warning, but we spent most of the time with me recounting my education because he did not believe that I was really an instructor. Maybe these instances are more to do with age than sex, but they still shaped my perception of others' opinions of me as a woman in the professional sphere. I spent two years in this position. During that time, I met and married my husband, and we relocated to afford him more opportunities for his career.

Over the next eight years, I gave birth to twin boys, and I accepted a full-time position at another community college in Alabama. When the boys were almost two-years-old, I began working on this PhD part-time. It was difficult. I had a relatively new and extremely time consuming position, two young children, a husband, and grades to maintain. I do not regret these choices, but I will not lie and say that life was easy or simple. I definitely had not perfected the art of balancing personal and professional life. There are situations with my husband and children that I remember and cringe because of my reactions. They were the reactions of a tired, out-of-balance person.

During that time, I did not have another woman in the field that I could look to for advice. I felt alone, and I felt like I had to wear a façade that everything was fine, even perfect.

As I began interviewing these women, I was once again plagued with life changes. My husband was offered a wonderful career opportunity in another state. This would mean taking a leap of faith and leaving my current position. Again, I found myself in a time where I was questioning life choices and who I was as a conductor and educator. As I interviewed these women, I was heartened to hear their struggles that sounded so similar to mine. My courage to face the unknown was bolstered by their confidence in the future. I found myself leaning upon these dialogues to help me find myself as a woman and as a woman conductor. This was my hope for this study.

The purpose of this study was to explore the paths women choral conductors in the United States have taken to find success as professional choral collegiate-level conductors. The data and analysis yielded a greater understanding of the experiences of women choral conductors as well as encouragement for future women conductors. This will be accomplished through the following research questions:

What encouragements and/or challenges did these women experience in their home, educational, and work lives that contributed to their identity?

How do gender issues affect women as choral conductors in the Academy?

Why are women underrepresented in the Academy, specifically in Director of Choral Activities positions?

What motivations and encouragements can be offered to future generations of women choral conductors?

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Literature surrounding women conductors primarily focuses on orchestral conductors or an historical description of women in music. There are very few discussions about the challenges that women face (Bartleet, 2008a; Brenneman, 2007; Conlon, 2009; Elkins, 2008; Koza, 2005; Macleod, 2001; Sheldon & Hartley, 2012). A better picture of the career path and struggles of women conductors may be seen by viewing these studies holistically. The following discussion considers women's placement in music, music education, and leadership.

Historically, society has been slow to accept women in music, especially women in leadership positions in music:

The sexual division of labor has been used to restrict women to reproductive activity (the private sphere). When they were permitted to engage in productive activity (the public sphere), women were allowed to enter only those professions that most approximated typical reproductive or nurturing activities. In music education, most elementary music teachers are women while most college band directors are men. Historically, this has been true since elementary and secondary education were

formally separated, and public school bands and college bands were first organized. Women nurture young children in their early music education, while men produce highly competitive, award winning bands. (Gould, 1996, p. 57)

Women's symphonies and choruses were formed in the early 20th century to provide a place for women to perform. The need for female driven organizations continued into the latter half of the 20th century as evidenced by the formation of organizations in the 1970s and 1980s such as the International League of Women Composers (ILWC), American Women Composers, Inc. (AWIC), the International Congress on Women in Music, and the International Alliance of Women in Music (IAWM). Though society has accepted women in various leadership positions across professions, music continues to fall behind in this trend (Elkins, 2008). Hansen (2009) stated, "The career trajectory of a female choral conductor may be one of continual compromise until such time as society, our profession, and the Academy have enough tenured female faculty members that the rules can change for good" (p. 224).

Women's lack of prominence in music history is primarily due to their place in society as wives and mothers (Hinely, 1984a). The focus has always been upon male musicians (O'Toole, 1993). Though women were accepted as music teachers and performers earlier in history, Hinely (1984a) found that "conducting was an even less obtainable career goal" (p. 42).

Identity Development

Identity is developed through our lived experiences in relation to gender, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic background, and culture. The identity of women choral conductors is a product of all of these influences combined with their experiences in their home, educational and work environments. Identity for women is also fluid. Women are constantly evaluating their lived experiences and achievements, and this continues to shape their identity (Josselson, 1991). Support offered to women in their home, educational and work environments helps to develop a positive identity, which is needed to be successful as a conductor.

McClellan (2011) found that parental involvement and positive influence over their son/daughter's musical experiences has a strong correlation with their determination to major in music. Parental support also has a strong influence on the cultivation of their positive identity development as a music educator. This study did not find any specific correlations to gender.

It is imperative for women to have encouragement and support from parental figures during their formative years. Gibbson, Woodside, Hannon, Sweeney, and Davison's (2011) phenomenological study of 17 individuals' school and work experiences found that many of the women in their study were not encouraged by their parental figures to pursue an undergraduate degree. In fact, many of the women confirmed that their parents viewed this

as a male endeavor. This lack of support at an early age can be detrimental to the identity development of women. The researchers suggest that mentors for women in educational settings are extremely important. They can serve as supporters for the female student who comes from a home that espouses these types of beliefs.

Gender

Gender roles and expectations are complex and important issues in the lives of professional women. Differences between femininity and masculinity are defined by a societal construction. Gender can therefore be seen as a social construction as opposed to a biological sex. Gaskell and McLaren (1991) claim:

Gender is fundamental to the ways we interact with each other, to the ways our public and private lives are organized. Its significance is evident almost everywhere we look – in the wages of men and women, in the structuring of friendships, in the persistence of Cinderella myths, and in the organization of domestic tasks. (p. 2)

Gender affects every aspect of our lives. Instead of trying to hide or ignore gender differences, they should be celebrated (Boyce-Tillman, 2012).

Heilman and Eagly (2008) point out that gender stereotypes associated with women are generally more positive than those associated with men, however

these stereotypes do not align with roles associated with particular jobs (p. 393).

A few studies have discussed the challenges that women faced early in the 20th century regarding roles of women conductors as opposed to male conductors (Elkins, 2008; Macleod, 2001). During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, women were generally viewed as the gentler, more fragile sex. They were not expected to be dominant figures like their male counterparts. For this reason, it was difficult for many to view them as conductors and virtuosos “for the obvious reason that it (conducting) connotes the ultimate in forcefulness, leadership, and control” (Macleod, 2001, p.24). Even into the late 20th and early 21st centuries, society “constructs gender differences based on the constraining notion that men should be masculine and women feminine” (O’Toole, 1998, p. 9). Many studies of women conductors have stated the need for women to assert, or prove, themselves to their ensembles in this traditionally male dominated role (Bartleet, 2008c; Brenneman, 2007; Hinely, 1984b). This assertion, though, has caused many women to be labeled in derogatory terms as ‘feminist’, ‘difficult to work with’, or ‘too assertive’ (Bartleet, 2008c; Sandberg, 2013).

Women need women role models. Gould’s (1996) study found that many associated choral with feminine and orchestral or band with masculine. Women held a majority of the degrees in music but held fewer positions in higher education. A majority of women choral conductors held positions in

the elementary and secondary level. The central focus of her study was a need for female role models in the field of music. However, she stated that many women were resistant to these titles for several reasons. She found that many women reject the notion that they are “unique” as “pioneers”. They believe that their accomplishments are a result of skill, and gender is not pertinent. Next, these women demonstrate an aversion to being placed in a “hierarchical relationship with their women students” through the “label of expert” (p. 49). This also translates into relationships with women colleagues. Gould determined that a role model becomes a “hero”, and this creates a barrier between women colleagues precluding “them from developing networks of relationships with real women with who they work, women who may be able to assist them in direct and more meaningful ways. Fourth, uncommonly successful role models may be a psychological burden to women facing the struggles and limited successes more characteristic of their own lives, creating a sense of failure” (p. 49).

This resembles Brenneman’s (2007) findings that women were reluctant to label themselves as female conductors, as if this is a lesser qualification. She quotes one interviewee (Celia):

Men aren’t defined by gender – only women. Only women. We only say, “It’s a FEMALE conductor,” we never say that – “MALE conductor” or “BLACK conductor” rather than a conductor. (Brenneman, 2007, p. 144)

Many studies indicated that gender is only applied in terms of women conductors, and that the application of gender has a negative connotation (Bartleet, 2008b; Brenneman, 2007; Gould, 1996). Gould (1996) described that women fall into two categories: “tokens” (p. 50) and “outsiders” (p. 50). Utilizing Kanter’s (1977) definition of tokens, she determines that women are tokens in music in that they are involved in tasks usually performed by men. Women then also become outsiders when they select a specific career path traditionally held by men.

Rao (2009) recommended that women should embrace their “feminine voice” (p. 250). She approaches a feminist curriculum design in choral music education through “(1) social realities of the twenty-first century, (2) characteristics of the feminine voice including the qualities of receptivity, relatedness, intuition, and unity, as well as (3) Zen perspectives and peacemaking initiatives...” (p. 250). Just as in Gould (2005), she encourages women to embrace their differences, or otherness, as choral music educators. Instead of taking on male characteristics at the podium, or attempting to camouflage our femininity, we should be embracing this feminine voice. She states, “...we have been taught to conduct free of emotion or personal expression; how to rehearse efficiently for maximum productivity; how to execute a public performance without personal attachment” (p. 242).

Embracing the feminine voice is to embrace the characteristics of the feminine. Rao (2009) lists three characteristics of the “sacred feminine,”

recognized by non-western cultures: “unity” (p. 243), “the ability to recognize reality” (p. 244), and “healthy, exuberant and sensual vision of life” (p. 245). She discusses unity in terms of the recognition of the connections between all things. She breaks down “the ability to recognize reality” into “developing the feminine powers of reverence, attention, and the ability to listen” (p. 244). As stated above, many women conductors have been taught to hide their emotions, and the trait of empathy has been viewed as a negative aspect of the feminine character in the work place. Rao encourages that these sides of the feminine voice are important to a feminine curriculum in music education. She further argues that to strive for perfection is a result of a patriarchal leadership style that is in direct conflict with the feminine characteristic of a “healthy, exuberant and sensual vision of life” (p. 245). To achieve this vision, the feminine voice accepts the confluence of spirit, mind, and body.

Apfelstadt (2009) argues that “the characteristics of good leadership can and do transcend gender” (p. 163). She cites Fisher (2005), who studied the leadership abilities of women in business. Apfelstadt (2009) then links them to conducting:

Web thinking, the ability to take a holistic view of the process of conducting and rehearsing; *mental flexibility* in terms of responding to what actually happens in rehearsal; *long-term planning*, always essential to our work both in developing curriculum and also in deciding how and when to teach

repertoire; *creativity*, an asset in programming; *imagination*, in fueling artistic fires; and *verbal and social skills*, in terms of expressing oneself and detecting others' responses—all of these are essential to the conductor's process. (p. 164)

Gender and Leadership

Traditionally, leadership has been viewed as a male endeavor, and women attempting to traverse this minefield must do so cautiously (Carli & Eagly, 2001; Weyer, 2007). According to Ridgeway (2001), gender stereotypes are interwoven with “status beliefs” that assume “greater overall competence with men than women” thus developing a system of inequality. This is the basis of “expectation states theory,” which proposes that the obstacles that women face are based upon status beliefs (Ridgeway, 2001, p. 637-638). Women who find themselves in leadership positions outside of traditionally female spheres might face negative repercussions from individuals below them for violating these traditional status roles.

In 1986, the *Wall Street Journal* introduced the phenomenon of the glass ceiling. It is a barrier created either through an organization's hiring process and/or work environment that prohibits women and minorities from climbing the proverbial corporate ladder. Weyer (2007) proposed explanations as to why twenty years later this phenomenon persisted. Through the lens of both social role theory and expectation states theory, she surmised that a primary cause of the persistence is related to bias in

evaluation due to gender roles. Both theories propose that gender roles are relegated by society, but they vary slightly. Social role theory argues that gender is the primary determination in leadership. This is in direct contrast to expectation states theory, which believes that nominal (age, gender, race) and ordinal (wealth and education) factors both contribute in the attainment of leadership roles with these categories working for or against the person.

While gender is the primary determination in attainment of leadership roles in social role theory, it also purports that preconceived ideas of a gender-role might be reduced when an individual holds other leadership roles. Expectation states theory conversely argues that gender roles are extremely influential in the workplace. Societal gender roles state that men will exhibit agentic behaviors (assertive, ambitious, competitive) while women are communal (tentative, supportive, soothing, helpful, sympathetic) (Weyer, 2007). Under the purview of the expectation states theory, women will still behave communally because of the influence of gender roles. If a woman deviates from this communal behavior to exhibit more agentic behaviors, this might result in negative evaluations because she is operating outside of the normal gender role.

Gender stereotypes can be harmful to a woman's success. Boldry, Wood and Kashy (2001) studied the discrepancies between traditional female stereotypes and expectations for successful performance in the military as well as how gender stereotypes may affect their evaluation in a male-

dominated institution. Though they found no differences in performance between men and women, they did find that women were perceived as “lower in motivation, leadership, and masculinity than male cadets and as higher in femininity” by their peers (p. 702). As a result, Boldry, Wood and Kashy (2001), supposed that these gender stereotypes may negatively affect a woman’s judgment about her ability to succeed in military training thus negatively impacting their identity development.

Many studies have focused on male versus female leadership styles, and there is inconsistent evidence regarding the validity of differences in male and female leadership styles (Oakley, 2000; Robinson & Lipman-Blumen, 2002). Weyer (2007) believes that exhibiting too few differences between male and female leadership styles could show women to be more effective as leaders while highlighting too many differences might discriminate against women leaders. Bern (1974) sought to clearly identify masculine and feminine traits as well as identify a category for individuals who encompass both traits through the Bern Sex-Role Inventory (BRSI). Bern (1974) proposes,

First, that many individuals might be “androgynous”; that is, they might be both masculine and feminine, both assertive and yielding, both instrumental and expressive—depending on the situational appropriateness of these various behaviors; and conversely, that strong sex-typed individuals might be seriously

limited in the range of behaviors available to them as they move from situation to situation (p. 155).

The Female Body and Gesture

Several articles discussed in this literature review examine women conductors' issues in their leadership styles and physical appearance. Many of these women will strive to hide their femininity while others will argue that their femininity makes them better conductors. Bern's (1974) study stresses that these androgynous individuals are better suited to serve the needs of their organizations, as they are able to work in a variety of capacities. However, this once again might bring about negative impacts for the male or female androgynous figure, which is operating outside of his/her gender role expectation.

Bartleet (2008b) states, "a dominant masculine presence has consistently remained the norm. Men have had the authority to create and cultivate the traditions in this profession, and as a result the role of conductor has always been imbued with inherently 'masculine traits'" (p. 33). Women are subject to a society that encourages them to embrace their femininity yet many professions suggest that they hide or reduce it; "This erasure of the body is perceived as 'professional,' but it is, of course, inherently masculine" (Bartleet, 2008b, p. 37).

Bartleet (2008a) also addressed the most notable differences between male and female conductors: their bodies. In her interviews with women

conductors, these women expressed varying views on the suppression or accentuation of the female form on the podium. A majority of the women discussed dressing in a manner not to detract from the music, while another female conductor discussed her choice of wearing a tuxedo to conduct for major concerts. Again, the conclusion is that suppressing the physical femininity of women conductors will help them to gain access into this largely male dominated field.

Haynes' (2012) study regarding women in law and accountancy firms found that women and men associated professional attire with professionalism. One participant in the study was quoted as saying, "...women they have got to understand the consequences of the way that they are dressing and if they dress in a way that is not traditionally professional, or too casual, or too sort of trendy that veers away from the business look, I think it affects their credibility" (Haynes, 2012, p. 496). This level of censure of a woman's dress can be seen across a number of professions, and it begs the question of where to draw the line on women's attire. Women must walk a tight line between being feminine versus provocative.

The issue of body is not limited to discussions of dress. There is also the complex issue of gesture. How are your gestures perceived? Are they overtly feminine or sensual? Morrison and Selvey (2014) found that a listener's evaluation of music performance is strongly linked to the

expressivity of the conductor. Two male graduate conducting students were asked to conduct the same piece of music; one utilizing low expressivity in conducting and the other high expressivity in conducting. When the participants were able to view the conductor while listening, they assigned the performance including the high expressivity conductor higher ratings.

Conducting gesture is clearly an important facet.

Marin Alsop, a world-renowned female orchestral conductor, stated:

When a woman makes a physical gesture, which conducting is, it's all about gesturing and getting a response, it's interpreted very differently societally than the same gesture from a man.

For example, if I am very strong to you as a woman...people say, "Oh, she's a bitch," excuse my language, you know, "Oh my god, she's too macho"...but if a man does that, people melt, "Oh he's so manly." If a woman is very...frilly and delicate they say, "Oh it's too lightweight, it's too feminine." If a man's like that he's "sensitive" (Bartleet, 2008b, p.38).

There are not many studies that focus on women's dress or gesture in music research, however through various published articles, it is evident that this is a pressing issue for women that deserves more attention. A woman's work certainly should not be judged by the masculinity or femininity of her dress or gesture, but it appears that this is a complex subject in the perceptions of women conductors.

Personal Life and Balance

Scholars have addressed the issue of a woman's ability to separate her public and private life (Conlon, 2009; Elkins, 2008). Traditional roles of the early 20th century placed women in a domestic capacity, and even today, many women are continuing to serve as the leader of domestic responsibilities in the home while carrying a professional career. In a sense, many women are juggling two full-time jobs (Sandberg, 2013). In an interview with women music educators, Richardson (1992) anonymously quotes one educator:

I always wonder if I'm shortchanging my children by spending so much of my time and energy on my career. I cannot do everything, and I am grateful for all the opportunities that I have had. On the other hand, I know that I could be a lot farther along in my career if I did not have to deal with the responsibilities of my family and children. (p. 40)

Critical tensions arise in a woman's choice to further her career. Many women believe that by choosing advancement they are choosing not to have or maintain traditional familial roles, and many times in society this is portrayed in a negative light (Eddy & Ward, 2015). The reality is that due to a lack of support for working families, including paid leave and childcare, this can be an issue for men as well as women.

Maïke Ingrid Philipsen, a career academic, shared candid personal details in her study on women finding balance; “I care deeply for both my profession and my family but, in a nutshell, I had to get divorced before I was able to find a healthy balance in my life, because then I started having my children only half of the time” (Philipsen, 2010, p.14). Through divulging her experiences, she discussed the need to downplay her role as a mother in the work place as well as her inability to find a balance between work and home. In her quest to discover how to have it all without necessitating divorce or forgoing children, she interviewed 46 female faculty members. She found that many women felt the same way that she had, even at times expressing envy over her situation as a parent with time off so to speak.

These issues even extended to women who were not yet mothers. Women find themselves making choices about their career based upon what they see as issues for their future life. If I have this career, can I have a personal life? Philipsen (2010) quoted one associate professor,

The thing I worry about the most in terms of this question about balance is the ...whole biological clock problem which is that my pre-tenure years are also, for whatever reason, in sync with the years in which I should probably, if I want to have a child, I should be doing it. I will get tenure, provided everything goes all right, when I'm 38. According to a lot of doctors that is getting late to start a family. I haven't found a way to start a family yet

while on the tenure track. The one thing that would make a difference to me is if there was a way to make tenure sort of not coincide with one's child producing time. It isn't that I don't want to get tenure. Obviously I do. It would be nice if tenure didn't have to such a rigid thing. As it stands, I don't feel like I can really prioritize finding a partner and getting pregnant right now. So, I have to sort of roll the dice on whether or not I will ever be able to carry children. (p. 17)

Not only are women having to deal with questions of uncertainty in their career such as: Can I find a job? Will I receive tenure? They also have to decide what sacrifices they are willing to make for that career. Though no one argues that this discrimination is explicit, many believe that this is implicit in the nature of our academic, and even non-academic, organizations. These structures were built using a rigid model of the process of hiring and advancement. In a society today, where men and women are sharing more equal roles in the management of the home, this can be problematic for both sexes.

Interviews with women conductors reveal that they deal with a plethora of issues from stereotypes of women conductors to personal issues as wives and mothers (Bartleet, 2008b; Bartleet 2008c; Conlon, 2009; Richardson, 1992). They seem to fall prey not only to others' expectations but also to unrealistic expectations of themselves. Many believe that by

“hiding” the fact that they are women, they can be successful, but there are still other women conductors who purport that women should embrace and even celebrate their differences from their male counterparts (Bartleet, 2008b). Antonia Brico was allowed the honor of being critiqued as an artist and not necessarily a woman (Brenneman, 2007; LePage, 1980); however, many would assert that this only highlights the problem. Women should not have to separate their identity from their career in order to be successful; in fact, this suppresses their voice (Bartleet, 2008b). Bartleet (2008b) asserted, “If she adopts too much “masculine authority,” she is characterized as “butch” or a “bitch” and if she reveals too much of her femaleness she is disparagingly labeled weak or a “pushover” (p. 39). Dr. Bernice R. Sandler, a forerunner in the women’s movement in education, says,

When men and women behave according to our expectations we are comfortable and approving. But when someone violates these deeply held expectations, men and women alike often become uncomfortable, disapproving, or defensive. (as cited in Hansen, 2009, p. 190)

Many women presume the mindset that they must appear to work harder and longer than their counterparts, man or woman; a group that “does not need to work relentlessly in order to survive and yet does so, anyway” (Koza, 2005, p. 191). Koza (2005) identifies the term “spillover” (p. 192) as non-paid work completed outside of normal work hours. In choral conducting,

this might be viewed as after-hours recruiting and program advocacy, extra rehearsal time, and/or concerts. This participation in spillover works to validate the woman as a professional, however this works alternately against the professional by continuing to substantiate the claim that participation in spillover constitutes professionalism. This claim then furthers the myth that women cannot participate in careers laden with spillover, such as choral conducting, because they must care for their families. In reality, this concept of spillover is not just a female problem. This is a problem for males as well, who share in the responsibilities of caring for a family or maintaining a home. Koza (2005) calls not for a restructuring of women's lives to fit into professionalism but rather a total restructuring of professionalism. This restructuring would benefit male and female professionals.

The Academy

Women, such as myself, born during the latter half of the 20th century have been fortunate enough to be the recipients of the changes brought forth by the Patsy T. Mink Equal Opportunity in Education Act, or more commonly known as Title IX: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance" (as cited in Hansen, 2009, p. 187). Since the enactment of Title IX on June 23, 1972, women have not been faced with the

explicit discrimination that women prior to this time had experienced in education. There are still many hurdles to be traversed, though.

The Academy continues to be a point of struggle for women, as many believe that they are underrepresented within the system as both senior educators and administrators (Acker, 1994; Bannerji et al., 1992; Begona, 2011; Brenneman, 2007; Conlon, 2009; Eddie & Ward, 2015; Savigny, 2014; Weaver, 1993; Wenniger & Conroy, 2001). Studies reveal that even in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, salary inequities among men and women are still great, and in fact, that women represent the lowest pay among the various ranks of professor, associate professor and assistant professor (Begona, 2011; Rushing, 2002; Weaver, 1993). “Women are more likely to leave academic employment before tenure, are less likely to receive tenure, and take longer to be promoted to full professor” (Rushing, 2002, p. 582). Clifford (1989) cited that many policies regarding tenure in the academy were actually destructive to women’s careers.

Eddy and Ward (2015) state that entry-level positions for women in the academy abound. It is the next step that begins to create problems:

Women represent half of new faculty members...But generally, the academic pipeline begins to leak at the associate-professor level: The number of women associate professors dips to an average of 42 percent, and by the time they become full professors, women comprise only 29 percent of those at the top

of the faculty pipeline...women fill only one in four college presidencies. (p. 8)

They go on to discuss the why of these situations: women falling into traditional female roles, women stuck in mid-level management positions, and women being penalized for stepping outside of traditional female roles while in leadership positions. Though women may be able to step into leadership positions, it can still be a minefield making it difficult to cross successfully.

Women face many barriers in the academy. Savigny's (2014) study gives voice to these issues through oral histories of women in the British academy. One such barrier was the fact that men were promoted over women or that expectations for promotions were raised for women. As these women fought for promotions, they displayed feelings of being unsupported. The marginalization of women is also a great concern. As women feel that their voice is not heeded, they begin to participate less in the workplace, and they may even opt out of working toward promotions.

This disparity continues in collegiate music departments. VanWeeldon's (2003) study of American post-secondary institutions' choral music programs and conductors revealed that 1,759 ensembles were conducted by men while only 538 ensembles were conducted by women. If the department contained male and female conductors, more than 50% of the

women conducted women's ensembles. Men held 83% of Director of Choral Activities positions with women holding the remaining 17%. This is problematic for future women conductors, because they need strong female examples and role models in positions of authority within the Academy in order to support their endeavors as future conductors and performers (Begona, 2011).

Gould (2009) presents a mandate for women in music education. She discusses our "yearning" and our hardships:

The intellectual work toward which women yearn is work that matters to us. It is the work we must do; the work we endeavored to do when we entered the university, the work that sustains us, the insistence, the inexorable moving, what cannot be refused...Appropriated by music departments and universities, we participate in all of the roles designated for us: teaching, research, service. We complete all of the requirements for tenure; which is to say we publish acceptable work in acceptable journals, keep our students happy enough to elicit positive teaching evaluations, and pour countless hours into various service activities that make it possible for music departments, universities, and the music profession to exist. The effect of our appropriation, what is specific to the experiences of women, is our disproportionately high rate of

failing to be hired, promoted, tenured, and equitably compensated. Our departments and universities literally depend and survive on our backs, or more accurately, the appropriation of our work. Further, and perhaps more importantly, these State apparatuses deprive us of our work, our yearning – as we do their, work, writing, teaching, and service in ways that satisfy their inflexible and unending requirements. (pp. 136-137)

Gould goes on to challenge women to take these hardships and turn them into strengths. She refers to this yearning as “the nomadic war machine of women working in music education” (p. 137). Always moving forward, she encourages women to use what has at times been listed as negative aspects of feminism as strengths in our approach to our careers and yearnings, “...it occurs when women tell the truth – write the yearning of our experiences – and blow up the world as we currently know and experience it...” (p. 138).

Conclusion

The literature reveals that there is still much to be learned about the careers of women choral conductors. Though there have been great strides made in women’s access to leadership positions, there is still much work to be done (Carli & Eagly, 2001). There is a need for an open and honest discussion regarding the challenges and encouragements that women choral conductors face in the Academy, both as students and teachers, in order for

the next generation of women choral conductors to continue to advance in the Academy.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Purpose of the Study

This study explored the career path of exemplary women choral conductors in the United States who have found success as professional choral music educators at the collegiate level with particular emphasis on how gender may have affected their experiences. The data and analysis yielded a greater understanding of the challenges that women conductors face as well as encouragements they received.

Research Strategy

My worldview is that of a social constructivist. Truth is constructed by humans within social and historical context thus the researcher and the participants work together to construct the knowledge found in a study (Creswell, 2013; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014). In acknowledging that truth is in the eye of the beholder, I must acknowledge that my truth might not be relevant to all, and must grant that another researcher might find a different truth in this study. At the same time, I must also acknowledge that each experience will be different for each participant,

even though they share the same gender and profession (Hesse-Biber, 2014; Reinharz & Chase, 2003; Silverman, 2005).

Stake (2006) stated, “Qualitative case study was developed to study the experience of real cases operating in real situations” (p. 3). I selected a case study methodology so that I might include the real-life, unique perspectives of four successful women conductors, thus confirming my stance as a social constructivist, gaining knowledge through my experiences as well as the experiences of others (Creswell, 2013; Hesse-Biber, 2014; Stake, 1995; Stake & Trumbull, 1982; Yin, 2014). By utilizing their unique perspectives, the participants helped to co-construct a theory regarding the success of women choral conductors (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014). This is not to be confused with grounded theory, in which a theory is constructed to bring about social change. Yin (2014) stated that the research design as a whole should promote a theory. This theory should be derived from the literature or experiences of the participants, and it may be confirmed or negated at the conclusion of the study. By building a theory within the construction of the research design, the desirable methods of data collection and analysis will become obvious. Yin (2012) states:

...*theory* means the design of research steps according to some relationship to the literature, policy issues, or other substantive source. [...] Good use of *theory* will help delimit a case study inquiry to its most

effective design; theory also is essential for generalizing the subsequent results. (p.28)

Research Design

Subjectivity. I selected this research study because I am a female choral conductor in the early stages of my career. Throughout my education and career, I have often wondered what it would take to become a regionally or nationally recognized choral conductor. I studied with male conductors. In my graduate program, women were the minority. All of my male instructors were very encouraging, and I never viewed them as treating the women differently from the men. I never experienced discrimination in my education, though I have at times felt it in my career. Even so, I began to wonder why a majority of the heads of choral departments in colleges and universities across the United States are men.

On the other side of that, I noticed that a majority of the choral conductors at the high school level are women. Sheldon and Hartley (2012) found in their study on gender and ethnicity that this is also true of band conducting. There are a few very respected women choral conductors serving as heads of collegiate choral departments in the United States. What made these women successful? What encouragements did they receive as students and professionals? Did they face discrimination or challenges due to their gender in their education or career?

Denzin (1994) related the qualitative researcher to a *bricoleur*.

The *bricoleur* understands that research is an interactive process shaped by his or her personal history, biography, gender, social class, race and ethnicity, and that of the people in the setting. [...] The product of the *bricoleur's* labor is a bricolage, a complex, dense, reflexive, collage-like creation that represents the researcher's images, understandings and interpretations of the world or phenomenon under analysis. (p. 18)

In following this design, I recognize that my experiences will in some ways influence my interpretation of the data; however, as the research instrument, or *bricoleur*, I must attempt to put away any preconceived notions regarding what I may or may not find in the interviews with these women.

As a qualitative researcher, I understand that my experiences will shape the way that I view this study. Alison Jaggar, a feminist researcher, brings emotion to the forefront. She believes that it is unrealistic to say that emotions will not affect a study as most studies are selected through some emotional motivation (1997). Harding (1991) argues that objectivity under its accepted definition of precluding social and/or political interests, that which some time term as subjective, works against our research,

The best as well as the worst of the history of the natural sciences has been shaped by—or, more accurately, constructed through and within—political desires, interests, and values. Consequently, there appear to be no grounds left from which to

defend the claim that the objectivity of research is advanced by the elimination of all political values and interests from the research process. Instead, the sciences need to legitimate *within scientific research*, as part of practicing science, critical examination of historical values and interests that may be so shared within the scientific community, so invested in by the very constitution of this or that field of study, that they will not show up as a cultural bias between experimenters or between research communities. What objectivism cannot conceptualize is the need for critical examination of the “intentionality of nature”—meaning not that nature is no different from humans (in having intentions, desires, interests, and values or in constructing its own meaningful “way of life,” and so on) but that nature as-the-object-of-human-knowledge never comes to us “naked”; it comes only as already constituted in social thought.

(p. 146-147)

Feminist researchers believe that current standards of objectivity are taken from a male standpoint (Harding, 1993). Harding suggests that by taking the female experiences into consideration, we are actually coming from a standpoint of what she terms “strong objectivity” (Harding, 1991, p. 138). The idea is that by understanding my experiences and the experiences of women

choral conductors in the academy through a female standpoint, we will have a greater objectivity within the research. Harding (1991) states,

[...]in a society structured by gender hierarchy, “starting thought from women’s lives” increases the objectivity of the results of research by bringing scientific observation and the perception of the need for explanation to bear on assumptions and practices that appear natural or unremarkable from the perspective of the lives of men in the dominant groups. Thinking from the perspectives of women’s lives makes strange what had appeared familiar, which is the beginning of any scientific inquiry. (p. 150)

Case Study Protocol. As proposed by Yin (2014), five levels of questions were addressed in the case study protocol: Level 1 involved questions that were asked of the participants. These questions were developed through the review of the literature as well as personal questions regarding success in choral conducting. The questions were crafted to create a broad picture of the women’s careers and simultaneously allow the women to speak freely regarding their experiences as students and professionals in music programs. (See Appendix A for a complete list.) Level 2 involved questions that I asked of each case studied. These questions evolved during the initial analysis phase of coding the data utilizing a priori codes established from the literature review. These broad topics began to narrow as I focused

on Level 3: Looking for patterns across the cases. Themes emerged across the cases that did relate to the a priori codes but also delved into a deeper meaning. This was accomplished through a combination of *Atlas.ti* and hand coding. *Atlas.ti* was utilized to help identify the initial statements utilizing the a priori codes and then to search for emergent codes. As I began searching for patterns across the interviews, I utilized printed transcripts and highlighters. This hands-on process enabled me to dig deeper into the data. An outside coder was utilized to establish dependability in the coding process. She confirmed all codes with no suggestions for alterations.

Level 4 addressed the study as a whole, while confirming or disconfirming evidence found in the literature review. Emergent themes were addressed in light of the literature review. This level will be addressed further in Chapter 4. Finally, Level 5 resulted in further implications from the study. During the final phase of coding, I searched for new data to emerge from the a priori codes. Following this five-level protocol helped to ensure reliability in the study (Berg, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Silverman, 2005; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014).

Participants. This qualitative case study was designed to explore the educational and career paths of women collegiate, choral conductors in the United States. I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with four women choral conductors, who are currently serving or have served as the Director or Assistant Director of Choral Activities for colleges or universities.

Women selected for this study are currently employed or retired choral conductors, who served as the director or assistant director of college/university ensembles. They have a minimum of a masters degree in choral conducting or a similar field, and they have been recognized on a national level, either through publication in respected music and/or music education journals, performance on national conferences through organizations such as the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) or the National Association for Music Education (NAfME), or due to the nature of their individual program. Once a list was compiled of qualifying women, I contacted these women by email to request their participation in the study. Five was the intended number of cases for this study, however that number was considered flexible due to emerging factors in the study (Silverman, 2005). I felt that saturation was reached at four participants as they represented many stages of careers varying from early stages to retirement.

Each participant received a consent form (see Appendix B) prior to the interview. The study was discussed along with any potential risks to the participants, and they were allowed to ask questions in order to abide by the ethical principle of beneficence (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). They were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. Once the consent form was signed, the interview was scheduled. At the start of each interview, we reviewed these items prior to beginning. The interview

consisted of semi-structured, open-ended questions (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Data Collection. The semi-structured interviews utilized FaceTime since the participants lived in a variety of states. Interview data can provide a wealth of information, and by maintaining semi-structured interviews, participants helped to lead the direction of the discussion (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The research questions were used as a basis for the interview protocol (see Appendix A). Each interview was recorded, and I began transcribing the recordings immediately following the interview.

Transcription is a rigorous activity. Poland (1995) stated:

Issues of voice, representation, authenticity, audience, positionality and reflexivity, which suggest in turn that our concern with transcription must be not only how to do it well (technique) but also whether to do it at all (purpose) in giving voice to those studied in as authentic manner as possible. (p. 293)

Keeping this idea of rigor at the forefront, I worked diligently to represent each participant as clearly and as authentically as possible.

Data Analysis. During the transcription process, coding, or analyzing the data, began as soon as the first interview was transcribed. A priori codes were developed through the literature review for the first pass (Bernard &

Ryan, 2010; Saldana, 2013; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014). These following codes guided initial data analysis:

- ID – Identity Development
- GEN – Gender
- GENLD – Gender and Leadership
- FB – Female Body
- GES – Gesture
- PLB – Personal life and balance
- ACA – The Academy

Next, I searched for emergent codes in the data. This pass served to look for codes that were not exposed during the prior pass as well as expanded on codes revealed through the a priori codes.

- ADV – Advice to future women conductors
- CLLG – Colleagues
- EDU – Educational experiences
- FAM – Family environment
- FMNCH – Feminine characteristics
- MNTR – Mentor
- MOT – Motivation
- WMN – Relationships with other women
- WRK – Work environment

Each interview informed the questions and/or topics of each subsequent interview thus analysis began immediately following the first interview (Miles & Huberman, 1994). All data were coded using *Atlas.ti*. An outside coder was used to establish dependability during the coding process. I provided the outside coder with a list of codes as well as the full transcripts of each interview. The coder confirmed the established codes.

Member checking was utilized to establish credibility (Stake, 1995). The women were given the opportunity to read and comment on the findings. The women confirmed the data as presented and only suggested minor clarifications. This process of member checking helped to validate the research (Bresler & Stake, 1992; Silverman, 2005).

Confidentiality. All participants were given the opportunity at the beginning of the study to select to use an alias in the final paper. However, since there are so few women that meet the criteria, it may be easy for the knowledgeable public to make assumptions regarding the participants' identities. One participant selected confidentiality, and I took every step possible to maintain confidentiality by de-identifying the data and storing it in a secure location.

Transferability. Empirical studies have been so focused upon generalizability that if a study is not generalizable to a large population, its value is undermined. This privileges certain types of knowledge just as suggested in Harding's (1991) view of strong objectivity. Though this intrinsic

case study is not concerned with transferability (Stake, 1995), it is expected that readers might draw some generalizations from the shared experiences of the participants. Stake and Trumbull (1982) labeled these as naturalistic generalizations. They are described as descriptions that are constructed in a manner that allows the reader to feel as though they have experienced the phenomena themselves (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Stake, 1995). Stake (1995) provided a list of topics to aid in validating naturalistic generalization for the reader. He suggested providing detailed information regarding case study research as well as accounts of the data collection in analysis in “ordinary language” so that the reader can draw her/his own conclusions.

Dependability. Interviews can produce rich data. With an open-ended interview, the interviewee is given the opportunity to explain his/her perceptions, thoughts, and meanings (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994). In any study involving interviews, there are several issues regarding dependability that must be taken into account. First and foremost, the researcher must ensure that his/her questions are articulated in a manner that is easily understandable by the interviewee. The researcher must also be prepared to deal with issues of bias, inaccurate accounts from the interviewee due to poor memory, and reflexivity, the interviewee responding with what he/she believes the interviewer wants to hear (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Yin, 2014). In order to combat these issues, I worked

diligently to be as clear as possible in the interview questions. Also, as previously stated, I engaged in member checking. This gave each participant an opportunity to correct any misunderstood statements, any statements that she would like to expound upon, or any statements that she would like to clarify.

The study used standard measures to circumvent problems associated with construct, internal and external validity as well as reliability. Member checking was used to ensure construct validity and credibility (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Issues of internal validity were addressed by searching for patterns in the data as well as rival data, or data that disconfirm any codes (Yin, 2014). Using literal replication logic as discussed by Yin (2014), the generalizable domain was established thus addressing external validity. This generalizable domain was approached through the use of building theory, or as Yin (2014) called it “analytic generalization”. Analytic generalization is the qualitative counterpart to the quantitative “working hypothesis”. Through a review of the literature and coding, an analytic generalization began to develop that

may be based on either (a) corroborating, modifying, rejecting, or otherwise advancing theoretical concepts that you referenced in designing your case study or (b) new concepts that arose upon the completion of your case study. (Yin, 2014, p. 41)

Yin (2014) argued that external validity is closely related to your beginning research questions. These questions should be constructed as “how” and/or “why” questions moving either in the direction of descriptive or explanatory cases.

This was accomplished by following the case study protocol discussed earlier in this chapter. In Level 2 (questions asked by the researcher of the case), I began to build analytic generalizations, or theoretical propositions, based upon my knowledge of the literature and the coding of the data. The next step (Level 3) focused on finding patterns across the data. Level 4 then addressed confirming or disconfirming these theoretical propositions by looking for rival data within the transcripts.

Limitations of the Study

The first limitation of this study is the small amount of research on this topic in the field of choral conducting. Anecdotal articles discussing women choral conductors are readily available, but there is limited scholarly research on the topic. There are a few studies on women instrumental conductors, and there is, of course, a plethora of studies on gender issues in professional environments. For these reasons, the literature review encompasses fields outside of music to discuss issues of gender in education and work environment. Though few studies exist, this is a pressing issue for women, and this gap in the literature is evidence that further research should be conducted on this topic.

There was a limited pool of women who met the criteria of this study, and it was further limited to those who consented to participate in the study. I delimited this study to five women. The minimum number of acceptable participants was three. The study ultimately focused on four women.

Significance of Study

Women choral conductors entering the field need guidance from successful women choral conductors. By understanding these women's educational and career paths as well as possible struggles and/or discrimination and sources of support, other women choral conductors and young women choosing a field of study may become empowered to follow similar paths to success. Brenneman (2007) found that the life stories of her participants "provide a glimpse into self-perceptions and self-realizations of what it means to be a woman choral conductor" (p. 163). My hope is that this study will help to further enlighten and engage women choral conductors and the academy in general in this conversation of gender in the field of choral conducting, and that it will empower women to continue to pursue success in this field.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

This study explored the career paths of exemplary women choral conductors through qualitative analysis of interview data. Women's careers were examined through the factors of identity development, gender, gender and leadership, female body and gesture, and the Academy. As described in the methods section, the interviews were semi-structured to allow the participants to discuss whatever they felt was pertinent to the topic. These open-ended questions simply served as a guide for the interviews. The participants were encouraged to elaborate as much as they would like on any topic.

As described in Chapter 3: Methods and Procedures, five levels of questions were addressed as proposed by Yin (2014). Level 1 questions were open-ended interview questions asked of all participants (see Appendix A). Level 2 questions referred to the a priori codes established during the review of the literature. Since there is very little literature surrounding gender issues in choral conducting, the literature reviewed was from a broad range of fields. In preparing for the interviews and reading articles on gender issues, I established the following preliminary codes:

- ID – Identity Development
- GEN – Gender
- GENLD – Gender and Leadership
- FB – Female Body
- GES – Gesture
- PLB – Personal life and balance
- ACA – The Academy

In Level 3, I searched for emergent codes across the data. The following codes emerged in each of the interviews:

- ADV – Advice to future women conductors
- CLLG – Colleagues
- EDU – Educational experiences
- FAM – Family environment
- FMNCH – Feminine characteristic
- MNTR – Mentor
- MOT – Motivation
- WMN – Relationships with other women
- WRK – Work environment

These codes correlated with the research questions and helped to narrow the broader topics listed in the a priori codes. A combination of Atlas.ti and hand coding was utilized to help manage the coding process. Dependability during the coding process was established through the use of an outside coder. The

outside coder was given the transcripts as well as a code list. She confirmed the codes as presented without suggestions of alterations.

Level 4 involved looking for themes that crossed in the a priori and emergent codes, while confirming or disconfirming evidence found in the literature review. Several themes emerged, and they will be presented in this chapter. Level 5 (further implications from the study) will be addressed in Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations. Throughout this chapter (Chapter 4), portions of the interview transcripts are presented to show significance and meaning in the interpretation of the findings.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research is established through credibility, transferability, and dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility can be achieved through a variety of techniques such as triangulation, peer debriefing, prolonged engagement or observation, and member checking. Member checking was utilized in this study to establish credibility. Each woman was given the opportunity to read and comment on the findings presented in this chapter. The women confirmed the data as reported and only suggested minor changes.

Transferability is not a major concern of this intrinsic case study. It is expected, however, that generalizations might be drawn from shared experiences of the participants. Stake and Trumbull (1982) label these as naturalistic generalizations. Through the use of ordinary language and thick

descriptions, readers might feel as though they have experienced the phenomena themselves (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Stake, 1995).

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), an inquiry audit is the most valued tool in assessing dependability in a qualitative study. An inquiry audit involves an outside researcher examining the study to ascertain the validity of the findings, interpretations and conclusions. This was completed through an outside reader and committee review provided by the university as part of the dissertation process. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) and Yin (2014) also caution that it is important to establish dependability through the interview questions. Issues of bias, inaccurate accounts in the interviews and reflexivity were reduced through creating clear interview questions as well as member checking.

Trustworthiness is an important facet of qualitative research. Transparency throughout the study supports the validity of the research. The data reported were ultimately selected by the researcher, which speaks to a level of subjectivity, but creating trustworthiness in the study makes those choices plausible.

Themes

The data analysis process yielded eight main themes that describe and expound upon the educational and career paths of successful women choral conductors:

- Support Systems
- Biology vs. Personality: The Source of Strength
- Be True to Yourself
- Focus on the Music
- What They See Is What You Get
- Balancing Act
- Where Are the Women?
- Motivations and Encouragements

Support Systems

Identity development for women is fluid. Their home, educational and work environments influence their identity either positively or negatively (Josselson, 1991). In the review of the literature, identity development in the formative years was at the forefront, but each successive topic covered continues to influence women's identity development. In our interviews, the women discussed support in terms of home, educational and work environments in great detail.

Parental involvement and support are strong indicators in student success, particularly for female students (Gibbson, Woodside, Hannon, Sweeney & Davison, 2011). The women interviewed described varying degrees of parental involvement and support throughout their childhood.

I remember an incident. My mother was supportive too, but my dad was very vocal about it. As you know a PhD is very laborious, and after classwork was finished, I was in the dissertation, you know the throws of it. I remember I was studying for comps, and I remember just basically looking across from him and saying, "I think I'm going to quit." He said, "No. No, you are not. It's an unacceptable response, and that is out of the question." And I was an adult! I mean he really had no right, or authority, but I credit his unwavering voice to get me to where I needed to be." (Diane, personal communication, January 18, 2016)

Each woman reported that without the sacrifices made by her parents she would not have attained her current status. Many of the women spoke of parents driving them to lessons and performances all while caring for other children. Even if the encouragements were not as overt as Diane's experience above, the women felt support even through these seemingly small actions.

I don't know how they did all the stuff that they did having four kids. Driving us around to this and that, but I mean, I've always felt like that really gave me a leg up...They were just trying to enrich my life. They took me to dance class. They took me to

choir practice. They took me to soccer practice. (Jane, personal communication, January 25, 2016)

Though Jane felt the support of her parents through these enrichments, she never dreamed of a life outside of the normality of her parents' home life until later in life, though a part of her yearned for something different. Jane described her upbringing as "patriarchal with girls doing the cooking and the cleaning, and boys do the yard work" (personal communication, January 25, 2016). I found myself drawn to her description as I was raised in the deep south in a similar manner. Jane described a woman, who directed the local children's choir. She was a strong influence in Jane's life alongside her mother.

For my young age, I always wanted to be like that woman that was the conductor of the children's choir because I saw her as being this dynamic, engaging, certain kind of person. I don't know. I've always been torn between these two role models that I've had in my life. I feel like that makes my mom sound less than, but the thing is that I don't feel that way at all. She raised four kids. I don't know how she did what she did, honestly. It's just different, I guess. I just think that growing up in that way, I thought that was the life that I would have. I would be like my mom. I was going to college, but I thought I was going to be a teacher. I would stop working when I had kids,

maybe I'd go back maybe not. It never occurred to me that I was going to have this path like it just evolved. It wasn't like I was a young girl thinking that I'm going to do that. It never occurred to me. (Jane, personal communication, January 25, 2016)

Sonja did not report a strong female influence in her formative years, but she described the support that she received from her father and mother as idyllic. She was encouraged to follow her path and to believe that she could accomplish whatever she desired. Sonja could not describe a time when she did not see herself on this path. "If I could dream it, I could do it. Nothing was impossible for me. If I wanted to go to Carnegie Hall, I would go there. If I wanted to conduct, I would conduct, even if they had never heard of it. My Mama still doesn't really know what I do" (personal communication, January 19, 2016). She credits much of her success and self-confidence in life to her parents' undying support. "I think that my parents constantly believed in me. Believing that I was amazing in their eyes...I think it gives you the kind of feeling that you are kind of special, and it couldn't be the other way around" (personal communication, January 19, 2016).

Sonja also related the experience of being raised in a musical family. Her family would spend hours making music late into the night. It was no surprise to her family when she selected music as a career path. Many would

question her ability to make a living in the field, but her parents never questioned her decision despite their lack of understanding.

Sara Lynn had a very different experience from the other women. Her mother was a singer and music teacher. Though she only taught for one year, she remained active as a solo and ensemble singer. Sara Lynn recalls that there was always an expectation that she would go to college. It was never a question as to her path. She was given the freedom to choose her major, and her parents were always very supportive of her decision to major in music.

Each of these women's home situations was unique but similar. Sara Lynn and Jane had strong female influences in their formative years, while Diane and Sonja expressed a greater influence from their fathers. However, the common thread is that they each came from a very supportive home life. These supports were expressed in a variety of ways either through simply driving them to lessons or by vocally encouraging them to pursue their dreams. As supported by the research, this is a strong factor in women's success in college and beyond (Gibbson et al, 2011; McClellan, 2011).

Each of the women had strong educational influences mostly from male teachers, and each discussed the encouraging environment created by these teachers that fostered an expectation of greatness within his/her ensemble. None of the women reported any instances of discrimination as a woman within the ensembles, even as conducting students. In fact, none of

the women stated awareness of gender issues in education and, particularly conducting, until they were professional conductors. This was not an issue that was even discussed during their training. When asked whether in her training she realized that she was a woman conductor as opposed to a conductor, Diane stated, "I don't think it was a thought...I think certain teachers I had liked working with men more than women. I think they felt a little bit more comfortable perhaps giving them advice, showing them physically what they need to do with their body..." (personal communication, January 18, 2016).

Jane did recall a conversation with a professor in grad school advising her not to have children until she had completed her doctorate. She also related a story where she was told in a job interview, "Just so you know, the order is job then tenure then babies" (personal communication, January 25, 2016). Though she seemed to realize as we discussed that this was an inappropriate conversation in an interview, she did not appear to have related it to any sort of discrimination or gender issue at the time of its occurrence. She later said, "I don't know. Maybe in the back of my mind, that did affect me," as we discussed that she did not marry and begin a family until after completing her doctorate (personal communication, January 25, 2016).

Sonja received training from strong male personalities. She always felt that these men valued her voice, in both singing and opinion. Skills were the valued asset not gender. All of the women emphasized this point. To be

respected, whether man or woman, you must bring a certain skillset to the table. As long as those skills were in place, their instructors respected them, whether man or woman.

Sara Lynn felt encouragement from her instructors in undergraduate and graduate school:

I think when you're standing up in front of a group, which includes your peers and a mentor, telling you about your conducting; you're always a little bit on edge. I think the affirmation that I got from that experience was not, you're doing everything perfectly, but there was always a corrective comment paired with a positive comment. This is going well, maybe we need to work on this, or are you aware that you are doing this with your gesture. Not just comments about your gesture but comments about your musical insight and your ability to run a rehearsal. These comments might come in class, and sometimes they are one on one. (Sara Lynn, personal communication, May 16, 2016)

The constructive criticism paired with positive feedback helped to create confidence for her in front of a large group. She feels that these moments instilled a confidence in her ability that was needed in teaching. Continuing this process by participating in adjudicated contests and festivals as a director

helped her to increase her skillset, which led to even greater confidence in her ability.

The women discussed varying experiences in their work life. These experiences spanned from supportive work environments to competitive work environments. Many times, though, the women were reluctant to link any competitiveness or negative aspects of their work life to gender issues. I think it is important to note here that whenever faced with challenging areas in their work situations, the women's confidence in their identities as conductors never seemed to waiver. I am sure that there were moments of self-doubt, but as a whole, they each exhibited strong signs of self-confidence.

Jane was 24 years old when she accepted her first college teaching position after completing her master's degree, which she held for three years. She described the position as a rotating position, a place for upcoming conductors to hone their craft. It is a women's college, but men and women have held the position. She felt that her age was not a hindrance in the choir that she directed, but that when she would direct the auditioned choir, she would receive some push back from the women. For example, she might ask them to stand, and some of them would remain seated. Was this a result of her age or her gender? Possibly it was a combination of both.

Sara Lynn related an experience where she walked into a high school position, and she was judged based upon her predecessor. The woman who held the position prior to her had exhibited unprofessional behavior with the

students bordering on the inappropriate, and though she never felt any overt discrimination, she could feel her colleagues questioning whether or not she would behave in the same manner. It did not take long for her to set herself apart from her predecessor.

Sonja's experience is similar to Jane's in that she is teaching at an all women's college with a predominantly female faculty. She describes the situation as sometimes difficult to traverse personalities along with a strong steeped patriarchal environment. Her predecessor was a male conductor. Any difficulties that she has had in this position seem to come more from relationships between the women.

As the literature surrounding student success suggests encouraging environments are imperative for positive identity development (Josselson, 1991). Each woman expressed the importance of receiving support at home, in school, and at work. Their experiences served to further confirm the conclusions purported in the literature.

Biology vs. Personality: The Source of Strength

Gender is a complex issue, and each woman addressed this topic differently. I asked all of the women their thoughts on women's strengths as choral conductors. It was interesting to find that Jane and Sara Lynn were reluctant to attribute strength to femininity. They saw any personal strength as part of their being or personality not as attributes of their gender. This might serve to further confirm Gaskell and McLaren's (1991) claim that

femininity and masculinity are social constructs as opposed to a biological sex. On the opposite side, Diane and Sonja appeared to tout their feminine characteristics as an important aspect of their success. Just as Gould (2004) suggests, they celebrated the differences that they saw as feminine strengths.

The women used the terms “nurturing” and “empathic” to describe positive feminine characteristics. All of the women were reluctant to attribute these characteristics solely to women, and they were not implying that men could not possess these characteristics. However, they each stated that nurturing and empathic tendencies might be more engrained in the feminine voice. Diane embraces the idea that her femininity is a strength in her classroom,

We're intuitive. Can't you read your room when you walk in there, and you stand at the podium? Don't you have that ability? We are in touch with our own emotions therefore I think it makes us better equipped to be in touch with everyone else's emotions....We have the ability to multitask, and it serves us well. There is so much that comes naturally to a woman that informs who we are as a choral conductor. Not that men conductors can't explore the emotional side of a piece of music, but I think women can not only explore it but are ok to show it.
(Diane, personal communication, January 18, 2016)

Jane described what she considered to be her deficiency in what we might call stereotypical feminine characteristics:

It's funny because I'm the last person to cry in a concert. My husband will cry in a concert, I won't. It's really interesting...Students will say to me, 'I lost it in the concert because I knew you were about to cry.' In my mind I'm like, I wasn't going to cry. They think that I was. It's funny. It's like people put this emotional thing on me. I do feel emotion really deeply. I just don't go there in a concert. (Jane, personal communication, January 25, 2016)

Sara Lynn described women's strengths in the ability to be a role model for other women. She believes that personalities more than gender influence our strengths, but that empathy can be a positive attribute of femininity.

All of these women were reluctant to call themselves "women conductors," which is consistent with the literature (Bartleet, 2008b; Brenneman, 2007; Gould, 1996). They simply preferred to be viewed as a conductor in the professional sphere. The women did discuss the positive aspects of being a woman conductor as a role model for their students, and in this realm, they did not seem to mind the qualification. As previously stated, the women varied on their beliefs about the influence of being a woman on their profession, but they all agreed that they were simply conductors who were women.

The findings reported in this section are consistent with the literature. The women were of dueling mindsets regarding the celebration of or suppression of femininity. The literature supports these findings (Bartleet, 2008b; Brenneman, 2007; Gould, 1996; Rao, 2009). It was, in fact, evenly split among the participants. Two of the women felt more comfortable attributing some of their success to feminine traits while the other two women were a bit more reluctant.

Be True to Yourself

According to Webster's Dictionary, self-actualization is the realization or fulfillment of one's talents or potentialities. The first step to becoming who you should be is knowing who you are. Research shows that masculine traits are considered agentic (assertive, ambitious, competitive), while feminine are communal (tentative, supportive, soothing, helpful, sympathetic) (Weyer, 2007). For cisgender women to attain leadership positions, in many instances they must break with these communal traits, but when they shed these communal traits, they are denigrated because of their break with society's stereotypes of feminine traits (Ridgeway, 2001; Weyer, 2007). Again, Sara Lynn attributed this to personality,

Certainly you have to be true to your own personality, and everybody's personality is different, male and female. I do think women who come across as strong and authoritative in a rehearsal are more often viewed as bitchy than men. It's

expected from men. It's not expected from women, but I think you do have to be authoritative in rehearsal settings. You have to control the classroom. Part of that's in your pacing of the rehearsal and your command of the repertoire. I talk to men faculty about this. There are ways to be authoritative without being rude, and I think that's the line that you have to be careful not to cross...In terms of personality, some people are more feminine than other people, male and female, and you have to be true to your own personality. You can't get up there and be fake. You can't sustain that. (Sara Lynn, personal communication, May 16, 2016)

All of the women in the study spent segments of their career in the southern United States. They each discussed the element of a woman's upbringing in the south. The stereotypical southern woman is "bred to be demure and quiet and polite," according to Sara Lynn (personal communication, May 16, 2016). Each of the women discussed having to fight against either this breeding in them or expectations from others in this context. Yet again, they all agreed that these situations could be overcome with confidence in their ability, which was attributed to being prepared both in terms of skillset and knowledge of the music. Diane stated, "I think the quicker women move to the idea that you cannot let someone else define who are the better you'll be...the healthier you'll be. And if you are trying to let

your profession, the Academy, define who you are then you will be miserable” (personal communication, January 18, 2016).

Sonja related experiences working with an orchestra. There is a larger discrepancy in the number of women orchestral conductors than women choral conductors in the Academy. One of the members of the orchestra attempted to publicly criticize a tempo that she was taking when conducting an orchestra and choir. She felt that this situation would not have occurred had she been a male conductor, and she responded strongly to the orchestra member. After the fact, she faced criticism for her response. Her response to that criticism,

If I had been a man, they would never even have thought about coming at me with any kind of snarky attitude. They would have never even made a comment. Now we’ve all been in places where we thought, boy that’s really slow. I wish the conductor would go faster, or that was so fast, oh my gosh, I can’t believe the conductor went so fast. We’ve all been there, but would any of the orchestra or choir have said something? Heck no!

(Sonja, personal communication, January 19, 2016)

In our discussions of women and leadership, many of the women began talking about the relationship between female colleagues. Are the perceptions of gender stereotypes perpetuated by women as well as men? Each of the women had different experiences. Most of the women discussed

competition between women for positions, but they also stated how encouraging it is to find women in similar positions. Sara Lynn admitted to being a little more critical of women conductors than male when she is watching them at festivals or concerts. Sonja described being oblivious to competition between women in collegiate music positions until she began teaching at a women's college, where a majority of the faculty are women. Similar to the other women in the study, she believes that this is mostly due to women not feeling secure in their own abilities, but she advises that this can not dissuade you from being who are you, "This is part of what being a conductor is; It is having that ability to be a very strong leader, to hold the standards high, and to get people there with you" (Sonja, personal communication, January 19, 2016). All of the women stated in some format that if you relinquish this part of leadership out of deference, you would be an inauthentic leader, which leads to being an ineffectual leader.

While analyzing the data for this study, Hillary Clinton was named as the first woman nominee of a major political party for President of the United States. During the Democratic National Convention, there was a video showing a picture of each of the former presidents ending with a video of Hillary Clinton speaking as a glass ceiling shatters. There have obviously been many strides made for women in leadership, but at the same time, the literature shows that many of the same stereotypes remain. Today, many do not question a woman's ability to achieve a position in leadership, but

because of the discrimination that can be faced in those positions, it is her ability to accomplish the task once in the position (Ridgeway, 2001; Weyer, 2007).

Focus on the Music

When we arrived at the topic of clothing in the interviews, most of the women laughed at my question. They found it comical that there is literature that discusses women's attire as conductors. However, as we delved into the discussion, it became apparent that the women did put a good deal of thought into their attire, and that they were cognizant of what other women conductors wear to conduct. Two of the women related the exact same story when discussing this topic,

I remember a national conference. She wore a black dress that had a V, and it went almost all the way down to the top of her bottom. When she came out, you couldn't see it because it was in the back, but when she turned around to conduct the whole audience gasped. It was an audible sound. She was known for her musicianship and her work, particularly with middle school, but that became the focus of the performance. Good or bad, that's what people talked about after it was over. I think that was tragic because they didn't pay attention to what was going on in the performance. I think you have to make a decision on what perception do you want to leave the audience with, and

that perception is related to what you wear. (Sara Lynn, personal communication, May 16, 2016)

All four women discussed the importance of a conductor, man or woman, dressing in a manner that did not detract from the performance. They each stated that they wanted to look “classy”, and that some of that could be attributed to fit. An ill-fitting outfit on a man or woman conducting could be distracting to the audience. However, they each commented in some form that they did not want to be congratulated on their beauty or dress after a concert. It is about the music not the dress. Sonja chooses to wear a black romper over a white tuxedo shirt with a bow tie and tails, which she has been wearing for the last 20 years. “It’s my way of saying that I’m a woman, and I can do what I want with this outfit” (Sonja, personal communication, January 19, 2016). She confessed, though, that she always takes note of what men and women wear to conduct at national conferences.

As a younger conductor, Diane described an off the shoulder top that she wore with a long skirt. Her present skirt she describes as having a slit to above the knee. At the start of her statement, she emphatically responded that she had never felt the need to diminish her femininity in her dress as a conductor, though she does critique her outfits and body when watching recordings, “If we were doing a spiritual or something that had a little bit of rhythmic vitality because I used to get into it a little too much. I used to shake just a little too much” (Diane, personal communication, January 18, 2016).

The consensus among the women was that we must present ourselves in a professional manner. Accentuation or suppression of femininity in clothing is personal choice but our choices will relay a message. The choice to overly sexualize in dress, particularly in performance, can place the emphasis on the conductor instead of the music.

What They See Is What You Get

Gesture is an important topic for conductors, and can be debated in great detail among conductors (Bartleet, 2008b; Morrison & Selvey, 2014). I remember in undergraduate and graduate training hearing both male and female conducting instructors discuss the importance of gesture as well as feminine versus masculine gestures. In my training in the early 2000's, this discussion centered around these types of gestures being tools for the conductor depending upon the desired tone. The women in the study were predominantly trained prior to 2000. Each woman discussed the idyllic gesture, purported in education, as more androgynous, though this terminology was not applied, and each admitted that she might not always exhibit the idyllic gesture.

Diane discussed different schools of thought about conducting gestures: technical versus emotional. Then she began to talk about her own gesture,

A lot of people that are coming out of the Academy today, training wise, there seems to be this push, I can see this, for

that beautiful, controlled form. You know where the body is not doing very much, and it's all here in the hands...Interestingly enough all examples that I can think of right now are men. I have just never bought into that quite frankly. I work very hard on my gesture, but I don't over analyze the gesture. I work hard so that I am clear for the singers, but I don't really think about whether a purist would do it this way. I really could care less. As long as I'm communicating what the students need. Sometime I don't conduct. Sometimes I'll just put my hands down...I think it's equally important to know when you're not needed. (Diane, personal communication, January 18, 2016)

Sara Lynn, who is now primarily in administration but occasionally teaches conducting for undergraduate and graduate students, advises her students to consider the purpose behind each gesture. She would caution her female students against overly feminine gestures unless called for in the music, "You have to approach the gesture so that it ultimately is a reflection of the music" (Sara Lynn, personal communication, May 16, 2016). The standard accepted approach of a moderately curved hand with palm facing down, though it can be criticized as feminine, is supposed to mirror the shape of the throat for singers. She did also state that sometimes this criticism of overly feminine gestures could simply come from brightly painted fingernails. At the forefront, the conductor should be concerned with what he/she is

communicating with her singers. Effective communication should be the goal, and the conductor should not serve as a distraction in either dress or gesture

Diane and Sonja found this topic comical, but all of the women had much to say on the topics of dress and gesture. The idea of criticizing a woman's choice of clothing is, of course, not limited to women conductors, but Bartleet (2008a) suggests that it is an important topic that must be addressed with young women conductors. She does not argue that there is particular way to dress or conduct, but that we should be preparing women conductors for these conversations throughout their careers.

Gesture to a conductor is as important as good eyesight for a welder, steady hands for a surgeon, or analytical thinking for an attorney. Others will always scrutinize a conductor's gesture, whether the conductor is a man or a woman, because it is the impetus of the choral tone and the primary means of communicating with the choir during the performance. As Morrison and Selvey (2014) found, a listener's evaluation of a musical performance is strongly linked to a conductor's expressivity or lack thereof. Marin Alsop, an orchestral conductor, stated that certain gestures could be perceived as lightweight or overly feminine (Bartleet, 2008b). This issue is not relegated to women only. Men face the same issue of gesture dissection from an audience and/or performers, and it seems plausible to conclude that other underrepresented populations of conductors would experience the same issues.

Balancing Act

Studies show that women conductors frequently experience a critical tension between expectations that they place on themselves as well as others' expectations (Bartleet, 2008b; Bartleet 2008c; Conlon, 2009; Richardson, 1992). Does career fulfillment have to come at the expense of a personal life? In popular culture, we have seen this pendulum swing with movies and sitcoms shifting from depicting the happy homemaker to the frazzled woman trying to make work and personal life balance. Even though the message seems to support women in the workforce and in leadership, the underlying subtext is still telling women that they simply cannot do both. Many scholars have addressed this issue.

Though varying stages of personal life and career were represented among the women, the topic of personal life and balance was equally important to each. Diane recalled a particular home video that she cannot watch to this day. In the video, she is feeding her young daughter, who is not cooperating, and she (Diane) describes herself as looking angry, frazzled and bitter. She said she remembers the day. She was between rehearsals trying to rush. Trying to get back to the school. Working to fit in a little home time. Diane says to this day when she watches the video that she is ashamed. She wants to yell at herself. She wants to tell her, "Slow down. The rehearsal will be there. Tenure will be there. Just slow down" (Diane, personal communication, January 18, 2016). I particularly related to this story as a

mother of twin boys, who were very young, while I was teaching and directing full time as well as completing coursework for my doctorate. I wish that someone had told me to slow down and to accept help. Diane's words echoed in my ears for days after her interview, "So you do make choices, and you have to live with the balance. And I just think some women think why? Why do I do this? Why should I do this? Every woman has to answer those questions for herself" (personal communication, January 18, 2016).

Jane spoke of sacrifices that she had made to forward her career, whether conscious or subconscious. Her career has prohibited her from living near her family. She waited until later in life to marry, and she waited even longer to have a baby because she believes that subconsciously she felt that she needed to get through tenure first. Her next thought was of great importance for women to hear.

I feel like I've done them (choices). I've chosen them. I don't know. It all goes back to that I just feel like this is the path I'm supposed to be on in my life. I feel like my job is a vocation. Being a choral conductor is a vocation for me, so it doesn't feel like it was wrong to enter into it. It feels like there's a purity of intention behind it because I do feel in this very small way that I'm offering what I'm supposed to be offering to the world. (Jane, personal communication, January 25, 2016)

Jane feels justified in her sacrifices because she feels that this is not just a career for her. This is her contribution.

Sara Lynn discussed personal balance from a different perspective. She never had children, so she said that she had always been able to pursue her personal interests. She offered an interesting perspective that none of the other women addressed, “We have to tell ourselves that men have it all and have kids” (Sara Lynn, personal communication, May 16, 2016). Over time, she feels that she has witnessed men and women sharing more of the responsibilities in the household, but of course, there are still strides to be made. Because the younger generation has had both men and women as positive role models in a variety of careers, she believes that it will not be as big of a hurdle for future generations as it has in the past, who might still be living up to these ingrained perceptions of a so-called traditional household.

Sonja focused on the support that a woman must have at home to complete the degrees as well as maintain the schedule that the Academy can demand. She must have an equal partnership where each spouse wants to see the other succeed. She states that her husband would describe his career in life has been to support her career. Describing her relationship with her children and work, Sonja said,

It’s not that I didn’t bring them to work because of criticism, but because I couldn’t wear that hat at work. When I step on that podium, I’ve got to be able to put on that conductor hat. I

cannot have the mother hat on because when I have the mother hat on there are other things that I am aware of, and I cannot think about the music. I only have two hands. For me, I have to keep those places separate...To this day, Bryce, my son, sings with me in choirs. In rehearsal, he calls me Sonja. People say, "Who calls your mother Sonja?" Bryce responds, "That's the only way to get her attention in conductor mode. She is not going to hear mom because she is not in mom mode." (Sonja, personal communication, January 19, 2016)

Each woman handled balancing her personal life differently, and they all admitted that they did not handle it perfectly all of the time. Some have regrets, and others simply see the choices that they have made. Throughout the interviews, though, the common thread of being true to one's self was apparent. A woman has to make choices that she feels are consistent with her beliefs and desires for her life. Those choices may come with what some might term as consequences, but they are still your choice to make. It is evident in the literature that women in the workforce all express similar thoughts and feelings regarding their ability or inability to maintain a balance between personal and work life. Koza (2005) asserts that this is not simply a female issue, but an issue that must be addressed throughout the professional sphere.

Where Are the Women?

Most studies describe women as underrepresented and facing an uphill battle to achieve success in the Academy (Acker, 1994; Bannerji et al., 1992; Begona, 2011, Brenneman, 2007). As with so many other issues in life, this perception is based upon experiences, and each of these women had different experiences as choral conductors in the Academy. Diane worked in both secondary and post-secondary education during her career. Her experience in post-secondary has been largely without discrimination as evident in her statement,

I don't think the Academy has a glass ceiling. I really don't. I just think it's more women think it has a glass ceiling so they don't even try. They don't even start. I think quality and competence will be rewarded gender nonspecific. I think the greatest thing would be to get more women to believe that they can do it, more women to make a contribution to the Academy. Until you get more women in the Academy, it's not going to change...I see applications that come across our desk for vacancies, and I don't see the number of women that should be applying. (Diane, personal communication, January 18, 2016)

Diane infers that women's underrepresentation in Director of Choral Activities positions in the Academy is less about discrimination and more about women opting out for a variety of reasons. Much of the research does support this

claim, but it attributes this reality to the way that the tenure and promotion system is setup. Many believe that it is impossible for women, who are still serving traditional gender roles at home, to traverse this system (Begona, 2011; Eddy & Ward, 2015; Gould, 2009; Rushing, 2002; Weaver, 1993). Diane, along with the other women, all agreed that women need a strong support system in order to complete the degrees and be successful in the Academy.

Secondary teaching has long been an acceptable career for women. According to Sara Lynn, these salaries have intentionally been kept low. Because of this salary suppression, men are less likely to stay in secondary teaching and will move to post-secondary for the higher salaries that can be attained over time. She also concluded that many women choose to stay in secondary teaching in order to preserve time for their families. They view post-secondary teaching as too time consuming.

There's still a perception, in most western societies anyway, that it's the man that has to support and provide for his family. That's still a very strong tradition. It's a hard one to overcome particularly in male-female households. It takes a special relationship and special people to work out when it's the opposite...That's the reason why men don't choose to go into the lower paying professions because they want to be able to provide for their families. It's almost like if you are a woman that

is seeking a college position, you have to be better than all of the men that apply... You're overcoming perceptions that are unconscious. I think that's a big part of the reason, and some women just don't have the confidence. You think of all of your friends. There might be one or two men that aren't very confident in themselves, but most of them seem to at least present the perception that they have every confidence in their ability to do whatever is in front of them. But there are a lot of women that don't project that same confidence. That has to do with the kinds of things they (women) choose to do in life. (Sara Lynn, personal communication, May 16, 2016)

How do we overcome ingrained, unconscious bias? Sara Lynn and Diane concluded that we need more women mentors. More women should apply for positions in the Academy. If a woman chooses to opt out, it is her decision, but she should not be compelled to opt out because she feels that she must choose between her family and her career. We should be working together and supporting each other, men and women alike.

Motivations and Encouragements

Throughout our conversations, I heard these women speak of the sacrifices that they had made and issues that they deal with, but I also heard in each of them a passion for music and a passion for students. Even though I felt as if I knew the answer, I asked each of them what empowered them to

continue in this all-consuming career. Though the answers varied, I think that Diane's comments encompassed the sentiments of all of the women, "I am still enjoying the process of discovering music with students. I am still enjoying teaching them that it's more than the music. The music's important, but it's more than the music. I'm still trying to invest in raising the next generation of young men and women choral conductors" (personal communication, January 18, 2016).

As a wrap up to our interviews, I asked each woman what she would like to share with current or future women conductors as advice or encouragements. I want to share their words in their voice.

Be true to yourself. Know your limits. Know what's ultimately important. There is no such thing as an academic emergency. Create limits. The job will take as much as you let it take. At 7:00, turn off. Turn off communication with your students. Turn off the computer. Turn off social media...You HAVE to look at what WILL last...Be prepared. Do not try to enter any rehearsal without a clear plan...Invest in what's important, and the other will take care of itself. Don't apologize for being a woman. NEVER apologize for it! Seek out a support system. That's really important. (Diane, personal communication, January 18, 2016)

I don't get jealous. I just take out a book and write down what they did. I want to learn from them because I want to be like them rather than trying to figure out a way to put them back down so that they're not as strong so I won't feel bad. I think everyone should be as strong as they can be, and I should learn how to be that way...You just have to persevere, know who you are, and be good at what you do. You can't help the fact that some might people might just perceive you as a woman. It's better than it was. It's getting better. Just look how much it has changed in 20 years. (Sonja, personal communication, January 19, 2016)

I try very hard to be a champion for other women. There is in a lot of ways this cattiness sometimes between women. I really try to be supportive. I think that that comes from being in a place where you feel okay about where you are yourself. I'm getting there with my own self...A million people could be jealous of me, and I could be jealous of a million people. Try to just be happy with what you have and support other women because we definitely have challenges that men do not have. (Jane, personal communication, January 25, 2016)

I think the first thing is to do your very best to see that you are fully prepared for the job that you want. Decide your ideal and

work for it. I think I would tell them to go for it. Don't hold back because you have doubts. You've got to take advantage of your opportunities but you have to put yourself in a position to be afforded those opportunities. Don't hold back. Make conscious decisions about the choices they have to make now and will make later. (Sara Lynn, personal communication, May 16, 2016)

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study explored the path that women conductors in the United States have taken to find success as professional choral conductors at the collegiate level. During the interviews, the women spoke candidly about their perceptions as women choral conductors in the Academy. The women spoke of relationships with male mentors that continue to this day. They spoke of sacrifices made in their personal lives to pursue this time consuming career. They spoke of moments of failure and success with equal aplomb.

Women were selected based upon their career in the Academy as choral conductors, and their willingness to participate. Eight women were invited to participate in the study, and four ultimately decided to participate. One woman selected confidentiality. She was represented as Jane in the study. For this reason, I omitted names of mentors, teachers, and schools to assist in her wish for confidentiality.

As described in Chapter 4, I utilized open-ended questions to help guide our conversations, but I encouraged the women to speak freely and not to feel constrained by the questions. The summative conclusions that

emerged included the following: (a) all of these women received encouragements in their formative years from parents and positive role models, (b) none of these women experienced discrimination in their education and did not consider gender issues in the Academy or music until entering the professional sphere even then most never felt any overt discrimination, (c) most of the women believed that women's underrepresentation in music program in the Academy stems from the lack of women completing terminal degrees, (d) women must have a strong support system at home to be successful in this field, and (e) women must accept and embrace who they are, whether those traits are feminine, masculine, or androgynous, to be an effective leader.

Interviews were completed through Skype or FaceTime, and I found that this was a very effective mode when in-person interviews were not possible. Because I was able to watch the women as they responded, I felt that I gained a better understanding of their responses. It was easier to tell which responses elicited stronger reactions, and I could tell when a question was particularly thought provoking.

As I discussed my subjectivity in Chapters 1 and 3, I tried to not enter into any conversations with preconceived ideas regarding their responses. In the interest of full disclosure, because of the small circle of women in this world of collegiate choral conducting, I did know some of the participants. I have known Diane for several years on a professional level. Sonja and I each

attended the University of South Carolina for graduate degrees. She began the DMA in Choral Conducting the same year that I began the MM in Choral Conducting. Sara Lynn and I have had limited contact, though, we have met on two occasions for conducting clinics that she instructed over the past 4 years. I did not know Jane prior to the study, but I did know of her reputation as a well-respected choral conductor.

While analyzing the data I was not surprised by a majority of the findings, however some were unexpected. I found that most of the participants' perceptions aligned with mine as well as the literature, but I did find it interesting that many times the women were uncomfortable assigning particular situations to discrimination based upon sex. They would assign them more to issues of personality. This however did serve to confirm the idea, also evident in the literature, that women conductors shy away from the qualification of "woman" conductor. These findings of reluctance to assign the label of discrimination seemed to help bolster, whether consciously or subconsciously, the lack of need for this qualification.

Eight themes emerged across the data analysis:

- Support Systems
- Biology vs. Personality: The Source of Strength
- Be True to Yourself
- Focus on the Music
- What They See Is What You Get

- Balancing Act
- Where Are the Women?
- Motivations and Encouragements

These main themes recurred throughout the women's comments, and any subcategories were ultimately grouped into these themes. It should be noted that this study explored the lived experiences of these women. Though these women largely agreed on the eight themes represented, the experiences that led them to these perceptions were vastly different. Because of this, the results of the study cannot be, nor are they intended to be, generalized to the population of women choral conductors in the Academy. The aim of this study was to provide motivation and encouragements for young women aspiring to be choral conductors through the lived experiences of these choral conductors.

Conclusions Based Upon Research Questions

What encouragements and/or challenges did these women experience in their home, educational and work lives that contributed to their identity development? Throughout the data analysis, it was clear that these women all received encouragements during their formative years at home. They continually discussed the sacrifices made by their parents in order to take them to lessons and/or performances. Some of their parents were very vocal in encouraging them to pursue their career while others simply served as models of success in pursuing their goals. This confirms the

literature and supports the claim that parental support and involvement is pivotal in the success of the pursuit of a music degree (McClellan, 2011). These encouragements also help to support positive identity development in women as discussed in the review of the literature (Gibbson, Woodside, Hannon, Sweeney & Davison, 2011).

All of the women reported positive influences in their educational experiences. I found it interesting that none of the women remembered discussing gender issues as students in undergraduate or graduate programs with mentors or teachers, but they all discuss it to some extent with their students. Any issues that were brought up in their work life appeared to center around the competition that can sometimes exist between the Director of Choral Activities and Assistant Director at colleges or universities regardless of sex. None of the women felt that this was a result of sexual discrimination. More of them attributed it to age or personality than sex.

The research on identity development is very clear. Women's identity development is fluid and can change depending upon the status of their home, educational, or work environment. I would describe all of these women as strong, self-aware individuals. They seem comfortable with where they have been, where they are now, and where they are going. This is more than likely a result of the encouragements that they received in their formative years from their parents as well as the positive relationships that they established with both female and male teachers and mentors during their

training. They each qualified that many of these authority figures in their lives provided constructive criticism paired with encouragements.

How do gender issues affect women as choral conductors in the Academy? Again, it is interesting to note that some of these choral conductors initially shied away from attributing any strengths or weaknesses to gender. When asked about women's strengths in the choral classroom, some believed that this was less about a woman's strength and more about particular personality traits. However, two descriptions recurred in each conversation: nurturing and empathic. All of the participants were quick to qualify that this was not to assert that men could not possess these qualities, but that perhaps they came more naturally to most women.

Many of the participants discussed instances of "nurturing" their students. Two of the women even admitted that their students might call them "Mama _____" (insert last name). They felt that their students were comfortable coming to them with problems outside of the classroom, and that they were able to develop a rapport with their students that encouraged this type of sharing.

Empathic characteristics were defined as being able to understand the mood of their classroom upon entering. Because of this ability, they could adjust their rehearsal accordingly which resulted in effective rehearsals. Under this heading, many of the women also discussed their ability to feel the emotions of a piece of music and share that emotional response with their

students. Allowing this element of emotion into the rehearsal allowed for greater understanding of the music and enhanced the experience of making music together.

Analysis of the interview data as well as the literature reveals that most women conductors do not like the qualification of “woman” conductor. They would rather be referred to as a conductor who is a woman. This was most prominent in the discussion of leadership. There are certainly stereotypes in place in today’s society regarding masculine versus feminine traits, but these women did not seem to feel comfortable describing themselves in that narrow box. As we discussed these ideas of traits, again they attributed these traits, whether positive or negative, to personality rather than sex.

Throughout the interviews, the women each conveyed that women are respected as long as they are well prepared. Sara Lynn stated at one point that it seems that women are expected to be more prepared than men to overcome subconscious stereotypes when applying for positions. My perception throughout all of the conversations was that there was an underlying subtext that negative ideas about women and leadership were a result of underprepared women. Assuming that there are many male conductors who are underprepared as well, this raises questions regarding the implications of women conductors being held to a higher standard, and this could call for further research into other underrepresented populations as conductors. During this conversation, I posed a question to each of the

women about women's perceptions of other women. Are we more severe on other women? All of the women agreed that we must support each other, but some women did confess that they perhaps scrutinize women conductors more closely at conferences and festivals. Perhaps it is the familiarity of our own sex, or perhaps again we are dealing with subconscious ideas in our western society.

Many of the women felt that it was comical that clothing would be addressed in the literature surrounding women choral conductors. However, once we delved into the question of their own attire, it became apparent that this is something that each of them have given a good deal of thought. I am constantly critiquing my own concert attire. The general consensus was that they wanted to look professional and respectable. They certainly did not want to be discussed for bad clothing choices, but they did not really want to be discussed for good clothing choices either. The right balance in selecting attire to was when it was not a consideration of the concert at all. Each of the women discussed the importance of not detracting from the music with what they wore to conduct. Sonja's approach was a different in that her clothing choice was also a statement. Her combination of what some might consider feminine and masculine attire serves to assert her self-confidence.

On the topic of gesture, the women did not make many differentiations between masculine and feminine gesture. Discussion centered more around commonly accepted practices. They each focused on the eternal questions

that conductors ask regarding what the music calls for and how can that be clearly communicated. These are, of course, questions that a man or woman conductor would ask, so the women did not seem to feel that gender had any affect on conducting gesture.

Balance was also an important theme that emerged. Some of the women shared what they considered to be moments of failure and others what they simply viewed as choices in life that must be made. The women who have or plan on having children felt the need to explain the choices that they made to a certain degree. It was an almost subconscious reaction from them. They did not regret the decisions that they made as a whole, but as they would describe moments of balancing personal and professional lives, they would explain the need not to have their children in rehearsal so that they could focus or how they might have to travel without their children. I found myself again wondering here if a man having this conversation would feel the need to justify his actions. I do not believe that my questions were causing that reaction. It simply seemed ingrained in them to clarify the choices that they made regarding their home life.

I must say here that I have always held tremendous respect for each of these women. This has not changed. In fact, that respect has increased. These women chose a path in life, and they gave their all to each facet. Some of them worked and completed degrees without children while some worked and completed degrees with young children. Each of these women

have positively impacted the world of choral conducting as well as the Academy for women and men alike. From our discussions, I am not sure that they intended to serve as role models for the future generation of conductors but nonetheless they do. Some of them have crossed into positions in administration in higher education, and even as they move into that sector, they are continuing to pave the way for the younger generation entering the Academy, particularly women. I mentioned in Chapter 4 that popular culture has painted a picture of two opposites: the happy homemaker or the frazzled woman trying to have it all. When I see these women, I see neither of these pictures. I see strong women who have achieved great success in their personal and professional lives. These are women who have taken on challenges in the professional sphere on their own terms and who understand the value of balance. Does this mean that they have been perfect all of the time? Absolutely not. Through their stories, I have understood the importance of women being real with each other. Only when we are real with each other will these stereotypes begin to diminish that are perpetuated through facades of who or what we think we should be as women.

Why are women underrepresented in the Academy, specifically in Director of Choral Activities positions? The women as a whole believed that women are underrepresented in the Academy, specifically in Director of Choral Activities (DCA) positions, due to the fact there are not enough women completing terminal degrees. This is due to a variety of reasons: feeling that

they must choose between this career and family, having young children while working on the degree, not having time to complete the degree, or feeling that ultimately work in the Academy is too time consuming. Many women feel that the tenure process coincides too much with the years that they would be having children. In fact, Jane even stated in her interview that she had perhaps held off having a baby subconsciously until she got past tenure. She believed that it was too much to think about all at one time.

The overarching recommendation, as revealed at the end of Chapter 4, is that we simply need more women to make the effort to join the Academy. As I was analyzing this portion of our conversations, I kept returning to the question of *how*. How do we encourage women to pursue this path? What is stopping them? This brings us back to the theme of balance. We need women in the Academy, who will discuss the realities of the Academy, but also encourage women that career choice does not need to dictate personal life. It does not have to be one or the other. As more men and women are entering the workforces, who were raised in a home with two-working parents, the division of responsibilities in the home will continue to improve.

What motivations and encouragements can be offered to future generations of women choral conductors? As described at the end of Chapter 4, the women spoke for themselves on this topic, but there were three main recommendations that emerged: know and be true to yourself, support other women, and opt in. This first piece of advice is the most

difficult. Know and be true to yourself. All of the women admitted that this comes from time: feeling confident in your training and abilities as well as being content with where you are in life. One important aspect that came to surface in this topic was not to compare oneself with others. In a society where comparison reigns supreme, it is difficult not to do. This is tied closely with the next idea. Support other women. When we stop comparing ourselves to each other, we do not need to tear each other down to build ourselves up. Only when women begin fully supporting each other will we see new strides in the professional sphere for women. Lastly, simply go for it; opt in. Sara Lynn stated, “Don’t hold back because you have doubts. You’ve got to take advantage of your opportunities but you have to put yourself in a position to be afforded those opportunities” (personal communication, May 16, 2016).

Implications and Recommendations

All of the findings in this study support the reviewed literature and add to the literature specifically surrounding women choral conductors. The most common topic found in the data was solidarity of women. By speaking out and telling their stories, other women who have navigated, are navigating, or planning to navigate this path feel that they are not alone. As a choral conductor, who happens to be a woman, I felt great encouragement from hearing these women’s stories, and I hope that this study will serve as a source of encouragement for other women in our field.

The tenure system is a rigorous process that can exclude women academics. All of the women expressed that strides had been made in the Academy but conceded that changes still need to occur. As seen in the literature, women have felt the need to postpone life events such as marriage and childbirth to achieve tenure. In this study, Jane relayed a story of being encouraged to wait to have children until after receiving tenure. This mindset must cease. In both of the examples above, advice was given to these women by women. Though these seasoned women professionals were more than likely only trying to help these younger women, we must stop propagating this idea among ourselves. Women need to speak realistically, but they should also encourage each other to forge new paths.

Young women need to be encouraged to develop leadership skills. As an educator, I have witnessed extraordinary programs in various public and private school systems that encourage self-confidence and leadership qualities in young women. This should continue into post-secondary education. Once I completed college and even graduate school, I believed that I was ready for the work force. As a musician and educator, I was prepared. As a woman negotiating the professional sphere, I was underprepared. I am thankful for women who led by example through my first academic position, but not all women are fortunate enough to have access to these role models. Discussions during undergraduate and graduate

education regarding the path of women in the Academy would be a great step to help prepare our future women conductors.

Throughout this study, I could never come to the conclusion whether these women's lack of desire to attribute traits, positive or negative, to women was due to a communal understanding in society of feminine versus masculine traits or if it was due to a subconscious need to suppress their identity as women. One possibility for further research would be to explore women's response to feminine characteristics in the workplace. As this study focused on women, a similar study using these same questions focusing on men would be an interesting contrast.

This study has been an eye-opening endeavor. Through the process, I was constantly challenged by ideas that I did not even realize were ingrained in me. I celebrated the strength that I found in myself and the other women, but I also learned to accept the weaknesses that are simply part of our human nature. I am profoundly grateful for the women who participated in this study as participants and advisors. Their strength and perseverance has encouraged me. There is still work to do

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APPENDIX A: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Give the participant the consent form.
 - a. Explain the consent form.
 - b. Invite and respond to any questions.
2. Which past musical experience(s) have had the greatest impact upon your career?
3. Please explain any encouragements or discouragements that you received from your parents.
4. How and when did you develop an interest in choral conducting?
5. Do any particular experiences stand out in your memory from your secondary, undergraduate and/or graduate education that encouraged or discouraged you from pursuing a career in choral conducting?
6. What encouragements did you receive as a female student in a music department as an undergraduate?
 - a. As a graduate student?
7. Did you face any stereotypes and/or discrimination as a female student from faculty or other students during your undergraduate or graduate education?
8. Were your conducting instructors male or female at the undergraduate and graduate level? What was the content or tone of conversations with conducting instructors about gender issues in conducting?
9. Did/Do you have a mentor(s) through your education and career path? Was/Is this mentor male or female, and what was the content or tone of conversations regarding gender issues?
10. What was your first professional position as a choral conductor? Tell me about your experience as a female choral conductor in this position.

11. What about other positions that you have held? Tell me about your experience as a female choral conductor in these positions.
12. What has your experience been in your current position?
13. What encouragements have you received, or do you currently receive, as a female choral conductor?
14. What challenges, in general, have you faced as a choral conductor?
15. Have you faced any additional stereotypes and/or discrimination as a female choral conductor in your career?
16. Much of the literature on women in leadership discusses the female form. Do you believe that female conductors can embrace their femininity, or do you believe that female conductors should demonstrate more androgynous traits? How have you dealt with this in your career? Have you ever felt pressured to suppress your femininity?
17. What empowers you to continue as a female choral conductor?
18. What do you believe are the benefits of being a female choral conductor?
19. Do you believe that choral conducting is still a male-dominated field at the collegiate level?
20. What do you believe is the future of choral conducting for women?
21. What advice would you give to other female choral conductors?
22. Thank the participant for her time.
 - a. Do you have any questions?
 - b. Ask permission to contact for possible follow-up questions for clarification or to confirm conclusions.

APPENDIX B: INTRODUCTORY EMAIL

Dear _____,

I will be contacting you via a brief phone call over the next week to share details of a research project investigating the career paths of exemplary women choral conductors in the academy. I am conducting this study under the supervision of Dr. Nancy H. Barry, Professor of Music Education at Auburn University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of PhD in Vocal Music Education. The project's goal is to gain an understanding of the encouragements and/or challenges that you experienced during your education and career as a female choral conductor within the academy.

Should you choose to participate, the study will require one interview at a mutually agreed upon place and time for approximately two hours. There might also be follow up questions for clarification or to confirm conclusions.

I look forward to speaking with you, and I would like to thank you in advance for your time.

Sincerely,

Claudia Bryan
PhD Candidate, Auburn University
Director of Choral Program, Wallace Community College

APPENDIX C: PHONE SCRIPT

Greeting and Introduction

You are invited to participate in a research study related to a project investigating the career paths of exemplary women choral conductors within the academy. I am conducting this study as a PhD candidate at Auburn University, under the supervision of Dr. Nancy H. Barry, Professor of Music Education at Auburn University. The project's goal is to gain an understanding of the encouragements and/or challenges that you experienced during your education and career as a female choral conductor within the academy. If you decide to participate, I will ask you to allow me to interview you about your educational and professional career. The interview will take approximately two hours to complete, and it will be audio recorded. The interview will take place at a mutually agreed upon time and place either in person or through Skype or a similar program. You might also be contacted following the interview for follow up questions for clarification or to confirm conclusions.

Information collected through your participation will be used to meet dissertation requirements, published in a professional journal, and/or presented at a professional meeting. Because this is a study of exemplary women choral conductors with established reputation in the field, I am requesting permission for you to be identified and be identifiable through the data collected and possible publications and presentations. If you would prefer to remain confidential, though, I will make every effort to protect your privacy through de-identification of data as well as storing the data in a secure location. It will be your right to change your mind regarding confidentiality while the research is in progress.

Your decision whether or not to participate will not jeopardize your future relations with your school, Auburn University or its Department of Educational Foundations, Learning and Technology. Note that you may withdraw from participation at any time, without penalty.

As a result of your participation in this project, female conductors will have the opportunity to better understand the paths to success within the academy. I cannot, however, promise that you will receive any or all of the benefits described. No compensation will be offered for participating in the research study.

If you agree to participate or would like to take time to consider your participation, you will receive a follow up email stating all of this information. At the time of your interview, you will also receive a letter of informed consent that you will sign granting me permission to audio record the interview as well as declaring your intentions regarding confidentiality.

Do you have any questions regarding the study or procedures?

Are you able to make a commitment to participate at this time, or would you like to take some time to think about the study?

(If she responds yes)

Thank you for your time and participation. You will receive an email stating all of the information that we have discussed today as well as information regarding setting up an interview at a time and place that will be convenient for you. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call or email me. I am happy to answer any questions that might arise.

(If she asks for time to think about the study)

Thank you for your time and consideration. You will receive an email stating all of the information that we have discussed today. If you have any further questions that might help you to make your decision, please do not hesitate to call or email me. I am happy to answer any questions that might arise.

(If she responds no)

Thank you for your time and consideration. I understand that you are unable to participate. I have immense respect for the work that you do as a choral conductor, and I appreciate your time today.

APPENDIX D: FOLLOW UP EMAIL

Dear _____,

You are invited to participate in a research study related to a project investigating the career paths of exemplary women choral conductors within the academy. The study is being conducted by Claudia Bryan, PhD candidate at Auburn University, under the supervision of Dr. Nancy H. Barry, Professor of Music Education at Auburn University. The project's goal is to gain an understanding of the encouragements and/or challenges that you experienced during your education and career as a female choral conductor within the academy. If you decide to participate, we will ask you to allow us to interview you about your educational and professional career. The interview will take approximately two hours to complete at a mutually agreed upon time and location either in person or over Skype or a similar program. It will be audio recorded. You might also be contacted following the interview for follow up questions for clarification or to confirm conclusions

Information collected through your participation will be used to meet dissertation requirements, published in a professional journal, and/or presented at a professional meeting. Because this is a study of exemplary women choral conductors with established reputation in the field, I am requesting permission for you to be identified and be identifiable through the data collected and possible publications and presentations. If you would prefer to remain confidential, though, I will make every effort to protect your privacy through de-identification of data as well as storing the data in a secure location. It will be your right to change your mind regarding confidentiality while the research is in progress.

Your decision whether or not to participate will not jeopardize your future relations with your school, Auburn University or its Department of Educational Foundations, Learning and Technology. Note that you may withdraw from participation at any time, without penalty.

As a result of your participation in this project, female conductors will have the opportunity to better understand the paths to success within the academy. We cannot, however, promise that you will receive any or all of the benefits described. No compensation will be offered for participating in the research study.

For more information regarding your rights as a research participant you may contact Claudia Bryan, principal investigator, at 334-796-8306 or cbryan@wallace.edu or the Auburn University Office of Research Compliance

or the Institutional Review Board by phone (334)-844-5966 or e-mail at
hsubjec@auburn.edu or IRBChair@auburn.edu.

Sincerely,
Claudia Bryan
PhD Candidate, Auburn University
Director of Choral Program, Wallace Community College

APPENDIX E: INFORMED CONSENT

Page 1 of 2

AUBURN UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

INFORMED CONSENT BY SUBJECTS

“Women Choral Conductors in the Academy: A Case Study”

You have been invited to participate in a research study related to a project investigating the career paths of exemplary women choral conductors within the academy. This study is being conducted by Claudia Bryan, PhD candidate at Auburn University, under the supervision of Dr. Nancy H. Barry, Professor of Music Education. The project’s goal is to gain an understanding of the encouragements and/or challenges you experienced during your education and career as a female choral conductor within the academy. If you decide to participate, we will ask you to allow us to interview you about your educational and professional career. The interview will take approximately two hours to complete at a mutually agreed upon time and location either in person or over Skype or a similar program. It will be audio recorded. (Please see attached Audio Release Form.) You might also be contacted following the interview for follow up questions for clarification or to confirm conclusions.

Information collected through your participation will be used to meet dissertation requirements, published in a professional journal, and/or presented at a professional meeting. Because this is a study of exemplary women choral conductors with established reputation in the field, I am requesting permission for you to be identified and be identifiable through the data collected and possible publications and presentations. If you would prefer to remain confidential, though, I will make every effort to protect your privacy through de-identification of data as well as storing the data in a secure location. It will be your right to change your mind regarding confidentiality while the research is in progress.

If you are willing to be identified in the study, please initial here. _____

If you would like to select confidentiality in the study, please initial here. _____

Your decision whether or not to participate will not jeopardize your future relations with your school, Auburn University or its Department of Educational Foundations, Learning and Technology. Note that you may withdraw from participation at any time, without penalty.

As a result of your participation in this project, female conductors will have the opportunity to better understand the paths to success within the academy. We cannot, however, promise that you will receive any or all of the benefits described. No compensation will be offered for participating in the research study; nor will there be any costs for participation.

The Auburn University Institutional
Review Board has approved this
Document for use from
11/23/15 to 11/22/16
Protocol # 15-452 EP 1511

For more information regarding your rights as a research participant you may contact Claudia Bryan, principal investigator, at 334-796-8306 or cbryan@wallace.edu or the Auburn University Office of Research Compliance or the Institutional Review Board by phone (334)-844-5966 or e-mail at hsubjec@auburn.edu or IRBChair@auburn.edu.

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, YOU MUST DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY. YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES YOUR WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE.

_____	_____	_____
Participant's signature	Date	Principal Investigator's signature
_____	_____	_____
Print Name		Print Name

The Auburn University Institutional Review Board has approved this Document for use from 11/23/15 to 11/22/16
Protocol # 15-452 EP 1511

Audio Release

During your participation in this research study, “Women Choral Conductors in the Academy: A Case Study”, you will be audio recorded. Your signature on the Informed Consent gives us permission to do so.

Your signature on this document gives us permission to use the audio recording(s) for the additional purposes of publication beyond the immediate needs of this study. These audiotapes will not be destroyed at the end of this research but will be retained indefinitely for any additional data analysis for related follow-up research.

Your permission:

I give my permission for audio recordings produced in the study, “Women Choral Conductors in the Academy: A Case Study” to be used for the purposes listed above, and to also be retained indefinitely.

Participant’s Signature Date

Investigator’s Signature Date

Participant’s Printed Name

Investigator’s Printed Name

The Auburn University Institutional
Review Board has approved this
Document for use from
11/23/15 to 11/22/16
Protocol # 15-452 EP 1511