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Perspectives of the interaction between composer, student performer, and music educator: commissioned works in selected school ensembles

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Boston University

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS

Dissertation

**PERSPECTIVES OF THE INTERACTION BETWEEN
COMPOSER, STUDENT PERFORMER, AND MUSIC EDUCATOR:
COMMISSIONED WORKS IN SELECTED SCHOOL ENSEMBLES**

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to my patient wife Cathy, my wonderful children Jonah, Aaron, and Clara, and my parents who have supported me in my constant educational endeavors.

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Dr. Frederick Harris and Dr. William McManus deserve an extraordinary amount of gratitude for helping me to find my way through this research. I would also like to thank my dissertation committee, including Dr. Andrew Goodrich and Dr. Kinh T. Vu for their time and input.

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Boston University College of Fine Arts, 2016

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine and describe the process entailed in commissioning a new work for a high school music ensemble with a focus on the interpersonal relationships that exist among the student performers, their director, and the composer during a composer residency. With a multiple case study design, I examined the commissioned works projects of five cohorts that included one composer, three student performers, and one commissioning conductor. Each of the composers and commissioning conductors selected for participation in the study possessed extensive experience with commissioned works projects in school settings enabling them to draw on their past experience, as well as their experience working together on a commissioned work. The student performers were selected for the study based on their participation in a commissioned work project that included a composer residency with the commissioning conductor and commissioned composer associated with each cohort. Data was collected through interviews with the members of each cohort. Interview questions focused on understanding how each agent (student performer, music teacher, composer) contributes to the process of producing a new work through commission, how the interpersonal

relationships between the agents function throughout the process, and how the outcomes of the process impact the agents' experiences. The data gathered in the interviews was analyzed in light of these three foci and then re-examined to uncover themes common to multiple agents. Finally, the data was evaluated to determine how this information might shape future commissioning projects. I believe that the results of my investigation point to a greater understanding of the processes involved with the commissioning of a work, as well as the interpersonal relationships that exist within those processes. The results of my investigation formed a foundation for the construction of a concluding narrative providing step-by-step details that might be informative for music educators considering embarkation upon a commissioned work project.

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Chapter 1: Composers and Commissions in Schools

The commissioning of new musical works by school ensembles is a phenomenon that has increased in frequency during the last 50 years (Battisti, 1995). However, even as the occurrence rate of commissions has grown it is still relatively rare in the context of school music programs. Figures from The Commission Project, one of the most extensive ongoing commissioning assistance programs in the United States, indicated that only 37 commissioning projects in high schools in the academic year 2005–2006 were assisted by the program (The Commission Project, 2008). Although independent commissions unassisted by The Commission Project did occur during that year, if one considers that there are over 41,000 public and private high schools in the United States, the rate of commissioned music projects occurring in high school music programs is extremely rare.

Although the causation behind the low numbers of commissions by school ensembles is not the focus of this study, I believe that the results of my investigation point to a greater understanding of the processes involved with the commissioning of a work, as well as the interpersonal relationships that exist within those processes. The dissemination of this information to composers, teachers, and commissioning parties may increase the frequency of commissioning endeavors.

Existing studies on this topic have provided information on large-scale composer-in-residence programs and the collaboration efforts between composers and commissioning parties; however, there is a paucity of research on the commission process in school music programs. Furthermore, the majority of research studies on large-scale composer-in-residence programs provide insight into the residency of professional

composers in working with students, yet the focus of such research is on the program rather than the process involved in commissioning a work. The advantage of smaller scale research endeavors in this area tells the stories of commissions from the perspective of commissioning teachers and involved composers.

Research that focuses on the relationship between composer and performer as commissioner provides keen insight into the creative process and the interpersonal relationships that are part of the musical creation. This research does not consider the commissioner as a teacher of music, rather as a performer of the composer's music or collaborator with the composer. There is also a lack of empirical investigations on relationships that include the student musicians as part of the process or the relationships. Several trade journal articles about school music commissions describe the process of commissioning and the interpersonal relationships involved; however, owing to the journalistic medium, those articles lack the depth and understanding that can come from empirical research.

Research Problem

Very little research exists on how commissions come about and grow into concrete projects, the expected contributions of each collaboration contributor, the characteristics of the collaborative relationships, and the anticipated outcomes of such projects. This lack of information leaves many questions unanswered for school music directors and such unknowns may inhibit their consideration of commissioning music for school ensembles. The purpose of this study is to understand and describe the process entailed in commissioning a new work for a school music ensemble and the interpersonal

relationships that exist among the student performers, their director, and the composer during a composer residency. The descriptions and analyses of these aspects of the commission process may serve to inform and enlighten music educators, their students, and composers of the value of the endeavor.

A Brief History of Composers and Music Commissions In Schools

The commissioning of composers and the residency of composers has been part of music education on the national and local levels both here and abroad. The proceeding discussion will bear relevance to my study given the focus of my research on the presence of commissioned composers in schools. Discussion will focus on the work of composers as teachers, large-scale residency programs, and smaller scale residency programs. Discussion will continue with evaluation of some components that are present in successful residency projects.

Composers as Teachers

The discussion of composers as teachers, as it relates to this study, begins with Gustav Holst near the beginning of the twentieth century. Holst's career as a teacher in addition to being a composer began in 1904. At that time he was appointed music master at James Allen's Girls' School, West Dulwich (Laycock, 2005, p. 25). Shortly thereafter, in 1907, Holst's instruction at Morley College began a lineage of composer/teachers at that institution that extended on for many years, including composer Michael Tippett. Tippett's tenure at Morley College explored the music of the common worker. His compositional work and teaching during this time explored with depth the role of the composer in society (p. 28).

The influence of Tippett extended beyond his time at Morley College and through the instructional residency of Benjamin Britten. Britten's compositions during and after this time at Morley College reflected a belief in the importance of composing for young people and amateur musicians. This belief found fruition in the inclusion of audience participation parts and the incorporation of parts for musicians of varying abilities in works such as *The Little Sweep* and *Noyes Flood* (p. 28).

Composer Harrison Birtwistle worked as a schoolmaster and composed music for young musicians during that time. Birtwistle's music, aimed at 13 to 15 year-old musicians is comprised of techniques associated with contemporary music, written in a practical fashion to be accessible to younger musicians (Laycock, 2005).

Beginning in 1959, Peter Maxwell Davies contributed an enormous amount of music for the purpose of school performance as composer and teacher at Cirencester Grammar School. In addition to the teaching of composition, Davies composed for students to perform, including solo works, choral ensembles, chamber works, operas, and works for musical theater (Laycock, 2005; Pitts, 2000).

Beginning in the late 1950s composers made significant contributions to the shape of music education. It is at this time that the Ford Foundation Young Composers project commenced in the United States. American composer and educational theorist, George Self (1967) and the Canadian composer-teacher, Murray Schafer (1986) wrote about their experiences and ideas of teaching music, teaching composition, and making music. They encouraged music educators to be involved in the future of music, not just the education of music, thus reducing the isolation of music in schools from music in the real world

(Pitts, 2000).

Extending beyond the late 1960s and into the 1970s, David Bedford contributed greatly to music education in his role as composer and teacher. Bedford was a schoolteacher and composer-in-residence at Queen's College in London. He composed many works for performance by students in educational environments. Beyond these personal contributions to repertoire and efforts with students he taught, Bedford directed the Performing Rights Society's Composer-in-Education Scheme, which has been a significant influence on composing in education since 1990 (Laycock, 2005).

National Projects in the United States and Abroad

In 1959, as part of a six-year project commitment by the Ford Foundation and Music Educators National Conference (MENC), the Contemporary Music Project for Creativity in Music Education was commenced. This project was a multifaceted effort to improve the creativity of music education in the United States. One aspect of this program placed composers in public schools throughout the United States. These composers were charged with the task of composing instrumental and choral works for school performing ensembles and to participate in the musical life of the school and community (Contemporary Music Project for Creativity in Music Education, 1963).

The Contemporary Music Project (CMP) was comprised of three programs. Program I of the CMP involved the aforementioned composers in residence aspect of the project and was initially called the Young Composers Project. Program II developed the concept of Comprehensive Musicianship, which will be discussed later in this chapter. Program III was called "Complementary Activities" (CMP in Perspective, 1973) and

utilized a series of local, regional, and national seminars in which educators conducted forums and participated in professional development opportunities focusing on various topics in music education.

The Young Composers Project aspect of the CMP began in 1959 and was funded by the Ford Foundation for five years. At the outset of the program twelve composers were placed in public school systems to serve as composers in residence for one-year terms with the option to renew their residencies (Mark, 1999).

By 1962 the program had included thirty-one composers. During its first five years the YCP students and teachers involved in the program gained firsthand experience with contemporary music, which in turn made them more receptive to new music in general. The composers honed their compositional craft and were able to better understand the unique American market for educational music (Mark, 1999). Due to the program's success it was renewed for six more years as a part of the broader Comprehensive Musicianship Program of MENC, still funded by the Ford Foundation. A second renewal offered the opportunity for expansion and revision of the program, this time involving forty-six additional composers. From 1968 to 1973 the program continued to exist as Professionals-in-Residence to Communities. In this iteration, composers remained as part of the school system, but also composed in service to the community in which the school system was located.

Project chairman, Norman Dello Joio, also a composer, stated that the main objectives of the YCP were to provide opportunities for composers to develop their craft, to receive performances of their work, and to involve students in the study and

performance of work created especially for them (Dello Joio, 1968). Dello Joio reported that as a result of the interchange of ideas between composers and educators, a new vitality was brought to the musical lives of the schools and the communities. The program made possible a new body of music literature that affected the tastes of the students and the communities (p. 46).

Examinations of another national residency program include several doctoral dissertations that have involved the study of the Artists-in-Education program of the National Endowment for the Arts. Mok (1983) studied the program after it had been in place for thirteen years. In 1965, Public Law 89-209 created the National Foundation for the Arts and Humanities with the goal of promoting progress and scholarship in the humanities and arts. This foundation was later divided into the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts, overseen to this day by the Federal Council for the Arts and Humanities. In 1966, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) funded the Poets-in-Schools program. That program was expanded to include visual artists, musicians, dancers, and other artists in 1969.

The Artists-in-Schools (AIS) program was a large national program that carried with it both problems and benefits. Problems associated with the AIS program included the perception of the program as a replacement for existing arts courses and the personnel responsible for delivering instruction in those courses, as well as NEA goals that were unclear and unfocused. The AIS advisory panel articulated the benefits in 1974. The panel named benefits in four categories: benefits for the students, the teachers, the artists, and the communities. The benefits relating to students, teachers, and artists are pertinent

to this literature review, as they constitute the agents in the study.

Benefits for the students include:

- Nourish the innate creativity of students.
- Enhance perception, self-awareness, and self-expression.
- Enhance knowledge of contemporary arts and artists, and of the artists' role in society.
- Secure a fuller understanding of the creativity and artistic resources of all segments of the community.

Benefits for the teachers include:

- Offer shared insights into the creative process.
- Gain new respect for creativity in their students and in themselves.
- Lead to shared methods for stimulating student interest in the arts, and of the artists' role in society.

Benefits for the artists include:

- Enhance creative development through direct exchanges and cooperative efforts undertaken with students and teachers.
- Create the opportunity and the ability to communicate with wider audiences.
- Clarify the role of the artist in society. (Mok, 1983, p. 53–54)

Many of the beneficial characteristics of the NEA's AIS program, as stated by the advisory panel, were affirmed in many of Mok's conclusions. Mok (1983) concluded that artists grew in ability and recognition through practice and demonstration of their art, students developed creative abilities, aesthetic sensitivities, and critical judgment, and that through the AIS program, existing arts programs were enhanced and enriched.

The benefits of the AIS program were reiterated and supplemented in Cohen's (1984) doctoral dissertation. Along with the benefits previously discussed, Cohen added that the AIS program of the NEA afforded opportunities for artists, teachers, and students to explore areas not covered by the regular art program and offered artists the chance to dispel myths and demystify the arts (p. 42). Bumgarner (1993) witnessed highly artistic and collaborative work as part of the AIS program, but mainly in schools where an established arts program was already in existence.

The Australian Society for Music Education initiated a project in 1994 in conjunction with the Australian Music Centre with funding by the Australia Council to promote the importance of composition in music education through composer in residence programs and a young composers project (Australian Society for Music Education, n.d.). The composer in residence project has a two-fold aim of developing a repertoire of musical works composed by prominent Australian composers that are suitable for school and community performance and providing young Australian composers the opportunity to work with professional orchestras and receive feedback on their compositions.

In the United Kingdom, the Performing Rights Society's (PRS) primary objective is to assist in the collection of royalties that are owed to its members. To commemorate its 75th anniversary the PRS launched the Composing-In-Education Scheme in 1987. The PRS Composing-In-Education Scheme began supporting nine composers who are members of the PRS. The composers were placed in schools at the disposal of teachers with the goal of encouraging composers and teachers to collaborate. The two-fold objectives of the program were to encourage the creation of Composer-In-Education Schemes throughout the UK and to create employment opportunities for its members through such schemes (Laycock, 2005).

While the Composer-In-Education Scheme no longer exists, the PRS is still providing funding for commissioning projects and composer residencies with amateur musicians and ensembles (PRS for Music Foundation, n.d.). The PRS for Music Foundation, in conjunction with the Hackney Music Development Trust (HMDT) now

funds the PRSF Young Composers' Scheme. In this scheme young composers are offered the opportunity to develop their skills in composition and workshop leading in educational and community music environments. They also shadow the large-scale commissions and projects of the HMDT. Further discussion of the HMDT is to follow.

Local Level Projects

The composer residency programs in the cities of London, New York, and Chicago have provided examples of residencies and arts partnerships at the local level. The Hackney Music Development Trust (HMDT) in the East London area of Hackney in the United Kingdom supports a variety of music education and training projects. The HMDT's projects involve experienced workshop leaders and musicians whose goals include engaging both teachers and students in the project (HMDT In Schools, n.d.). Several of the HMDT projects have included collaboration between school students and teachers with HMDT guest artists in the production of staged musical events.

The 2004 premiere of *The World Was All Before Them* was the culmination of work by the Jubilee Primary School and the HMDT. In the process of the project, commissioned composer, Matthew King used the writing students to create a libretto, then held workshops with students to develop the musical ideas for the opera. The themes in the opera were creatively used by the teachers in the school to augment the curriculum as part of the students' school work, immersing every child at the school in the opera and its development (HMDT In Schools, n.d.).

In 2007, nine schools from the East Hackney Schools' Consortium partnered with the Hackney Music Development Trust to commission a work that celebrated the richness

of the Chinese culture. The creation of the work involved composer, Richard Taylor, who worked in the schools with students to create source material for the music. The collaborative process involved over 3500 students in the creation of the work and over 350 students in the performance (HMDT In Schools, n.d.).

In the United States, New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago hosted citywide arts in education partnerships in which artists in residence have been placed in schools. The Arts Partners program in New York City commenced in 1984. The program consisted of placing artists in New York City public schools for ten-week residencies working in a variety of arts genres, including poetry, visual art, music, dance, and drama. The artists in residence were charged with helping students transfer their knowledge from other subject areas to their arts medium. Through this transfer students solidified their content knowledge in the area outside of art through the practice of art (Program Support, 1999; York, 1990).

Redfield (1990) studied the effects of the artist residency program of the Los Angeles County schools. The artists-in-the-schools program was designed by the Music Center of Los Angeles County, Education Division (MCED) and was financially supported by the California Community Foundation and Mervyn's. Redfield studied the program during the 1989–1990 school year, in which 25 artists from five arts disciplines were placed in 221 classrooms located within 31 schools (p. 8). The goals of the program were to:

- reinforce basic learning and cooperative group skills;
- improve student achievement through enhanced self-esteem;
- expand student problem solving, creative expression, and critical thinking abilities;

- increase teachers' skills and knowledge of the arts in education curriculum;
- increase multicultural awareness, understanding, and tolerance;
- increase the awareness and involvement of parents with their children and the school. (p. 16)

Redfield found that students who were in classrooms with the artists-in-residence learned, retained, and generalized knowledge and skills presented by the artists. Students were also found to have improved in written and oral communication, as well as problem solving skills. Student motivation, self-confidence, work habits, and cooperation showed positive results. The report also indicated that the artists were observed to be sensitive to the needs of the students, the classroom teachers, and the school environment (p. 5); however, collaborative planning with teachers was limited.

The Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE) was founded in 1992 as a publicly and privately funded program to bring more half-time arts/music teachers into Chicago Public Schools along with local artists and arts agencies at all grade levels. The teacher-artists were assigned the task of planning integrated instruction between arts areas and specific instructional goals in academic subjects (Catterall & Waldorf, 1999, p. 1). Catterall and Waldorf reported on the evaluation of the program by two independent agencies, the North Central Regional Laboratory (NCREL) and the Imagination Project of the University of California at Los Angeles.

The NCREL report focused on “findings in four main categories of effects: impacts on the classroom, effects on teachers and artists, impact on students, and support from school and community based groups” (p. 3). NCREL found that there was extensive arts integration in a variety of subject areas in CAPE schools leading to high participant reports of school climate, quality of relationships with parents, professional development,

instructional practices, and relationships with the community (p.5). NCREL's

conclusions as reported in Catterall and Waldorf (1999) included:

1. Positive changes in school climate resulted because of CAPE, based on school community surveys. Climate includes qualities such as principal leadership, focus on instruction, positive collegueship, and widespread participation in important decisions.
2. Significant progress was seen in getting the support of school principals for CAPE.
3. CAPE succeeded in getting teachers and artists to collaborate, with more success in co-planning than in truly co-teaching.
4. Teachers believe that an arts integrated curriculum has learning, attitudinal, and social benefits for children.

NCREL's final recommendations to CAPE included the following:

1. Commit to arts integration as the mission of the program.
2. Establish criteria for assessing the quality of arts integrated units.
3. Establish a standards-based student assessment system. Determine what is to be learned and how what is learned should be measured and reported.
4. Find ways that teachers and artists can have more time to plan and work together.
5. Provide added resources to teachers.
6. Maintain and enhance CAPE's position in school communities and their reform agendas. (p. 8)

UCLA's Imagination Project reported additional findings. The report stated that for students at the elementary level there appeared to be "strong and significant achievement effects of CAPE" (p. 13). This impact was determined through analysis of student scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills and the Illinois Goals Assessment Program test. The Imagination Project also reported two patterns that emerged in their evaluation: (a) that CAPE arts-integrated lessons contribute to the speaking, motivation, and decision making skills of students; and that (b) in 75% of measured areas of skill development, participants reported more direction and progress during CAPE lessons than during non-integrated lesson (p.14).

The Imagination Project also listed nine conditions that are important in creating high quality arts-integrated instruction. These conditions include: supportive principals, highly skilled artists, adventuresome, risk-taking teachers, well defined learning objectives, matching objectives to assessment plans, a good schedule to make school visits convenient for artists, teachers having the freedom to choose art forms they like, sharing in faculty meetings, and a good steering committee (p.17).

Commissioning a Musical Work

The focus of this study is on the process of commissioning a musical work. The term *commission* is the act of suggesting or inspiring the creation of a new work. Therefore, the person who is responsible for the suggestion or inspiration is the *commissioning agent*. The initiation of a commission can take on a variety of forms; however, most commissions are categorized in one of three ways: an admiration commission, an exchange of services commission, or a paid commission.

The three main aforementioned types of commissions exhibit identifiable characteristics. Admiration commissions usually involve no financial exchanges. The inspiration for admiration commissions is typically a performing artist whose skills motivate a composer to write a work specifically for that performer. Exchange of service commissions also generally do not involve financial compensation. In the case of this type of commission, the composer expects that future paid commissions will result from the publicity and exposure attached to the commission and performance. Commissioning agents who pay composers a fee to create a new work are referred to as paid commissions (Frigo, 2005).

The description of the process of commissioning a musical work serves to inform each of the three parties involved in the endeavor: the commissioner, the composer, and the performer. In some cases, the commissioner and the performer are the same person. However, in the specific case of this study, the three parties include the composer, the commissioner (music teacher), and the students who will perform the work.

Throughout this dissertation the parties involved in the commissioning process will be referred to as *agents*. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the word *agent* as “something that produces or is capable of producing an effect” and “a means or instrument by which a guiding intelligence achieves a result” (Agent, n.d.). While these definitions are appropriate in terms of both process and product, producing an effect and achieving a result, the word *agent* has also been chosen to identify each person involved with the commission because of the active role each person has in the realization of the commission. Implied in the word *agent* is a sense of action and reaction, as in the way chemicals interact. A person’s role as an *agent* emphasizes the vitality that exists as an active and reactive component of the process and its inherent interpersonal relationships. Indeed, each person involved in a commissioning project is a contributor to the process and the outcome.

Each agent enters into a commission project with different goals, roles, responsibilities, expectations, and ambitions. Additionally, each agent has his own perception of the goals, roles, responsibilities, expectations, and ambitions of the other agents. Understanding these aspects of the process, as well as the interpersonal relationships that focus on the communication of these aspects is the purpose of this study.

For many composers, insight into the processes and interpersonal relationships of a commissioned work are important to their professional and artistic aspirations. Commissioned works represent opportunities for composers to create new art. Commissions have parameters of varying constraint within which the composer must work, but nonetheless present an opportunity to compose with an often-guaranteed performance of the work as an outcome. The performance is generally not the only outcome of the project. Financial gain may play an important role in the commission. Establishment or maintenance of a reputation as an artist or professional may be at stake for the composer, as well.

Naturally, all composers are at different points on a continuum of career placement. A commissioned work presents a different set of opportunities, expectations, and outcomes for a composer just beginning a career as opposed to one that is established or in the twilight of his or her career. Equally as variable are the dynamics of personality that a composer might bring to the relationships with the commissioning agent and performers. The results of this study may shed light on some of these hidden facets of the commission process from the perspective of the composer.

The commissioning agent's motivations for initiating the commission are also widely variable. Among these considerations is expansion of repertoire, musical and artistic experimentation, and honoring or memorializing a person or event. While the motivations are certainly not limited to this short list, one prominent motivation in the high school setting is use of the commission as an educational tool.

The motivation behind a commission may impact the amount or type of

involvement that the commissioning agent has during the commission process. Embedded in this variable involvement are the many components of the relationships between the commissioning agent, the composer, and the performer. The role of the commissioner as the teacher of the student performers will almost certainly influence not only the motivation behind the commission, but its placement in the educational curriculum and the relationships that are cultivated in its production. Appreciation of the issues related to the commissioner's role in the realization of the commissioning project and the relationships that are part of the process of the project are important to understanding the commissioning process and its outcomes.

In an educational setting it would be easy to assume that the students would simply be beneficiaries of any type of collaborative enterprises in which their teachers might be involved. However, in the instance of a commissioned work involving a school music ensemble the student performers have a greater role than that of recipients of information. Student performers are the people responsible for developing a commissioned work into a piece that is audible to an audience, and for bringing the printed art to life. They are not alone in this endeavor, as their teacher leads them and the composer often supplies input. The dynamic relationship between the students, their director, and the composer whose art they bring to reality is unique in the educational setting.

Since many teacher designed student learning activities are structured as student learning objectives, (United States Department of Education, 2014) it stands to reason that the act of commissioning a work for a school ensemble must have some educational

objective for the students involved. In addition to learning through the realization of educational objectives, the students and their conductor have the artistic responsibility of turning the composer's printed music into sound. The contribution of the students is thus intertwined with those of the composer and teacher in a complex web of interpersonal relationships that may result in musical growth for the students. In this study I examine this complex web, including the contributions of each of the agents and the educational outcomes of the experience. The effect of educational outcomes are of particular importance for understanding the potential that a commissioned work might have in the musical growth of the students involved in the process.

Understanding the process of a commissioned work in a school music ensemble and gaining insight into the perspective and relationships between the agents requires a systematic examination of such a project in its natural setting. Qualitative study is particularly well suited for increasing the understanding of such a process and for providing insight into perspectives and relationships. Understanding of meaning for participants in the study, as well as events, situations, and actions also can be achieved through qualitative study, making it a medium that is especially well suited for understanding the process of commissioned works. The identification of unanticipated phenomenon and the generation of theories about the data through qualitative study allows for flexibility and openness to explore emergent ideas (Maxwell, 2005).

The attributes, methods, and descriptive writing associated with qualitative research permit the study of commissioned works, their processes and the relationships contained within those processes. Through systematic study involving noninterventionist

interviews in a natural setting using myself as the key research instrument, I have been able to build themes using inductive data analysis from multiple sources to construct a contextual description and holistic account that addresses both emic and etic issues pertaining to the participants in commissioned work projects. This description divulges the meaning of the experience from the perspective of the participants. The meaning and understanding from the perspective of the participants may provide valuable, vicarious experience for readers who may be composers, music educators, students of music, or prospective participants in a future commissioned work.

Research Questions

The specific research questions to be addressed in this study are:

1. How does each agent (student performer, music teacher, composer) contribute to the process of producing a new work through commission?
2. How do the interpersonal relationships between the agents function throughout the process?
3. How do the outcomes of the commission process and composer residency impact the experience for the agents?
4. How might this information shape future commissioning projects?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine and describe the process entailed in commissioning a new work for a high school music ensemble with a focus on the interpersonal relationships that exist among the student performers, their director, and the composer during a composer residency. Guided by the preceding research questions, this

study utilized data gathered from interviews with five cohorts each consisting of a composer, a commissioning conductor, and three student performers who were part of the commissioning experience. The individuals who provided these data were connected to one another in five strands. Five music educators were interviewed with at least five years of teaching experience and experience in commissioning at least three pieces of music. In connection with each of those five music educators, one composer who was commissioned by each of the five music educators was selected for interview. Also in connection with each music educator, three student musicians who were participants in a commissioned work composed by the selected composer were interviewed. These five strands of connection provided a rich data set that represented the perspectives of each of the agents involved in commissioned works and composer residencies. Analysis of the data provided the information used to construct the narrative description found in chapters 4 and 5 of this document.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Three main strands of relevant literature have been examined in relation to this study. In the preceding chapter, discussion of artist residency programs established a context in which composers have done work in schools in a broad sense. The forthcoming chapter discusses views into specific commissioning and residency projects that are intended to provide more in-depth understanding of the issues involved with the projects. Examination of literature relating to the relationships between composers and performers enlightens the ways in which music comes to life from the printed page, through interpretation, and realization in sound. A majority of the literature discussed in this literature review falls within in the vein of scholarly research. This literature review also includes some articles from trade journals, such as *Music Educators Journal* and *The Instrumentalist*. Although trade journal articles are not peer reviewed, the biographical and autobiographical content of these articles speaks with authenticity with regard to the commissioning experience, therefore bearing relevance to this study.

Successful Projects

Through examination of the literature regarding artist residencies, several themes have emerged that indicate conditions under which residencies have been “successful.” “Successful” is a term that is difficult to define. The context of “success” is individualized and culturally related. Success is not the same for any two people since every person is a unique individual (Maxwell, 2008, p. 5). This applies to the individual studies that have been investigated in this literature review. The complexities of the context of each study necessitate that each individual study define its own parameters for

success. In the instance of research studies, the research questions and research design are typically focused on measuring the effectiveness of the artist residencies. Therefore, for the purposes of the following discussion, the words “success” and “successful” will refer to those projects which have been viewed in their own terms to be effective or those in which the agents involved exited the experience feeling generally positive about the process and the outcomes.

The themes discussed in the upcoming paragraphs seem to transcend context. The mention or discussion of their presence in successful artist residencies is pervasive. However, regardless of their transcendence of context, it is important to remember that for each project exists a context in which some of these themes either might not be necessary for success or may require additional conditions to produce a successful venture.

The establishment of clear, common goals, aims, and/or objectives is vital to the success of a residency endeavor. The development of goals involves the engagement of two of the agents in the project – the composer (or artist) and the teacher (and possibly the school administration). Inherent in the development of clear, common goals is communication between the agents.

Gradel (2001), writing on behalf of a consortium of arts institutions invested in arts education stated that the generation of these goals should be an outgrowth of an understanding of one another’s artistic and educational philosophies. The importance of residencies directed by clear, common goals was underscored by several authors (Bumgarner, 1993; Catteral & Waldorf, 1999; Dreeszen, 2001; Myers, 2005; Purnell,

2008; Sharp & Dust, 1997; Waldorf, 2005).

While the importance of educational goals for residency exists as a common denominator in a large portion of the literature, the manner in which those goals have been set varies from context to context. As coordinator of artist residencies in New York between universities, public schools, and the Lincoln Center, Wasserman (2003) asserted that three questions were viewed to be important in the establishment of common goals: (a) What goals do we have in common? (b) What can each of us do to achieve those goals? (c) What do we do about other goals we don't share, goals that seem irrelevant or even repugnant? The resultant answers to these questions provide a foundation for the relationship between the resident artist and host.

Sharp and Dust (1997) have suggested that the responsibility for the creation of common goals lies in the hands of the schools hosting the artist residency. Dreeszen (2001) communicated the belief that shared goals between artists and schools that are focused on the learning needs of the students enhance students' learning. This position has been reflected in the writing of Myers (2001) with the assertion that the goals should be linked to the existing curriculum which exists as a function of the learning needs of the students.

Sharp and Dust (1997) phrased a similar idea in different terms by stating that the goals should be focused on helping the students "acquire relevant skills, knowledge, and understanding" (p. 56) connected to the ongoing work in the school. Connected to the concept of linking the goals of the project with the curriculum is the importance of the students' participation in art that is appropriate for their skill level (Hultgren, 1993). For a

composer creating a new work of art for student musicians to perform it is important that the skills required to perform the music are complementary to skills the students already possess or are a logical extension of skills that are part of the curriculum for student learning (Colgrass, 2004; Hultgren, 1993; Owens, 1986; Thorn, 1997).

Related to the connection between project goals and the existing curriculum is the ability for the artist to understand child development in general. When an artist is able to understand child development more appropriate choices can be made in the planning and implementation of instruction. This concept has been a theme in the research of David Myers (2005), Gradel (2001), Hultgren (1993), and Waldorf (2005). Understanding of child development can be gained through preparation and professional development opportunities for artists in residence (Booth, 2003; Gradel, 2001; Myers, 2005; Waldorf, 2005; Wasserman, 2003).

Understanding of the educational environment and school climate is another concept that can be taught through artist professional development and preparation training. Artists who have completed residencies in schools have cited the importance of understanding how a school works as being one of the important components for residency success (Cohen, 1984). According to Cohen, many artists in residence are artists by profession who have been placed in schools as a result of the residency opportunity. These artists have not considered themselves to be teachers, rather artists who are teaching. Some teaching artists, as residents in schools, have lacked understanding of how schools work. Understanding of the school environment can aid in the success of the residency project (Gradel, 2001; Marcellino, 1993; Sharp & Dust,

1997).

A component of understanding and working in the school environment involves dealing with interpersonal relationships. Artists working in schools interact with a wide variety of people, including teachers, administrators, students, parents, audiences, and others. The ability to build relationships and rapport with these groups of people is important to the success of artist residencies (Cannava, 1988; Catterall & Waldorf, 1999; D'Arms & Dello Joio, 1966; Myers, 2005; Purnell, 2008; Sharp & Dust, 1997; Waldorf, 2005).

The existence of good relationships and rapport opens pathways for good communication and collaborative work. Open avenues of communication lead to two other components found in successful residencies: clearly defined roles and flexibility. Clear role definition leads to fewer instances of conflicts between agents in artist residencies (Barresi, 1983; Bumgarner, 1993). While the literature shows a spectrum of models of role definitions as being effective, from the artist and teacher sharing authority and parity in the responsibility for delivering instruction (Purnell, 2008; Waldorf, 2005) to artists being responsible for art demonstration and teachers responsible for instruction and student management (Myers, 2005; Sharp & Dust, 1997), it is evident that it is the existence of definition that leads to more successful residencies (Barresi, 1983; Sharp & Dust, 1997). When artist-teacher collaborations are defined in terms of role, the agents have built an environment of trust and respect. Modeling trust and respect in artistic endeavors shows students a positive example of healthy artistic collaborations (Myers, 2001; Purnell, 2008).

Trust and respect in the relationships of teachers and artists opens the path to flexibility in planning and delivery of instruction. When artists and teachers understand one another's strengths and weaknesses and respect one another, flexibility can bring out their strengths in the teaching of the students (Purnell, 2008). Flexibility in the collaborative relationships held high value according to several authors (Albert, 2009; Cohen, 1984; Colgrass, 2004; Dreeszen, 2001; Waldorf, 2005).

As the creation of goals, aims, and objectives is specific to the context of the artist residency, the elements of the evaluation of the project vary from situation to situation. Within the context of each project a criteria for evaluation, which is determined by the objectives of the project, should be established. Regardless of context, however, the process of reflection or evaluation remains a vital component of successful artist residencies (Catterall & Waldorf, 1999; Dreeszen, 2001; Gradel, 2005, Myers, 2001; Myers, 2005; Sindberg, 2005; Waldorf, 2005).

For a variety of reasons, including the investment of time and money required for the effort, the formal evaluation of artist residencies is not commenced or completed (Higgins & Bartleet, 2011). A lack of clear goals, as well as the size and scope of the National Endowment of the Arts Artists-In-Schools program prevented that program from being evaluated effectively (Mok, 1983).

When the time, money, and effort are invested, the evaluation process yields important information. Evaluation and reflection help to improve future projects and also document past projects as reference for future projects (Sharp & Dust, 1997).

Commissions and Residencies *in situ*

Composer residencies and commissioned works belong within contexts. Each edition of the experience involves a specific place and time, as well as permutations of the combinations of agents. Many brief descriptions of specific experiences have been chronicled in research documents, trade journals, and websites. The purpose of this study limits examination of these experiences to educational environments. Their contexts include public and private schools of elementary to university levels; bands, orchestras, and choirs; one time and ongoing projects; small and large scopes. Although there are different aspects to each context, their commonalities include the three agents and each agent's experience of the project.

The collective experience in these contexts provides some insight into what can be expected when agents enter into the endeavor of commissioning a work and participating in a composer residency. While none of the chronicles of this sample provide the depth to understand what is entailed in the experience, they allow a peek into the facets of the experience. From these experiences relevant questions can be asked that provide direction to this study. What do the agents gain from the experience? What potential problematic issues exist? What makes the process work well? What have the experiences taught the agents?

What Do the Agents Gain?

Each agent involved in the process of commissioning a new work offers a unique perspective on the experience. As each agent plays a different role in the process, each agent perceives the experience differently. In the following paragraphs the experience

will be discussed as it pertains to each agent.

When a new work is commissioned the student performers are afforded the opportunity to perform a piece of music that is entirely new. A special value exists that is different and separate from the recreation of previously existing music, as Gary Fletcher (Dello Joio, et al., 1968, p. 53), a music teacher involved in composer residencies, stated in a report to Music Educators National Conference. Even for students at the university level there is a uniqueness and excitement that lives within the collaboration with a composer in bringing a completely new work of art into existence (Nitz, 1984, p. 11). Canadian composer Colgrass (2004) wrote of the experience of residence with a middle school music program. His position is that the experience of creating first-rate music for the first time adds “a new dimension to their education” (p. 23).

The uniqueness of the experience of performing a new work composed especially for them can build a feeling of “being special” (Tinney, 2007). Students develop a sense of ownership, a view that the commissioned work is “their” piece (Floyd, 1999). Young (n.d.) echoed the sense of student ownership or “possession” of the commissioned work as did Robinson (1998). The students’ sense of ownership can also develop into feelings of pride in their involvement in the creation of a new work (Ferreira, 1999; Lichtmann & Lewis, 1985).

Students who are involved in a commissioned work and composer residency report that the experience is positive and memorable (Cannava, 1988). The personal connections that are created between the agents within a composer residency provide students with a sense that the performance of printed music is a human experience rather

than an interaction with printed pages (McAllister, 2012). The memories created through the experience can be manifested in an attachment to the composer and to the work (Carpenter, 2005). The memories that grow from the experience are not limited to the agents involved. The audiences who witness the works and the institutions involved in the process become part of the experience, as well (Nitz, 1984, p. 11). The growth of memories from the commission process is strengthened through the connections between people involved in the process and the “meaningful connections [student make] between music in relation to their world and their experience” (Sindberg, 2005).

While the previously discussed benefits of the experience could be viewed as ancillary and peripheral to the music education curriculum, more tangible and curricularly relevant benefits are apparent. Through interactions with living composers and new works, students gain a better understanding and appreciation of contemporary music (Costes, 2005). While composers utilize a variety of musical languages, this type of interaction can be a comfortable way in to musical languages that are traditionally difficult for students to understand. Graphic notation, non-traditional playing techniques, aleatory, and patchen have been successfully introduced in this environment (Colgrass, 2004; Hargis, 1984).

Modeling is an important part of developing musicianship (Jordan, 1999). Working side by side with a professional musician has the potential to change a student’s life. As students see a composer at work, the creation of music is viewed not as a bewildering and mysterious process, but instead as a natural act (Wiprud, 1999, para. 7). Not only are students exposed to the generative process of idea creation, they are privy to

the development and revision of those ideas (Colgrass, 2004).

A variety of residency schemes exist that allow students to see a professional composer at work. As one example of a more common scheme, composers have rehearsed ensembles in preparation of music from the composers' oeuvre or a commissioned work (Albert, 2009; Cannava, 1988; Carpenter, 2005; Nitz, 1984; Norcross, 1991; Silvey, 2004; Tinney, 2007). Composers have also worked with students in master class environments (Cannava, 1988; Nitz, 1984). In some cases, composers have worked with students in creating a wholly new piece of music. In these cases the students have created the source material that the composer manipulated and orchestrated, innovative notation techniques have been used that allow students of varying technical abilities to perform, or students have contributed completely developed ideas. In each case, professional composers guided students to one degree or another from beginning to end through the whole process (Colgrass, 2004; Franklin, 2007; Hackney, 2007; Lichtman & Lewis, 1985).

Students' participation in commissioned works projects and their associated composer residencies give students a glimpse into the creative process of a professional composer (Ferreira, 1999; Sindberg, 2005; Young n.d.). Through participation in the creative process with a professional composer, students are often inspired to compose on their own, with and without the guidance of a resident composer (Norcross, 1991). The creation of new music by students is an important part of educational philosophies of composers and educators in developing musicianship in students (Laycock, 2005; Schafer, 1986; Self, 1967).

Often inside school settings and within educational endeavors, the students are the primary beneficiaries in any educational process. However, benefits and learning opportunities are not limited to the students in the process of commissioning a work and composer residencies.

In reflecting on his experience as a composer in residence as part of the MENC Contemporary Music Project for Creativity in Music, Martin Mailman summarized the mutually beneficial relationship that grew in the school where he resided.

My residency added another dimension to the sophisticated musical life that already existed; it did not create that life. In fact, creativity adds a dimension to all musical life and practical demonstration of this to the children must be counted as one of the educational and spiritual assets of the project. The added dimension might be described as a risk or challenge with the implications of vitality, new meanings, growing awareness, and fresh conceptions as implicit in involvement as rigidity, staleness, and habitual caution are in the failure to participate. We faced the risks together and clearly saw our mutual growth, not only in ability, but in our appetite for the need to be challenged. (Dello Joio, et al., 1968, pp. 49–50)

In contributing to the report on the CMP, Mailman discussed some of the facets of the mutual growth mentioned in the quote above. Exploration of what is possible within the capabilities of young and developing musicians was one of the areas of growth for Mailman, as well as other composers in residence in educational environments.

Colgrass (2004) recalled with embarrassment the inability to recognize the music that he had written for middle school band. Through collaboration with the teachers at the middle school and regular interactions with the students, Colgrass viewed composing for young musicians as an opportunity to create for their abilities rather than to limit the creativity due to their inabilities. Other composers involved in residencies have reported creative growth as a result of composing within the performance abilities of students

(McAllister, 2012; Robblee, 2009; Webb, 1967).

Even with professional players, whose technical abilities seem boundless, composers grow through learning what is possible through interaction and collaboration with performers (Kernan, 2010; Roe, 2007). While the actual interaction that occurs between composers and performers is part of this process, a key component is the immediate feedback that composers witness as part of a residency. Immediate rehearsal and performance creates a feedback loop that provides composers with the opportunity to make revisions and learn from the reasons for those changes (Webb, 1967). Composer, Robert Washburn learned to solve practical problems through witnessing the reactions of the student musicians in rehearsal situations (Washburn, 1960).

In addition to immediate performance, composers reported that their works were enthusiastically performed by student musicians (Battisti, 2002; D'Arms & Dello Joio, 1966; Norcross, 1991; Washburn, 1960; Webb, 1967; Wiprud, 1999). Wiprud (1999) used the words of composer-in-residence, David Evans Thomas to make this point, "The residency puts the music in front of the students while it's still warm; the kids make it hotter." Warren Benson, composer-in-residence at Ithaca High School, stated that the students "had enthusiasm for their part in the project and anticipation for my part in it...what more could a composer want?" (Norcross, 1991).

Due to the enthusiastic performances and the positive reception of their works by the students, composers also gained a sense of fulfillment through the projects (Battisti, 2002; Colgrass, 2004; Robblee, 2009; Tinney, 2007; Webb, 1967; Wiprud, 1999). Composer, Michael Colgrass reported that writing for and working with middle school

students was amongst the most fulfilling experiences in his career (Battitsti, 2002).

Robblee (2009) reported that composers felt an increased confidence in their abilities to compose as a result of school commissions and residencies.

Not only do the composers and student performers reap benefits from the commissioned work and composer residency experience, the commissioning conductors are also able to enjoy benefits from their participation. Commissioning agents benefit from the interaction with the other agents during the commissioning and residency process, as well. Through the interactions with composers and administrators, stronger professional relationships have been built (Dello Joio, et al., 1967; Norcross, 1991; Washburn, 1960; Webb, 1967). The mutual growth expressed by Martin Mailman with regard to the students was echoed in relationships with other adults involved (Dello Joio, et al., 1967).

Mok's (1983) four benefits for teachers who invite composers-in-residence are applicable in this discussion: insights into the creative process, new respect for creativity in their student and themselves, shared methods for stimulating student interest, and enhanced knowledge of contemporary arts and the artists' role in society. Albert (2009), a music teacher, described the experience of the residency of composer, Michael Colgrass, and its impact on the author's teaching. Colgrass's residency provided the author/commissioner/teacher with insights into the composer's creative process through exposure to Colgrass's method for teaching students to compose. Albert's newfound insights motivated new methods of instruction and offered new avenues for stimulation of student interest in creativity through music.

The commissioning of works builds repertoire within any given genre. For commissioning agents this is a frequently cited reason for and benefit of commissioning new works. Contributions to the growth of a segment of repertoire are a rewarding outcome for the commissioning agents. The frequency of these reports by commissioners underscores both the relevance and importance of this phenomenon as a benefit of the commissioning experience to the commissioning agent. Regardless of the idiom or the method of commission, contributions to the repertoire have been a gratifying aspect of the process for commissioning agents (Belfy, 1986; Belser, 1994; Bill, 2007; Halseth, 1987; Mahr, 1999; Mensel, 2007; Nicholls, 1980; Norcross, 1991; Olfert, 1992; Pugh, 1966; Robinson, 1998; Watson & Forrest, 2008; Young, n.d.).

While the act of commissioning a work to expand the available repertoire is a common phenomenon, there are ancillary benefits to being the conductor who commissions the work. Some attention has been given to the concept of conductors commissioning new music with the primary benefit being the notoriety the commissioner might receive simply for being the person who initiated the commission. Participants in the research of McAllister (2012) referred to this phenomenon as commissioning for the “right” and “wrong” reasons. Attaching value judgments to the reasons for commissioning a work is not the aim of my study. It is worth noting, however, that the commissioning of works for the benefit of receiving notoriety can be a measured act.

Obstacles

Commissions and composer residencies have not and do not go without their issues. Difficulties, problems, confusions, obstacles, and other manner of issues can be a

part of the process just as well the rewards, good feelings, and mutual growth. The act of composing a musical work and preparing parts to be performed takes time and consists of intricate workings. The finite nature of a musical performance requires certain deadlines for the workings to be complete. Rehearsals must take place to pursue quality in performance. Late arriving performance materials, incomplete materials, or materials with mistakes can all cause problems with the preparation and performance of musical works (Nitz, 1984).

Meeting deadlines with clear and complete materials requires organization on the part of the composers. For one of the composers in Robblee's (2009) research, a lack of organization led to problems in residence at their schools, including the production of performance materials. On time delivery of materials has also been a problem in the University of Wisconsin-River Fall Commissioned Composer Project (Nitz, 1984).

The composer who self reported a lack of organization in Robblee's (2009) research described himself as being immature. That immaturity led to tensions and frustrations between himself and the teachers with whom he worked. Feelings such as tension and frustration can be rooted and manifested in many ways, but often reflect the nature of the communications involved in the interpersonal relationships between people.

Webb's (1967) investigation of the Young Composers Project revealed some figures regarding interactions between agents. Webb found that between two-thirds and three-fourths of interactions between composers and teachers were positive and clearly communicative. Eighty-four percent of composers responded that teachers were interested and cooperative in their musical efforts, with a small percentage (unmentioned)

reporting hostility or unreceptiveness (p. 88).

As reported in Robblee's (2009) study, music teachers can feel intimidated by the idea of working with a composer (p. 108). Sharp and Dust (1997) wrote of similar feelings of the teacher resenting the presence of the artist (p. 13). Students and other adult staff have reported that composers have at times spoken in condescending tones, a generally undesirable interaction (Nitz, 1984; Webb, 1967).

What Makes It Work?

The existing literature that focuses on commissioned works and composer residencies has left traces of the ingredients entailed in implementing a successful commissioning process. Some of the literature has discussed a few of the ingredients that make the process successful. As previously mentioned, the term "successful" is difficult to define; therefore, "successful" projects will be regarded as those in which the agents involved exited the experience feeling generally positive about the process and the outcomes.

Many components contribute to successful commissioning and composer residency projects. Commission projects and composer residencies benefit from careful planning and preparation. Harris (2005) listed six steps that lead to more successful projects. These steps are summarized as follows:

1. Dream – Embrace the full experience of commissioning a work.
2. Composer exploration – Choosing a suitable composer for a particular project is important to its success.
3. Budget development – Revenue can come from a variety of sources.
4. Project development – Establishment of an educational philosophy of the project will deepen its meaning for students, parents, and community.
5. Project implementation – It is important to prepare students for the experience, the piece, and the composer.

6. Evaluation and continuation – Reflection upon the experience can lead to deeper learning and future projects. (pp. 54–55)

Similarly, Robinson (1998) broke the process of commissioning a work into three stages. Contained within each of those stages, sequential procedures were described. The outline below shows each of the stages and the underlying procedures within each stage.

1. Conceptual Stage
 - a. Timetable
 - b. Compositional Parameters
 - c. Composer Selection
 - d. Composer Fee
 - e. Budget
 - f. Funding
 - g. Contracts
2. Production Stage
 - a. Pre-compositional Overview
 - b. Sketches
 - c. Drafts
 - d. Copies
 - e. Program Notes
3. Preparation Stage
 - a. Score Preparation
 - b. Rehearsal
 - c. Presentation
 - d. Conclusion (p. v–vi)

Just as agents grow and benefit from the process, agents contribute to its success. Communication between and among the agents is chief among these components. The communication in the process of a commission and composer residency begins with the commissioning agent and the composer. Within these initial communications, the agents develop an understanding of the scope of the project. The ensemble for which the music is to be written is described and understood by both agents. A timeline and compensation document is usually drawn, known commonly as a contract. If a residency is involved with the commission it is usually, but not always discussed in the early communications.

The early communications establish the expectations of the agents that will continue through and evolve during the commission and residency process (Albert, 2009; Cannava, 1988; Floyd, 1999; Hargis, 1984; Hultgren, 1999; Mahr, 1999; Meet the Composer, 2011; Silvey, 2004).

The establishment of clear, common goals by the commissioning agent (in most cases the music teacher) and the composer in residence is vital to the success of the project. The shared common goal directs student learning (Cannava, 1988; Dreeszen, 2001; Sharp & Dust, 1997). In the case of Colgrass's residency in the Longmeadow schools, the commissioning agents met together with the funding agency at the outset. Together they set goals for the project and established legal parameters to protect all agents. The teachers and the composer then planned the creative design of the music and its instruction prior to the composer's residency and the plan's implementation (2009).

Clear, common goals as established by the commissioning agents, teachers, and composer should be set within the context of the students abilities in terms of musical and cognitive development. The placement of the composer in residence needs to be a function of and a complement to the development of musical skills as set forth by the music curriculum. The focus of a composer residency can be shaped by framework of the music curriculum. The composer can best develop and extend those areas of the curriculum when he understands human development and learning (Hultgren, 1993, p. 114).

When the composer understands the developmental level and musical abilities of the students who will be performing the composition, the appropriate level of music can

be composed for those students. The importance of matching the difficulty of the composition with the abilities and development of the students is vital to the success of the project (Colgrass, 2004; Hultgren, 1993; Owens, 1986; Thorn, 1997).

Planning and designing the commission and residency project involves the commissioning agents and composer. Implementation of the plan brings the third agent into the picture, the students. In transmitting the musical and instructional plan to the students, a relationship and rapport needs to be built (Marcellino, 1993). Often the students are unfamiliar with the composer and need to be introduced to that composer and the composer's works by the teacher.

In the experience of Neil Argo as composer in residence at a Colorado high school, a relationship and rapport was built with the assistance of the music teacher, Eric Cannava. Cannava (1988) introduced Argo as the composer in residence gradually over the course of several months so that a relationship could be established with students prior to the composer's residence.

Another facet of the interpersonal relationships entailed in the process involves the educational institution, its administrative personnel, and the surrounding environment. A composer's ability to understand and function within the educational environment can increase the effectiveness of the communications within those relationships (Dello Joio, et al., 1968; Hultgren, 1993; Marcellino, 1993).

Funding for any project is a make or break aspect. Without proper funds promises cannot be made and contracts cannot be fulfilled. Many avenues for funding are available, both public and private. Foundations can be a source of funding through grant

writing or other request methods (Albert, 2009; Cannava, 1988). Institutions can combine efforts to create a consortium of funds (Silvey, 2004; Bill, 2007). In some cases, students have been inspired enough to raise necessary funds on their own to support commissioning and residency projects (Norcross, 1991).

The Composer-Performer Relationship

Understanding the relationships between performers and composers is central to the focus of this research study. While there are three agents involved in the study, the composer, the student performers, and the music educator, the student performers and the music educator fill similar roles in the relationship with the composer. Whether wielding a baton, playing an instrument, or vocalizing, the students and the conductor assume a similar responsibility for recreating the sounds that the composer has written.

The path to understanding the relationships between the agents travels through the myriad viewpoints of the roles they play in the act of bringing a musical work to life. The roles that the composer and performers play in the process are nearly as diverse as the music they create. These roles have been the topic of discussion and the subject of studies by composers, performers, critics, and scholars.

The Printed Page

Roger Sessions (1974), a composer, described the prototypical musical experience in American concert halls and high school music programs. Sessions depicted three entities separated by their roles: the composer as creator, the performer as re-creator, and the listener as perceiver. The link between the performer and the listener exists through performance of, in most cases, a printed work of music that is re-created by the

performer. In this example, the performer/listener link is propagated by an audible realization of a silent participant in the process – the printed music.

The relationship between the printed page and the living musician has been a topic of discussion amongst performers, critics, and philosophers for more than two hundred years (Stubley, 1995). Copland (1939) believed that a music composition is a living organism rather than a static being. This statement reflects the understanding of a composer that the process of re-creating or realizing, through audible sound, the silent and printed artistic voice of the composer, leaves open the chance that the composer's intentions may not be fulfilled. Copland, however, wrote that it is the performer's responsibility to serve the composer's intentions – "to assimilate and recreate the composer's 'message'" (p. 268). The difficulty lies in reconciling composers' varying abilities and desires to make that intent clear to the musician interpreting the written symbols.

The spectrum of opinion regarding the freedom that performers have in interpreting the written score is wide. O'Grady (1980) provided a kind of meta-analysis of historical interpretation of texts. Sympathy is shown to the interpreter/performer in the general tone of O'Grady's writing, as well as in the voices of the authors he cited. O'Grady and his sources are focused primarily on the role of the interpreter as an active creator and co-author of the musical work. The artistic vision and interpretive abilities of the performer are defended by the likes of Meyer, Collingwood, Greene, and Seashore.

The context of the work, the established tradition, and the written indications are all part of the interpretation of the music. The performer cannot be expected to be a

conduit of automatic reproduction of the composer's intent (Meyer, 1956). Collingwood (1938) pointed to the inadequacies of even the most detailed score in indicating exactly how a work should be performed. Greene (1974) and Seashore (1937) echoed the position that the void of information provided by a score thrusts it into the position of being merely a schematic reference for the arrangements of sound that the performer believes the composer may wish to express. Thus, complete understanding of the context of the work, as well as the period practices are vital to respectful interpretations and performances.

The preceding view of the interpretive practice of performing musicians can be applied liberally to music of previous centuries, a time when the printed music left performers with many questions. However, as music composition has progressed through time, the constraints and details that composers have placed in the score have increased, thus reducing the need and opportunity for performers to have the freedom to interpret (Smalley, 1969–1970). The works of Debussy and Webern are referenced by Roger Smalley as being examples of music in which the performers only need to realize the written features of the music to achieve its meaning. In such works, as well as the works of serial composers, adherence to the notation is a vehicle for eliminating the possibility of erroneous interpretation.

Noted contemporary composer and conductor, Boulez (1986) explained the composer's process to communicate through the score in this manner. In Boulez's model, the composer originates a structure, which he ciphers into a coded grid. The coded grid consists of all the musical notations that the composer needs to transmit his message to

the performer or interpreter. The performer deciphers the coded grid and then reconstitutes the structure that has been transmitted (p. 87).

The detail of the coded grid, especially in contemporary music, according to Boulez is often so important and precise that the performer is obligated to reproduce this message exactly as written (p. 87). Stravinsky, in Boulez's estimation, is one of the composers for whom the detail of the coded grid held such importance. In other words, composers whose detail is so great that they go to great length in the detail of the coding are doing so with the goal of leaving nothing to chance in the interpretation of the meaning of the code.

Stubley (1995) asserted that such precise coding relegates the performer to the position of bystander or mere transmitter of the coded message. Rejecting the role of bystander or transmitter, Stubley described music making a transactional event. According to Stubley, in the musical transaction the performer uses the printed notation to assimilate meanings and then brings an authentic quality to that meaning through the experience of its reconstruction. Through this transaction the connection of the composer and performer is both mechanical and automatic, but imbued with a spiritual sense. Stubley quoted Stephen Davies in describing this action as giving the music the sense that "the written notes and the way in which they are played become inseparable" (p. 59).

Stubley calculated the many ingredients of the transaction. Essential to the transaction are a web of social relationships and cultural conventions of the event as well as the performers' experience, the score, and the evolution of the performance (p. 60). The evolution of the performance includes and combines the actions of practice and

performance, two activities that are traditionally viewed as separate chores. Stublely's contention is that, "Contrary to tradition, practice should not be focused solely on technical drill and performance the medium for expressive discovery. Rather, the evolving performance is one in which there are two interwoven strands of constructive activity, one bound by allegiance to the concept of the musical work as an autonomous artifact, the other by a growing sense of self in relationship to that work" (p. 62).

The implications of Stublely's evaluation strike deeply for music education. Instruction in music history, music theory, and applied music in the performance medium of the student in the music curriculum establish a foundation for the development of interpretive abilities. However, in seeking to find authentic meaning in the interplay between the young performer and the musical work, interaction with a living composer establishes a specific context for musical works.

Understanding Through Interaction

Composer, conductor, and educator, Alice Parker has built such a context in her interactions with chorale ensembles (Grossman, 1993). In an interview, Parker stated that she "let[s] the singers know how the music came into being: the time, the place, and where the composer might have started from" (p. 55) as part of context building. Parker's multifaceted viewpoint reflects the value of the input of a composer in the process of translating written symbols into aural representations, emphasizing the gap that exists between the intended meaning of the composer and the inadequacies of the music notation system to transmit those meanings. Through interactions with composers those meanings become more apparent to performers.

Beyond the opportunity to build a context based on first person understanding, performer interactions (particularly those of student performers) with composers open the door for professional mentoring. From experiences as a student, educator, and commissioning agent, Ned Corman reported the experience of working with a professional as life changing (Wiprud, 1999). According to Corman, founder of The Commission Project, through interactions with composers, students see composition as a natural act rather than some mysterious process (para 7).

Within the educational environment, music educator, Frank Battisti, also sought interactions with professional musicians, including composers, for his students (Norcross, 1991). A lasting relationship between Battisti and composer, Warren Benson, allowed for a system of interactions with music professionals to be established. Through Benson's associations with other composers, relationships and interactions between Battisti, his students, and commissioned composers, collaborations on many projects resulted. Many of the projects included composer residencies in which the composers were not viewed as guests, but as participants (p. 96). With composers as participants in the process of recreating a musical work with the students, the context of the music and the creative process of the composer became part of the students' education.

Collaboration and Revisions

The revision aspect of the creative process is one in which the interaction between composer and performer has allowed for both agents to learn and grow. Joan Tower composes only on highly selective commissions and considers herself a performer who composes (Fletcher, 2002). Tower realizes the commitment necessary for a performer to

present her compositions respectably and weighs the performers' investment in that process before accepting a commission (p. 41). During the composition process Tower will often consult with performers as executed with the St. Louis Symphony during the composition of *Silver Ladders*, considering the composition of that piece "a joint endeavor between composer and performer" (p. 42).

Tower believes that "in an ideal musical world, a composer has a friendly, creative, and outgoing working relationship with performers for whom s/he writes" (pp. 53–54). During the composition of Tower's *Fascinating Ribbons*, this type of working relationship was established with conductor, Jack Stamp. Tower requested that Stamp review the score in progress and provide input back. The process of composing the work also included Stamp and Tower singing phrases to one another over the phone to address concerns. After hearing the piece performed Tower made further revisions to the piece. Tower so trusted Stamp in the composition process that she requested that he communicate the revisions to the copyist (Fletcher, 2002). Tower's well-documented collaborations also included a request of editorial comments from clarinetist, Laura Flax. Flax's collaborative replies were used to edit problematic passages in Tower's *Wings* (Oddo, 2003).

Composer, Eric Ewazen utilized a similar working relationship with trumpeter, Chris Gekker (Wurtz, 2001). Ewazen collaborated with Gekker in revising the *Sonata for Trumpet* by sending newly composed sections to Gekker for review. Gekker in turn would send them back with input included. Yo-Yo Ma contributed favorable revisions to Richard Danielpour's *Cello Concerto*, which Danielpour deemed as sounding much

better than originally written (McCutchan, 1999).

Eric Stokes, a composer who has collaborated frequently with conductor David Zinman, has found the conductor's suggestions for revision so "right" that at times they have prompted the thought, "gee, why didn't I think of that?" (McCutchan, 1999, p. 6). Composer Libby Larsen relishes the opportunity to compose chamber music and work with chamber music ensembles. Working with small groups gives Larsen the freedom to experiment and hear immediate feedback from the performers, allowing learning opportunities and opportunities for revision on the spot. Larsen has likened the experience to rehearsing a play and exploring the myriad ways in which a particular line can be expressed (pp. 145–146).

Successful Collaborations

What makes the collaborative interaction between composer and performer work? The ingredients vary from situation to situation; however, composer Daniel Godfrey has succinctly phrased some of them. Echoing Larsen's words, Godfrey has viewed working with great performers as an opportunity to learn and revise. Godfrey pointed to history's greatest composers as lifelong learners who took suggestions from performers. A sense of shared purpose and mutual respect is necessary for the interaction to be fruitful (McCutchan, 1999, p. 103).

The Percussion Group Cincinnati has taken the sense of shared purpose and mutual respect as a means to collaborate with composers in an attempt to change the face of American music production in terms of its creation, performance, and distribution (Kernan, 2010). The social, political, and economic elements of music production have

been part of The Percussion Group Cincinnati's ongoing and self-labeled "conspiracies" with composers (p. 11).

The ensemble's "conspiracies" (p. 11) to commission new music through nonconventional methods have built lasting relationships with composers. The use of the word "conspiracy" underscores the importance of the interaction between the agents working toward a common vision. In their prolific commissioning projects no money changes hands. Most of their numerous commissions have required a close physical proximity between the composer and performers so they can have immediate access to each other's ideas and feedback (p. 31). They also preferred long-term relationships with composers to promote candid communications.

Through the performers' collective experience as performers and in their work with composers, the Group has learned that many composers lack the skills to effectively compose and orchestrate for percussion instruments. It has been their mission to seek out both student and professional composers to educate them with regard to the possibilities and technicalities of composing for percussion through collaborative commissions.

The possibilities and technicalities of composing for a particular instrument were part of Roe's (2007) research in collaborating with five composers in commissions for solo bass clarinet. Roe's research revealed that in many cases the composer gained understanding of the performance capabilities of the instrument through the collaboration. The author/performer found that working with composers in collaborations provided new insight into how to animate each composer's particular music. While Roe's research indicated that both agents in each of the commissions experienced creative

growth and skill development (p. 153) through the process, a major focus of Roe's study was on the roles of the agents and the types of collaborations that exist.

Types of Interactions

Three structures of collaboration are discussed in Roe's (2007) dissertation. Each of the three structures displays varying depths of collaborative interaction. In the coordinated collaboration structure individuals exchange information and share a workload to maximize efficiency with minimal amounts of participant involvement. In the cooperative/partnership structure cooperative effort brings participants together to work toward a common goal. In this structure resources, space, time, and ideas are shared to build greater confidence and trust through greater commitment than the coordinated structure. The integrated structure is an environment in which participants are involved in shared thinking, planning, and creation to produce jointly what would be beyond the capacity of individual effort (p. 25).

Roe detailed a more musically focused set of categories derived from the organizational theory of Argyris and Schön (1992). In this model of collaborative structure, a system called *directive collaboration* posits that the composer and the score are the ultimate determinates of performance with interpersonal communication only used in dealing with pragmatic matters. *Interactive collaboration* preserves the composer's role as ultimate arbiter, but utilizes a more open negotiation between composer and performer. *Collaborative interaction* explores collective decision making with no hierarchy of roles (Roe, 2007, p. 28).

The above organizational theory of Argyris and Schön served as the basis of a

research study conducted by Hayden and Windsor (2007). Hayden and Windsor identified the categories as more of a continuum than as definitive categories (p. 33). In their study, they constructed a case study involving three settings of collaborations placed in three locations on the aforementioned continuum of collaboration. Further involving Argyris and Schön's organizational theory, each collaboration was evaluated based on two main types of collaborative behaviors. Type I, or closed loop behavior, is described as consisting of individuals who have fixed and defensive views of their roles. Type II, or open loop behavior, is described as allowing for either party to question their roles and find creative solutions to artistic problems through open dialogue (p. 30).

The authors found that collaborations work well when the collaborators enter into the endeavor freely with the efforts of the agents focused on the process of creation rather than the product. The best results of collaboration were found when neither the collaboration nor a particular collaborative ideology was imposed on the agents. In the instance of a composer imposing collaboration, reversion to directive interaction was found.

An empirical study exploring the collaborative end of the Argyris and Schön continuum found that on this end of the spectrum differentiating between the composer and the performer is difficult. In the study, Frisk and Ostersjo (2003) graphed the interactions between a composer and performer during a videotaped collaboration. Points were plotted as each individual made contributions to the collaboration in the poietic (constructive) and esthetic (interpretive) realms of the collaboration. Through the study, the authors were able to determine that in the case of this collaboration both agents

oscillated between the two modes of artistic activity, thus making it difficult to define each agent's role (p. 247).

Undesirable Outcomes

Creative endeavors breed somewhat unpredictable outcomes. Thus far generally positive outcomes have been discussed. However, sometimes neither the process nor the product turns out as the agents envision. The reasons for poor outcomes vary and are often hidden from view. There do remain some apparent ingredients for less than desired results.

For Foss (1963) trusting the performer to interpret correctly was an issue in relationships with performers. Not all composers interact with performers, thus understanding of the performer's point of view is vacant or lacking for the composer.

Deficiencies in interaction have stemmed, too, from unwillingness or inability for composers to be social creatures. Hayden and Windsor (2007) described the old, romantic vision of composers writing in isolation. The stories of composers like Grieg and Mahler tucked away in secluded cabins with a straw bed and piano are legendary. In an interview, composer/pianist Finnissy (2002) communicated that this portrait of the isolated artist exists because some composers don't want relationships with performers. Finnissy also shared the fear that this attitude is institutionally reinforced. An isolationist attitude, as shown in the Hayden and Windsor study, is not conducive to a collaborative interaction and relationship. The agents need to enter into the collaboration willingly and freely to realize the creative potential that exists in a collaborative environment. Relating to the study at hand, it would reason that entering into a commission and residency

involving performers and a composer willing to collaborate would more likely foster that environment.

Project failure has resulted from lack of agreement on the part of the agents (Fang, 2005). From time to time, agents have simply not been able to agree on the direction or parameters of the project. Disagreement can stem from problems in communication. Projects can fall apart from a lack of adequate communication (Kernan, 2010). Communication has been a commonly recurring theme in the literature.

Summary

Several components for success appear as common threads weaving through the literature. Communication is vital between all agents. Quality communications between the commissioning agents and the composers build a foundation for the agents' visions to be attained. Clear communication allows goals to be set and plans made to implement the objectives that grow from those goals.

Communication through rapport and relationship building, establishes a climate of learning for the student performers as they work with the composer during residency. Artistic collaboration can occur in a situation where trust and respect have been built through a strong relationship and good rapport. Within artistic collaboration all the agents can grow through the experience.

Reflection and evaluation of the process help to determine if the goals and objectives have been met. Through evaluation, documentation of the project's outcomes lays the groundwork for the improvement of future projects. Documentation of the evaluation helps in refining goals and objectives for student learning in future projects

and assists in the securing of permissions and funds for their commencement.

Chapter 3: Design and Method

The purpose of this study was to understand and describe the process entailed in commissioning a new work for a high school music ensemble and the interpersonal relationships that exist between the student performers, their director, and the composer during a composer residency. Thus, three groups of people were interviewed to collect data for analysis: conductors/teachers, composers, and student performers. Each group had specific and differing criteria for selection. The interview questions were also specific and varied from group to group, but were developed to elicit detailed answers to the primary research questions:

1. How does each agent (student performer, music teacher, composer) contribute to the process of producing a new work through commission?
2. How do the interpersonal relationships between the agents function throughout the process?
3. How do the outcomes of the commission process and composer residency impact the experience for the agents?
4. How might this information shape future commissioning projects?

Research Design

A multiple-case study is a qualitative inquiry that involves the examination of two or more cases of a phenomenon that share common characteristics of context within similar bounded systems (Stake, 2006). In this study, the five cases that were examined shared the commonalities of a high school band and their conductor who prepared and performed a commissioned work while experiencing a composer residency as part of the

process. Yin (2009) offered a two part definition of a case study. The first part of Yin's definition describes a study in which a researcher would use a case study design to "understand a real-life phenomenon in depth, but such understanding encompassed important contextual conditions – because they were highly important to [the] phenomenon of study." The second part of the definition allows the researcher to "[cope] with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion" (p. 18).

The contextual conditions are vital to understanding the phenomenon of the interaction between the agents during the process of a commissioned work. While pursuing answers to the research questions, data was collected from a variety of sources using multiple methods of acquisition and analysis, allowing for triangulation of data. The study included five cases with each case encompassing a music educator, a composer commissioned to compose a new work of music by that music educator, and three students who prepared and performed the commissioned work, totaling 25 participants in the study. The use of individual cases and multiple sources within each case increased the potential for data triangulation.

In case study research, understanding of "the detailed workings of the relationships and social processes" (Denscombe, 2007) are of interest. The outcomes are of importance in case study research, but the processes that lead to the outcomes shed light on the value of the outcomes. In this study, the research questions address the agents' contributions to the process, the personal interactions within the process, and the

effect of the outcomes of the process on the agents.

Identification of the Participants

Five music educators were selected for this study. Throughout this paper, the terms “music educator” and “conductor” are used interchangeably throughout this paper. At the time of this study, participating music educators were high school wind band conductors, although one is now retired. The criteria for selecting these educators focused on their ability to speak about their previous and ongoing experiences with commissioned works projects in high school music ensembles. The selected music educators possessed a minimum of five years teaching high school music ensembles and have experience with at least three commissioned works projects to provide the depth of knowledge necessary for this study. Each of the selected conductors has been responsible for organizing and rehearsing a minimum of three commissioned works with their school ensembles. Four of the five conductors are currently teaching music either in high school music programs or at the university level. The fifth is a recently retired teacher of a high school music program. Each interview with the music educators consisted of questions that can be found in Appendix A. The interviews also allowed for additional follow-up questions as necessary for clarification or expansion of ideas. In subsequent chapters the commissioning conductors are referenced using pseudonyms.

The five composers selected for the study were commissioned by each of the five music educators and must have participated in a residency with that particular music educator and performing ensemble of student musicians who commissioned the work. In this study, the composer residency consisted of as little as an hour or as long as several

days, with the requirement that direct interaction between the composer, the conductor, and the student musicians occurred during that time frame. Each of the composers selected had at least 8 years of experience as a professional composer and at least 3 commissioned works and residencies as part of that professional experience. The interview questions for the composers can be found in Appendix A. Because several of the composers wished to remain anonymous, I suppress information that might reveal their identity in chapters 4 and 5. In an effort to make the narrative more easily readable, I have utilized pseudonyms for the composers.

For each cohort of commissioning music educator and composer, and commissioning music educator, three student performers were selected to answer questionnaires. All of the student performer participants were high school students at the time of their participation in the commissioned works project. Of the 15 student performer participants, 12 were of university age at the time of their participation in the study. Questionnaires were chosen as the vehicle for gathering data from the student performers to improve response rate among the first participants selected. Questionnaires allowed the participants, who were primarily university students, to respond to the questionnaires on their own timeframe. Additionally, responding in their own timeframe gave the respondents the opportunity to carefully consider their thoughts due to the open-ended nature of the questions contained in the questionnaire.

Each of the student performers selected for the study participated in the rehearsal of the commissioned work with the conductor of the ensemble, participated in a performance of the work, and experienced the composer residency as previously defined.

Male and female students were selected, as well as students who were upperclassmen and underclassmen at the time of the residency. Within each of the cohorts, the commissioning conductors referred students who participated in the commission work preparation and performance. The conductors recommended students based on their prior experience teaching those student performers, with an emphasis on individuals who would be responsive to my request for information and their ability to provide coherent and timely answers to my questions. Each conductor provided the names and email contact information of three student performers. Once contact was established via email and consent to participate was granted, the student performers were emailed a Microsoft Word document containing the questionnaire. The contents of the student performer questionnaire can be found in Appendix A. The identities of the student performers have been concealed and pseudonyms used because a large number of them were minors at the time of their participation in the performance of the commissioned works.

Pseudonyms

Although the protocol for informed consent approved by the Institutional Review Board allowed for the names of the conductors and composers to be disclosed, I made the decision to keep the information they provided disassociated with their identities. All of the participants agreed to the conditions in the informed consent, but simultaneously expressed concern regarding the impact of some of their responses to my questions. The composers, who were concerned that if they shared bad experiences it might damage their professional reputations and interfere with future commission opportunities, particularly expressed this concern. It was my feeling that if I disassociated their identities with the

data they provided that they would be more comfortable and therefore more forthcoming with details of both positive and negative experiences. I weighed the importance of attaching their words to their names and the importance of collecting more honest responses in my data set. I chose to assure them that their names would not be associated with or attributed to specific quotations. By making this choice I believe that they provided a truer picture of their experiences and that I was able to simultaneously respect their desire to maintain their professional reputations.

In light of the participants desire for their words to be unattached to their names, pseudonyms were created for each of the conductors and each of the composers. Their pseudonyms consist of randomly fictional names associated with their roles, such as Composer James and Conductor Lilly.

Data Collection

Data was collected through two primary modes, interviews and questionnaires. All composers and commissioning conductors were interviewed either face-to-face, over the phone, or using FaceTime technology. The face-to-face interview format provided a forum for follow-up questions and real time clarifications when necessary. All student performers replied to questionnaires transmitted through email communication. When clarifications or follow up questions were needed, the student performers responded to my requests through further email communication. The email servers on which these email communications were held and the computer on which these communications were compiled were both password protected.

Interviews

The interviews of composers and commissioning conductors took place over the course of a three and a half year period in a variety of locations. Face-to-face interviews were conducted at the offices or homes of the interviewees or at mutually determined locations. Other modes of interview included recorded phone conversations or recorded FaceTime conversations. All of the interviews were audio recorded on a digital recorder. Face-to-face interviews were also video recorded digitally. The interviews ranged in length from 43 to 78 minutes. Each of the interviews was transcribed and saved in separate Microsoft Word documents. The transcriptions included the verbal content of the interviews, as well as pauses and vocal inflections that the participants demonstrated. The meanings of these verbal cues assisted in the synthesis of participant meanings when analyzing data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Questionnaires

The student performers answered questions posed to them via email communication of a questionnaire in the form of a Microsoft Word document. Associated with each pairing of composer and commissioning conductor, five cohorts of three student performers were selected, totaling 15 students performers. Initial response rate from the student performers was 73%. For cohorts that lacked three student performers, I contacted the commissioning conductors to request additional possibilities to fill each cohort to a capacity of three student performer participants. After contacting additional student performers via email each cohort was filled to capacity, resulting in a 100% response rate.

The questions posed to the student performers can be found in Appendix A. When student performer participant responses required further clarification or elaboration email dialogue was established. Data from these interactions was incorporated into the Microsoft Word documents containing the participants' original responses.

Data Analysis

Given that the purpose and the focus of this study were to understand the relationships between the agents it is important to hear the voices of each of the agents and their perspective and perception of the relationships. To achieve this goal, the words of the agents must be understood in the context of their roles in the process. Each participant provided data for analysis through personal interviews for the conductors and composers, and through questionnaires for the student performers. Data from these interviews and questionnaires was analyzed to discover themes within their content. Themes were compiled as functions of their source; separate themes were compiled for the student performers, the composer, and the music teacher. With themes operating as functions of their particular source they can be connected to a context, which will show insight into how the agents view the relationships from their own perspectives in Chapters 4 and 5.

Following each interview, its audio or video recorded contents were transcribed and saved in a Microsoft Word document on my computer. Each transcribed interview was saved as a separate entry and labeled with a code that identifies it by date, participant name, and interview type; those types being face to face, FaceTime, or phone. The transcribed contents of the interviews were analyzed using a coding and analysis system

described by Auerbach and Silverstein (2003). While Auerbach and Silverstein's system is utilized to develop grounded theory in their text, it was useful to me in combing through a vast quantity of information to find important and recurring themes. The complete process of coding and analysis that Auerbach and Silverstein unfold generates a grounded theory; however, I stopped short of producing grounded theory and was left with relevant and salient themes.

The first step in data analysis was isolating relevant text. Auerbach and Silverstein define relevant text as "passages of your transcript that express a distinct idea related to your research concerns" (2003, p. 46). In order to uncover relevant text in the transcriptions of interviews, I reviewed and kept a copy of my research questions at my side during analysis. As I read the interview transcriptions I highlighted any text that related to the research questions. After reading the entire text I then copied and pasted each line of relevant text into a new document that was labeled and saved in a new folder called "Relevant Text." Every interview and questionnaire that I analyzed was saved in separate files.

The next step of data analysis was searching for repeating ideas. Repeating ideas, as defined by Auerbach and Silverstein (2003), are "idea[s] expressed in relevant text by two or more participants" (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 54). For each relevant text file I created a new document of repeating ideas. In the repeating ideas document the first line of relevant text was copied. As I read through the remaining relevant text I copied any text that was of a similar nature to the first line in the new document and wrote a memo that describes how the two pieces of text were related. After reading completely

through the relevant text document and copying all ideas related to the first idea, I returned to the top of the relevant text document and found the next new idea. I followed the same procedure for this idea and continued the process until all repeating ideas were identified. Any outliers or single ideas were copied and noted for use in cross case analysis or as discrepant/contradictory ideas. Each file in the “Relevant Text” folder was given a separate and corresponding “Repeating Ideas” document in a “Repeating Ideas” folder.

After the process of discovering all repeating ideas was completed I made a master list of repeating ideas from all of the separate repeating ideas documents. Any ideas in the master list that were identical were combined. Once all repeating ideas were condensed, the repeating ideas were renamed. Each new name was related to the content of the idea and captured its essence in a few words.

A new folder and new file within that folder was created and named “Themes.” Themes are understood as “implicit idea[s] or topic[s] that a group of repeating ideas have in common” (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 62). Themes were determined using a similar process as that which brought about the repeating ideas. The document titled “Repeating Ideas” was used to find themes. The first repeating idea was copied and pasted into the “Themes” document. All other repeating ideas that related were also copied and pasted below the first theme with memos describing how the ideas related to one another. After reading through all repeating ideas and adding related ideas to the first idea, the same process was completed for the next idea that was unrelated to the first. Upon completion of evaluating all repeating ideas, all single ideas were noted as such and

saved for future evaluation as discrepant or contradictory ideas. In a separate document, all related ideas were condensed and renamed using easily understood terminology and saved as “Renamed Themes” in the “Themes” folder. The entire process of theme extraction was applied to interview transcriptions as well as questionnaire responses.

The final step of document analysis assisted me in the accuracy and consistency of my work. In this step, a colleague uninvolved with my study read my work with a description of my process to determine if all relevant information had been noted and if my thoughts had been grouped accurately. Following this check I was able to recognize themes that recurred in the data, related them to the research questions, and began constructing the narrative. Discussion of this process will be of greater detail in the next section.

While the data coding process described in the preceding paragraphs is a grounded theory process, its thematic reduction process was helpful in gaining consensus in the perspectives of the participants. It was not my intention to generate grounded theory in this study, but this reductive process was important for the purpose of condensing the thoughts of the participants. Interview questions were keenly focused on answering questions directly related to the main research questions. With the research questions at the center of the interviews and by using the reductive process described, I was able to coalesce the codes into coherent themes relevant to the focus of the research questions (Maxwell, 2005).

Trustworthiness and Reliability

Throughout the course of this study numerous protocols were exercised to build and maintain trustworthiness and reliability. Lincoln and Guba (1985) point to four main areas in which a qualitative study needs to establish trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. According to the authors, these do not have direct translations from quantitative counterparts, but fulfill similar respective roles as validity, reliability, generalizability, and objectivity.

Credibility

Establishing credibility was accomplished by demonstrating that the data in this study is accurate and appropriate (Denscombe, 2007). Throughout the research process there were procedures and protocols that assisted in the establishment of credibility.

Triangulation was used to provide a fuller picture of the study and to confirm conclusions, therefore improving accuracy of the data and conclusions. Triangulation “involves the practice of viewing things from more than one perspective...[through] the use of different methods, different sources of data, or even different researchers within the study” (Denscombe, 2007, p. 134). Data triangulation, specifically informant triangulation, was employed in this study. Informant triangulation compares data from a wide range of informants resulting in a data set that displays a variety of viewpoints and experiences that can be compared against each other (Shenton, 2004, p. 66). Utilization of interviews and questionnaires from the three different perspectives of composers, music educators, and student performers in data collection provided the opportunity to use informant triangulation.

The acknowledgement of discrepant evidence and negative cases was also an important step in establishing credibility in this study. Maxwell (2005) pointed out “discrepant evidence that cannot be accounted for by a particular interpretation or explanation can point up important defects in that account” (p. 112). However, there are times that discrepant data itself is in doubt. The important action that must be taken, regardless of the result, is that discrepant data is declared and evaluated. Through the reductive coding process described in the data analysis, I identified discrepant data. When discrepant data was discovered I evaluated its origins and its applicability to the context in which it was found.

Member Checks

Respondent validation or member checking was an important credibility building protocol in this study. In particular, the informants were asked to check the factual accuracy of my reports and to confirm my understanding of the interview content. The process of respondent validation was ongoing throughout the study and was of formal and informal nature. More informal members checks were conducted to confirm my understanding of the words and actions of the informants. Formal member checks gave participants the opportunity to read my writing and interpretation of events and amend them if necessary (Stake, 1995).

Transferability

Generalization, transferability’s quantitative counterpart, is a dubious objective in a study such as this. Generalizability is based on the statistical probability that a small sample is representative of a larger population. In the case of a qualitative study such as

this, generalization is not a realistic possibility. Thus, an alternative way of addressing the concern of extending the study beyond the specific instance is necessary. Lincoln and Guba (1985) prefer the term, transferability, in this operation. Transferability is “an imaginative process in which the reader of the research uses information about the particular instance that has been studied to arrive at a judgment about how far it would apply to other comparable instances” (Denscombe, 2007, p. 299). Whereas generalizability seeks to understand to what extent a phenomenon exists in other instances, transferability begs to know to what extent a phenomenon could be transferred to other instances.

Denscombe (2007) chooses two approaches for establishing transferability that were useful in my study. The first of these vehicles is providing enough information so that the reader can “infer the *relevance and applicability of the findings* [emphasis in original]” (Denscombe, 2007, p. 299). To achieve this goal I supply the reader with sufficient details about the context of the study that they might be able to draw these inferences. Such details include information regarding the selection criteria for the individual participants in the study and factual information regarding the process of commissioning a work and hosting a composer-in-residence. With this information, the reader can make comparisons to other situations and instances and determine if the information is transferable.

The description of the context leads to second tenet Denscombe lists for establishing transferability: thick description. Thick description is a vital component of my narrative. Lincoln and Guba (1981), following Geertz (1973) and Ryle (1949),

explain that thick description is multilayered, creating a context that describes people, events, situations, and relationships that allows the reader to have a vicarious experience. Through vicarious experience provided by thick description, the reader is able to experience Lincoln and Guba's (1985) "imaginative process" in which the reader can apply the phenomenon to other instances. My narrative includes factual traits as discussed in the preceding paragraph, but will also include detailed descriptions of the phenomenon of a commissioned work and composer in residence with a school ensemble.

Dependability

During the research process I kept methodological records which chronicled the ways in which I followed the methodology of the study. These records kept track of the ways in which the methodology developed during the duration of the study due to the emergent nature of the data within the study itself.

External Audit

As part of the maintenance of my record keeping I participated in peer debriefing (Lincoln, 1985) with my dissertation advisor. Peer debriefing brought to the forefront of my mind aspects of the study that may have been implicit to me and thus hidden to the reader. This process helped me to understand my biases, helped me develop my methodological proceedings, and gain clarity of thought.

An audit trail (Denscombe, 2007; Lincoln, 1985) was maintained to establish transparency in the research process. A colleague unassociated with my study acted as auditor of my research. The auditor was asked to review all raw data, including recorded

materials, transcripts of interviews, and all documents. The auditor reviewed the documents of my data analysis and reduction, as well as the reconstruction of the analysis into narrative. The auditor had access to all documents of consent and any other documents deemed necessary by the IRB. Finally, to guide the auditor in understanding the audit trail, the auditor reviewed my methodological record keeping.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the goal of researcher objectivity. While no research study is free from the influence of those who conduct it (Denscombe, 2007), it is important to understand that influence and strive to limit it. Through the audit process described in the preceding section, my colleague helped me to understand ways in which my experience has influenced my interpretation of the data. The feedback that I received from the auditor was dealt with through reconciliation with the raw data. Of particular importance in reconciling the auditor's feedback was exploration of discrepant data, its origins, and its meaning for the study. The auditor also led me to find alternate explanations for my interpretations of the data.

While the audit process helped me to achieve objectivity in the interpretation of data, my bias is an aspect of this study that must be addressed and involved in the study. I have extensive experience in conducting ensembles, collaborating with composers, commissioning composers, and hosting composer residencies. Through the auditing process I worked to limit the extent to which this experience influences how I interpreted the data. However, it is important that I acknowledge how my background has influenced the design of the study, the development of the research questions, as well as the structure

and content of the interviews.

Bias of the Researcher

Embarking upon my career as a band director I dreamed of commissioning new works for band. Throughout my time as an undergraduate and graduate student and to this day, the importance of expanding the repertoire and supporting composers has been important to me. I believe in the value of generating new art through commissioning music. In the very first instant that I saw the possibility of commissioning a work I capitalized upon all the possibilities inherent in commissioning a piece of music. To use an athletic idiom – I swung for the fence.

My first encounter with Lukas Foss occurred at a state music conference. At that time Mr. Foss was among the most prominent and respected living composers. He was part of a roundtable discussion about the place of contemporary music in our schools. After the discussion I gathered my courage, introduced myself, and proposed a commissioned work for high school band. He hesitated at first. He had only composed one piece of music for band before and had not composed band music for young musicians. As our conversation continued, I explained my mission to commission works for band so that the repertoire for the genre could be expanded. My emphasis on engaging the greatest composers to write for band to further the cause for future commissions began to sway him. He agreed with my assertion that it was particularly important to afford student musicians the opportunity to play outstanding music written by great contemporary composers. By the end of our conversation he had bought into my mission and dream to the extent that he was willing to compose a work for half of his usual fee.

Half the usual fee for one of the world's greatest composers rattled me. Determined to make this dream a reality, I agreed verbally and doggedly worked to raise the money. After hammering out the contract details and soliciting every colleague I knew to create a consortium, the commission came to fruition. Mr. Foss began composing and communicated with me regularly during that process. During many of our conversations he seemed unsure of himself, asking me many questions about orchestrating for an ensemble of wind and percussion instruments without strings or voices. Other questions focused on the abilities of high school musicians and their technical limitations. This master composer, a groundbreaking innovator, seemed humbled and was clearly concerned about composing appropriately in this idiom for which he had never composed.

Nevertheless, Lukas Foss completed the composition. He and I both haggled with his publisher and their contractual obligation to produce score and parts for all the contributing members of the commissioning consortium. After a year of effort, the work had printed parts, was distributed, and performed. To our great fortune, Mr. Foss visited my school for the world premiere performance. During his visit, he interacted with my students, their families, and the school administration.

The Lukas Foss commission left an indelible impression upon me. Since that time I have found ways for my students to be part of commissions on several other occasions, though none with composers as distinguished as Lukas Foss, nor with a similar financial scope. The experience of every commission with which I have been involved since then has been different, just as each composer has a separate personality and each group of

students is different from year to year. However, the experience of commissioning music and providing my students with opportunities to interact with composers is one that I value and continue to pursue.

Each commission has left me with feelings of success and failure with respect to certain aspects of each project. With each subsequent commission I've tried to build upon the successful areas and improve the areas of lesser success. However, each time I commence a project I am always intrigued by the interplay of the individuals involved in the process: myself, my students, the composer, and contributors to the consortium (if one exists). It is my interest in these interactions that has inspired this systematic examination of the process.

My participation in the commissioning and premiering of new musical works with my own students inspired this study. It is also unavoidable that my experiences have colored my views in the development of the study. As a result, gaining an understanding of my own role as researcher was an ongoing endeavor. Throughout the research process, I maintained honesty in reporting my bias and influence in the development of the study and its methodology. To serve as a check on my honesty, the auditor, having access to my notes and transcripts, reported any ways in which my bias has influenced the study beyond what I could identify myself.

Boundaries and Limitations

The preceding paragraphs described my first experience commissioning a musical work. My interactions with Lukas Foss and subsequent experiences during the last 10 years have resulted in an ever-deepening interest in the inter-relationships between

composer, music educator, and students. This study is an outgrowth of my interest in these relationships.

The present study represents a collection of individual cases, but also encompasses some past experiences of the music educators and the composers. In this regard the study is bound by time, but extends into the past. When a commissioning project is commenced in a school setting it has a clear starting date (when the composer begins composing), a period of rehearsal and preparation, and a clear ending date (the concert or premiere). The cases I selected adhered to these time boundaries, but opportunities for the participants to discuss the entirety of their experience were afforded.

This study is limited to commissioned works and composer residencies within the context of the American school band setting. While commissioning projects exist for other types of ensembles (orchestra, chorus) and other age groups/levels of experience (collegiate and professional), this study and the participants selected for interviews were all agents in commissioned works and composer residencies in the school band medium. It is not unreasonable to extend the results of this study for application beyond this medium. However, data collection from within a single medium yielded a more valid data set.

Because this study focuses on only five cases, generalization should be approached with caution. A study encompassing many more cases could provide data with greater potential for generalization; however, it was my interest to pursue a greater depth of data than that type of study could provide. Choosing five cases to study in depth provided a richer data set with less potential for generalization.

The focus of this study is limited to understanding the process of commissioning a work and the relationships contained within it. With this focus in mind, my own evaluation of the commissioned works and the performances of them from a critical standpoint are irrelevant, and information on only the perspectives of the agents is sought. Discussion of the commissioned work from a critical standpoint is beyond the boundaries of this study, with the exception of the perceptions of the agents.

This study is limited to the interactions between the five cohort groupings of three types of agents. Other persons might be involved with or influence aspects of the commissioned works projects in some way. These people could include audience members, families of the student performers, or sources of funding for the projects. I have considered interactions involving these persons to be outside the realm of pertinent educational influence for the students in the school ensemble, thus excluding them from the study.

Chapter 4: Results

The data collected through the interviews in this study will be presented in five categories. Each of the first four categories will be aligned with one of the four research questions that served as the basis for this inquiry. The fifth category addresses discrepant cases in the study. The five categories are listed as follows:

Part One: Contributions of the Agents

Part Two: Interpersonal Relationships

Part Three: The Commission and Residency Experience

Part Four: Future Projects

Part Five: Discrepant Cases

The information contained in each of the aforementioned categories is derived from the “repeating ideas” portion of my data analysis. Prior to reducing the repeating ideas into themes, I categorized the ideas relative to the research questions that they addressed. Within each category, these repeating ideas are given both voice through participant quotation and context based on their relevance to the research question they support.

Part One: Contributions of the Agents

Within the process of a commissioned work project and composer residency, each agent makes a contribution to the overall outcome. At the most basic level each agent contributes one singular thing. The commissioning conductor contributes the impetus for the project. The composer contributes the musical work and the student performers (and conductor) contribute the performance of that work. While this very basic understanding

explains the exchange of services in the transaction, an intricate web of details lies below the surface and connects all of the agents on a much deeper level. This web of connections also connects the answers to the research questions.

The contributions of each of the agents are determining factors in the effect of the outcomes upon the agents. The contributions and effect of the outcomes are often transmitted and realized through the interpersonal relationships between the agents. While attempting to answer each of the research questions, their connection to one another and interdependency upon one another was revealed.

At the outset of the commissioned works projects, the conductor provided the impetus for their inception. This impetus started with a vision that included goals and desired outcomes, as well as details relating to the means to achieve those outcomes. Conductor Lilly stated the importance of beginning with visionary goals with these words:

Is your goal to teach your kids about composing? Is your goal to have an amazing piece that's going to be lasting for centuries? Is your goal just to get your foot in the door and try and figure this thing [commissioning process] out? I think it needs to start with some sort of purpose for the future of why you're doing it.

Reports by the commissioning conductors in this study demonstrated the broad spectrum of goals with regard to commencing commissioned works projects. The goals stated by the conductors reflect the specific goals for the commissions examined in this study, but also extend beyond these five specific cases to include their previous commissions, as well as future commissions. These goals include: honoring the donation of a grand piano to the school and highlighting a local soloist, providing students with the opportunity to interact with a composer-in-residence, making additions to specific areas

of the band repertoire, honoring a deceased student with a memorial, providing an opportunity for a composer to write for a new genre, exposing students to the process of composition, providing students with the opportunity to try composing their own music, initiating a project in which old friends (conductor and composer) can collaborate, building social capital for a donating foundation, and providing students with the opportunity to play a completely new musical work.

The realization of the projects commenced with the conductors contacting the composers either in person, by phone, or by email to begin the discussion of the possibility of a project. Initial conversations determined the composers' interest in the project, as well as the ability to accommodate a commission within their schedules. Even in these early stages of the project, understanding the contributions of the agents overlaps with the communication between the agents.

In these first conversations the commissioning conductors contributed specific and important information necessary for the composers to complete the works in accordance with the needs of the commissioners. The commissioning conductors often provided specific parameters for the music, such as instrumentation, duration, difficulty level, general style of work desired, and deadlines for completion. These details must be addressed prior to the composition of the commissioned work to protect the interests of the agents. As Composer Eric stated: "One way or another, those questions have to be answered." Composer Eric also expressed the importance of these parameters in writing a work that was acceptable to the commissioning conductor: "My main objective is to compose a piece that is suitable for the commissioning group, in terms of difficulty, in

terms of what they're looking for.”

Many of these parameters were included in a written agreement. The composers and the conductors reported a variety of written agreements. All of the agents reported the importance of coming to some sort of written and formal agreement in which the commissioning agent and the composer expressed the terms of the commission. Composer Sarah emphasized the importance of the terms being solidified in some sort of written agreement: “I think it’s probably a good idea to have a contract with your composer that spells out the details of the expectations. It’s good to put all of those discussions in a written document.” Some of the agreements were legally binding contracts that were formal in style while others were simply a series of emails demonstrating the agreed upon terms of the commission. The same composer stated that the format of the agreement was less important than its content: “It doesn’t have to be fancy, it just needs to be clear...as long as it has everybody’s interest in mind.” This composer had worked with contracts on many occasions, but most of the commissions from schools did not involve enough money to be concerned with a contract that would stand up to litigation in court in the instance of dispute. Composer Sarah felt that in these cases court costs and attorney fees would often exceed the price of the commission, therefore making a legal contract unnecessary.

After the agreement was reached, the composers set about the task of composing the commissioned work. The composers provided the agreed upon commissioned work in each of the cases examined in this study. Of the conductors interviewed, none reported having entered into an agreement with a composer and not receiving a musical work as a

result of the agreement. All of the conductors reported having dealt with late deliveries at some point in their wider commissioning experience. It should be noted, however, that only one of the cases examined in this study was reported to have been delivered after the due date. Further discussion of deadlines and late deliveries will be included later in this chapter.

After delivery of the completed work, the conductors and student performers set about the task of preparing to perform the work at the concert premiere. The conductors studied the scores and prepared for rehearsals with the students. Conductor Evan described a personal approach to preparations for rehearsal and performance of the commissioned work: “I would never want to conduct a piece with a composer that I commissioned and come up short. You want to conduct well and know what the piece is about and you want to do a complete analysis.”

Some of the conductors reported questions that arose during the score study period. During those times the conductors contacted the composers to pose those questions. In a further interweaving of agent contributions and interpersonal relationships, the composers contributed answers to those questions. This communication led to a performance more representative of the composers’ intentions for the work. Description of the content and outcomes of some of these conversations will be discussed in the next two parts of this chapter.

In addition to the conductors’ study and preparation for rehearsals, the students practiced their parts individually and rehearsed as an ensemble to prepare for the concert and the composer residency. Some students reported extensive individual practice to

prepare for the residency and premiere performance. These reports also included memories of their student performer colleagues devoting hours of practice in preparation for performance.

All of the agents reported that a high level of commitment and preparation led to a rewarding experience. When discussing commitment and preparation, the agents praised each other for their efforts. The composers reported a genuine effort to contribute the highest quality piece of music they could. Composer James stated, “I try to do the very best piece I can – tailor made to the skill level, but actually trying to make a real piece of music with real meanings and harmony and harmonic rhythm, syntax, and timbral unfolding.” The composers conveyed strong feelings for the commitment of the students to honor their efforts with a great performance in each of the cases included in this study. Composer Eric reported, “They [the students] realize how serious the commitment of the composer is and the importance in their participation in bringing forth the music.”

Composer James lauded the students with further appreciative statements such as:

I really like it when people take it as seriously as the Berlin Philharmonic would take anything they play. They really commit and they do their best. I don't mind if someone hits a wrong note in the concert. That never bothers me if it was prepared to the right level and it was the best that they could do.

The composers also showed appreciation for the efforts of the conductors in their work with the students. Composer Sarah said, “I think one of the things that has made it easy is when the conductors have really prepared the students for the first performance.” Composers reported that when student ensembles are prepared for the performance prior to composer residency, the composers are able to make contributions that have a deeper level of impact on musical performance and student learning. Composer David described

the kinds of contributions that can be made when the performing ensemble is well prepared to interact during the residency:

I could comment on a few things that would help bring out the general intent and expressiveness of the work, so we could talk about some of the finer details, like the ways of approaching a particular moment or little details about balance issues.

The points illustrated above describe the composer residency and premiere experience when an ensemble and its conductor have contributed a high level of preparation. Agents reported, composers in particular, that when an ensemble or conductor lacks preparation for the residency and concert premiere, the agents experience frustration. While the following descriptions are not applicable to the five cases included in this study, the composers spoke of their wider experience throughout their careers. Some of the composers reported feeling an obligation to make “the most immediate improvement” on the students’ performance during the residency, regardless of the students’ level of preparation or ability. Composer Sarah described the experience of working with an ill-prepared ensemble as follows:

I think it’s hardest when the group isn’t very far along in having the piece prepared. In that circumstance it’s a real challenge to know how to respond in a way that’s productive and positive for the students, but helps move the piece closer to the possibility of good performance. Sometimes that’s because the conductor doesn’t...didn’t get the piece or doesn’t understand it. Those are the hardest situations.

The quote above utilized the word “positive.” This word was recurrent in many of the participant interviews in reference to the quality of experience the adult agents desired for the student performers. For these adult agents, creating a positive process for the students meant “a good experience that they’ll remember for years to come” and “a really effective premiere.” The conductors and composers used phrases such as, “I want

the premiere to be really effective,” “I want to make an immediate impact,” and “This is about changing lives,” to describe their desire for a positive experience.

The previous paragraphs illustrate the interweaving of agent contributions discussed in the opening paragraphs of this section. Each of the agents makes individual contributions to the process that is unique to his role in the project. Each of the agents is also dependent upon each of the other agents to see the commissioned work through to its fruition. The commissioning conductors depend upon the composers to write quality works that meet the parameters of the agreement. The composers depend upon the conductor and student performers to bring about a realization of the composition that reflects the composers’ intentions. The conductors and the student performers depend upon the composers to provide their unique insights during residency to help move the performance closer to those intentions.

Dependency upon each other led to the agents reporting an element of trust amongst and between them. Individuals from each of the categories of agents reported feeling a sense of trust or the importance of placing trust in the other agents. In the words of Student Performer Leila, “Knowing that the conductor had faith in the group to play whatever the composer threw at us cemented a very important level of mutual respect.”

Conductor Fran phrased the importance of trust in this manner:

For instance, being far enough along with the relationship with the school and the students that the trust between the students and the teacher for me [as the teacher] to take my students to a place they’ve never been before [as if to] say, “Follow me. Come with me. You’ll be ok.”

Through interactions with the student performers and the conductor during residency, the composers were able to contribute a perspective on the music that was

unique to them as the creators of that music. Several of the conductors reported that the composers' contributions of their unique perspectives on their own music enhanced the authenticity of the performance, broadened their students' perspectives on music making, and brought more meaning to the commissioned works. Conductor Fran spoke to this point as a major reason for participating in commissioned works projects, emphasizing that the viewpoint of the composer is distinct from his own:

At the center of me and who I am, I'm a teacher, so this [my interaction with music and students] all comes through that filter, that funnel for me. Bringing in composers and commissioning works teaches my students more about what we do in music. It's teaching in ways that I can't and I love providing those experiences for my students that are just beyond me. Their world becomes bigger. My world becomes bigger. Our perspectives become bigger. It's just a really great thing.

Conductors and students alike expressed the importance of having the experience of working with a composer in a young person's music education. This pairing of agents reported that the composer-in-residence contributed an especially strong influence on students who were interested in composing. The residencies were reported to have inspired students to create their own compositions. The importance and impact of the composers' unique contribution to student learning through residency is best explained in Student Performer Jordan's words:

It's very hard to articulate this [point], but working with the composer on a challenging [piece] is something I think every musician HAS to experience for his/her artistic development. There is something magical about working with someone who's so connected to the work, both musically, and emotionally. This connection was immediately felt, and is contagious. Once the ensemble absorbs that, I believe that the performance of the work is always more likely to be flawless.

Throughout the commissioned work process the agents contribute their own unique skills to the endeavor. The contributions of each of the agents are vital to its

success. The contributions of each of the agents are also interwoven with the contributions of the other agents. In the next part, the interpersonal relationships that bind the agents together will be examined.

Part Two: Interpersonal Relationships

Communication between the agents was reported to be an important factor in determining the outcomes of the commission works projects. The quality and clarity of communications through myriad methods (live and technology assisted) served as the foundation upon which the interpersonal relationships existed. In some cases the foundation of communication resulted in satisfying outcomes. In other instances the foundation of communication led to disappointment. As Composer Eric stated, “Communication is key.” The following pages contain reports of the components of the communication between the agents and the characteristics of the interpersonal relationships that resulted from those communications.

Of the five composers who participated in this study, two preferred that a third party negotiate the details of the contract, including price, delivery date, and rights retention. For one of the composers the negotiating third party was a publisher and for the other it was a foundation. Those two composers also preferred that the contracts for all of their commissions be negotiated through the same respective third party. The other three composers negotiated contracts with the commissioning conductors themselves and preferred to negotiate other commissions that same way. All five of the composers preferred to make personal contact directly with the commissioners after the contracts were negotiated without the involvement of a third party.

The composers and conductors reported that making personal connections in the early stages of the process was an important part of a successful commission. The conductors reported spending a lot of time familiarizing themselves with the music of the composers whom they commissioned. Several of the conductors discussed the importance of knowing not only the composer's works written for band, but the other mediums for which the composer had written. Composer James reported that it was "flattering" to know that a commissioner was familiar with his work and that it was "good to know that when someone wants to commission a piece from you that they actually know your music and [they are] not just doing it to commission a piece from a composer, but doing it for a very specific reason."

In addition to being familiar with the composers' oeuvre, both composers and conductors reported the importance of knowing each other on a more personal and human level. For Composer David, knowing the commissioner on a personal level helped to create music that is more meaningful to him:

I'm finding out that it's meaning a lot more to me, getting to know the people who are asking me to write because it's such a personal thing, to write a brand new piece of music for somebody. If you already know who that person is, then it's part of writing an honest piece of music for that occasion. I guess the takeaway is that I'm becoming more and more aware of how important it is that the pieces are personal, that they mean something to me on a personal level, that I have as much of a connection to the commissioning party as possible.

This personal connection also held value for the conductors. It was particularly true for Conductor Fran, who utilized the personal connection to effectively evaluate whether or not the composer would be a good choice for a composer residency with his students:

I feel I can get a good read for “was this ok or were they too distant to really understand how a 16 year old comes to the world, both musically and otherwise?” So, I’ve relied a lot on [my intuition]. Over the course of time, meeting composers that come to us for workshops or other things, my radar’s pretty sensitive to people and how they come to being when you meet them and interact. People who are open are the kind of people who I really like my students to interact with because I think students need to see that modeled to get a sense of a person who is just being and doing what they do in a really open, gracious way.

Conductor Fran went on to describe why his knowledge of a composer’s personality is an important aspect of choosing a composer for residency. This description of a potentially harmful interaction between a composer and a student demonstrates the importance of good interpersonal skills for composers-in-residence.

It’s that moment when—if you aren’t sure you’ve got a person who will get kids—it can be a disaster. Because when a student opens up in front of a rock star composer and the composer doesn’t get what a gift that is to have a student who is willing to be that vulnerable and instead kind of shuts the kid down, that can be transformative in a bad way really quickly. It can take a long time to undo something like that. That’s where the quality of the person, in terms of meeting new people and being comfortable and understanding of what that [means], is pretty critical to me.

Composers and conductors alike reported that clear communication at the outset of the commission led to a more favorable commissioned work process. In a favorable commissioned work process the composer and commissioning conductor were able to come to a shared understanding of the goals and vision for the new work, including learning outcomes for the students, instrumentation and level of difficulty, and stylistic preferences (form, genre, character) for the composition itself.

Discussion of goals for student learning led to positive interactions not only between the composer and commissioning conductor, but positive outcomes for the students, as well. Composer Eric described the discussion of goal development for the

work and for student learning:

In a positive interaction we talk about and share our goals and put the visions together so they are the same. They almost always have to do with the growth of the students. So, we talk about what the students are going to get out of it and we make that goal happen. The best interactions have to do with the piece, making it successful, but also what the goal is for the learning process for the students and what they are going to get out of it.

Clear and honest communication of the desired difficulty level was reported to be very important and easy to mishandle. Composers and conductors reported the need for honesty and objectivity in assessing the abilities of the ensembles for which the works were to be written. From time to time commissioning conductors can be misleading with regard to the strengths and weaknesses of their ensembles. Composers also pointed to a large discrepancy in the meanings of common difficulty ratings amongst publishers as one of the contributing factors to the possibility of composing a piece with a mistaken difficulty level. The essence of both of these phenomena were captured in this statement by Composer Ellen:

That's a tough one to figure out because I'm not sure that the conductor is always [forthright]...I've had a couple of experiences when the conductor has given me a level and even identified some pieces that were like what they wanted and my thought about it is that I'm capturing what they're looking for and there have been cases where it's too easy or one case where it was too hard. We've worked through that to make it work, but obviously I was surprised. It's also really, really hard to capture an exact level. That's always one of the hardest things about doing music for band because it's kind of a variable thing. If you've been in the band world long enough you know that those ratings on those pieces are all over the map.

In order to more precisely gauge the requested difficulty level of the commissioned work, composers and conductors reported that discussion of existing examples of music was helpful. Most often, in these instances, the commissioning

conductor sent a list of existing pieces of music that represented the desired level of difficulty to the composer. In some cases, the conductor sent recordings of these pieces, as well.

One other effective strategy for capturing the correct difficulty level was reported by both composers and conductors. In this strategy, conductors sent recordings of performances of the ensemble for which the work was being composed to the conductors. Composers, in particular, found this communication helpful in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the ensemble. The following statement from Composer David shows the value of these recordings, as well as the difficulty of accurately estimating the difficulty based solely on the difficulty grade:

I want to know the ensemble I'm writing for, the difficulty level. If a high school wants to commission a piece from me I kind of know, but if they say they want a grade four, five-minute piece I kind of know what that means, but it means something different all across the country. So if you say you can play the Holst First Suite I want to know how well you can play it because that speaks to the maturity of the group, so oftentimes I'll ask for recordings of the group before I get started so I [am able to] gauge where the ensemble is and where their strengths and weaknesses are.

Specificity in communication of instrumentation was reported to lead to a more favorable result in the commissioned work. Instrumentation of ensembles varies from school to school, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the sections in those ensembles. Communication of the strengths and weaknesses, or in some cases absences, of those sections was reported to be an important component to effectively engaging the students through the commissioned work. This is exemplified by Conductor Ellen's statement:

From my perspective, if you are going to write for the students where I teach, all of the students in that community need to be engaged, so to write a piece and say, “Sorry there aren’t any saxophone parts.” Well, that’s not ok.

During the interviews, composers spoke of the specific commissioned works incorporated in this study, but also added information drawn from their overall career experience with commissioned works with school ensembles. Composers reported appreciating clarity in the communication of the style or character of the music that the commissioning conductor desired. This information was helpful to the composers by providing information that helped them to compose music that was appropriate for the goals of the commission. In two of the cases in this study, the composers were asked to write a specific type of music for the commission project. One of works was a celebratory fanfare meant to open a concert. The other work was a commemorative piece to memorialize a student who passed away. The contrast of the character of these two pieces of music can serve as an excellent example of how composing a piece of music with the wrong style or character would be inappropriate for a specific occasion. Composer Sarah explained the value of conductors who articulated their desire for a certain type of music:

It’s nice to know, even if they don’t say it up front, that what they’re really looking for is a slow beautiful piece or a really energetic, aggressive piece. They might not say it right away, but if you probe a little bit, what would be ideal, that tends to help a little bit. There’s nothing worse than missing the mark on these because you work really hard to produce the pieces and I know I try really hard to create a good piece and if I miss it and it’s not what the person’s looking for, that’s a level of disappointment for the commissioner, but also for me because I’m thinking that I’m giving the person what they’re looking for.

In the other three cases, the commissioning composers did not request a specific style or character of music for the commissioned work. Some composers expressed appreciation of an open-ended commission in which duration, difficulty, and

instrumentation are the sole main parameters. Composer James expressed the value of this open-endedness with regard to style, which allowed the composer more artistic freedom to create the best music possible at the time:

We know your body of work, we love your body of work, make us your next piece. What do you want to make? What do you need to make? I think in that way you get a better product. You're really giving someone that you trust, who has been working 30 years on this [artistic freedom]. It's really coming out of the stomach, something they really wanted to make. It's a little bit different for high school band, but you can say *I want an 8 minute piece. Make us your next best piece.* You might get a better result.

When commissioning conductors grant the composers freedom to compose their “next best piece,” but harbor unspoken hopes for the work, it can create tensions or feelings of disappointment. In order to avoid this occurrence, Composer Ellen reinforced the importance that those hopes be verbalized:

If you don't want to be specific, say that, but be willing to accept what you get. If you're not going to be specific, don't be upset when the composer brings you something that you maybe didn't have in mind. That goes back to the marriage...you can't complain about something you haven't asked for.

Commissioning Conductor Fran discussed the reasoning for leaving the style of the commissioned work open-ended. This reasoning for this decision dealt with both the composers' wishes for a new piece and the life of the piece after the premiere:

I try to let them compose anything that will complement their catalog, anything that they have the intention of doing. I don't put any stylistic parameters on them at all. In our group most people can play more difficult than grade four, but one of our goals is to get music that is practical and playable [by] more than just us. Hopefully, it gets out into the world a little bit.

Individuals from both the composer and the commissioning conductor groups discussed the element of trust between them with reference to the preceding topic. The commissioning conductors who requested a specific style of piece trusted the composers

to deliver on that request. The composers who created under the open-ended premise of commission trusted that the commissioning conductors would be accepting of their work.

Multiple conductors and composers reported that mutual understanding of deadlines and dates held great importance. All of the conductors reported having dealt with commissioned works that had been delivered late at some point in their careers, although not necessarily with the work associated with this study. Conductor Lilly suggested that when pieces are late a commissioner should “roll with it.” This conductor highlighted communication from the composers as helpful in planning for and adjusting to the late delivery of the music:

Let’s put it this way: nobody has been late that we didn’t know it was going to happen and we couldn’t plan for it. We could get other pieces ready at a higher level of preparedness knowing that this piece was going to be late.

Composers reported poor communication from conductors with regard to dates of residency as being frustrating. One composer recalled arriving to a residency to learn that the school schedule had changed and there would be no access to the students on the day of the scheduled residency. Multiple composers reported that this type of incident could be avoided with simple, clear communication.

All of the cases incorporated in this study required a composer residency as part of the commissioned work process. The duration and content of those residencies varied from as little as a one-hour rehearsal to as much as two full days of interaction. Some of the interactions during the process also incorporated a variety of other modes of interaction between student performers and composers, including conference calls, email exchanges, and video conferences. Composers, conductors, and students reported the

importance of the composer being able to relate to young people.

Composer James discussed the ability to relate through empathy for the students' position in their education:

My whole life was making music like young people made music because that's what I did for my whole youth. For instance, if I'm working with a chorus I can relate. I was there. I stood there and sang just like they did. If I'm working with a band, my entire upbringing that's what I did.

Conductor Fran also articulated that the composer's ability to relate to students during a residency was a prerequisite for being selected for a commission:

So there is this certain kind of litmus test that the composer needed to pass in terms of "Are you going to connect? Are you going to have a way to kind of understand high school kids and how they think and how they are?"

During the composer residencies the student performers also had the opportunity to witness the interpersonal relationships between their conductor and the commissioned composer. The students who addressed this issue reported that the interactions between their conductors and the composers were "professional", "cordial", and that they "seemed to work well together." Conductor Evan discussed the importance of the students observing the relationship between these two agents:

I think it's important for the students to see the interaction between the composer and the conductor, the teacher as well and for them to realize that I, as a teacher, am perfectly comfortable asking the composer, "What am I doing wrong? How is my tempo here? How do you want me to do this?" and see that it's a back and forth balance.

Part Three: The Outcomes of the Commission and Residency Experience

The contributions of the individual agents and the interpersonal relationships among the agents in the commissioned works projects examined in this study led to outcomes that impacted the agents' experiences. The essence of the commissioned work

project and composer residency experience was interwoven with the contributions of the agents through their interpersonal relationships. In the following paragraphs the words of the agents will describe what the commissioned works projects and the composer residencies were like for them. Many of those descriptions will also reveal how the contributions of the other agents and the interpersonal relationships among the agents impacted their experience.

Individuals in all three groupings of agents (conductors, composers, and student performers) reported that playing a newly commissioned piece of music and working with the composer of that work was a significant experience. The agents used some of the following words to describe the experience: exciting, cool, different, unique, positive, rewarding, uncommon, moving, and lucky. In particular, the students related their feelings regarding the experience. Student Performer Sam said:

Getting to talk with [the composer] made it more real for me that I was being part of history in the making. It made me realize how lucky I was to get to have this experience while still in high school, and opened my mind to a whole different type of music for a high school wind ensemble.

Conductor Quinn also described what he observed from his students by stating that, “the kids realized that this is not something that happens at every school in the country.” The conductors also reported that the uniqueness of the experience led to strong feelings of ownership and motivation on the part of the students, as demonstrated by the words of Conductor Fran:

I realized that there’s this real ownership thing that I hadn’t really pushed on them, but they started to intuit and kind of embrace and I just wasn’t expecting that. Without question that [ownership] continued to play itself out and serve as an incredible motivator for those students and that music as the rehearsal process continued.

The feeling of ownership was also reported to have contributed to the feeling that the commissioned work project was something special for both the students and the conductor. Conductor Lilly expressed these feelings by saying, “I have a lot more investment and my students probably have a lot more investment because it’s OUR thing and, for them, it’s special just for OUR band.”

The opportunity to work with the composers-in-residence and hear their words in reference to the music being made provided the conductors and the students with insights into the creative process that only the composer of the music could share. Student Performer Jo spoke of an increased understanding of what the composer wanted to hear: “Getting to have the time to listen to [the composer] talk about [the piece] gave us a greater understanding of the piece and what [the composer] was looking for when [it was written].” Student Performer George spoke of this experience:

Working with a composer allowed me to see a whole new perspective of musicianship. I had been involved with music my whole life, but never from the creating point of view. I was able to gain a new understanding and appreciation for this process which has impacted how I look at the music I perform. I am better able to understand the music from a composer’s point of view and work to do my best to give the music the quality it deserves.

Conductor Quinn shared how the experience helped him grow as a musician and a conductor. This particular description highlights the way in which each agent’s contribution is interwoven with the interpersonal relationships:

When you’re studying a score it’s one thing, but when you’re studying the score and you can call someone up – “What are you trying to get at with this phrase? I’m analyzing and I’m not seeing...” that’s pretty incredible. If that doesn’t help you grow as an interpreter and a musician, I don’t know what does. When you interact with these people and when you are on a stage conducting and you’ve got these people watching your back and they know every single note on the page

better than you do, it helps you grow and you certainly want to do your homework.

Conductor Fran also reported that the composer's revealing of the composition process was a learning moment for him and for his students:

They marveled, as I did, at the compositional process and what it takes to compose a work. When they're interacting and when they're working through the piece with the composer being there it really opens their eyes that it's not something that most people just sit down and write off. They take a lot of time doing outlines or graphs or whatever their compositional process is – deciding what kinds of melodies to use, what kinds of harmonies to use, the orchestration process. Why did you choose the bassoon to play that part? Why did you use heavy brass here? Those kinds of things are eye opening for students and conductors, as well.

Many of the agents reported that revisions to the commissioned works were made during rehearsals with the composer present for residency. The conductors described these moments as opportunities for students to learn about the revisions that go along with the composition process. Through viewing of the revision process, students reported learning that in some instances the composer's notation does not reflect the intentions of the composition:

I also think it's a great thing for the kids to see when the composer writes something that doesn't work, for them to watch changes on the fly – from a dynamic change, to taking a part out or doubling a part. Those kinds of things are pretty cool because they can see that this is a process.

When students have the opportunity to work with composers in person and go through the revision process as described above, they often see the humanity of the composer. In moments when the composers shared with the students and their conductor that the way they notated the music didn't match up with their own creative vision, the students were able to see a humility and fallibility in the composers that highlighted their

existence as normal human beings. Students and conductors alike described experiencing the realization that the composers were regular people. In light of their experiences with composer residencies, agents described composers as “real people with real experiences” who “get hurt and recover” who they “might see at the grocery store or a baseball game.” These realizations connected student performers, in particular, to composition having a great sense of attainability.

Because of the student performers’ sense of connection between the music and the human beings who created it, conductors reported a change in perspective of their students with regard to their previous experiences with musical works without composer residencies. With regard to this change of perspective, the students reported showing feelings of responsibility to the composer to honor the work with best effort in its realization. Conductor Fran phrased the phenomenon as follows:

But you have to kind of engage [the connection between music and its composer]. All too often for our students music just shows up on their stand and there’s no thought about where it came from. There’s a real process to bringing them to the fact that a human being organized all of this and said, “Here’s what I’ve done and here’s what I’m trying to say. Now it’s your turn to take the torch and make this work in the air.”

The experience of interacting with a composer through a residency was reported to have increased interest in music composition for students who were interested in composition themselves and for students who composed as a part of the residency. In two of the cases, the students had the opportunity to submit their own compositions to the composers for review. Two students reported that they began composing as a result of their experience with the composer-in-residence. The descriptions of the interactions reported by the apprentice students and mentor composers were similar. In both cases

students had opportunities for face-to-face feedback with the composers, as well as remote feedback via emailing of compositions and email responses. Conductor Ellis explained the impact of these interactions saying, “For my students, well, the ones who were interested in composing, absolutely working with the composer and writing their own pieces and getting guidance was incredible for them. That experience, I think, was unparalleled for those students.”

Both composers and the commissioning conductors relayed the importance of the building of band repertoire as a result of the commissioning process. All of the conductors expressed a sense of fulfillment in contributing music to the band repertoire through commissioning music. Several composers expressed a sense of satisfaction in the expansion of their own oeuvre and catalogs. Some composers also reported pleasure in being able to contribute music specifically to the band repertoire. Composer James, in particular, shared a broad view of the place of commissioned works in the overall band repertoire and referenced this within the broader mission of building, expanding, and deepening that repertoire:

One small point that can be amplified along the way is high school band repertoire is important. Every high school in the country has a band and they rehearse at least 2 or 3 times a week. This is a huge confidence builder for the young men and women playing in these bands and practicing at home and playing in church and so on and so forth. We shouldn't take for granted the importance of that repertoire. Therefore, if somebody can make a piece...we need a lot of quality high school band pieces, which I do believe are needed to build a bigger picture. Yes. Let's do this. Let's build some repertoire.

Several of the conductors continued to interweave their contributions to the process with the outcomes of the experience by expressing pleasure in their role of building, expanding, and deepening the repertoire of music for band. The conductors who

participated in this study selected composers to commission not only for the educational aspect of the composer residency, but because they felt confident that the composers they selected could provide a piece of music that was a quality addition to the band repertoire.

Of the five commissioned projects examined in this study, each was commissioned for a specific reason with regard to the composers' contributions to the repertoire. One of the projects examined in this study yielded a new work for solo piano and band. This project served to build repertoire for band in an area that lacks abundance: works for accompanied solo instrument. Another of the projects afforded the composer the opportunity to compose a celebratory fanfare that utilized harmonic language uncommonly found in band music. Another commissioning conductor sought to commission a composer who had composed very little band music at the difficulty level of his ensemble. The final two projects focused on adding music to the band repertoire from composers whose renown primarily existed in other mediums prior to the commission.

By making contributions of anticipated quality music to specific areas of the band repertoire, the commissioning conductors open the door to contributing to the greater good of musical artistry and educational opportunity. The conductors reported that these contributions were not limited to the specific commissions examined in this study, but to an overarching desire to achieve this goal in all of their commissions. These conductors sought composers who consistently produced music of high artistic quality for commissions. While each individual commission might serve a very specific purpose, the conductors endeavored to better the available repertoire through commissioning new

music and received a sense of accomplishment for making those contributions.

Part Four: Future Projects

The aim of the fourth research question in this study was to gather and communicate information that could be used to guide future commissioned works projects. While the information contained in the three previous parts of this chapter should elucidate some guidance, the fourth question struck directly at that goal. The information shared by the participants in the study, mainly the commissioning conductors and composers in this instance, focused on three main points: timeline, funding, and composer choice.

All of the conductors and several of the composers discussed timeline in reference to commission planning. They reported that multiple factors influence the timeline such as composer choice, fundraising, and composer availability. The conductors discussed spending a great deal of time selecting the composer to commission. During the time prior to selection the conductors familiarized themselves with the work of the candidate composers, talked to others who have worked with composers, and networked to get to know potential composers. The conductors also discussed the time it takes to generate the funding necessary to execute the commission. For some, the band booster organizations are prepared to make annual contributions to commission works projects. For others, time is needed to write grants, contact administrators, and conduct various fundraisers. In some instances, high demand composers have commissions booked years in advance. Conductors and composers reported that in some cases composers might not be able to complete the commissioned work until two to four years from the time of contractual

agreement. When organizing a commission work project the commissioning conductor should consider that composer availability plays a role in the amount of time it takes to complete a commission.

The consensus amongst the composers and conductors was that a potential commission project should be planned a couple of years in advance. For composers whose schedule is less hectic, the project could be completed in a year or less, but for some composers with many commission commitments it might take as many as four years. Conductor Fran phrased this succinctly, “Depending on where the composer is in his or her career and how far out they are and how many commissions they’re taking in a year it can sometimes be four years from now.” Some composers with significant bookings might say that they are unavailable, in which case an alternative would be necessary. Raising the funds necessary to get a commission project off the ground can also extend the amount of time it takes to reach completion. Conductor Quinn described this aspect of the timeline with these words: “Finances are a part of that and it can also be a good thing to have a long timeline if finances are going to be a thing that will take a long time to garner.”

The composers and conductors reported that commissioned works projects could be attained at an array of price points, with Conductor Quinn and Composer Ellen urged commissioning conductors to negotiate composer fees. This variety of price points is available through two main methods of commissioning: independent or stand-alone commissions involving a single commissioning conductor/ensemble and a composer, and consortium commissions comprised of two or more commissioning

conductors/ensembles that pool their financial resources to commission a composer. Composer residencies can be arranged as part of the commission project with either method.

All of the conductors and composers reported having participated in both types of commissioned works projects during their careers. These agents discussed the advantages and disadvantages of each approach to commissioning. Independent or stand-alone commissions are characterized by the singular connection between one commissioning conductor/ensemble and the composer; therefore, greater specificity can be attained with this type of commission with regard to instrumentation, difficulty level, and strengths and weaknesses of the ensemble. In this type of commission, the work doesn't have to "fit" any other ensemble. An independent commission can also be an effective method of highlighting a soloist who might be unique to the commissioning ensemble or to honor a specific person who is meaningful to the commissioning agent. The main drawback of this type of commission is that it is often, but not always, more expensive than a consortium commission because the cost is not shared by any other commissioning agents.

In a consortium commission, two or more agents share the cost of commissioning the composer. The participants in this study reported that there are two primary ways that the cost sharing of a consortium commission can be beneficial: the cost sharing can make the overall financial contribution of each consortium member lower, and it can also make a larger financial contribution go farther. For instance, if a commissioning conductor wishes to commission a high profile composer or wishes to commission a musical work

of long duration, it might be too costly to afford in an independent commission. However, in a consortium commission the potential commissioner's budgeted contribution, when combined with contributions from other commissioning agents, can purchase a higher priced commission. The main drawback of consortium commissions is that the musical work is shared amongst the group of commissioning agents and is therefore not unique to one singular commissioning conductor or ensemble. For this reason, consortium commissions may not address the specific strengths and weaknesses of the ensembles for whom they are commissioned because they must be playable by a larger number of ensembles.

With the understanding that either commissioning format is a possibility, the conductors and composers who participated in this study recommended choosing a format that aligns with the goals and budget of the potential commissioner. The following paragraph is a summary of the comparison of independent and consortium commissions in the words of Conductor Lilly:

The consortium commissions are great because usually there's a smaller buy in and sometimes you can be part of a big project for not a lot of money, which has been really good. The nice thing about an independent commission is that you're kind of in control of the whole thing, so you can make it into whatever you want to make it.

The conductors reported funding as a major issue in the prospect of commencing a commissioned work project. All of the commissioning conductors reported that some level of funding had come from their school administration for at least one of the commissions during their careers. The conductors also reported that funding came from a variety of sources including band booster organizations, grants from foundations, private

donors, and various traditional school fundraising activities. Several conductors recommended that with financial planning and prioritization a commissioned work project can be engaged at almost any level. Conductor Fran urged potential commissioners to not allow lack of funds to be an excuse for not commissioning a work:

I think too many people say they don't have enough money. Nobody has excess money, but if you prioritize and plan farther out, that's where money from the Coke machine or wherever you can find \$500...if you're really interested you'll make it happen.

Three of the conductors also reported utilizing engagement of the parents, band boosters, community, and school administration as effective tools for garnering support for commissioned works projects. The conductors reported engaging these groups through a variety of methods. Promoting the concert premieres in local papers was reported to be effective in generating a larger audience and involving the community at large. "Meet-the-composer" nights and question/answer sessions were organized to provide parents, boosters, and administrators with the opportunity to communicate directly with the composers themselves. Some conductors also reported encouraging their students to talk to their parents about what the commissioned works projects and composer residencies were like and what they meant to them. The conductors stated that through these types of interactions continued support for projects was gained from school administrators. Conductor Quinn stated:

I think you can sell [commissioned works projects] to an administration as something that's important to be doing and investing in. Actually finding the money in schools right now, obviously is tough. If you have an advocate in the district, who you could say, "This is really development money for the school district. This isn't an extra thing I'm doing for my kids for fun. This is going to have real returns for the district."

The same conductor went further to describe how the interactions could also increase the interest and investment of parents, boosters, and the community-at-large:

If you have a really involved booster group that really wants to promote the band and the community, you can do marketing like crazy on this kind of thing. You can get things in the papers, get a ton of people at the concerts, and show what great work the band is doing, what a great group this is, and maybe get your boosters to invest in this. There are going to be members that feel invested and want to be part of it.

Agents from the conductor and composer groupings also reported that negotiation served as an effective means of getting more composition for less money. The composers expressed a desire to be hired and were willing to negotiate the price of the commission, especially when the project was of high interest to them. Conductor Evan reported successfully lowering the price of the commission through negotiation:

I was not afraid to negotiate with a composer and say, “You know, gee, you charge \$5000 for this piece and I can’t afford that. I’d like to do it, but I can only afford \$3500. How can we make that work?”

Conductor Evan also spoke of a former student who is now a band director himself. The former student has made commissioning music a priority in his band program. He is commissioning new works and stretching his budget by selecting relatively inexperienced composers who are located near his school:

When he got a job he thought, “I’m going to get in with people who are on the front edge of this because a) they’re inexpensive and b) they’ll work really hard to make that all go and your students will still have a great experience”...So, he’s set up this whole thing, but they’re not spending a whole lot of money on this endeavor, but Neil has realized that, as a teacher, this is important. Because it’s important I’m going to make sure that I can make this go and do it within the resources that we have.

The desire to commission composers “on the front edge” was echoed by conductors and composers alike. For some conductors, the “front edge” composers were

reported to represent a financial savings, but also a conscious step away from other composers who produce numerous works for school band. When selecting composers to commission, the Conductor Ellen reported a desire to commission composers whose music would be characterized as a departure from commercially available music: “I wanted something really high quality and something fresh with a new voice and not...I don’t know if I can say it – you know, your standard band piece.” Conductor Lilly discussed this topic within the framework of her own overall goals and mission in commissioning new music:

I would encourage them to seek out a talented composer who might not be too busy to take it. I have a lot of respect for [commercially popular composers], but why would you commission [them]? [They’re] going to write a piece anyway. I think that’s counterproductive to what we’re trying to do.

The conductors and composers who addressed this topic recommended selecting composers who do not have a lot of band music available or might not have music available at the difficulty level of the commissioning ensemble. One conductor encouraged commissioning composers who “would be great at this, but aren’t known yet.” By commissioning these types of composers, the participants who addressed this topic expressed that a deeper, more broad and varied repertoire of band music could be built at a variety of difficulty levels through commissioned works projects.

Part Five: Discrepant Cases

Throughout the data analysis of this study, care was given to uncover data that was contradictory or data that had a singular occurrence or occurred only within one cohort of participants and possessed a particularly important relevance. In this part of the chapter these cases will be described.

An inconsistency of reporting was uncovered within the interviews of the student performers. Some student performers reported that their conductors approached the commissioned works with greater care than other pieces of music in the ensemble's repertoire. Other students reported that their conductors approached the commissioned works with the same care as any other pieces of music in the ensemble's repertoire. This inconsistency could be attributed to differing philosophies of music preparation on the parts of the individual conductors if the students within each cohort of agents were in agreement with one another. However, in two cases, the students within a cohort of agents were in disagreement with one another with regard to their conductor's approach to preparation of the commissioned work. Any discussion of the reason for this disagreement would be speculation on the part of the researcher and beyond the scope of this study. This issue of inconsistency could serve as a topic for future research.

For one of the case cohorts in this study, the commissioned work was written as a memorial to a student from the band who had passed away. The commissioning conductor, two of the students, and the composer reported that the commission project was an important part of the healing process from this traumatic event. The students contributed phrases of musical material to the composition process in this project. The agents within this cohort described the composition, preparation, and performance of the commissioned work as "cathartic". Music commissioned as memorial to the deceased is not uncommon, as is the case with art and architecture, as well. When considered in the overall context of commissioned works, this memorial is not an anomaly. However, within the bounds of this study, it is the only instance of memorial commission. The

participants in this project cohort consistently reported its cathartic effects, but it was the only project included in the study to report those effects. Therefore, it has been considered as a discrepant case containing information of significant relevance.

Reflection and evaluation of the commissioned works process was discussed as an important component of commissioned works projects in Chapter Two of this study (Catterall & Waldorf, 1999; Dreeszen, 2001; Gradel, 2005; Myers, 2001; Myers, 2005; Waldorf, 2005). Despite the importance of this step in the process as cited in six studies, only one conductor discussed the value of reflective evaluation of the commissioned work project. The following quote describes the thoughts that this conductor, Conductor Quinn, relayed with regard to evaluation of the project:

I think it's important to talk about the evaluation process, which to be honest, I have not done until this interview. And this interview brought to my mind that one of the key components is the evaluation process at the end, which I ignore and need to revisit. Now, I revisited a lot of it today, you know, while you're asking these questions, my mind is processing. How would I do things differently? What would I want to do next time we do this? Things such as: is it just me to be involved or do I involve my colleagues? Those are the types of things that go through my mind as I do this interview. I think an important piece is the evaluation and I just learned that today. That is something I would like to offer to you that there must be an evaluation process. And also, I must talk to [the composer] to finalize our collaboration together.

The final discrepant case to be reported serves as somewhat of an anecdote. This description of interaction with a composer comes from one of the student performers. The participants reported that the composer-in-residence most often sat in the audience at rehearsals, listening and giving feedback. The words of Student Performer Vincent describe the experience of playing for the composer as guest conductor:

At the outset, [our conductor] did a run through of the piece. It was a pretty good run through, we had the music down. This was the first time I had worked with a

composer conducting his own work so when he took the baton from [our conductor] and started working with us it was really a neat deal. Part of it was cool because he was not afraid to conduct (some of the later composers only commented from the auditorium seats, they did not want to conduct the group) and that lent itself to a greater impression on the student ensemble. We were more receptive to his requests because he was engaged with us – we made an emotional connection and the means of connecting was his musical composition. I recall that the majority of his requests were around exaggerating the dynamics and changing up a few tempos, making the ritardandos more expressive and the second, quick movement more exciting. That's not a slight on [our conductor] at all – he had tapped us but the energy and expectation of the composer actually conducting the work added new excitement to feed from to get the response he was looking for.

The reports of the participants represent information pertaining to the contributions of the agents, the interactions between the agents through communication, the effects of the outcomes of the process on the agents, and recommendations for future commissioning projects from the perspectives of agents with experience in the process. The following section will discuss themes that emerged from the data through the analysis process.

Conclusion

The agents involved in a commissioned work project are bound together through interpersonal relationships of a symbiotic nature. Each of the agents makes a contribution to the process that is necessary for the others to be affected by the outcomes of that contribution. The process would be incomplete without the contributions of each of the agents. Additionally, the quality and clarity of communication within each of the interpersonal relationships influences the contributions of the individual agents, thus impacting the resulting outcomes for the other agents.

The conductor contributes vision and goal development prior to the initiation of

the project. Following these steps, the conductor contributes monetary incentive to the composer to commence the project. Throughout the beginning stages, the conductor contributes specific technical and logistic details essential to the process through discussion with the composer. The composer contributes unique artistic expertise as the creator of new musical art. The outcome of this creation is the commissioned work itself, ideally in fulfillment of the commissioning agent's requirements for the commission agreement. As an outcome of delivering the completed work, the composer receives financial compensation.

Once the work has been delivered, the conductor contributes time, effort, and expertise in learning the piece. The composer, through interpersonal communications, contributes answers to questions that might plague the conductor during the score study period. During this time period, the student performers are contributing time and effort in practicing their parts in order to produce their best performance of the new work. These contributions are often made through individual practice and ensemble rehearsal. The interpersonal relationships between the conductor and student musicians are a vital function of the process as the conductor transmits information learned from score study and discussion with the composer to the students to maximize preparation efforts.

During the composer residency and ensuing premiere performance, the conductor and student musicians collectively contribute sound realization of the composer's printed notation. The outcome of this aural representation impacts the composer relative to the internal and authentic artistic intentions. The composer contributes suggestions or even revisions through interpersonal communications with the conductor and student

performers in an effort to move their performance of the work closer to those intentions. Through these interactions, the conductor and student musicians gain insights into the composer's creative vision and process with regard to how the intended sound relates to the printed notation. The outcome of these interactions, in conjunction with less formal interactions with the composer, impacts the students by helping them place themselves within the context of the specific composition associated with the commission project, but also within the context of the grander scheme of music composition.

At the premiere performance of the commissioned work, the conductor and student performers contribute an aural portrayal of the composer's work that reflects not only the composer's printed notation, but also personal influence through interactive communication. The outcome of the performance impacts the composer through a prepared aural representation of the new work. After reflection and evaluation of the process, the agents are able to surmise how the outcomes of the project impacted them and how they might contribute to future projects.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Recommendations

Discussion

The discussion section of this research endeavor presents an opportunity for application of the research in the teaching situations of conductors of school ensembles in a variety of mediums across a range of ages. The data that was collected and analyzed in this study examined five cases of commissioned works projects, but included information drawn from the participants' numerous project experiences. The collected data paints a picture of the happenings within those cases, as well as within those participants' broader experiences. This collection of information can serve as a reference point for the educational potential within commissioned works projects and the processes contained within those projects.

The first research question examined in this study was how each agent (student performer, music teacher, composer) contributes to the process of producing a new work through commission. There are very basic, low level contributions that each agent makes during the process of producing a new work through commission and composer residency. Although some points seem obvious, they are worth stating because without these basic contributions the project would disintegrate. The composer's basic contribution to the process is a fully developed, performable piece of music. At the most basic level, the conductor and student performers contribute preparation and performance of the piece of music. The further contributions of the agents in the forthcoming paragraphs add depth to the spectrum of experience of the commission.

The commissioning conductors in this study provided the primary vision and

setting of goals as they relate to student learning objectives. Sharp and Dust (1997) concurred that the primary responsibility for goal creation lies with the school hosting the artist residency. Sharp and Dust (1997) also asserted that the goals of the project should be relevant to ongoing work at the school. Myers (2001) more specifically stated that the goals should be directly connected to the existing curriculum and should meet the learning needs of the students. In addition to curricular connections, the goals of the project should be appropriate to the skill level of the students (Hultgren, 1993). The commissioning conductors, as the daily teachers of the students, are most familiar with the needs and abilities of the students, as well as the curriculum. Therefore, the commissioning conductors should shoulder the majority of responsibility for goal creation.

The commissioning conductors in this study also provided the impetus for a commissioned work project. Entailed in the initiative of the commissioning conductor are the organizational details and processes necessary to set the project in motion and see it through to its completion. Some of the organizational details the conductors contributed are attention to: instrumentation, duration, difficulty, general style, occasion, timeline, and budgetary parameters. While each commissioning conductor in this study discussed slightly differing details as related to the organizational aspects of a commissioned work project, they each took responsibility for those details in their roles as commissioners. Harris (2005), McAllister (2012), and Robinson (1998) also addressed the steps in the process of commissioning a work. In congruity to this study, these authors discussed the importance of following steps in the process of commissioning a work that help to assure

its success, although the details of each process differed slightly from one another.

All agents need to contribute a high level of commitment to make the project successful. In an optimum situation in which all agents are highly committed, the composer contributes an artistically significant piece of music that is appropriate for the ensemble in terms of difficulty and well suited to the goals for which it was commissioned. This achievement is realized through clear and accurate information contributed by the commissioning conductor through excellent channels of communication with the composer. From this point, the conductor and the student performers begin preparations for contributing a committed performance.

Conductors and student performers in this study contributed preparation in the form of score study for the conductor, individual practice for the student performers, and rehearsal for them all together. Robinson (1998) discussed the preparatory process for conductors extensively. Robinson's (1998) study detailed the score study process, as well as its relationship to a conductor's preparation for rehearsal. The role of the students in preparing for the residency of a composer is absent from Robinson's (1998) study, as with other research that discusses the commission process.

The composers in this study contributed their own unique perspective as the visionaries of the composition to conductors in preparation and to students during residency. These vital contributions by the composers are directly linked to the outcomes for the conductors and students in terms of musical and personal growth. The link between the composer's perspective and the experience of the conductor/performers is a theme present in my research as well as the work of others (Dello Joio, et al., 1968;

McAllister, 2012). The outcomes related to the composers' contribution of unique perspective will be addressed in greater detail in the forthcoming discussion of the third research question.

The second question I sought to understand in this research study was how the interpersonal relationships between the agents function throughout the process. The starting point for the interpersonal relationships is communication between the agents. While communication is very important, it is only the gateway to the interpersonal relationships between the agents.

Communication is a vital component of a successful project from beginning to end. Communication serves as the conduit through which necessary information flows between the commissioner and the composer. In most cases, the quality and clarity of communication lay the foundation for success in realization of the project. As reported by participants in my study, flaws or failures in communication often result in frustration on the part of one or more of the agents. The importance of quality communication between the commissioning conductor and the commissioned composer, particularly in planning and goal setting, is also supported by the work of Dreeszen (2001), Myers (2001), and Sharp and Dust (1997).

Communicated agreements are best served when put in a written contract. Although some of the commissioners and composers who participated in this study expressed some level of comfort working without a formal contract, other sources (including other participants in this study) deemed it necessary for proceeding with an engagement (Robinson, 1998; Young, n.d.). Whether through a legally binding contract

or simply through electronic correspondence, composers and commissioners feel most at ease when all agreed upon facets of the arrangement are communicated in writing.

Clearly stated, written documentation helps all parties to understand what is expected of one another.

Creating a personal connection through communication deepens the meaning of the project for all involved. Composers are able to create more meaningful music when a personal connection is made. While discussion of this aspect of personal connection is not present in existing research on this topic, the effectiveness of the communication through personal connection and rapport was shown to be an important part of a rewarding and educational residency experience (Marcellino, 1993).

The commissioning conductors' knowledge of a composer as a person and professional helps in selecting an appropriate composer to engage in a project to yield the kind of work desired and to educate the students effectively. This aspect of composer selection held particular importance for Conductor Fran, for whom the composer residency was the key educational component of commissioned works projects. Conductor Fran, as well as subjects in the research of McAllister (2012), sought composers whose interactions with student performers would be musically educational and personally enriching. Composer residencies are most effective when the composer can relate to the students on a personal level and communicate empathetically.

Specificity, honesty, and accuracy are important in communicating the abilities of the ensemble to the composer. When conductors communicate specific information about the technical abilities and instrumentation of the commissioning ensemble without

reservation, the composer can more accurately tailor the commissioned work to meet those abilities. In this way the composer can challenge the students appropriately without exceeding the performers' abilities. Composer Ellen felt that being able to accurately match the difficulty of the music with the skills of the ensemble was one of the most difficult and important aspects of the job of the composers. This information can be effectively communicated with the conductor sending representative recordings of the ensemble to the composer. Composer David much preferred to have reference recordings of the ensemble than simply relying on the word of the commissioning conductor. Robinson (1998) affirmed the efficacy of this practice.

Honesty and clarity in communications between the composer and conductor enable communications to flow much easier and lead to better experiences. When students observe trust-based interactions between the composer and conductors, they witness positive modeling of healthy artistic collaborations (Purnell, 2008).

Communications based on trust also serve as a foundation for goal development and lesson planning.

Effectively communicated goals, whether conductor created or co-created with composer, help to focus the efforts of the composer and conductor on the learning outcomes for the students. Composer Eric expressed concern for the learning process for the students and the importance of considering student learning in developing goals and vision uniformly with the commissioning conductor. The research of Dreeszen (2001), Myers (2005), Sharp and Dust (1997), and Wasserman (2003) supports the importance of the development of a unified vision and goals to guide a project toward a successful

experience.

Conductors communicate with composers regarding questions about the composers' intent and desired musical effects. These communications have taken a variety of forms, from phone calls and emails, to face-to-face conversation during and away from rehearsal settings. All of the conductors in this study reported communicating with the commissioned composers with these types of questions through one or more methods of communication. It is within these communications that the conductors benefit from insights into the creative process and vision of the composers.

The third research question examined in this study sought to understand how the outcomes of the commission process and composer residency impact the experience for the agents. Much like the contributions of the agents, the outcomes consist of some very basic aspects, as well as outcomes of varying degrees of depth for the agents. The most basic outcomes include the commissioning conductor receiving a piece of music, the composer receiving financial compensation for the work, and the student performers experiencing the opportunity to learn from performing a new musical work for the first time while working with a composer-in-residence.

Participants representing all three agent groups reported feeling excited, rewarded, and moved by the experience. All of the commissioned works projects examined in this study took place within the last 15 years, with a vast majority in the most recent five years. The feelings associated with this experience seem somewhat timeless, with older literature reporting the same types of excitement 50 years or more ago (Dello Joio, et al., 1968).

In this study, the student performers in particular reported that the excitement of participation in a unique musical endeavor fostered a sense of investment and ownership. The concepts of investment and ownership were echoed in the research of Robinson (1998) and were reported to have developed further into a sense of pride (Ferreira, 1999, Lichtmann & Lewis, 1985).

Through commissioned work and composer residency projects, students were given views into the creative process of a composer. In line with the research of Mok (1983), this aspect of an artist residency allowed the student performers in this study to grow in their abilities as musicians, develop critical judgment and enhanced artistic sensitivities, and have their music programs enhanced and enriched by the experience. Viewing the creative process of the composer also provides students with a practical application of the creative and theoretical concepts that they learn through the study of other musics (McAllister 2012).

Conductors grow as musicians through commissioned works projects by learning about the creative process and musical intent of composers. The conductors who participated in this study reported similar benefits to those described by student performers – gaining insight into the creative process of composers and sharing in an exciting musical experience with an enhanced sense of ownership. The conductors involved in the work of McAllister (2012) reported similar benefits.

Rehearsals and performances during residency offer composers a preview of their compositions so that revisions can be made on the spot or at a later time in preparation for publication. Webb (1967) reported that these instances are often viewed as learning

experiences for the composers. Prominent American composers Joan Tower (Oddo, 2003), Eric Ewazen (Wurtz, 2001), Libby Larsen (McCutchan, 1999), and Richard Danielpour (McCutchan, 1999) represent a few examples of composers who have revised works based on what they have learned through collaborations with performers.

Witnessing the revision process is a particularly impactful opportunity for student and conductor growth for participants in this study. Several participants explained that they were able to see the creative process in action – unrealized musical outcomes and the composers' struggle to achieve those outcomes.

Composers receive guaranteed performances of their work. Often these performances are given enthusiastically by the student performers and are taken in by audiences of parents, school administrators, and community members. The fulfillment that the agents (composers, conductors, and student performers) feel from the mutual excitement at the performances is congruent with the research of Norcross (1991), Robblee (2009), and Webb (1967).

Student performers in this study gained a realization that composers are regular humans and that making music is an experience of human interaction rather than simply interaction with notation on a printed page. McAllister's (2012) empirical data supports the idea that students realize that composers are real people. McAllister's research also indicates that understanding the composer's point of view helps with understanding the composer's music. Interactions such as these broaden the students' perspectives about music and music making.

Some student performers who participated in this study became interested in the

act of composing through experience with a composer. Those students who were already composing learned from observing the process and improve their skills when given the opportunity to work on their compositions directly with composers. Colgrass (2004) reported similar instances through involvement as a composer in school-based composition projects. This seems to be in contrast to McAllister's (2012) findings that a large proportion of the students involved in that study did not believe that they were capable of composing themselves. Discrepancies such as this could be attributed to the length of the composer residencies, the nature of the involvement of the composer during residency, or the goals of the project.

Repertoire is built through commissions. Composers add to their oeuvre and conductors who commission works contribute to the band repertoire. Within the band music genre there exists an urgency to increase the breadth, depth, and quality of the existing repertoire. Band conductors of prominence have clearly stated their desire for increases in the quantity and quality of works in the band repertoire. Support for this movement can be found in the words of Battisti (1995, 2002), Dello Joio, et al. (1968), McAllister (2012), Olfert (1992), Reynolds (2000), and Robinson (1998). As can be seen by the publication dates of these writings, the efforts of conductors to grow the band repertoire extends back more than fifty years, continuing yet today. These efforts are not only supported by conductors who commission music, but by composers, as well. Although support of commissioned works projects by composers can be viewed as self-serving, composers included in my study along with composers discussed in other studies identify with the need to expand and improve the band repertoire (Dello Joio, 1968;

McAllister, 2012; Norcross, 1991).

The fourth question I sought to answer in this research study was how the information gathered in this study might shape future commissioning projects. Much of the data collected from the conductors and composers addressed this question from the departure point of overcoming pragmatic barriers to commissioning works. These pragmatic barriers include: timeline, monetary concerns, engagement of the broader community, and selecting a composer.

Understanding all of the details involved with a commission and designing a practical timeline that allows all of those details to be addressed is a difficult matter for a first time commissioner. Harris (2005) and Robinson (1998) discussed these components and offered a sequence of events for seeing through each component. For each commission and each composer the specific time that it takes to address each component will vary, requiring that the commissioning conductor possess a great deal of forethought and flexibility.

One of the details incorporated in the timeline establishment was a concern significant enough to warrant specific discussion. Funding a commissioned work project often requires a significant financial investment. Participants in the study offered several ways to make commissioned works projects a financial possibility. Commissioning Conductor Sarah dealt with funding projects by requesting funds from school administration and booster groups, but also felt that a commissioned work project was worth the investment of time to participate in additional fundraising efforts. Conductor Evan has made money stretch farther by commissioning composers who might charge

smaller fees and by buying into consortium commissions. Conductor Fran urged potential commissioners not to allow the financial aspect of commissioned works projects to prevent them from engaging in the practice, but rather to design projects that are financially attainable and find ways to fund them. Resources for assistance with funding music commissions are available from a variety of sources (Young, n.d., Meet the Composer, 2011).

Conductor Quinn spoke at length about the importance of involving the broader school and local communities in the commissioned works projects. Through conversation with administration, promotion of concerts via school and local journalism, and education of parent groups, excitement about commissioned works projects can be generated (Dello Joio, et al., 1968). Not only can promotion and education generate excitement about the current project, it can lead to support for future projects.

The theme of composer selection was a recurring thread in the literature (Battisti, 2002; McAllister, 2012; Robinson, 1998) and in the voices of the participants in this study. Several factors need to be considered in composer selection. These factors include, but are not limited to: composer availability, composer affordability, synchronous artistic preferences between composer and commissioner, and a composer personality that is compatible with goals for student learning.

Recommendations for the Profession:

Setting Up a Commissioned Work Project and Composer Residency

In addressing the question of how this study might shape future commissioning projects, discussion of recommendations for conductors considering embarking upon a

commissioned works project seems appropriate. The following paragraphs represent guidelines and suggestions for music teachers who are considering a commissioned works project. While the information in this study is specific to high school bands, these recommendations are transferable to other large ensemble performance areas (chorus, orchestra, chamber ensembles, etc.) and age groups (elementary, middle school, university, professional). The following recommendations were derived from a synthesis of information gathered from the participants included in this study and the reviewed literature. These suggestions can serve as a step-by-step guide to the process of commissioning music and hosting a composer residency. Major concepts are noted in boldface type, while explanations of those concepts remain in normal font.

Get to know a lot of composers. Listen to their music. Get to know them on a personal level. These actions will be of value during composer selection. Internet technology has made access to composers very easy. Many composers have websites containing valuable information including: biographical information, video/audio recordings, avenues for obtaining printed music, and contact information. Often composers who do not host their own website have pages on their publishers' websites with the same types of information. Websites can serve as an access point for familiarizing oneself with recordings of the composers' works. Some composers archive their printed and recorded materials in other areas of the web, such as: YouTube, Soundcloud, Vimeo, and Issuu. This technology changes rapidly and access can be gained through simple web searches. The composers and conductors who participated in this study recommended listening to pieces of music by composers of interest that are

outside of the teacher's area of specialty. Choral conductors should listen to orchestral music, band conductors should listen to choral music, orchestral conductors should listen to percussion ensembles, etc. Diverse familiarity gives prospective commissioners a broad view of the potential composers' oeuvre. Greater familiarity may help commissioners to expand their personal artistic tastes and experiences.

Through contact pages on the websites mentioned above, potential commissioners can make connections with composers. Composers and conductors recommended that requesting a commission is not advisable in this initial contact. Rather, they recommended that a simple dialogue be started that can be continued over email, phone, or in person. Extend compliments in these first contacts. Share thoughts about specific parts of enjoyable pieces of music by the composer. Ask questions about their music, background, or composition processes. Lay the groundwork for future communications.

Personal relationships can also be established and maintained through social media. The more informal nature of many social media outlets can serve as a more relaxed arena for communication. Comfort in use of social media can allow for quicker familiarity with people and their public personas. As with most uses of social media, the public nature of the interaction begs caution on the part of those engaging in this type of communication.

Music teacher conferences are held in most states in the United States. Additionally, there are many regional, national, and international conferences, clinics, and conventions geared toward musicians and music teachers. Many composers attend these conferences and are eager to meet people who have performed their music or might

perform it in the future. Conferences are a potential avenue for composers and potential commissioning conductors to make acquaintances or extend interpersonal relationships. Conference connections provide the opportunity for geographically separated agents to have face-to-face meetings and discuss projects. These professional meetings can also represent opportunities for composers and conductors to cultivate connections aside from commissioned works projects.

Interpersonal relationships that develop through the methods described in the preceding paragraphs serve as a strong foundation for potential commissioned works projects. When conductors and composers are acquainted with one another and have a personal connection, those relationships tend to foster commissioning projects with better outcomes. Established relationships create environments in which conductors are more comfortable in communicating requests of the composer and honest in portraying the abilities of their ensembles. Composers are often able to create more personally meaningful music when the compositions are connected with a commissioner with whom a prior relationship already exists.

Clearly define goals for each commissioning project. Each commissioned work project exists in a context that is unique. The combination of commissioner, composer, performing musicians, time-frame, and peripheral circumstances creates this infinitely variable context. Commissioning agents should utilize the context of the commission to develop goals for the commission. The conductors, composers, and literature included in this study suggest that the goals of the commission should consider the students at the center of commission goal development. Goals and vision beyond the immediate student

impact may also be a consideration in the development stages. Answers to the following questions can assist in developing goals for commissioned works projects:

- What are the student learning outcomes to be achieved through this project?
- What are the motivating factors for this commission?
- Are there special circumstances that surround the project, such as a donation, special soloist, an event to celebrate, or a person to honor?
- Is there a composer residency planned in conjunction with the commission and, if so, what are the learning objectives for that residency?
- How might a commissioned work project support school district curriculum or incorporate community initiatives?

Answers to these questions coupled with clear, detailed goal development can lead to stronger organization and better project outcomes. Information contained within well-developed goals can assist in determining structural elements of the commission project. These structural elements will be discussed in greater detail in the following paragraphs. Mutual understanding of project goals helps composers to create musical works that fulfill those goals. Goals that are teacher designed or co-created with composers provide a foundation for outcome-focused lesson planning during rehearsals and preparation. Quality lesson planning leads to better student learning.

Select a format for commissioning that suits the goals for the project. As described in the previous chapter, individual commissions and consortium commissions each possess characteristics that make them more or less appropriate as choices for commissioning projects. The duration of the work, the prominence of the selected

composer, the time-frame during which the composition will be completed, the availability of the composer for interaction or residency, and the desired outcomes for the students are all issues that should be considered in selecting a commission format. For instance, if the primary goals of the project include generation of a new work of long duration from a prominent composer and a composer residency is not a priority, then a consortium commission might be the best route for achieving this goal. As another example, if frequent composer contact through residency is of greater importance than the substantiality of work, an individual commission with a less prominent, local composer might be the best choice. With creative thought, a commission format can be designed to meet the needs of the range of specific goals for any given project. The amount of available funds can also be of great influence in the choice of format.

Select a format that is appropriate for budget constraints. The two instances discussed in the previous paragraph represent two situations that could be approximately equivalent in cost. A commissioned work of long duration from a prominent composer can be extremely expensive. The addition of a composer residency would increase that cost. If this type of work is important to the goals of the commissioner, a consortium can provide a more affordable vehicle to meet that goal. The multiple contributors to the consortium distribute the cost amongst themselves. The individual contribution goes down as the number of contributors goes up.

For the adult agents in this study, the composer residency was a vital component to the goals of the projects. Within limited budgets, these commissioners enacted consortium and individual commissions to meet these goals. One particular case involved

the commissioning of a very expensive piece by a large consortium. In this case, the conductor was able to contribute to the consortium and schedule a residency, as well as remote communications, for less money than some of the other projects investigated in this study. Another of the cases included in this study was an independent commission that utilized a composer located within an hour's drive of the school site, which allowed for several composer visits for the smallest sum of money of all the cases. A third case involved a commission consortium with a larger contribution than the two cases in the preceding discussion and only one rehearsal of composer residency that was an additional cost. These three examples show the diversity of cost and variability of commission structure. With research, networking, goal setting, and creativity, the ideal commission structure can be found to match the goals and budget of any potential commissioner.

Make personal or phone contact with the composer. When initiating the commission process, conductors and composers alike recommended using phone or face-to-face conversations to pitch the proposal. Email can be used to establish a time for a personal or phone connection, but is not recommended for proposing a project. A voice conversation can provide a communicative avenue for the flow of ideas, questions, and answers that are necessary in those first moments of project proposal. The delays in response that are inherently part of email exchanges can hamper the flow of conversation and ideas. Once that initial conversation has taken place, email can serve as an effective way to document agreed upon details of the project.

Communicate goals and expectations clearly. Address every aspect of the commission project in conversation or by email. Any issue that is important to the

commissioner should be part of the communication, whether it is instrumentation, difficulty level, weaker sections in the ensemble, duration of the piece, mood or character of the piece, deadlines, payments, dates of residency, particular arrangements for travel, structure of residencies, or any other expectations that the commissioning conductor or composer might have. Make no assumptions. If a question exists, it should be asked.

Conversely, it is acceptable to leave certain aspects of the commission open-ended. In particular, composers and conductors in this study expressed that some of the best creative and musical results of commission projects resulted when the artistic parameters placed upon the composer were minimal. Minimal parameters often give composers the freedom to write music that is of the greatest artistic urgency to them. Open-ended creativity is something that should be discussed with the composer. Three important factors need to be understood when aspects of the commission are open-ended: (1) the agents must all understand what aspects are to be left open-ended, (2) the agents need to extend trust to one another pertaining to those open-ended aspects that they will be fulfilled to a satisfactory level, (3) there needs to be acceptance upon reception of those open-ended aspects of the project. As one of the composers in this study stated: “You can’t be upset about something you haven’t asked for.” With this in mind, if there is an important aspect of the commission it deserves conversation and agreement.

Be willing to listen to and understand the needs, requests, and ideas of the composers. Most composers who make their living writing music have a really good grasp of the workload they are capable of maintaining and the circumstances that they need to create for themselves to do their best work. If a composer’s timeline/fee and a

conductor's timeline/budget do not match on a particular project, the composer can be asked for other ideas of how a project might work. The composer might be able to adjust the scale of a project (and thus the timeline/cost) to a smaller level to make it work on the conductor's time-frame or budget.

Sometimes composers are unable to meet deadlines. It is in these instances that we see composers are regular human beings, just as the students make this realization during composer residencies. They have health and family issues, they get overcommitted, they meet roadblocks the same as anyone else in any other profession. There are times that the muse does not visit them and they simply can't write. In these instances, it is important to communicate. Express your desires for the project and be understanding of the composer's situation. In almost every instance, it is their most sincere desire to meet deadlines. Sometimes they can't.

One of the most valuable reasons for commissioning a composer and arranging a composer residency is to gain the musical perspective of another whose expertise is of another realm. If a commissioning conductor has sought out that different perspective, then the expertise of that perspective should be openly received. Seek out their ideas for the commissioned work or the residency. Embrace their ideas if they can work within the situation. Receptivity to the ideas of the composer can unlock solutions to problems or roadblocks that inhibit the progress of a project. Additionally, the composer might be able to share new ideas that could make the project even more special or impactful.

Negotiate. As with many business agreements, commissioned works are negotiable. Commissioners and composers likely will share their ideal terms at the outset

and hopefully common ground can be met. Areas that can be negotiated include, but are not limited to: deadlines, cost, duration, and residency conditions. Other aspects of the commission, such as instrumentation and difficulty level should be discussed and agreed upon, but are not necessarily items that need to be negotiated in a business sense, since a composer's inability to meet these requests could break the deal.

When finances or timeline are the limiting factors in reaching an agreement, negotiation can lead to solutions. As discussed in the preceding section, composers can often find creative ways to supply a piece within the means of a potential commissioner. Through communication of goals, hopes, and capabilities, a solution can often be found to get the project off the ground. Composers, particularly those with experience dealing with school commissions, can suggest ways to work around the factors that might inhibit forward progress with the process.

Other details of the agreement may or may not be negotiable. Items like score and part production, as well as rights retention might not be negotiable, depending upon the composer's existing contracts with publishers. Oftentimes, commissioning parties might be able to negotiate a performance exclusivity clause that permits only those who contributed to the commission to perform the work for a designated period of time. Printed dedications on the score and/or parts might also be negotiated.

Mutually create a written document that tracks all details of the agreement.

Depending upon the composer's association with publishing companies, a formal contract may or may not be a requirement of a commission agreement. If the composer's publisher or agency requires a contract, it is likely that the structure of that document will

be already established and the details will be variable according to the agreement reached. Even if no third party requires a contract, a contract may still raise the agents' overall comfort level. Many composers have a standard contract that they use. If the composer does not have a contract template, one can be acquired from a number of sources, including another composer or other colleague, and adapted to the specific needs of the project.

Some composers do not require a contract and even insist that one is not needed. A potential commissioner should not necessarily view this as a reason not to proceed, but should proceed with caution and leave a clear trail of documentation. The necessary details of the commission agreement can often be spelled out and agreed upon in a series of email exchanges. While these email exchanges would not serve as legal documents, they can serve as an arbiter if a dispute arises.

A majority of the composers and conductors who participated in this study reported having engaged in successful commission projects that did not involve formal contracts. Those agents suggested that in the absence of a formal contract, it is recommended that the agents only proceed with collaborators whom they trust, leaving a trail of documentation, and understanding that an agent's professional reputation can be damaged by a dispute. Although points of agreement can be documented informally, a single document in the form of a contract is recommended for clarity.

Be realistic about the abilities of the ensemble and honest about the desired difficulty of the music. When discussing the technical and musical abilities of the commissioning ensemble it is important that the conductor is honest and clear in

communications with the composer. Conversation between commissioning conductor and composer is a good starting point for this aspect of the process, but written and recorded examples can provide more clarity. Composers can assess the strengths and weaknesses of an ensemble by listening to high quality recordings provided by the commissioning conductor. When the composer is able to listen to the ensemble it also adds an objective perspective to the assessment rather than relying solely on the conductor's point of view.

Another method of communicating the abilities of the ensemble is to provide the composer with a few examples of existing repertoire that represent the desired difficulty of the commissioned work. With this information, the composer can review scores of these pieces to help determine instrument ranges, rhythmic complexities, and other technical aspects of the music that factor into the difficulty of the music. Regardless of the means of achieving this end, accurately matching the difficulty of the music with the abilities of the ensemble is vital to the success of the commission project.

Another way to approach matching the difficulty of the music with the abilities of the students is by seeking to **provide the students with an achievable challenge**. As discussed above, conductors and composers alike reported that “getting” the difficulty level correct was a very important factor in the educational and aesthetic outcomes of the project. When the composer accurately achieves the difficulty level, students will be challenged both technically and musically, while an aesthetically pleasing performance is well within their abilities. A commissioned work that is easier than the desired difficulty might not stretch the students technically or musically, thus diminishing the potential educational benefits of the project. A piece that is too difficult could result in a

performance that is not aesthetically pleasing to the performers, the conductor, the composer, or the audience and lacking in opportunities for student growth. While educational opportunities and student growth are available through a commissioned work project that results in a work that misses the difficulty level, these aspects can be maximized and extended when the difficulty level is challenging, but achievable.

If the work needs to have a particular character to satisfy the goals of the commission, communicate that information clearly. There are many different occasions for commissioning a work. Celebrations, commemorations, and memorials might be included amongst these occasions. Music that is appropriate for a celebration is often inappropriate for a memorial function and vice versa. If the occasion motivating the commission necessitates a certain character of music, it is vital that the composer knows the circumstances of the commission. This knowledge can help the composer and commissioner to avoid uncomfortable situations if the wrong character of music is composed due to lack of specificity or communication.

Often, commissioning projects are not associated with a particular occasion and the character of the music can be open-ended. These instances are discussed in previous paragraphs, but the point leads to the idea that **many composers appreciate artistic freedom. If no specific character is needed, leave the work up to the composer.** Some composers prefer to have as much freedom to compose music that meets their own personal artistic goals as possible while remaining within the confines of the commission arrangement. Other composers prefer to have as many details and parameters as possible clearly defined. Ask the composer what is preferred. Not only can discussion of these

issues lead to a better result in terms of the commissioned work, it can enlighten the commissioning conductor in regard to the variety of creative paths a composer might take to achieve the creation of new music.

Check in. Make contact with the composer from time to time during the composing phase of the process. Contact during this time serves several uses. Periodic contact can be an opportunity to ask questions about the composition process and answer any questions the composer might develop as the piece begins to take shape. Conversations with the composer during the process keep the project in the forefront of the composer's mind. This can also assist with pacing of the project and meeting delivery deadlines. A stronger interpersonal bond can be built between composer and conductor through periodic contact during the process, potentially leading to a more impactful residency and a lasting collegial relationship.

Make payments on time. Keep up with any agreed upon payments. Composers frequently do commission work on an installment plan, most often consisting of two payments. The first payment usually serves as a down payment and is made just after agreement is reached on all of the terms of the commission. The second payment is usually made after the score and parts are delivered. While this is not the only payment schedule that can be possible it represents a common model. Trust amongst the agents has been a repeated idea that has emerged in this study. Trust is a vital component in this issue. The commissioner and composer must both act in good faith with regard to delivery of payments and the commissioned work. Timely payments deserve a timely delivery of the piece. Timely delivery of the piece deserves timely payments of money to

the composer. Any major delays in delivery of either are a violation of good faith.

Many school-based organizations operate on purchase order systems that can take weeks to process payments. In these cases planning ahead is important to process payments in a timely fashion. This complexity of timely payments is compounded when a consortium commission has been organized. With a consortium commission the composer needs to be paid according to the predetermined schedule from a pool of money that comes from different sources. If participating in a consortium commission, conductors need to make payments on time. Failure to do so affects the other commissioning parties. If a conductor is organizing a consortium commission, advanced planning and preemptive communication are necessary to acquire funds from contributors and keep the project on schedule.

Study the score. Know the piece. Ask questions. Prepare to the utmost. Score study and preparation are key components of effective rehearsals for any conductor (Battisti & Garofalo, 1990). Knowledge of the score in a commissioned work also leads to a more enriching experience for the conductor and students, as well. Conductors should not only study the score to a point at which they can facilitate good rehearsals in preparation for performance, but also to the point that they have a great depth of knowledge about the piece. If questions arise during the study process, the conductor can contact the composer and ask those questions. Answers to those questions might not only clarify a conductor's interpretation of the piece, but might also shed light on parts of the music the composer might choose to consider for revision. When a conductor has a clear vision of the music through study and question/answer sessions with the composer, a

more authentic artistic representation of the piece is possible.

Implore students to practice their parts. Prepare to the utmost. The conductor must prepare for effective rehearsals, but the students must also contribute to the preparation process. Well-prepared individuals who have practiced their own parts will contribute more positively to the ensemble as a whole. As with the conductor's preparation, individual student preparation allows greater potential for a more authentic realization of the composer's intentions. Additionally, a well-prepared ensemble will reap the benefits of deeper learning during composer residency through higher-level artistic engagement with the composer.

Have the best rehearsals of your lives. Embrace the rehearsal and preparation process with an open mind. No other human beings have ever put this new piece of music into sound before this moment. The experience of bringing new music to life is a special, once-in-a-lifetime experience; enjoy the uniqueness of that process. Preparation of a new piece is truly breaking new ground that will cease to be new once it is broken; do so with enthusiasm, care, and abandon. While the preceding words are certainly clichés, they are genuinely applicable to the process of preparing a new musical work for premiere. Attention to detail, devotion to excellence in performance, fearlessness in artistry, and expressive musicianship will make the experience even more memorable.

Double check and then triple check dates and arrangements for residency. A simple misunderstanding or a lack of clear communication can ruin a residency. For every residency there are a great number of details that need to be arranged and confirmed. The dates of residency are first and foremost among those details. Arrival and

departure schedules should be communicated and confirmed. The agents should have a clear understanding of who is responsible for making and paying for those arrangements. Transportation to and from airports, rental vehicles, meal planning, and overnight accommodations are all important considerations in a smooth running residency.

School schedules change frequently. Communication of any changes in schedule that would affect the interaction of the composer with the students is of vital importance. Like other professionals, composers often value their time greatly and wish that their time be productive and respected. Communication of schedule changes helps them to use their time efficiently and effectively.

Come to a mutual understanding of the format of the residency. There can be many components to a composer residency, including rehearsals, master classes, private lessons, question/answer sessions, meet and greets, etc. Composers have varying levels of comfort in their interactions with students, school officials, parents, and others. Some composers are very comfortable conducting their own music, while others would prefer to make comments from the audience. Residency rehearsals can take on a variety of forms. Discussion with the composer can yield rehearsals that will be most effective for the performance and educational for the students, while working within the composer's comfort level. The format of the residency and modes of engagement between the composer and others associated with the commission should be mutually agreed upon given the goals of the project and the availability and comfort of the composer.

Create many avenues for communication with the composer for students, parents, community, and administrators. A composer's presence on campus is an

excellent learning opportunity that can include a wide community that extends beyond the conductor and student performers. If the conductor is agreeable to social engagements, meetings with administrators, parents, and audience members can provide a foundation of understanding of the nature of commissioned works projects for those whose roles lie outside of the process. This study did not specifically examine interaction between the composer and persons on the periphery of the process; however, several conductors and composers discussed the importance of engaging this group of people. Administrators and parents of students are often the primary financial supporters of commissioned works projects. Increased understanding of the outcomes of commissioned works projects can lead to ongoing support of subsequent projects. Composers can interact with administrators, parents, and audience members through receptions, dinners, question/answer sessions, meet and greets, or other events.

Interaction between composers and students can take place through a variety of settings to deepen and extend student learning. These interactions can take place on campus through in-person interactions or off campus using a variety of technological means. For on campus composer residencies, consider arranging sessions for students and composers to interact that are more informal than rehearsals. In more casual interactions, students have the opportunity to have one-on-one conversations with the composer in which they can ask questions they may hesitate to ask in a more structured setting. It is often in these settings that students also have a deeper realization that composers are regular people.

There are a variety of modalities for interaction that can take place off campus, as

well. Skype and FaceTime technologies can provide composers with an update of rehearsal progress and students with the opportunity to meet the composer prior to residency. As students and composers develop interpersonal relationships, those interactions can be extended through technologies such as email. These extended interactions are of particular value for students who are interested in composing themselves. Composers who have participated in residencies are often willing to advise students on how to continue to learn more about composing, offer feedback on student compositions, or even arrange for ongoing remote private lessons.

Coach students on how to engage the composers during interactions. Provide students with guidance regarding the appropriate timing and content of questions and conversation. Uncomfortable moments can be avoided by informing students when they can ask the composers specific types of questions. Students might have excellent questions for composers, such as: “How did you learn to compose?” That type of question is perfectly appropriate for a question/answer session or an informal gathering, but is not best timed during a rehearsal with the composer. Students might also ask personal questions or make other remarks that would make a visiting composer uncomfortable. Often, those types of situations can be avoided with a little instruction from the students’ conductor.

The opportunity to interact with a living composer is a rare occurrence for many students. With that in mind, students should be encouraged to ask questions and gather information that piques their curiosity. Absorbing perspectives that only the composer can provide is a vital component of a composer residency. Students should be encouraged

to take advantage of the opportunity to learn from the composer's perspective by asking questions that are appropriately timed and of appropriate subject matter.

Be open minded and flexible. During a composer residency, the composer may ask the conductor or students to try things that are outside their comfort zone in terms of performance or musical interpretation. Understanding that the composer makes these requests from a genuine perspective and motivation can open learners to new and valuable musical ideas. If the conductor and student performers accept that the composer's requests are earnestly motivated and come from the perspective of the creator of the art, it can also alleviate feelings of defensiveness or territorial reactions on the part of the conductor and performers. A willingness to try new things as guided by the composer can lead to learning opportunities for both conductor and student performers.

Soak it all in. Enjoy the music making and the artistic moments. **Make recordings.** Document the moments by making high quality recordings. All of the agents, as well as parents, administrators, and audience members may want to relive the world premiere of a new commissioned work. High quality recordings are of great value to composers for promotional reasons and as a reference for future revisions or works. For conductors, recordings serve a variety of purposes as historical markers and portfolio fodder, amongst other uses. For students and others, recordings make for great memorabilia.

Evaluate. Evaluation of the process from a variety of angles can serve to inform further projects. Seek the input of the students, composers, and self-reflection to understand the aspects of the project that were impactful in a positive way and which

aspects need to be further developed to improve for future ventures. Questionnaires (either paper or electronic) can be used to mine information, as well as discussion amongst agents. Journaling can also serve as an effective form of reflection. A strong sense of self-efficacy in the organization of a commissioned works project is an important part of growth for commissioning conductors, because they may want to commission more works.

Do it again. The following question was posed to the conductors and the composers in this study: “What suggestions do you have for someone who is considering commissioning a new work for the first time?” Several respondents, both from composing and conducting groups, responded quickly with an enthusiastic: “Do it!” This short phrase captures the enthusiasm of those who have participated in commissioned works projects. The rewards of the process motivate commissioners to pursue subsequent projects and inspire composers to continue accepting commission proposals. Reflection on the process and repetition of the process produce refined efforts that may yield better results with each new endeavor.

Each new commission project provides opportunities to cultivate additional or more focused goals. Ensuing commission projects present the possibility for refined composer selection, improved communication, enhanced composer residency structure, more developed learning outcomes, and myriad other process improvements. Superior commissioned works projects are possible through the process of experience, reflection, and successive undertakings. When commissioners complete multiple projects, deeper learning is possible for the students and conductors, composers are further engaged in

musical creation, and repertoire is expanded. These results can be visible with single commissioned work project attempts, but generate more value when informed by experience through multiple attempts.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the findings of this study, several opportunities for further research could be valuable to the extant body of research. Case study research in great depth from the perspective of any single agent involved in a commissioned work project could yield insights into roles, attitudes, actions, and perceptions of that agent. The impact of the outcomes of commissioned works projects on the musical growth of the students who participate in the projects might be of particular interest in future research.

An historical survey of commissioned works projects would give perspective to the contributions to the repertoire made through these efforts. The scale of such research would be enormous. Therefore, limitations of scope could be employed with subsequent research studies continuing the compilation efforts. These limitations might include genre or medium, such as band, orchestra, choir, chamber music, or jazz ensembles. Further limitations might also include the age level of the ensembles for whom the works were commissioned, such as middle school, high school, university, or combinations. A broader historical view of commissioning projects might help identify past trends that could inform future commissioning efforts.

An in-depth study of the factors that commissioning conductors consider when commissioning a composer might provide information for conductors who experience difficulty with that selection process. A study of this nature could focus on the simple act

of acquiring a commissioned work together or separately from a composer residency. Additionally, such a study might examine the factors considered in either situation.

A research study examining conductors' motivations for commissioning works could serve as a foundational reference for commissioned work project goal setting and vision development. This type of study might include comparisons of specific aspects of independent versus consortium commissions as they relate to the goals and visions of commissioners.

Examination of agent self-evaluations in commissioned works projects is another area of research within this topic that could yield beneficial knowledge. Only one of the participants in this study discussed reflection or evaluation of the project. The information that the agents would gain from structured reflection or evaluation of the project might be of great value for subsequent projects. Research into the processes and component parts of such evaluation could prove valuable to those individuals who seek continued commissioned works projects.

A case study of a single commissioned work project as it is happening could provide details of its inner workings *in situ*. This type of research might be categorized as a field study and could produce information about the process from the eyes of an outside observer. Data from this type of research study could then be compared to perceptions of the participating agents gathered from their own reflective evaluations.

Future research endeavors might include global examinations of a collection of projects or narrowly focused investigations of a single aspect of the concept. Field research or action research might also serve as vehicles for increased understanding of

the processes involved in commissioned works projects. The idea of commissioned works projects in school music ensembles presents a variety of future research possibilities.

Conclusion

The research questions guiding this study sought to understand not only the processes entailed in the commissioning of a new work for high school music ensemble, but interpersonal relationships that exist within that process. The results of this study have enabled me to construct a framework for the commissioning process that potential commissioning conductors might implement in future projects. These results also point to the importance of the interpersonal relationships within the process to the successful outcome of the project. Some of the key components of positive interpersonal relationships include: (1) clear, honest, and detailed communication between the agents; (2) the establishment of personal connections between the agents; (3) a high level of commitment on the part of all of the agents; and (4) engagement of others beyond the agents, including parents, administrators, and the broader school and local community. In this sense, the process of commissioning a new work for school music ensemble successfully is relational, as well as transactional.

Appendix A

Each interview with the conductors consisted of the following questions, allowing for additional follow-up questions as necessary for clarification or expansion of ideas:

1. What factors do you consider in selecting a composer to commission?
2. What kinds of parameters do you discuss with the composer prior to composing the work?
3. I'm interested in the interaction between the composer-in-residence and your students. When there has been a composer residency in conjunction with a commission, what behaviors and reactions have you observed with regard to the interactions between the composer and your students?
4. What are some of the situations or interactions that have been difficult or challenging in your experience with commissioned works?
5. What aspects of the commissions you've participated in have been particularly rewarding or gratifying for you and your students?
6. How has your participation in commissioned works impacted you as a musician and as a teacher?
7. How has your participation in commissioned works, and particularly composer residencies, impacted your students?
8. I'm interested to know the differences between independent commissions and consortium commissions. What are the advantages or disadvantages to both approaches?

9. What are potential roadblocks or challenges in initiating a commissioned works project? What can one do to overcome these challenges and get the process started?
10. What suggestions do you have for a teacher who is considering commissioning a work for the first time?
11. What are some of the keys to sustaining a commissioning program or generating multiple commissioning projects?
12. Is there anything that we didn't cover that you would like to add?

Each interview with the composers consisted of the following questions, allowing for additional follow-up questions as necessary for clarification or expansion of ideas:

1. Please describe the initial stages of the commissioning process.
2. What information do you ask of the commissioning conductor? How does that information influence the composition?
3. I'm interested in the interactions between all of the people involved in the commission. Can you describe some of the interactions you've had with conductors that have been memorable in either a positive or negative way? How about interactions with student performers?
4. In what ways have school commissions and associated residencies served your personal or musical goals? In what ways have these experiences influenced you as a creative artist?

5. In your experience, what behaviors have the conductors and student performers exhibited that have made the commission process particularly successful or difficult?
6. How have your experiences with school commissions and/or residencies shaped your work with other school ensembles?
7. In what ways is working with a school ensemble different than working with a professional ensemble when considering the commissioning process?
8. From the perspective of a composer, what suggestions do you have for a music teacher considering commissioning a work for the first time?
9. Is there anything that we didn't cover that you would like to add?

Each questionnaire for the students contained the following questions:

1. Considering the time just before you began rehearsals on the commissioned work, what did your conductor do or say to prepare you for the experience? What were your thoughts about the piece prior to playing it?
2. During the rehearsal process, did your conductor approach the piece differently than a typical piece for performance? If so, how?
3. Describe the rehearsals with the composer. In what ways were they similar to or different from regular rehearsals with the ensemble? In what ways did the composer's involvement make a difference in your experience with the piece?
4. What were you able to observe about how the composer and your conductor worked together? What were your impressions of their relationship?

5. In what ways did working with the composer impact you as a musician?
6. Is there anything about your experience with the commissioned work that you would like to add?

Appendix B

The data analysis process yielded a list of thirty-six repeating ideas. Through examination of frequency of occurrence and similarity of content, those ideas were distilled into five themes that emerged from the data as transcribed from the participant interviews. The following paragraphs list these themes and discuss the important component parts of their content, as well as their relevance to the process of a commissioned work project and the interpersonal relationships entailed in that process. These themes take the form of recommendations for conductors who commission musical works for their school ensembles. Each recommendation is summarized in one sentence and emphasized with boldface font. Explication of each theme follows in the proceeding paragraphs.

Recommendation 1

Clear, quality communication throughout the commission process is a key component of a positive commissioned work experience. The quality of communication between the agents is important throughout the commissioned work process. Personal communication between the commissioning conductor and the composer prior to project proposal provides a foundation of personal and artistic common ground upon which a project can be built. Clear communication at the outset of the project defines and articulates the agents' goals, intentions, and expectations. Clear communication at the outset and prior to composer residency also alleviates misunderstandings regarding deadlines, dates, and logistic considerations. A more fulfilling experience can be gained by all agents through mutual understanding of

expectations from clarity of communications.

Detailed communication during the preparation and rehearsal periods of the process between conductor and composer and between conductor and student performers leads to a more authentic representation of the composer's artistic intentions for the commissioned work. The conductor's study of the score and corroboration of understanding through conversation with the composer bears importance in producing a genuine representation of the composer's aspirations for the work. The ability of the conductor to transmit the composer's intent to the student performers requires knowledge of the composer's intent through study and corroboration, as well as clear communication in preparatory rehearsals.

Quality communication between the composer and student performers and between the composer and conductor during the composer residency leads to both a higher quality performance of the work and deep learning experiences for all of the agents. In this setting, quality communication can be understood as insights conveyed through the unique perspective of the composer as creator of the composition. Through quality communication and interaction, the student performers and conductor have a greater possibility of producing a performance that is as close as possible to an authentic representation of the composer's intentions.

Recommendation 2

Articulation and definition of many details, such as duration, instrumentation, delivery and payment deadlines, difficulty level, and character of piece desired at the outset of the process leads to more satisfactory outcomes for the

agents. Discussion of and attention to the fine details of the commission agreement can leave the agents with a greater sense of fulfilled expectations. Agreeing to and meeting deadlines for payments and music delivery, aids in maintaining positive interpersonal relationships and keeps the preparation process on schedule. Delinquency in payment can result in delayed composition, thus leading to strained relations between the composer and commissioner. Delayed composition can lead to late delivery. Late delivery can result in less time for the ensemble to prepare for the premiere. This cycle of lateness can be preempted by declaration of and adherence to payment and delivery schedules.

It is important for the commissioning conductor and composer to discuss the details of the commissioned work itself. Ensemble instrumentation varies from group to group, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of sections within that ensemble. The commissioned work will “fit” the ensemble better when there is mutual understanding of these details between the conductor and composer.

Understanding and achieving the desired level of difficulty for the composition is a challenging task for the composer. The commissioning conductor and composer can use a variety of means to achieve understanding of the desired level of difficulty. These means include, but are not limited to discussion of the abilities of the ensemble, sharing of recordings of the ensemble performing, and identifying existing pieces of music that represent the desired level of difficulty. Achievement of appropriate level of difficulty by the composer is critical to the success of the commissioned work project. An accurate portrayal of the ensemble’s abilities and a clear understanding of those abilities on the part of the composer can yield a piece that matches those abilities most appropriately.

It is important for the commissioning conductor to communicate whether or not a specific character or style is desired for the commissioned work. Depending whether or not the commission is connected to a special occasion, such as a celebration or memorial, the character of the commissioned work might be categorically appropriate or inappropriate. The conductor and composer might discuss the occasion for the composition at any level of depth, but even the mere acknowledgement of the existence of such an occasion will certainly influence the content of the work.

Recommendation 3

A composer residency in conjunction with the commissioned work deepens the impact of the experience for the agents by providing each agent with an artistically authentic learning experience. Each of the agents reaps benefits from a composer residency connected with a commissioned work project. For the composer, the opportunity to hear a newly composed work in person in rehearsals prior to the performance is an incredibly valuable opportunity. In these first hearings of the work, the composer is able to determine if its intentions as written on the page are communicated accurately in sound. Often these intentions deal with issues of balance between the instruments or sections in the performing ensemble, dynamic pacing, or clarity of intended style. With the information gathered in hearings prior to the premiere, the composer can offer suggestions to the ensemble to help them better convey those intentions. These hearings might also lead to revisions of variable magnitude that may be implemented before or after the premiere performance.

When the conductor and students are privy to the revision process during a composer residency, they gain insight into the creative process of music composition. Through the interactions with the composer, they learn what notations are used to produce the effects desired by the composer, as well as underlying factors that led the composer to utilize those specific notations in those specific moments to create the intended sounds. Many of these insights are specific and unique to the composer-as-creator of the music. This perspective can only be accessed through direct interaction with the composer.

During composer residencies, the agents make personal connections that are mutually beneficial. Students learn that composers are regular people and through that realization make the connection that composing is an action that is possible for their own lives. In some cases, students receive feedback on their own compositions from composers in residence and develop mentoring relationships that are ongoing. Through growing interpersonal relationships, conductors and composers often lay the groundwork for future commissioned work projects together or with others through professional networking.

A composer residency connected with a commissioned work often generates a level of excitement and deep educational engagement amongst the agents that is not often present in the preparation and performance of a pre-existing musical work. All of the agents are participating in the creation of art that is all new, forging new artistic territory. The energy that results from this excitement can extend beyond the associated agents and be transmitted to the audience, as well.

Recommendation 4

The most rewarding experiences stem from a high level of commitment and preparation on the part of all the agents. Conversely, a lack of commitment or preparation leads to frustration on the part of the agents. A composer who is committed to clearly articulated goals, vision, as well as the technical and logistic details of the commissioned work project has a better opportunity to create a piece of music that aligns with the learning objectives for the student performers. A composer who is uninformed of these issues or uncommitted to meeting these requirements might produce a work that is inappropriate for the students in a variety of ways. While a commissioned work that is inappropriate in one or more ways might not spell doom for the project, it will not maximize potential learning outcomes for the students.

The importance of score study and preparation in enabling conductors to facilitate effective rehearsals is well documented (Battisti & Garofalo, 1990; Corporon, 1997; Green, 1992; Labuta, 1989). This importance is compounded when preparing and performing a completely new work for which no reference recordings exist. To produce the best possible performance, the conductor must know the score very well. As a component of score study and knowledge, the conductor may seek the counsel of the composer if questions arise regarding the composer's intent. Answers to questions that result from score study serve to better the preparation of the piece.

The student performers have individual contributions to make. If the student performers practice their parts to assure that they are free of technical flaws, then the conductor has more freedom to address ensemble performance issues and expression of

musical intent. Individual preparation on the part of the students is vital to accurate aural transmission of the composer's intent.

Maximized preparation on the part of the conductor, individual student performers, and the collective ensemble lays the foundation for a more aesthetically pleasing performance. This process seems to serve an end, but is also a means in itself to gain access to higher levels of musical learning. Better preparation and a more aesthetically pleasing performance permits the composer to contribute more artistically significant input during residency, thus deepening student learning. By contributing more, each of the agents is able to gain more affect from the outcomes of the process.

When any part of this cycle of preparation breaks down, the outcomes are not maximized. If a composer is not committed to the goals and details of the piece or the conductor fails to adequately communicate those issues, it may not result in an aesthetically pleasing performance or impactful learning for the students. If the conductor or students fail to adequately prepare, the result might be a less attractive performance and lessened student learning. Breakdowns in commitment or preparation do not necessarily identify with completely failed projects. Breakdowns occur by degree and magnitude and can be egregious or mild. The existence of such a breakdown, whether great or small, simply represents an opportunity for depth of impact that is lessened by degree. The greater the breakdown, the more impact of outcome is lost. Great failures in commitment or preparation by any of the agents can sometimes result in frustration and resentment, particularly if one or two of the agents exhibit a high level of commitment and preparation.

Recommendation 5

The agents valued commissioning underrepresented composers to contribute music to the band repertoire while simultaneously engaging young musicians with those newly composed works. The content and quality of repertoire in the band medium has been the source of much debate and focus of great effort since the 1950s. Band conductors, composers, and music education organizations have endeavored to deepen and diversify the repertoire during the last six decades. The influence of the efforts of these individuals and organizations is reflected in conductors who commission new works for band. In light of these efforts, the focus of the expansion of band repertoire has been on commissioning composers who are underrepresented in the band medium (Battisti, 1995).

In recent decades, music teachers, and more specifically band directors, have been implored to carefully select repertoire with aesthetic content that meets the educational needs of their student ensembles (Reynolds, 2000). This movement has been a professional reaction on the part of music teachers, conductors, and music teacher educators to the promulgation of aesthetically and artistically homogeneous music designed by publishers to generate high sales volume. The act of commissioning a new musical work can be viewed as a way for teachers to take part in the building of repertoire that reflects their own aesthetic tastes and what they might determine are the educational needs of their students in addition to or opposition to purchasing existing music that might be marketed by publishing houses. Defining the attributes of words like quality, reputable, underrepresented, homogeneous, etc. is beyond the scope of this study.

Nonetheless, in their own words, the commissioning conductors, as well as the composers who participated in this study reported that the production of quality music by first-rate composers was of importance.

The conductors who participated in this study focused on providing musically educational experiences for their own students through creation of new musical works and interaction with the composers who created those works. The composers identified with and shared the vision of the conductors through communicative discussion. Each of these agents contributed insights most relevant to their area of expertise to achieve the mutually agreed upon goals. These goals were centered upon the educational needs of the students in the commissioning ensemble as determined by the commissioning conductor.

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