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**Religious Worship Music in The United House of Prayer
for All People: A Brief Examination of the Shout Band
Tradition and its use of the Trombone.**

By:
Joseph Lee Jefferson

Research Document submitted to the
College of Creative Arts
At West Virginia University
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Doctor of Musical Arts
In
Trombone Performance

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2015

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ABSTRACT

Religious Worship Music in The United House of Prayer for All People: A Brief Examination of the Shout Band Tradition and its use of the Trombone.

Joseph Lee Jefferson

This document investigates the cultural and historical significance of the use of the trombone in the shout band of the United House of Prayer for All People the Church on the Rock of the Apostolic Faith, a predominately African-American religious institution founded by Marcelino da Graca (also referred to as Bishop Charles M. Grace).¹ Specific attention will be placed on the use of the trombone as a pillar of musical expression in the shout band tradition. Research has been limited to the most prominent House of Prayer houses located in Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Sources for this document have been gathered from published books, dissertations, articles, on-line sources, discography and personal interviews.

This study discusses the life of Marcelino da Graca and his immigration from the Cape Verde Island of Brava to the United States until his death in 1960. Topics pertinent to Marcelino's assimilation in American culture as well as the establishment and expansion of the House of Prayer will also be investigated and scrutinized. Furthermore, an exploration of the shout band and its history will be discussed, outlining its hierarchy, specific roles, and pedagogical practices throughout the ensemble. A portion of this research will discuss trombonists who were "made" in the shout band and who utilized this particular tradition as a platform to pursue musical endeavors in both sacred and secular musical arenas.

The states of Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina were visited to obtain first-hand accounts of past and present shout band members. These first-hand accounts have provided significant individual insight and details about participants' personal House of Prayer knowledge and shout band history. Lastly, interviewees were allowed to expound on their overall religious experience both as a member of the House of Prayer and as a member of the shout band.

The purpose of this document is to advance the study of this under researched topic because of its importance to American music culture as well as the trombone community at large. It is my hope that this document serves as a worthy addition to the current research on this topic by providing historical background as well as first-hand accounts of the use of the trombone in the shout band tradition.

¹ Hereafter, the United House of Prayer for All People the Church on the Rock of the Apostolic Faith will be referred to as the House of Prayer.

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I could improve my research document. The time you devoted helping me achieve my academic goals speaks volumes about your character as a person as well as a colleague. A very special thanks goes to Jodie Lewis for always tolerating the copious amounts of questions I asked while I was in residence. No matter how busy you were, you always stopped to assist me when I was in a bind. Thanks! To Kenneth Carr, Hank Bilal, and Jonathan Burrell, thank you for giving me the opportunity to interview you. I appreciate you taking time out of your busy schedules to meet with me and discuss your previous shout band experiences. Your candor and contribution to my research was extremely valuable and greatly appreciated.

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TERMS

- The term *house* is an abbreviation commonly used by members referring to The United House of Prayer for All People (The actual church: i.e building).
- The term *made* refers to where a trombonist began his initial trombone playing/training in the United House of Prayer for All People. (Trombonists who began playing in The United House of Prayer faith will often say that they were *made* in that particular religious faith).
- The *shout band* is a traditional, soul-based musical style that arose in some predominantly African-American Protestant churches in the 1920s.
- The *band leaders* typically consist of one or two trombonists who play contrasting melodic passages within a given musical selection. The *leaders* initiate the chorus, verses as well as lead the call and response between the two trombonists. *Leaders* employ the use of improvisation combined with extended techniques such as glissandos and multi-phonics.
- The *run horn section* is the section of the shout band that serves as a countermelody to the musical accompaniment. Musically, the *Run Horn Section* uses a consistent heavy slide vibrato.
- The *background section* maintains the structural chordal foundation for any particular musical selection played by the shout band. The *background section* is normally comprised of the younger, less experienced players in the shout band.

- The *bass horn* is also known as the modern sousaphone and provides the bass line for the shout band. Improvisation is a tool used to add musical variety to the bass line.
- The *set timing* sustains the backbeat as well as the consistent musical pulse for the entire ensemble. The Set Timing usually plays a shaved down drum set which includes the bass drum, snare drum and a hi-hat.
- The *back time* is the background musical accompaniment played at a low dynamic volume. The *Back Time* music provides a musical setting where churchgoers can “shout” and worship (this is often exhibited via churchgoers dancing and/or swaying from side-to-side).

I. INTRODUCTION

"To me, music is conversation between God and I and he allows the world to listen in on it!" - Kenneth Carr

Over a decade ago while driving through the streets of Washington, DC, the sweet sound of trombones rang throughout the neighborhood causing me to pull over and observe this unplanned performance. The ensemble I witnessed utilized trombones as well as other brass instruments in a way that I had never heard previously. The trombones played with a unique singing quality, which reminded me of my childhood when my mother would sing in church. Therefore, I immediately began to parallel this particular style of trombone playing to that of a gospel singer. The group was comprised of trombones, baritone horn, sousaphone and a drum-set. After listening further, I realized the style in which they played was reminiscent of the New Orleans Brass Band style of the late 19th century. I discovered that the ensemble, known as a shout band, was a part of a religious institution: The United House of Prayer for All People. This instrumentation immediately separated the House of Prayer from all other religious music ensembles that I had ever encountered in my then 18 years of life. The shout band embodies a soul-based musical style comprised of the cross-pollination of jazz, blues, gospel, and dixieland. In addition to the marriage of styles, the shout band utilizes upbeat tempos infused with West African techniques, such as call and response and the use of ostinatos. Although I am not a member of this particular religious faith, the conviction of the performance sparked my interest to further investigate this ensemble. In my preliminary

research, I discovered there was little published information on the United House of Prayer and its shout band. The information that was published provided scant first person narratives from current and past members of the shout band tradition.

Surprisingly, throughout my undergraduate studies at Norfolk State University, I encountered more House of Prayer trombonists when I joined the university's marching band. After several rehearsals and multiple sidebar conversations, I learned that most of these trombonists were self-taught. The large majority of the House of Prayer trombonist did not engage in conventional ways of learning set forth by academic standards. Instead, they acquired all of their skills from being submerged in the shout band tradition from a very early age. Instantly, I noticed these trombonists demonstrated an unwitty natural mastery of the trombone as well as keen grasp of aural skills techniques, which allowed these individuals to pick up music quickly in rote learning environments. Although these individuals lacked certain fundamental skills, such as basic music reading abilities, their deficiencies were offset by their overall strong work ethic toward trombone playing in general. Before and after rehearsals, it became commonplace to hear these individuals play gospel motifs using improvisation infused with a heavy slide vibrato, which added a unique singing quality to the shape of the musical lines. Though I was beginning to understand the shout band tradition and its unique use of the trombone, my experiences led to many more questions. Eleven years later and now as a Doctoral Candidate in Trombone Performance at West Virginia University, I still find myself inspired and dedicated to advance the study of this under researched topic because of its importance to the trombone community at large.

Further research, coupled with a more general understanding, of the United House of Prayers shout band—specifically, the role of the trombone within it—is necessary.

Review of Literature

The time period of 1960 – 2001 is a significant period of time for the United House of Prayer for All People as well as the Shout Band. During this time, the religious faith and its flourishing ensemble underwent several transitions and developments, which are still in use today. The shout band tradition, which originated in African American Protestant churches in North Carolina, is the primary source for worship music and devotion within The United House of Prayer for All people.

As I began my initial my research, I examined what types of sources were of value and needed to be included in this document. I immediately disregarded entries that did not present specific information pertaining to the use of the trombone in the Shout Band, The United House of Prayer for All People as a religious faith or it's founder Charles Manuel "Sweet Daddy" Grace. I also began searching for items such as articles, which covered first hand accounts of church services as well as Shout Band performances. In addition to the available articles, I scrutinized Dissertations found in *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses* until I found those I that understood to be of importance. The use of West Virginia Universities Library website helped me gather information from the following databases: *JSTOR*, *Pro Quest Dissertation & Theses* and *RILM Abstracts of Music Literature*. Even with the limited amount published research on this topic,

significant time was spent narrowing down my results to find items that were of most validity to my research.

Dr. Sherri Damon's *The Trombone in the Shout Band of the United House of Prayer for All People* will be a highly integral component in the cumulative assimilation of this information. Dr. Damon's dissertation offers a comprehensive perspective of the Shout Band's origin, significance, and emergence as well as The United House of Prayer's founder, Charles Manuel "Sweet Daddy" Grace. Additionally, Dr. Damon discusses the originating culture of the Cape Verde Island in Brava—the birthplace of Charles Manuel Grace. Moreover, the African-American culture's impact on the shout band as well as the incorporation of several West African traditions such as the "ring- shout," "call and response" and the passing of Oral Traditions in shout band music are also addressed. Dr. Elizabeth Brune's *Sweet daddy grace: The Life and Times of a Modern Day Prophet* will also play an integral role in the subsequent development of this study. The dissertation's specific focus on Charles Grace from his arrival from the Cape Verde Islands in 1904 through his ascension to power as Bishop Charles Manuel Grace until his death in 1960. This document provides acute insight into the development and the cultivation of the religious denomination known as The United House of Prayer for All People.

Pertinent information relative to the denomination's infrastructure will be garnered from Dr. Tom Hanchett's article "God's Trombones: The Shout Band tradition in the United House of Prayer for All People". The content of this article references specific information applicable to the operations of The United House of Prayer for All People 's Charlotte, North Carolina, location. The article is reflective of Dr. Hanchett's personal experience when he visited the "Mother

House” in Charlotte, North Carolina. In addition, Dr. Hanchett speaks of how The House of Prayer evolved out of the Pentecostal Holiness movement in the early twentieth century. Mainly, however, the article provides insight essential to the validity of this particular subject matter.

For a detailed prospectus and timeline of the most prominent shout bands, Nick Sptizer’s article *“Saints’ Paradise: Trombone shout bands—The men and their music”* provides a wealth of information regarding the most prominent “Houses” as well as the names of the most influential trombonists belonging to the various shout bands along the east coast. The article also provides an in-depth account of performances, worship services as well as personal experiences and perspectives gathered throughout attending various religious services.

Recordings such as Kenny Carr and The Tigers *Dancing with Daddy G*” and *“Make a Joyful Noise: Sound that Shout Band Brass* along with other live video performances will be reviewed as they provide substantial value in their auditory and visual nature. Although Kenny Carr and the Tigers is one of the most renowned groups who have recorded and exposed the style and essence of the shout band on a large platform, other trombonists who began playing in the House of Prayer will also be discussed and highlighted. The House of Prayer recording *Saint’s Paradise- Trombone Shout Bands from The United House of Prayer* is another valuable source as it features six of the most prominent shout bands: Madison’s Lively Stones, McCollough Sons of Thunder, The Happyland Band, The Madison Prayer Band, The Clouds of Heaven, and The Kings of Harmony. This CD compilation was recorded during the timeframe of 1990 - 1996 and serves as a perfect representation of the art of the shout band music and style.

Scope And Limitation of The Study

Although interviews will be conducted with current and past members of the United House of Prayer for all people, the primary time period of focus for this document will be from the death of Charles Manuel “Sweet Daddy” Grace in 1960 to 2001. Since most of the published documents pertinent to this topic were published around the beginning of the 21st century, the aforementioned forty-year timeframe serves as a significant period of time that witnessed the development and expansion of the Shout Band as well as the religious faith.

Research Methodology

Two primary research methods will be used to facilitate this study. Information will be obtained via scholarly publications, such as articles, dissertations and recordings (audio and video). Only highly credible resources will be consulted and used for this particular section of the research. An acute examination of these materials will be used to identify authentic, relevant, and pertinent information.

II. The United House of Prayer for All People: Brief Background

Although there are no official records that document the birth of Marcelino Manuel da Graca, it appears that he was born between 1891 and 1894 in the Cape Verde Islands on the Island of Brava. Raised with both parents, Manuel and Gertrude, Marcelino was brought up under the Catholic faith along with his brother, Benventura, and his three sisters, Eugenia, Sylvia and Louise. Living in one of the most prominent islands in Cape Verde, the Island of Brava was noted for its varying degrees of social status. Since Marcelino was of a lighter complexion and spoke fluent Portuguese as well as some English, it is assumed that his social status was higher than those who were of a darker complexion with little to no formal education.²

In 1902, the da Graca family moved to the United States aboard a ship named the *Freeman* to seek prosperity and more employment opportunities.³ Although Marcelino did not accompany his parents at this time, ship manifests show that he visited the United States in 1903 and took up permanent residence in 1904.⁴ Upon Marcelino's arrival at the port of New Bedford, Massachusetts, he was immediately introduced into a new social hierarchy in the United States, which only acknowledged two varying degrees of social status: American Negro or Caucasian. Now labeled as an American Negro, Marcelino found himself limited in his resources and was forced to live and thrive in an unfamiliar land.

² Marie W. Dallam, *Daddy Grace: a celebrity preacher and his House of Prayer*. (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 61.

³ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 44.

Unfortunately, the harsh reality was that his skin color and heritage posed a serious challenge to his initial success in America.⁵

There is a limited amount of information detailing Marcelino's early years in the United States, from his arrival to the establishment of the first church. According to Marie Dallam, Marcelino worked many jobs that were deserving of unskilled immigrants at the time.⁶ Marcelino's first area of locality was in the New Bedford region of Massachusetts where he worked as a cranberry picker as well as a cook at the Snow Inn in Harwich.⁷ In his personal life, Marcelino had two failed marriages, one to Jennie Lomba and the other to Angelina Montano. As a result of these marriages, Marcelino fathered three children: Irene (1910), Norman Walter (1914) and his namesake Marcelino in 1935.⁸ In an attempt to assimilate with American culture, Marcelino assumed the name of "Charles M. Grace." This name change benefited two fold as it symbolized his identification with American culture and served as a general pattern for his religious teachings.⁹

In 1919, Charles M. Grace founded the first United House of Prayer for All People in West Wareham, Massachusetts. The official non-abbreviated name of the new organization was The United House of Prayer for All People of the

⁵ Danielle Elizabeth Brune, "Sweet daddy grace: The life and times of a modern day prophet," ProQuest, (Ph.D. diss., The University of Texas at Austin, 2002): 50, accessed January 7, 2014.

⁶ Dallam, *Daddy Grace*, 45.

⁷ Ibid., 14.

⁸ Ibid., 43

⁹ Arthur Huff Fauset, *Black gods of the metropolis; Negro religious cults of the urban North*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1944), 23.

Church on the Rock of the Apostolic Faith. The church was located at 357 Kempton Street in the west end neighborhood, which was occupied by mostly minorities and immigrants.¹⁰ Although nightly church services were already being held, the church was not formally opened until December 1921.¹¹ In January 1922, *The New Bedford Evening Standard* released an article that discussed The United House of Prayer under the leadership of Charles M. Grace and how he was “called to God and brought him to preaching the Gospel.”¹² Throughout the 1920s and 1930’s, Grace began to expand his church. Promoting his ministry with an evangelistic approach, Grace maintained complete authority over the religious body, while seeking national incorporation in 1927. Grace, with the help of his deacons and trustees, continued to spread the gospel by having tent revivals in the south. The tent revivals, ultimately led to the House of Prayer establishing new churches in Charlotte, North Carolina, and Savannah, Georgia. To help spread the gospel of the new religious faith, all offerings supported and sustained the developing churches, while providing capital to create products that could be sold on behalf of the organization. Products such as soap, stationery, tea, coffee, cookies, toothpaste, facial creams, talcum powder, hairdressing, and the Grace Magazine were sold to assist financially with the expansion of The United House of Prayer’s religious faith.¹³

During the first southern tour in Savannah in 1926, Grace faced steep opposition from other Christian denominations. Church leaders and community

¹⁰ Dallam, *Daddy Grace*, 48.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹² *Ibid.*, 48.

¹³ Fauset, *Black gods of the metropolis*, 30.

members did not agree with the unorthodox religious practices seen at the tent revivals. For instance, the tent revivals were known to be lengthy services and included the loud playing of brass and percussion instruments, which often was juxtaposed with “shouting” and frequent outbursts of joy from the attendees. Despite the opposition from established churches and communities, each tent revival drew in more and more people. The energetic sermons, music, and miracle healings that were occurring at these tent revivals attracted hundreds to thousands of people in a short period of time. As the popularity of Bishop Grace and the House of Prayer grew, media outlets began to take an interest in the new religious sect as well as his personal stand to not be classified as a Negro.¹⁴ Frequently interviewed by newspapers, Grace was often questioned about his race, religious beliefs, and the church as a whole. Additionally, the lack of cultural diversity in his congregation was also a topic for discussion by outsiders and media. As planned, the tent revivals continued to spark the interest of potential members and lead to the establishment of more brick and mortar churches in the south.

Those who were not attached to the United House of Prayer religious faith considered Grace to be quite ostentatious and extravagant in the ways in which he lived and traveled. Standing just less than six feet in height, with long pressed hair reaching his shoulders, Grace usually dressed in flashy suits often mirroring his flamboyant persona. For example, Grace normally dressed in bright suits with gold buttons and lots of gaudy jewelry to complete his ensemble, which ensured Grace, would always stand out in a crowd. In addition, he is known for having extremely long fingernails that were sometimes

¹⁴ Ibid., 30.

painted red, white and blue (The primary colors for the House of Prayer). As for transportation, Grace was chauffeured from city to city in the finest automobiles available during that time (i.e. Cadillac's, Packard's, and other luxury automobiles). By the end of the 1930's, Grace owned over forty-two mansions across the United States with one mansion in Havana, Cuba, boasting twenty-five rooms. This type of luxurious lifestyle was the first of its kind for a preacher, and it earned him the title of being the first example of an African American "celebrity preacher."

Daddy Grace

Today, the name "Daddy Grace" is quite common when referring to Charles M. Grace. The use of "Daddy" was instituted during Grace's first tour in the south in the 1920's. In sermons, he would refer to his members as his "children," and in return, they referred to him as "Daddy." Specifically, he would ask his congregation, "Who are my children? All my children hold up your hand!... Am I your daddy?... Ain't you all got a nice daddy?"¹⁵ This marked the origin and use of the alias "Daddy." Interestingly, this is similar to the familiar Catholic tradition of calling the priest "Father." Being raised a Catholic, Grace must have found it fitting since the members of his flock looked up to him as their spiritual father figure. Over ninety years later, the use of "Daddy" is still used for each successor. Today, "Daddy" is shouted during church services as an homage to its illustrious founder.

After forty years of leadership and advancement of the United House of Prayer, the religious faith witnessed the death of its beloved founder, Charles

¹⁵ Dallam, *Daddy Grace*, 60.

“Daddy” Grace, on January 12, 1960. Since the death of Grace, the organization has had three successors, Bishop W. McCullough (1960-1991), Bishop S.C Madison (1991-2008), and the current leader, Bishop C. M. Bailey (2008 -). Today, The United House of Prayer for All People has flourished to over 100 edifices across the country in over 20 states.¹⁶ Primarily located on the east coast, some of the most sought after churches to visit and worship are located in Washington, DC (“Gods White House” - National Headquarters), Charlotte, North Carolina (Mother Church), and Savannah, Georgia. These locations are substantially bigger in size, have frequent visits from the current national bishop, and host the most well-known shout bands throughout the United House of Prayer Faith. In the 96 years of the religious institution, the organization has seen many advancements and developments throughout its tenure. Although there has been some backlash from the media as well as other African American religious denominations, the House of Prayer has continued to thrive throughout the years.

The United House of Prayer for All People of the Church on the Rock of the Apostolic Faith is set up under the Apostolic doctrine and follows several mandates and protocols throughout the entire organization. The following information was obtained via the official website:

Purpose:

“The purpose of the organization is to establish, maintain, and perpetuate the doctrine of Christianity and the Apostolic Faith throughout the world among all people. To erect and maintain houses of prayer and worship where all people may gather for prayer and to

¹⁶ *The United House of Prayer For All People of the church on the rock of the Apostolic Faith*, accessed May 10, 2014, <http://tuhopfap.org/>.

worship the Almighty God in spirit and in truth, irrespective of denomination or creed, and to maintain the Apostolic Faith of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”¹⁷

The Creed:

*“We believe in the Almighty God, maker of Heaven and Earth
We believe in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son who
was conceived by the Holy Ghost and crucified for the
redemption of the sins of the people so that all men may
have a right to the tree of life.*

*We believe in water baptism for the repentance of sins
We believe that you must be born again of the Holy Ghost
We believe in one leader as the ruler of the Kingdom of God”¹⁸*

About the Organization:

“The United House of Prayer For All People ® was organized in the United States of America by Bishop C. M. Grace. Bishop C. M. Grace founded and built the United House of Prayer For All People faith on the teaching and principles of Jesus Christ, our Lord, Savior, and Chief Cornerstone of our faith.

”And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. 18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. 19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;” (Ephesians 2:17-20)¹⁹

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

III. THE SHOUT BAND: BRIEF HISTORY

"Members of the shout band viewed the ability to play trombone as a blessing from God".²⁰

The musical vision of Bishop C.M Grace contributed to the creation of the shout band, which combined sacred and secular musical styles. Bishop Grace envisioned an ensemble that would incorporate both West African and American Cultural traditions in its music.²¹ One sacred influence of the shout band comes from the ring-shout tradition, which is a popular religious ritual in West African culture. This tradition's contribution included dance and various body movements, engaging worshipers to clap and stomp while moving in a counter-clockwise circular direction. Much of the secular influence of the shout band came from the New Orleans Brass Band tradition, which was established in the early 19th Century. New Orleans Brass Bands served as the primary model for the development of the shout band in regards to style and overall structure. These bands often consisted of trumpets, trombones, clarinets, saxophones, sousaphones, and percussion. Moreover, the brass bands incorporated the use of improvisation. Together, the sacred West African traditions and the secular

²⁰ Matthew A. Hafar, "The Shout Band Tradition in the Southeastern United States," *Historical Brass Society Journal*, July 2, 2014: 8, http://www.historicbrass.org/Portals/0/Documents/Journal/2003/HBSJ_2003_JL01_005_Hafar.pdf.

²¹ Sherrie Marcia Damon, "The trombone in the shout band of the United House of Prayer for All People," *RILM Abstracts of Music Literature*, (PhD diss., The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1999): 34, accessed June 26, 2014.

New Orleans Brass Bands led to the development of the shout band in the United House of Prayer.

Prior to the 1940's, co-ed musical ensembles in The United House of Prayer consisted of Tambourine Bands, String Bands or Mixed Wind Bands.²² However, the first documented use of the trombones in the United House of Prayer was on October 29, 1938, in the *New Amsterdam News*.²³ Despite the origin of the shout band as well as its first use of the trombone being ambiguous, George Holland—a trombonist—of Newport News, Virginia, is credited for founding the first shout band in the 1940's.²⁴ Additionally, Robert Washington, who played the bass horn with Holland, is noted for introducing significant instrumentation changes, including the use of trombones, baritones, sousaphones and rhythm sections as the default instrumentation for the ensemble.²⁵

Noted for his use of alternative positions, superb technique, and singing approach to playing the instrument, Holland is credited with the rise of the trombone in the shout band.²⁶ Trombones in the shout band were designed to mirror vocal choirs by distributing individual parts throughout the trombone

²² Damon, "The trombone in the shout band of the United House of Prayer for All People," 51

²³ Hafar, "The Shout Band Tradition in the Southeastern United States," 1.

²⁴ Damon, "The trombone in the shout band of the United House of Prayer for All People," 52.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 52.

²⁶ Damon, "The trombone in the shout band of the United House of Prayer for All People," 36.

section. This allowed the group to incorporate supporting harmonies within compositions. Soon, this male dominated ensemble became the featured musical act during church services, and its primary function was to assist in heightening the “spirit” during times of worship. Although, there are no mandates that stipulate male exclusivity, there has been very little interest or documentation of women participating in the shout band. By the late 1940’s, the expressive characteristics and overall dominance of the trombone in the shout band began to spread like wildfire throughout the entire religion. The trombone, in turn, provided a wider musical range as well as a humanistic quality to the worship music, which had not been achieved in the previous music ensembles.

Throughout the late 1940’and early 1950’s, shout bands had become an integral part of the United House of Prayer throughout “Houses” in the Carolinas, Virginia, Georgia, Washington, DC, and New York.²⁷ In addition to providing music for church services, Bishop C. M. Grace also utilized the shout band to proselytize for the religious institution. The passion in which the music was played often drew bystanders into the nightly church services. After the death of Bishop Grace in 1960, the shout band tradition quickly began to flourish throughout the organization establishing some of the most influential bands and leaders throughout the history of the shout band. These bands include George Holland & the Happyland Band (Newport News, Virginia), Cedric Mangum & the Clouds of Heaven (Charlotte, North Carolina), Eric Babb & the McCullough Sons of Thunder (Harlem, New York City), Cedric Mangum of the Madison Prayer Band & Clouds of Heaven (Charlotte, North Carolina), Norvus Miller and the Kings of Harmony (Washington, DC), and Kenny Carr & The Tigers

²⁷ Hafar, “The Shout Band Tradition in the Southeastern United States,” 1.

(Charlotte, North Carolina). An excellent compilation of the aforementioned shout bands can be heard on the Smithsonian Folkways recording *Saint's Paradise- Trombone Shout Bands from The United House of Prayer*.²⁸ This recording showcases some of the most popular shout bands and displays their musical gifts and overall virtuosity on the trombone.

The music of the shout band consists primarily of hymns and other religious songs arranged by the band's leader. Since the majority of the members start playing trombone at a very early age, most are self-taught and have received little or no formal instruction on their instrument. Rote learning is the primary method of teaching music since reading music is not a basic requirement for the ensemble. In addition, strong memorization and aural skills are pertinent for learning new songs in short periods of time. Leaders in the shout band often assist aspiring trombonist by teaching scales and /or easy hymns so that young trombonist can become familiar with the instrument. Lastly, the stylistic aspect of playing the trombone in the shout band is gained through many years of playing and being submerged in the shout band culture.

Throughout the late 20th Century, shout bands began to establish a distinguished notoriety performing in secular musical arenas as opposed to playing exclusively for the House of Prayer. The shout band, known for its unduplicated sound and style, soon became requested for outside performances both nationally and internationally. Performing for large audiences of all races

²⁸ "Saints' Paradise: Trombone Shout Bands from the United House of Prayer," *Smithsonian Folkways*, <http://www.folkways.si.edu/saints-paradise-trombone-shout-bands-from-the-united-house-of-prayer/african-american-music-sacred/music/album/smithsonian>.

and cultures soon influenced shout band musicians, trombonists in particular, to expand their musical scope beyond the church and embark in commercial musical genres. This flexibility allowed trombonists to use their shout band background as a platform to develop their individual musical careers outside of the church. In secular music genres, notable crossover players such as Kenneth Carr and Jeff Bradshaw have made a resounding imprint in the areas of Jazz, R & B and Soul music. This crossover model has continued to develop among younger players, providing an avenue for shout band members to incorporate this unique style of playing into various music genres across the world. Moreover, shout bands in the 21st Century have continued to perform on a variety of first-rate musical platforms and venues such as the Kennedy Center, Smithsonian Folkway recordings, and the Grammy's.

IV. STRUCTURAL MAKEUP OF THE BAND

Use of the Trombone

Spiritually, the trombone assumes the role of the “preacher” in the shout band. Similar to the style of African-American preachers, trombonists demonstrate the “shout” by showcasing a boastful yet captivating sound that reveals the trombone’s expressive nature. This assertive characteristic allows the trombone to assume an authoritative role within the ensemble. In the shout band, the trombone acts as the primary communicating mechanism for “spreading the message” to all listeners. The leaders in the shout band, usually the trombonist, direct and provide musical guidance for the entire ensemble. The trombonist directs by either a physical indication or by utilizing varying degrees of dynamic contrast. The primary objective of the trombone in the shout band is to mirror the style and voice of a singer in a gospel choir. In doing so, each trombonist invokes several West African vocal traditions to develop the desired sound. Complex rhythms, pentatonic melodic passages, call and response motifs, and ostinatos are all devices used to help convey vocal authenticity. Jointly, the trombones provide a timbral nuance that easily demonstrates the various SATB vocal ranges heard in gospel choirs.²⁹

Structural Makeup

Shout bands can range from six to twenty members; certain components in the smaller bands can be omitted as long as the primary sections are present. For the sake of this research, I will focus on the core sections of the shout band,

²⁹ Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Bass voices

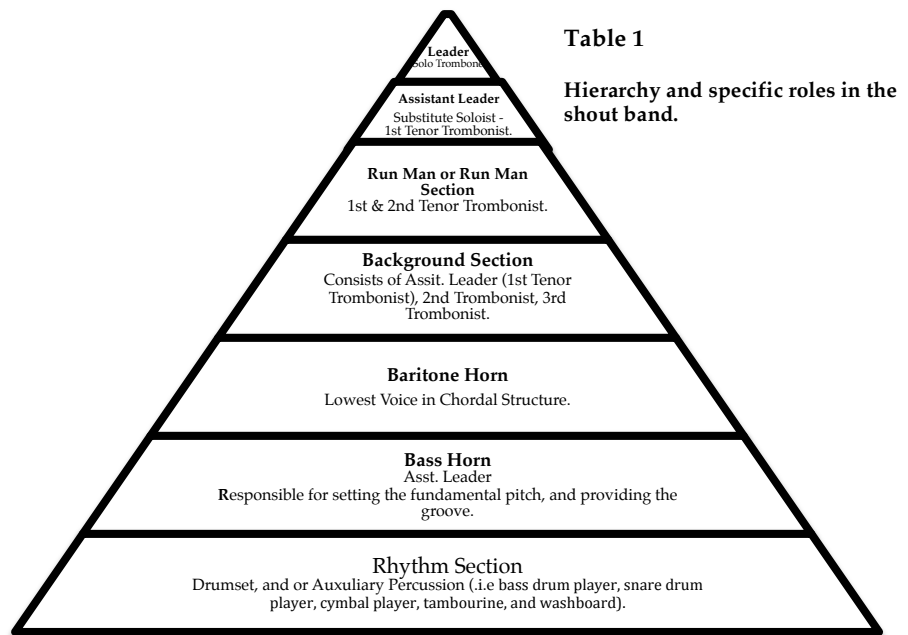
which are the *leader*, the solo trombone; *background section*, which includes the first tenor, second tenor, and third tenor; *run man or run horn section*; *baritone*; *bass horn*; and the *rhythm section*. Within each band, a hierarchy is established, which determines the leadership roles and specific duties throughout each section of the ensemble. Leadership positions are in place throughout the shout band to assist the *leader* with establishing order and musical guidance.

The band's *leader* is in charge of the entire shout band. The *leader* is solely responsible for

organizing and ensuring that each member in the ensemble learns all of the required materials. Since reading music is not a requirement in the shout band, the leader must be able to hear, sing, discern,

disseminate and hand down the different parts of a song to all members of the band, including the percussion.³⁰ In addition to teaching the music, the band's *leader* assumes the role of mentor and spiritual leader for the entire band.

Although most bandleaders play the majority of the solos, he is not always the best trombone player in the ensemble.³¹ Frequently, there is an *assistant leader* in



³⁰ Damon, "The trombone in the shout band of the United House of Prayer for All People," 64.

³¹ Jonathan Burrell, interview by author, July 3, 2014.

place who shares the duties of playing the solos. This creates fullness to the solo part as well as provides an opportunity for soloists to trade off within songs.

The other core sections of the shout band also have defined roles. The *background section* consists of three separate voice parts, which creates the chordal structure by providing basic triads and harmony for the song. Based on the number of members in the ensemble, additional voices and/or harmonies can be added. For instance, the sixth, seventh and ninth scale degree can be added to fill out a particular chord. Incorporating additional scale degrees to the basic triad creates a thickness in the texture as well as enriches the overall harmonic structure. The *counter background section*, which is called the *run man (co-leader)* or *run horn section*, provides improvised call-and-response to the soloist. The *run horn section*, ranging anywhere from one to three individuals, maintains order from the rear of the band while the leader plays and directs the band from the front.³² Another essential part of the shout band is the *baritone*, whose part is usually the lowest voice in the chordal structure. The baritone provides a conical sound, which is occasionally showcased with an improvisatory role in certain songs. The final and lowest pitched instrument in the shout band is the *bass horn*, commonly referred to as the sousaphone. The bass horn player is another co-leader and responsible for setting the fundamental pitch of the harmonic structure as well as providing the groove for the shout band.

Lastly, there is the *rhythm or percussion section*, which serves as the central driving force for the entire ensemble. The rhythm section can range from one to as many as five members, which is also contingent on the size of the ensemble.

³² Damon, "The trombone in the shout band of the United House of Prayer for All People," 66.

The role of the rhythm section is to keep the music driving forward while maintaining a consistent timing for the entire band. The rhythm section can be established either by the use of a single drum-set or a three-piece section, which consists of a bass drum player, snare drum player and a cymbal player. In addition to these instruments, the rhythm section can also include tambourines and washboards, which help accentuate specific parts within given musical selections. Moreover, within the shout band, the *background section* and the *rhythm section* collaborate to create the *back time* or *back timing* for the ensemble. The *back timing* provides a background musical accompaniment, which is played at a low dynamic volume during songs. This musical accompaniment is often played without the addition of the solo part, providing a musical atmosphere where churchgoers can “shout” and worship during church services and other performances. Collectively, all of these components work together to create the shout band.

V. INTERVIEWS: PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

Throughout my travels to Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina, I was afforded the opportunity to speak with individuals, past and present, of the House of Prayer shout band. These experiences allowed me to gain an individual perspective of their personal experiences playing in and outside of the shout band tradition. The interview portion of this research proved to be essential in understanding the culture, style, and overall structure of the shout band. In addition to gaining this invaluable learning experience, these interviews also provided a wealth of knowledge relevant to brass music making in general. All of the participants for this portion of the research were selected specifically because of their musical focus and connection to the shout band tradition. Though participants were able to experience the distinctive music of the shout bands and their focus on the performance of the sacred, these experiences also provided the participants a platform to expand their musical horizons beyond the parameters of the House of Prayer and the shout band. Furthermore, these musical experiences afforded the following individuals to not only excel in the performance of shout band music, but allowed them to branch out as individual artists and perform professionally in other musical genres.

In addition to conducting these interviews, I was afforded the opportunity to learn the shout band style of trombone playing first hand. After my interview with Mr. Hank Bilal, we briefly engaged in a practice session where he demonstrated and instructed me how to approach this unique style of trombone playing.

Participant # 1: Kenneth Carr is a composer, producer, singer and musician. In addition, Mr. Carr is an internationally renowned jazz trombonist that incorporates the shout band style/tradition into his music. Mr. Carr is most known for being the featured soloist/leader of the Tigers – shout band. (Major figure in demonstrating the shout band style of playing on a national/international stage)

This interview was conducted on Sunday, June 29, 2014 at 3pm at:
P.F. Chang's Bistro
10245 Perimeter Pkwy
Charlotte, NC 28216

The following questions were asked to facilitate the interview portion of this research:

Based on the information you know, discuss the origin of the shout band?

“The shout band originated from Abe Miles. They would actually have Abe Miles play from the back of a pickup truck to bring the people to the house of prayer. After the music was done, the service would actually proceed. Because of Abe’s playing was able to bring the people from the city to the church”

What was your first interaction with The United House of Prayer’s shout band?

“My first interaction with the United House of Prayer shout band was at the age of three years old when I played drums and the trumpet for a group called the Prodigal Sons. This group was based out of Charlotte, North Carolina.”

At what age did you begin playing the trombone? Why?

“I started playing the trombone at the age of three.”

Did you receive any formal training on the trombone before you began playing in the House of Prayer shout band? Is reading music a fundamental part of the shout band?

“I did, I actually received formal training in Junior High School at Coulwood Junior High. I also played the drums at West Charlotte Senior High School....

No, reading music is not a requirement. Actually, years ago, there was a gentleman by the name of Fess Coleman that started a musical band in Charlotte and in his group you had to be able to read music. His group was set up as a marching band and he definitely required you to know how to read music.”

What is the working relationship between the church pastor/elder and the leader of the shout band?

“Yeah of course! The shout band's primary job is to set the tone of the service. And to be honest with you, in that particular church, the shout band is almost as important as any other thing else that goes on in there. The shout band draws people young, old or whatever....”

Why are the trombones held in such high regard within The United House Of Prayer?

“The trombone is actually the preacher of The United House of Prayer. The Trombone and the shout band sets the pace before the preacher or whoever gets up to speak for that day. It's just how The United House of Prayer is set up. The trombone is the feature of the service...”

If any, what is the hierarchy of the members in the shout band? Describe the various roles within the shout band?

“Well, the trombone the leader that is the pastor of the band. The shout band is set up like this... The leader is the person that oversees everything of the band by teaching the parts and the harmonies. The shout band consists of several different parts, the seconds, thirds, baritones, the first tenor man the split man, which is the color guy. There is also a sousaphone player as well as a drummer. And what they used to call the Chase section or the Run Horn, which play while the back time, is going on. The leader job is pretty much to navigate through everything which is occurring throughout a particular performance.”

What are the requirements for a member of the shout band to become a leader or play the lead/solo part? No Response.

Discuss the music of the shout band? What separates this music from regular gospel music?

“The shout band music is timeless and has the ability to transport you musically.”

What do you love about playing in the shout band or shout band style?

“What I've always loved about shout band style is that the sound is able to transport you. It is a transporting sound as opposed to jazz or other genres. Not knocking those particular styles.... It's kind of like fashion where it's in style one or two years and then it's out of style. The shout band music is timeless. You can still listen to music from 1920s and 1930s and still be able to relate to it. You have

jazz artists that have had a similar effect like Miles Davis, Charlie Parker or J.J. Johnson. This type of feeling in the music is different in comparison to guys that are playing today...”

If any, can you talk about your experience using the shout band style of playing the trombone in secular music genres?

“I’m totally a freestyle player! My style is totally different from standard shout band tradition because I have evolved throughout time. Now early on, I will cover hymns but I’ve always tried to do my own original music. Although, I do my own music, all of my music does contain a hymn or sound structure to it.”

“My setup is very similar to the shout band tradition except for the fact that I now have incorporated new instruments like the bass guitar and the Hammond organ into my music. So it’s that and the big band.... There is only nine people in my band..

Participant # 2: Hank Bilal is the former soloist of the Madison Bumblebee’s, which was featured on the 2008 broadcast of the Grammy’s alongside Aretha Franklin, BeBe Winans, The Clark Sisters & Trin-I-Tee 5:7. Mr. Bilal is an emerging jazz artist who incorporates the shout band Tradition/Style into his playing.

Interview was conducted on Monday, June 30, 2014 at 12pm at:
Starbucks
47 Saluda Ave
Columbia, SC

The following questions were asked to facilitate the interview portion of this research:

Based on the information you know, discuss the origin of the shout band?

“As far as what I know, the shout band started around the 1920s. It started somewhere up North. I am assuming this because The United House of Prayer began in Massachusetts. I honestly do not think there is no definitive answer as to who started the shout band.”

What was your first interaction with the House of Prayer and the shout band?

“My first interaction with the shout band was being a little boy watching the band play in church. I saw people playing the horns and I wanted to do the same thing. My grandmother bought me a trombone how do you know what I was doing I was just playing around with it. I started really get into the music and then I started getting serious about practicing the trombone.”

At what age did you begin playing the trombone? Why?

“ I probably played my first note at the age of five years old.”

Did you receive any formal training on the trombone before you began playing in the House of Prayer shout band? Is reading music a fundamental part of the shout band?

“I first started playing by ear. Being around music so much I just happen to inherited learning how to play the trombone. No, reading music is not a fundamental part of the shout band. Music is learned aurally by ear. Some of the members and the shout band could read but is only because they decided to take lessons when they were in school.”

What is the working relationship between the church pastor/elder and the leader of the shout band?

“The Bishop speaks directly with the leader to make sure that the band and said important events or ceremonies. The shout band is extremely important in church services as they help intensify the atmosphere.”

Why are the trombones held in such high regard within The United House Of Prayer?

“The Trombone of anything is actually the closest thing to the human voice. When you think about it there so much range on the trombone. You can do almost anything on the trombone. The shout band in a way is somewhat similar to acquire words you have singers and the trombone closely relates to that of a singer.”

If any, what is the hierarchy of the members in the shout band? Describe the various roles within the shout band?

“I can try to make some kind of comparison. You have the leader or leaders. They play the melody within pieces. Leaders are qualified! They have the highest registers and they know all the parts in the band. Similar to a choir, you of your people who play the solos all the time you have the run horn section which provides the harmony, the tenor man, the sousaphone which provides the groove and the percussion which keeps the time. The back time is comprised of the third try moment players. They're not the most talented people in the ensemble but they are responsible for keeping the foundation of the ensemble.

The middle section consists of the baritone player on the tenor man player. The baritone and the tenor man are in the middle of the band.”

What are the requirements for a member of the shout band to become a leader or play the lead/solo part?

“You just need to know how to play the trombone. There are some guys that are not even members of the non-house of prayer that plays in the shout band because they like doing it. In order to become a leader in the shout band you need to start about knowing all of the parts. You have to know all of the aspects of the shout band musically wise before you can call yourself a leader.”

Discuss the music of the shout band? What separates this music from regular gospel music?

“The overall spiritual aspect and feeling of the music. It goes back to my earlier answer saying that the trombone is very similar to singing. Trombonist from the House of prayer has a very distinct sound. As soon as you strike up a note someone will say “you're from the house of prayer aren't you?”

What do you love about playing in the shout band or shout band style?

“It feels free! Especially when you get with other guys that are on the same level with you playing wise. Being amongst good musicians and making good music. Whether it will be the response of someone crying or shouting. It is an indescribable feeling.”

If any, can you talk about your experience using the shout band style of playing the trombone in secular music genres?

“Being in the shout band, we're taught not to play for ourselves but to play for the listeners to field. No matter what type of music you play be it R&B and Jazz you want the people to feel it which can result in a lot of good results. People will pay money to hear you play because they can feel the emotion behind it.”

Participant # 3: Jonathan Burrell is a Trombonist/ current member and leader of the Spiritual Tones shout band in Columbia, South Carolina.

This interview was conducted on Wednesday, July 3, 2014 at 8:30pm at:
Personal Residence
****New River Reach
Portsmouth, VA 23703

The following questions were asked to facilitate the interview portion of this research:

Based on the information you know, discuss the origin of the shout band?

“From what I know, back in the times of Bishop C.M. Grace, starting out, the church didn't have piano's because nobody could afford them. So as a form of musical accompaniment, members would stomp their feet and clap their hands. In those times, people used what they had... Shortly after, people started bringing and playing different instruments such as the trumpet, saxophone, and clarinet. The addition of these instruments assisted with the praise portion of the service. That's pretty much how it started.... Later on, the trombone, baritone, sousaphone and the percussion became the primary instrumentation for the shout band.”

What was your first interaction with the House of Prayer and the shout band?

“I was born into the house of prayer.... I first attended a United House of Prayer in DC and they had a singing band back in the day... The singing bands were a huge thing when I was growing up. I watch them as a little kid and between the ages of two through five, I knew that I wanted to play the trombone. Actually want to play the tuba.... In the house of prayer they call it the Bass Horn. I wanted to play this is also bad... Hahahahaha... Eventually the trombone took precedence. I began to learn more about the trombone. A flat major was the first key that I ever learned on the trombone..”

At what age did you begin playing the trombone? Why?

“My grandmother bought me my first trombone. She bought it from a pawnshop... a King 606... I started playing the trombone around five years old...”

Did you receive any formal training on the trombone before you began playing in the House of “Prayer shout band? Is reading music a fundamental part of the shout band?

“No, no sir not at all.... Back during Bishop McCulloch's days some bands did read music. But overall, most shout band's learned by rote.... Today, people in the shout band's are playing such phenomenal things on the horn. It would be very difficult to try to transcribe certain things that are played within a song. Personally, I did not start reading music until my high school days. I was playing in the school band since elementary school but I was basically learning all the music by ear. I would hear other students play something and then I

would memorize it and play it right back verbatim.. Then when I went to college, I began to comprehend more of the fundamental aspects of reading music. What's funny is all of the modulations and scales and different things that are played in the shout band I didn't fully understand until I actually got to college and learned what exactly I was doing."

What is the working relationship between the church pastor/elder and the leader of the shout band?

"The bandleader and the Bishop are in communication to make sure that the band is schedule to playing at special events and all services. The shout band is extremely important to each church services. Of course the service can proceed without the shout band but the shout band most definitely pushes the service...."

Why are the trombones held in such high regard within The United House Of Prayer?

"All instruments are extremely important within the shout band. I think that one of the reasons why the trombone is held in high regard is because the trombone leads the ensemble and is the dominating instrument within the ensemble... The fact that you can manipulate the trombone and make it sing says a lot... The trombone in the House of Prayer just touches people's hearts in a certain way... The different ways of tonging notes while hitting odd notes that other instruments can't hit just makes this instrument perfect for fulfilling a leading role in the shout band... "

If any, what is the hierarchy of the members in the shout band? Describe the various roles within the shout band?

“First, you have the leader. This is the person that runs rehearsals and make sure the band knows all of the music. The bandleader is not always the best player in the band but he is the most organized and makes sure that the band is guided spiritually as well. The leader gives the band guidance and presents all the materials that the band should know before an upcoming performance. The second leader is there to push songs and backup the first leader. ... Next you have the run horn section, which is an off branch of the leaders. The run horns play certain parts of the songs, counter-melody as well as push the song. The run horn section emphasizes the chorus and makes the texture thicker when the entire ensemble plays. Next, you have the background. And that's a whole different beast... That's the overall foundation of the band. Without a background there is no band. You got the thirds that generalize the harmony, the baritone player that plays it a thirds lower, then you have the tenor player that plays a third up from the thirds and that's the complete harmony. In bigger bands, sometimes you would have a split man that adds a fourth part. He adds a fourth up and that's when harmonies get extremely close and tight. And that's the foundation... That soulfulness... the harmony... The leader is responsible for organizing how each song should be played. Then you have the timing. The timing could be a set player, or you can have a two-piece, which will be a bass drum player and a snare with the addition of a cymbal player. The cymbal player is remarkably important because he accents key points in songs, which adds that spice to the song. The purpose of the percussion is to keep the bands

timing. Keep the music driving... Lastly, you have the Bass Horn. The bass horn is extremely important because he keeps the groove of the entire ensemble.”

What are the requirements for a member of the shout band to become a leader or play the lead/solo part?

“Anybody can join the band! As long as you can learn how to play something you can become a member of the band. You do not have to be a member of the House of Prayer to play in the band... As long as you're willing to come, we will welcome you with open arms...

Now to be a leader you must be able to teach the music and be able to spiritually guide the band. There is more to a leader than just playing. Now to play the solo part you have to flat out be able to play the horn...”

Discuss the music of the shout band? What separates this music from regular gospel music?

“The thing that separates shout band music from regular gospel is the fact we like to play a lot of hymns. Our music is also different because of the timing. The timing gives the music a different feeling from other types of music.”

What do you love about playing in the shout band or shout band style?

“I love everything about it! It gives me joy! It makes me feel like I have a sense of purpose... It makes me believe... It makes me feel like I'm doing the right thing... It keeps me off the street... It generally gives me joy! When I'm having a long day I go to the House of Prayer and pray to God then I turn around and play to God... When I play I like to give God everything that I have and

hopefully my playing while a positive effect on someone who is listening... I do not play to be boastful or proud... I play to give glory to God... Every time I pick up my horn I just play from my heart to the best of my abilities.”

If any, can you talk about your experience using the shout band style of playing the trombone in secular music genres?

“Jazz! Jazz is what made me want to pursue a degree in music. I use my experiences from playing in the shout band to help with my overall jazz playing...”

VI. CONCLUSION

Overall, I have been enlightened on many fronts as a result of this study. Musically, this research allowed me to experience brass music making on “higher” level—a more spiritual level. This freedom granted me the opportunity to enjoy, share, and experience the shout band tradition and its unique style of trombone playing from a more objective view. Additionally, I have gained a wealth of knowledge on the House of Prayer as well as an analytical view of the culture of the shout band tradition. During the course of this research, I began to ask myself why this particular musical tradition is so under researched. Was it a lack of interest? Is it a lack of visibility? Puzzled by these questions, I soon began to poll individuals, asking them if they had ever seen or heard of a shout band. To my surprise, a large majority of those individuals, musicians and non-musicians alike, admitted to coming across this ensemble throughout their lives. Although some participants needed a brief description or a video to refresh them on the topic, sadly, it became apparent that individuals more than likely forgot the performance as soon as it ended. Living in a generation where constant fads and so-called popular music styles change so frequently, especially in the arts, we often fall victim to not appreciating or overlooking the musical traditions rooted in local cultures or regions. Nonetheless, this topic has inspired me to focus my future research on musical traditions and styles that are organically grown. As a trombonist and lover of all things brass related, this topic has also fueled me to seek, participate, and advance the study of this particular musical tradition.

In the preliminary stages of my research, I was met with some resistance when I began to gather information on this topic. Since the House of Prayer has previously received backlash from media outlets, some current and previous members were reluctant to share background information on the shout band as well as the religious institution. Because of those actions and other ambiguous topics found, there have been many additional questions about the House of Prayer and the shout band tradition that have surfaced as a result of this study. For example, each House of Prayer trombonist that I interviewed shared a different historical account of the genesis of the shout band. For a music tradition that has been active only since the 1940's, it seems that its origin would be more clear and consistent for members of the ensemble, especially within the confines of the religious institution. On the other hand, this ambiguous history can be easily understood. Similar to the way this style of music is taught, shout band history and other information are passed down solely through oral tradition. Depending on who tells the story, historical information can be, and most certainly will be, lost throughout this process. It is quite possible that the oral transfer of history and traditions comes from the United House of Prayer's West African roots. From an academic perspective, I firmly believe that the history of the shout band should be accurately documented on behalf of the church, as the shout band has risen to become one of the most notable aspects of the religious institution. A documented history would serve as a great resource for the House of Prayer members as well as a formidable tool for individuals who wish to research this American musical tradition.

Besides the shout band's need for a documented history, another topic for further study would be to examine the trends of musical equipment used within

the shout band tradition. In general, “gear” has always been a huge topic of discussion for musicians. Similar to the equipment trends seen in today’s music business, novices and professionals alike often seek equipment played by nationally acclaimed musicians. Similarly, based upon conversations with House of Prayer trombonists, certain instruments and mouthpieces have been favored among the shout band’s most highly respected trombonists. This, in turn, trickles down to the younger players in the bands. The King 2B, King 3B, and Conn trombones are highly favored within the shout band tradition.

Additionally, Rudy Muck mouthpieces are often preferred because they possess a wide cushion rim and a shallow cup, which is great for endurance, range, and comfort. This type of mouthpiece has proved to be beneficial for the trombonist in the shout band tradition as it assists individuals to play lengthy performances at loud dynamic volumes with fewer constraints.

One final potential topic for future investigation would be to examine or survey why reading music has not been incorporated as a fundamental practice within the shout band tradition. Based on my research, many House of Prayer trombonist have went on to either major in music or participate in musical ensembles at the collegiate level. In both cases, individuals are required to read music in some capacity. The ability to read music certainly could raise the musical literacy of each band. Although shout band music contains certain aleatoric traits, which can be challenging to transcribe, certain basic musical sketches can be notated and documented to help advance the process time of learning music. This process could also help safeguard the shout band’s music from being lost throughout the years.

Outside of the documented research questions, the interviews provided many enjoyable and healthy conversations. Topics concerning the current state of jazz, music business, academia, instrumental equipment and general brass issues were all discussed. Moreover, we all shared similar general interests in music and trombone playing, regardless of how we began our musical journey. In closing, this research has left me inspired as well as enthusiast about the possibility of future research on this particular topic. The rich history of the shout band proves to be a great discovery for the trombone community at large as well as an important tradition in the history of American music.

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