

**A Phenomenological Experience of Singing Vocal Harmony
With Another Person**

A Thesis

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Acknowledgments

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*Now may the Lord of Peace give you peace at all times and in every way.
~II Thessalonians 3:16*

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Abstract

A Phenomenological Experience of Singing Vocal Harmony with Another Person

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The purpose of this phenomenological study was to gain insight and a deeper understanding of the experience of singing vocal harmony with another person.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with four adults capable of singing vocal harmony. Minimal prior research to explain a person's perception and psychological experience of singing vocal harmony has been published. Through informal conversation the researcher discovered that vocal harmony is often utilized within clinical practice, but there is no literature to support its use or omission.

Four healthy adult participants met individually with the researcher for an interview that mixed verbal and musical components. During the interview, the participant recalled and described their previous experiences singing in vocal harmony, sang a song of their choice with the researcher in vocal harmony, and then described this experience. Following data analysis the major findings of this research indicate that the experience of singing vocal harmony includes the *building and expression of relationships, intrapersonal and interpersonal insight, movement and action, and beauty.*

This study discovered that there are implications for the clinical use of vocal harmony when working with patients who have reported prior experience and expressed a preference for vocal harmony. Recommendations were made for future research regarding vocal harmony, its use and application within the field of music therapy.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to gain insight and a deeper understanding of the experience of singing vocal harmony with another person. For the purpose of this study several semi-structured interviews were conducted with adults who are capable of singing vocal harmony. Singing vocal harmony with the interviewer occurred as part of the interview in order to obtain information about the lived experience of the interviewee. Harmony is an integral element of Western music theory, but it also exists in the music of many other cultures in both instrumental and vocal works. It has been this researcher's experience that people of various demographics have revealed powerful emotional responses to vocal harmony. Unfortunately, there is minimal research regarding the development of a psychological perception of singing vocal harmony (Butler, 1992; Crowder, Reznick & Rosenkrantz, 1991; Trainor & Trehub, 1994).

The potential implications and applications included the following. It was hoped that the results of this research might provide incentive for further research regarding implications for the use or omission of vocal harmony within the practice of music therapy. The researcher considered that findings might indicate that singing vocal harmony is not a significant experience and that results might contraindicate its use in clinical settings. Also, it was recognized that the limitations within this study would prevent any generalizations. However, most importantly this study sought to increase music therapists' awareness of their choice to sing in unison or vocal

harmony with their clients. Another potential implication was that the findings of this research would increase the awareness of the music therapist to the significance of vocal harmony and the choice to use or omit harmony in their practice. Yet another potential implication is that the results of this study would lead to further questions and more comprehensive studies to guide the music therapists' knowledge of ways that vocal harmony may be used with specific clients or groups.

This researcher's interest in vocal harmony stems from both a personal and educational interest. The researcher is a vocalist and singing in harmony has long been one of her preferred musical interactions. As a result, this researcher was often keenly aware to the use or omission of vocal harmony within clinical practice during her graduate studies in music therapy. In clinical placements there were a few instances that the supervisor would intentionally encourage this researcher to add a vocal harmony line as an element of the music therapy session. When the researcher attempted to find literature discussing the rationale for using vocal harmony in music therapy, none was discovered. The researcher then spoke informally to practicing music therapists and inquired about their use of vocal harmony in music therapy sessions. Several mentioned that, although they have used vocal harmony in clinical practice, they have not given much thought to their reasoning for using or omitting, vocal harmony in sessions.

The term harmony has been used to describe balance and order since the sixth century and “from the beginning the idea was connected with music” (Lippman, 1963, p. 3). Philosophers often separated the concepts of cosmic harmony and musical harmony; however many philosophers, such as Plato in his *Republic*

expressed that “the components of a harmony [wonderfully illustrated in musical concord] must preserve their individuality in spite of their relationship; harmony is not fusion.” (Lippman, 1963, p. 29). A brief modern definition of harmony is “the simultaneous sounding of notes” (Kennedy, 2007).

It has been detected that there is a preference between major and minor harmonic intonation in infancy (Crowder, Reznick & Rosenkrantz, 1991, p. 188) possibly implying instinctual harmonic attunement beginning in early stages of human development. However, further research of this finding has not been conducted. Musical development of the ability to perceive harmony in typically developing children, whether vocal or instrumental in nature, generally occurs around the age of 7 (Trainor & Trehub, 1994, p. 131). Regarding instrumental harmony as well as vocal harmony, one study found that in middle school, music students had a difficult time sight-singing with harmonic accompaniment, whether provided instrumentally or vocally. The middle school students performed more accurately with the isolated melody. Meanwhile, high school and university students' sight-singing skills were more successful with the harmonic accompaniment (Brittain, 1998, p. 9). This possibly indicates that the development of the ability to sing and prefer harmony occurs in the midst of adolescence between middle school and high school.

Singing is a musical activity that music therapists engage in with their clients with on a regular basis. As reported in informal conversations with several music therapists, sometimes vocal harmony is intentionally used in sessions as part of a treatment method. However, only one article was found discussing this practice.

Austin includes vocal harmony as a specific step in her “vocal holding” technique (2001, p. 25). The relationship of the interval between the melodic line and harmonic line is one of the characters of music that the therapist evaluates to understand the effects provoked within the musical interaction with a client (Alvin, 1975, p. 78).

Research is minimal regarding knowledge of the psychological experience of singing vocal harmony and why it elicits responses from participants. Within the literature, studies have predominantly involved children listening to instrumental harmony and only rarely vocal harmony (Trainor & Trehub, 1994; Zenatti, 1985). There has been research regarding musical training and the methods used to teach theoretical harmony (Howard, Holland, & Whitelock, 1994; Troth, 1963; Wishart, 1962-1963). Recently, the experience of singing in a choir and its benefits to members has been studied. In these articles, the authors consistently report that participants frequently refer to an appreciation for the vocal harmony that exists in a choral experience (Bailey & Davidson, 2003; Mizener, 1993; Rio, 2005; Silvey, 2005). None of these studies has inquired why the participants enjoy the vocal harmony and how the vocal harmony contributes to their choral participation.

What was found in this limited field of research were persistent statements referring to the need for further study regarding the psychological experience of singing vocal harmony. As shown by the dates of these studies, there is a logical progression from studies of the development of the perception of harmony and the methods of teaching and learning harmony to the experience of singing such as in a choir. It appears that the field is ripe to begin investigating the phenomenon of singing vocal harmony with another person.

This research study asked the question: What is the essence of a person's experience singing in vocal harmony with another person? This study's objective was to find unique exceptions as well as commonalities of individual experiences singing vocal harmony. The major findings of this study were that the experience of singing vocal harmony involves the *building and expression of relationships, intrapersonal and interpersonal insight, movement and action, and beauty.*

This study was delimited to researching normally developing individuals capable of singing vocal harmony with another person as defined in Western music theory. Since research supported that the capability to sing vocal harmony occurs during adolescence, this study involved the participation of individuals ages 18 to 65. The focus of this study was specifically experience of singing with another person and did not include the phenomenon of listening to others performing vocal harmony. A possible limitation to this study encompasses the idea that individuals who do not enjoy or have confidence in singing vocal harmony did not volunteer to participate in the interview process.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Historical Background and Definitions of Harmony

Since the sixth century harmony has been described as a balance and order within musical and non-musical constructs. According to Lippman, harmony is “the existence of two or more distinguishable entities somehow capable of mutual adjustment.” (1963, p. 3) “From the beginning the idea was connected with music.” (Lippman, 1963, p. 3). Some philosophers, such as Socrates, separated the concepts of cosmic harmony and musical harmony; however other philosophers, such as Plato in his Republic expressed that “the components of a harmony [wonderfully illustrated in musical concord] must preserve their individuality in spite of their relationship...harmony is not fusion” (Lippman, 1963, p. 29). Harmony has been expressed as a virtue that exists in music “in the pitch and duration of tone”, the individual “in the conduct of his life”, the politician “in society” and so on (Lippman, 1963, p. 30).

The ancient Greeks spoke about “harmony of the spheres” which were “the inaudible sounds produced by the movement of celestial bodies which expressed the mathematical harmony of the macrocosm” (Alvin, 1975, p. 20). This is an early expression of the spirituality with which the general use of the word harmony is often associated. This spirituality was a feeling of deep connection or “perfect harmony between body and soul, between habits and reason, between intellect and emotions” (Alvin, 1975, p. 37).

The Greeks appreciated the connection between the mind and body in achieving optimum health; therefore, they also appreciated the influence that music had on one's mind and body. Aristotle spoke of modal harmonies and their corresponding ethical characteristics. For example, he described the Dorian mode as having a "spirit of valor", the Lydian mode was "suited for young children" and the Phrygian mode was "strongly exciting and emotional" (Alvin, 1975, p. 40). Cassiodorus applied these modal associations as prescriptions for emotional and physical health problems. He found that the Aeolian mode "composes mental disturbance and induces sleep" and the Lydian mode "soothes the soul when oppressed with excessive care" (Alvin, 1975, p. 40).

Over the centuries, the musical definition of harmony has separated from these earlier virtuous conceptions. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music* defines harmony in Western music as "the simultaneous sounding (i.e. combination) of notes...some melody which ranks as the principal one...whilst other melodies which are combined with it...as subsidiary" (Kennedy, 2007). Harmony is traditionally considered a vertical aspect of music, such as a chord visually represented as notes stacked on top of one another versus horizontal music such as counterpoint or melodies in conjunction with one another that follow defined rules (Kennedy, 2007). Harmony is a main theoretical concept in Western music and entire books are written regarding how it was established and how to teach its composition. However, in these books the psychological perspective of harmony, and specifically vocal harmony, is not addressed.

2.2. Musical Development Literature

2.2.1. Musical Development of Harmony

Harmony is considered one of the more sophisticated musical elements that develops following more basic musical behaviors including rhythm, tempo, dynamics and melody. While there is literature discussing when harmonic skills develop, it is typically brief, and the literature that discusses how harmonic skills are acquired is even smaller. A preference between major and minor harmonic intonation has been detected in infancy (Crowder, Reznick & Rosenkrantz, 1991, p. 188) possibly implying that instinctual harmonic attunement begins in early stages of human development, but there has been no further study on this specific finding. Studies show that between the ages of 5-7 years, typically developing children given exposure to Western music demonstrate initial awareness of implicit harmonic structures within Western music (Hargreaves, 1986; Shuter-Dyson, 1981; Trainor & Trehub, 1994). By age 9, a typically developing child has the musical ability to reproduce several melodies and basic rhythm patterns, and the child has the emerging awareness of the implicit harmonic structure of a song. Around 10 years of age the function of harmony and general Western harmonic structure becomes integrated in a child's cognitive understanding (Deliège & Sloboda, 1981, p. 209). Williams' study found evidence that music training increases the awareness of harmonic elements in music (Williams, 2005). His findings supported prior research that "listeners perceive melody and harmony independently" (Williams, 2005, p. 218). He suggested that in the future "research should address the effects of instrument or voice part on melodic and harmonic focus of attention" (William, 2005, p. 219-220).

2.2.2. *Development of Vocal Harmony*

One view of how persons learn harmony is through listening and repetition; according to Wishart, “Harmony can only be learned, it cannot be taught.” (Wishart, 1962-63, p. 91). Within music education literature it appears that the ability to sing in vocal harmony is a skill that children begin to learn in music classes during their elementary and middle school years through singing in canons or rounds, singing with ostinato accompaniment, and singing descants (Troth, 1963, p. 93). These specific vocal music activities are considered "part singing" and according to Troth are "facilitated when pitch producing instruments reinforce the harmony" (1963, p. 94). Part singing activities allow for participants to begin recognizing their vocal part in relation to a differing vocal part, which is a prerequisite to singing in vocal harmony with another person.

Howard mentions that people typically begin to study harmony intentionally between ages 11-15 years old (Howard, Holland & Whitelock, 1994, p. 468). Junior high and high school student instrumentalists demonstrate evidence of being more melodically focused when playing; however high school students begin to demonstrate the ability to acknowledge and play with harmonic accompaniment (Williams, 2005). Instrumental harmonic development often precedes the development of the ability to sing in vocal harmony. The ability to sing in harmony or, part-singing, requires the ability to “avoid being distracted by other parts...to integrate the [singer’s] part into the overall fabric of the piece [entering] in a triadic

relationship between the self, the others, and the work being sung.” (Russell, 1997, p. 98).

Findings about harmonic development are usually embedded within broader studies. One study found that middle school music students had a more difficult time sight-singing with harmonic accompaniment (both instrumental and vocal), and that they performed more successfully with the isolated melody. Meanwhile, high school and university students' sight-singing skills were more successful with the harmonic accompaniment (Brittain, 1998). This is an indication that the development of the ability to sing and prefer harmony occurs in the midst of adolescence between middle school and high school. During high school, music education generally begins to center around the experience of singing in a choir (Adderley, Kennedy & Berz, 2003; Mizener, 1993; Silvey, 2005). This is yet another indicator that the development of the ability to sing in vocal harmony occurs during adolescence.

We move now to vocal harmony literature and to an examination of active participation in experiences of singing vocal harmony.

2.3. Vocal Harmony Within General Literature

2.3.1. Uses and Practices of Vocal Harmony

Vocal harmony commonly occurs in a variety of music genres including but not limited to folk songs, ballads, spirituals, hymns, and barbershop quartets (Russell, 1997). People experience singing vocal harmony in various formal and informal settings depending on individual culture including school and educational settings, community choirs, informal singing in the home or with friends, and church (Bailey

& Davidson, 2003; Faulkner & Davidson, 2006; Harvey, Smith, Abraham, Hood & Tannenbaum, 2007; Rio, 2005; Russell, 1997). Since vocal harmony is the result of 2 or more simultaneous pitches there must be another person or source of music present for vocal harmony to occur.

2.3.2. *Choral Participation*

There are multiple recent studies on the experience of participation in community vocal choirs. According to Graham Welch in contribution to the book *Musical Communication*, “Singing can be a form of group identification and social bonding...in many choral settings” (Miell, MacDonald & Hargreaves, 2005, p. 254). In Faulkner and Davidson’s interpretive phenomenological analysis, “Men in Chorus: Collaboration and Competition in Homo-Social Vocal Behavior”, some of the choir members cite vocal harmony as being a significant element of their choral experience. One participant explains “to find the sound with another voice...you feel much better in harmony with others. Then you get that kick. That’s how it’s supposed to be...” (Faulkner & Davidson, 2006, p. 227). Another participant mentions singing with the chorus informally at a birthday party and describes his experience saying “It was the first time I got this feeling for singing in voices, that I’ve always been so attracted to...tremendously enjoyable...this sound, the harmony that you land inside of...” (Faulkner & Davidson, 2006, p. 230). These and other statements testify that singing in vocal harmony is a meaningful experience and can be a defining part of memorable moments.

Having discussed the early history of and the development of vocal harmony, we turn now to a review of vocal harmony and its use in the music therapy literature.

2.4. Vocal Harmony in Music Therapy Literature

Alvin states, “Our growing knowledge of man’s behavior and of his responses to certain experiences enables us to understand better the meaning and the significance of his responses to music and to apply them therapeutically.” (Alvin, 1975, p. 78) As reported in informal conversations with the researcher, singing is a common musical activity that is utilized by music therapists in clinical settings in order to engage their clients. Some music therapists choose to use vocal harmony within their sessions (Alvin, 1975; Austin, 2001; Bailey & Davidson, 2003; Pavlicevic, 1999).

Austin includes vocal harmony as a specific step in her “vocal holding” technique (Austin, 2001, p. 25). The relationship of the interval between the melodic line and harmonic line is one of the characters of music that the therapist evaluates to understand the effects provoked within the musical interaction with a client (Alvin, 1975, p. 78). In Bailey & Davidson’s study “Amateur Group Singing as a Therapeutic Instrument” a participant states “...I’m learning a lot of things...we create some harmonies...we learn what harmony is and we try things...those creativity, this is really good for...your self-esteem” (Bailey & Davidson, 2003, p. 26) highlighting the significance of the experience and development of the ability to create vocal harmony within the therapeutic process.

In Pavlicevic's book *Intimate Notes* (1999), several music therapists speak about music therapy sessions that included vocal harmony. Emotional responses are often associated with the inclusion of vocal harmony, but this is mentioned briefly and there is no discussion of why vocal harmony elicits such a response. There is also no literature that discusses the rationale for why a music therapist would choose to include or omit vocal harmony when they engage in singing with their client or clients. Through informal discussion, some music therapists recognize that there may be a relationship between the client's cultural backgrounds and if or how they sing vocal harmony. Again, while this topic arises informally, it is not explored in the literature.

2.5 Summary

This review of relevant literature revealed that there are significant gaps in the literature regarding the understanding of the phenomenon of singing vocal harmony. The development of vocal harmony, though only briefly discussed, appeared to be described as a normal developmental process; however, why there seem to be many who cannot or choose to not sing vocal harmony was not addressed. There seemed to be a natural progression in the literature of research from the experience of singing, to the experience of choral participation, to brief mentions of the inclusion of vocal harmony in music therapy. This affirmed that the time is ripe for researching the experience of vocal harmony.

CHAPTER 3: METHDOLOGY

3.1. Design of the Study

This was a phenomenological study seeking rich description of the experience of singing vocal harmony. This study's objective was to discover the unique individual experiences of singing vocal harmony and commonalities amongst subjects and indications for the use of vocal harmony within the practice of music therapy. The hope was to increase awareness of the use or omission of vocal harmony by music therapists and motivate further research on this topic. From here on, subjects were referred to as "co-researchers" in keeping with the tradition of phenomenological research in which research participants play an active role in verify research results. Research was conducted through semi-structured interviews with 4 persons who had prior experience singing vocal harmony. The interviews included 1-2 live experiences of singing vocal harmony with the interviewer and interviewee.

3.2 Location of the Study

This study was conducted in Drexel University's New College Building, room #4417 for three interviews and in a church located in Lancaster, PA for one interview. Multiple locations were used due to the geographical variables of the participants who were recruited from multiple locations in order to broaden the demographics of the volunteer sample. The interviews occurred in rooms that were large enough to offer space for two persons and a guitar. The interview rooms were conducive to singing and offered limited sonic interruptions. The locations also offered anonymity. The

areas used were suited for privacy and lent themselves to the pursuit of singing without distracting anyone. The researcher received permission to use the rooms from the facility prior to the interviews.

3.3. Time Period for the Study

This study began in December 2008 and was completed in June 2009.

3.4. Enrollment Information

This study involved 4 normal adult volunteers ranging in age from 18 to 65. The sample included both men and women of various socioeconomic, ethnic and educational backgrounds.

3.5. Subject Type

Co-researchers included normal volunteers selected through purposeful sampling who had experience singing vocal harmony. Using purposeful sampling from this population minimized potential risks. This study intended to collect baseline data of individuals' lived experiences of singing vocal harmony. This population was used because it was assumed that these individuals would be more capable of insight and expression of the internal lived experiences.

3.6. Subject Source

The participants/co-researchers were recruited from the Philadelphia and Lancaster, Pennsylvania communities.

3.7. Recruitment

Following approval by the Drexel University Institutional Review Board (IRB), print ads and verbal announcements were posted publicly to obtain volunteers to participate in this study (see Appendix A). These print ads were posted with permission and verbally communicated to potential volunteers at various locations in the Philadelphia and Lancaster communities. The print ad announced that volunteers were needed to participate in a research study about singing vocal harmony. It designated the inclusion criteria as follows: the ability and prior experience of singing vocal harmony as well as minimal inhibition to sing with another person unknown to the participant. The age range of 18-65 was listed as well as the time commitment involved. The flyer assured that confidentiality would be kept. This flyer stated that there were no incentives, monetary or otherwise, for participating in this study. Contact information for Paul Nolan, Director of Music Therapy at Drexel University was listed for interested volunteers.

Interested volunteers were screened via telephone by the researcher to ensure that they met the inclusion criteria and not the exclusion criteria. Upon acceptance to participate as co-researchers, volunteers set up an initial meeting with the researcher to review the informed consent form and ask questions regarding participation. If the volunteer chose to participate as a co-researcher, they signed 2 copies of an informed consent form, one for themselves to keep and the other to be kept in a locked drawer in the office of the Hahnemann Creative in Therapy program. Upon signing the

consent forms the researcher scheduled an interview date and time with the co-researcher.

3.8. Subject Inclusion Criteria

- Normal adults, who are able to read, write, sing and communicate fluently in English.
- Have the ability and prior experience singing vocal harmony.
- Are willing to sing with another person in vocal harmony with limited inhibitions.
- Are between the ages 18-65 years.
- Volunteers can be of any socioeconomic, ethnic/racial, educational or religious background.

3.9. Subject Exclusion Criteria

- Individuals who are younger than age 18 years.
- Unable to find transportation to the location of the interview.
- Do not have ability or prior experience singing vocal harmony.
- Individuals who self-report that they have any inhibitions singing with another person.
- Have a previously diagnosed mental or emotional disorder.

3.10. Investigational Methods and Procedures

The researcher communicated with the co-researchers 3 times during the course of the study. The first communication was to review and sign 2 copies of the informed consent form (see Appendix B). The second communication was to collect data through an interview that included questions regarding the participant's history and background with vocal harmony, a live experience singing vocal harmony with the researcher, followed by a semi-structured responsive interview about the live experience. The third communication was via email to validate data collected and analyzed.

3.10.1. Instrumentation

Background Information. At the onset of the interview, questions were asked to collect background information on the co-researchers regarding their musical history and experience singing vocal harmony.

Vocal Harmonization. During the interview the researcher offered the co-researcher a predetermined list of 20 familiar songs to choose from. The list of 20 songs was compiled by the researcher and included a variety of genres and styles. They were chosen for their basic chord structure to encourage confidence in singing the melodic and harmonic lines. They were also chosen based upon the researcher's familiarity and ability to confidently play the songs or transcribe them if necessary during the interviews. The researcher and co-researcher sang the chosen song together multiple times in unison until the co-researcher expressed confidence to split parts. Then the

researcher and co-researcher took turns adding harmonization to the melody of the song. Harmonization will be assumed to be of the implied Western harmonic system.

Semi-structured responsive interview. According to Patton, an informal conversational interview “offers maximum flexibility to pursue information in whatever direction appeared to be appropriate, depending on what emerged” (Patton, 2002, p. 342). This type of interview was combined with a standardized open-ended interview, which is a more “fully structured interview instrument” (Patton, 2002, p. 344). Using a semi-structured responsive interview allowed the researcher to ask questions consistently among the co-researchers as well as questions that were pertinent but unforeseen prior to the interview experience.

3.10.2. Informed Consent

The co-researchers reviewed an Informed Consent form (see Appendix B). Co-researchers verbally confirmed in their own words their understanding of their participation in the study. They signed 2 copies of the informed consent form. The co-researchers were given one copy to keep for themselves and the other copy was kept locked in the office of the Hahnemann Creative Arts in Therapy program.

Co-researchers were informed that they would be audiotaped using a Sony digital recorder and that the interviews would be transcribed by the researcher. To ensure confidentiality, all sound clips and hard copies of the interview were destroyed upon the completion of the study.

3.10.3. Data Collection

Data Collection One – Previous Experience Data (10-15 minutes)

Co-researchers participated in a semi-structured interview (see Appendix C) that encouraged the participant to describe when and where they sing vocal harmony and recall recent experiences in which they sang vocal harmony.

Data Collection Two – Vocal Harmony Process (5-10 minutes)

After describing past experience singing vocal harmony, the co-researchers were asked to choose a song to sing with the researcher in vocal harmony from a list of 20 songs provided by the researcher. The co-researcher was offered music and lyrics. First the co-researcher was asked to sing the melody in unison, or together, with the researcher in order to establish familiarity with the song and to diminish any initial anxiety related to singing with another person. The melody line was sung in unison until the co-researcher reported feeling ready to split parts. Next the co-researcher was asked to sing the melody line while the researcher sang a harmonic line. Again, this step was repeated until the co-researcher reported confidence to switch parts. Then the co-researcher was asked to sing a harmonic line of their choosing while the researcher sang the melodic line. This was sang as many times as preferred by the co-researcher. The co-researcher was then offered the opportunity to choose another song and repeat the process if preferred. This was option was offered in case the co-researcher was uncomfortable with their first choice or did not feel they could fully describe their experience following the first experience. After singing

either 1 or 2 songs in vocal harmony, this portion of the interview ended. The researcher then proceeded to the in-depth portion of the interview.

Data Collection Three – Open Ended Responsive Interview (10-15 minutes)

For the in-depth portion of the interview the researcher asked the co-researcher to take a moment to think about this experience and, when ready, to fully describe their subjective experience singing vocal harmony in this interview. The researcher continued to use the semi-structured interview format only asking follow-up questions to provide clarification from the co-researcher. The researcher asked questions to encourage the participant to elaborate on physical sensations, thoughts, feelings, memories and/or spiritual experiences in order to elicit further reflection when needed. When the researcher felt that the co-researcher had fully described this specific experience of singing vocal harmony, she asked the co-researcher about additional thoughts or recollections about singing vocal harmony to add to the interview. When the co-researcher felt he or she had completely described their general experience of singing vocal harmony, the interview was completed.

After the completion of the interview, the digital audio recorder was turned off and the researcher debriefed the co-researcher. The co-researcher was given an opportunity to express any questions and/or concerns as a result of their participation in this study.

3.10.4. Data Analysis

Moustakas' Method of Analysis of Phenomenological Data was used for this study (1994). This method is composed of the following basic steps: *epoche*,

horizontalization, imaginative variation, and synthesis of meanings and essences (Moustakas, 1994, p. 122). The process of data analysis was cyclical in nature as previous information was constantly referred to and reflected upon to draw out the essences of the experience. Updates were sent to the thesis committee members following each completed step of the data analysis process. This supplied the researcher with new perspectives, and brought overlooked items to awareness. It also provided an audit trail to increase the validity of the data analysis.

Step 1: Epoche

The researcher began by writing the epoche regarding personal experiences and thoughts regarding vocal harmony. The epoche involved evaluating “everything referring to others, their perceptions, preferences, judgments, feelings ...” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 88) and followed by setting these aside. In the epoche, “the researcher looked inside to become aware of personal bias, to eliminate personal involvement with the subject matter...or at least to gain clarity about preconceptions” (Patton, 2002, p. 485). The epoche was written to shift the perspective of the researcher away from her personal bias to increase her ability to “see the experience for itself” (Katz as cited by Patton, 2002, p. 485).

In order to invest in the epoche process, the researcher wrote about her personal experience with vocal harmony. She wrote about growing up with vocal harmony as a part of family, church and educational interactions. The researcher also recorded in writing her assumptions about the experience of singing vocal harmony to bring to her awareness her bias. The researcher also engaged in singing vocal harmony in a variety of settings and then wrote about this in order to gain insight into

her own experience of singing vocal harmony. The epoche was an ongoing process throughout the study that involved the researcher writing her personal experience prior to, during and following each interview as well as her experience during the data analysis. This process allowed the researcher to constantly be aware of personal feelings and beliefs regarding vocal harmony and how they were affecting the analysis.

For this researcher the epoche highlighted biased assumptions that singing in vocal harmony was related to an individual's identity and interpersonal skills. Also, the researcher believed that expectations of vocal harmony would elicit thoughts about community and spirituality. These presumptions were all recorded and then set aside in order to diminish the researcher's bias during the data analysis process. Through the epoche, the researcher acknowledged that several of the data were initially overlooked due to personal bias. As a result, the established steps of the analysis process were repeated to include originally omitted information, which added to the validity of the results.

Step 2: Horizontalization

In horizontalization, every expression in each individual interview was considered "significant for description of the experience (Moustakas, 1994, p. 122). Through the process of horizontalization the researcher determined that the co-researcher's prior experiences, as well as their reflections on the live experience of singing vocal harmony, were all significant to gaining insight into the phenomenon. Therefore, all data were combined and considered of equal significance throughout the data analysis.

Repetitive, overlapping and irrelevant statements were eliminated leaving *invariant horizons* also referred to by Moustakas as "meaning units" (1994, p. 122). These invariant horizons were then clustered into themes and thematic portrayals were written. The data were deconstructed through this process of horizontalizing in effort to view the data "in pure form, uncontaminated by extraneous intrusions" (Patton, 2002, p. 485). During the reduction process "the task is that of describing...what one sees, not only in terms of the external object but also the internal act of consciousness..." (Moustakas, 1994, p. 91). Therefore, the researcher reviewed the data and the clustered themes multiple times in order to achieve the most accurate reduction.

From the themes that emerged, the researcher wrote a "textural description" of "what happened" (Creswell, 1998, p. 149). A complete textural description of the experience was constructed for each individual co-researcher. This description "facilitates clear seeing, makes possible identity, and encourages the looking again and again that leads to deeper layers of meaning" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 96). When writing the Individual Textural Descriptions, the researcher discovered that each individual co-researcher's experiences had a pattern and sequence to its formation. Then the researcher spent time cutting and pasting various paragraphs within the textural description to allow this natural sequence emerge.

Step 3: Imaginative Variation

After writing the individual textural description, the next step is that of Moustakas' "imaginative variation" in order to describe "the essential structures of a phenomenon" (Moustakas, 1994, 98). During this process "any perspective is a

possibility and is permitted to enter into consciousness" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 98).

The researcher initially attempted to evade this step because she thought that she had already done it during the writing of the individual textural description. However, the researcher was unable to proceed any further in the data analysis until fully participating in this essential mode of presence with the data.

To engage in the imaginative variation, multiple perspectives were applied to the textural description to discover the rationale behind the co-researcher's experience. The researcher was immersed in the data and spent many days reading and re-reading through the data analysis to this point in order to continue to seek new perspectives. This resulted in an indwelling of the data as it was present in the researcher's mind during un-related conversations to expose new understandings and allow the structure of each co-researchers' experience to be revealed. There were moments when the researcher was preoccupied with the data as it consumed her thoughts. Following this preoccupation, the researcher went through a period when the data seemed to disappear from her conscious thoughts as the imaginative variation entered the incubation stage of the creative process. Once she had fully completed the imaginative variation, the researcher was able to write the individual structural description of each co-researcher's experience. The researcher then wrote the individual structural description highlighting the essence of the "why", or rationale, of the co-researcher's experience.

Once these steps were completed, the researcher sent the original interview transcript, the individual textural and the individual structural descriptions to the corresponding co-researcher and invited the co-researcher to read and respond to

what was written thus far. The interview transcript was included to remind them of the interview, if needed, and to allow them to comment on their original information. Each co-researcher was given a week to read and respond in order to sustain the momentum of the data analysis process and meet the academic program deadlines for its completion. Two of the co-researchers responded that they consented to what was written without any suggestions. One of the co-researchers responded by agreeing to the overall concepts, but wanted to clarify a few statements. One co-researcher was unavailable at this time and therefore unable to respond within a week. The researcher carefully considered these comments and how they related with the data originally collected. The researcher determined that the co-researcher's comments added clarification and did not contradict or change the original data's meaning. Therefore, a few adjustments were made to this individual's textural description to enhance its validity and accuracy.

Step 4: Synthesis of Textural and Structural Meanings and Essences

The researcher then wrote a composite description of the experience, or “a way of understanding how the [co-researchers] as a group experience what they experience” (Moustakas as cited by Patton, 2002, p. 487). To write the composite textural description, the researcher read through each of the four individual textural descriptions and noted the similarities, overlapping themes, and the unique concepts to surface. The researcher then combined these into a composite textural description. Following this step, the researcher again engaged in the previous step of imaginative variation with the composite textural description. She allowed this to be in her mind throughout her day, constantly thinking of new possibilities and perspectives

regarding the underlying rationale for this composite experience. A composite structural description was written based upon the imaginative variation.

Finally, through the process of reflection on the composite textural and composite structural descriptions, as well as the researcher's personal reflection on the experience of singing vocal harmony with another person, the overall meanings and essences of the composite co-researchers' experience emerged in the synthesis of meanings and essences. The researcher constructed "an overall description of the meaning and essence of the experience" (Creswell, 1998, p. 150), and a "unified statement of the essences of the experience of the phenomenon as a whole" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 100) was created.

3.10.5. Operational Definitions of Terms

Consonance. As defined by Butler, "usually equated with stability and goodness-of-fit" (Butler, 1992, p. 124-125).

Dissonance. This is defined for by *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music* as "a chord which is restless, requiring to followed in a particular way if its presence is to be justified by the ear" (Kennedy, 2007), by *The Musician's Guide to Perception and Cognition* as a "rough" sound (Butler, 1992, p. 56), or a generally unpleasing chord.

Vocal Harmony. For the purposes of this study, vocal harmony is defined using *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music* as "the simultaneous sounding (i.e. combination) of notes" (Kennedy, 2007) as specifically found within the theory of Western Music.

Resolution. This is defined by *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music* as "the satisfactory following of a discordant (or dissonant) chord" (Kennedy, 2007).

Beauty. The use of the term beauty is based upon multiple sources including Aigen's discussion of beauty and music therapy (2008), and Armstrong & Detweiler-Bedell's 2008 article about beauty from a psychological perspective. In brief, it is referred for aesthetic factors (Aigen, 2008) as well as "an exhilarating emotional experience" (Armstrong & Detweiler-Bedell, p. 306).

3.11. Possible Risks and Discomforts

Co-researchers may have experienced minor anxiety due to the inherent nature of being interviewed and divulging personal information. They may have had minor anxiety about singing with another person. There were no other known risks or discomforts.

3.12. Consent Form

See Appendix B.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, an analysis of the data collected from verbal in-depth interviews including a live experience of singing vocal harmony with another person is presented. Data were collected as part of a phenomenological study exploring the lived experience of normal adults from the greater Philadelphia area. Five adults (18-65) volunteered to be co-researchers and participate in the interview process and reflect upon previous experiences singing vocal harmony as well as the live experience singing vocal harmony with the researcher. Of those five adults, four met the aforementioned inclusion criteria and consented to participation in this study.

4.2. Overview of Results

Major findings from the study were that the experience of singing in vocal harmony with another person includes the *building and expression of relationships, intrapersonal insight, movement and action, and beauty*.

4.3. Subjects

This study called for 4-6 volunteers between the ages of 18-65 with the ability and prior experience singing in vocal harmony, were willing to sing with another person in vocal harmony with limited inhibitions, were able to read, write, sing and communicate fluently in English, and not previously diagnosed with mental or emotional disorder. Four volunteers were recruited and consented to participate in

the study. The co-researchers included 3 females and 1 male. All four participants were Caucasian, which was possibly limited by the location of the interviews and distribution of recruitment flyers. Three of the participants were graduate students and one was a working professional.

4.4. Analysis of Data of Four Subjects

In this section, the phenomenological data analysis of each co-researcher including each individual's invariant horizons, initial themes and meaning units, thematic portrayal, textural descriptions, and structural synthesis is presented. This is followed by a composite textural description, composite structural description and synthesis of meanings and essences.

4.4.1. Co-Researcher #1

Invariant Horizons

- With a band.
- In pre-arranged and spontaneous, joking-around kind of ways I might sing some natural harmony
- Karaoke activities with people.
- If I'm really familiar with a piece of recorded music I will find that I've learned some of the harmonies and sing them.
- Sometimes I'll just develop harmonies on my own.
- I play the drums mostly, also some keyboards.
- People singing different things [in the band], parts that are written to compliment each other.
- The line between pre-arranged and spontaneous might not always be perfectly clear.
- Practice and performance.
- The way we've described it, in our conversations with each other, is that someone will be doing something or playing something and then another person tends to hear their own part in there, and then they use their voice or use an instrument sometimes to try to get what they're hearing in their mind as an accompaniment into their hands or into their voice to see if it works.
- When I'm doing something that's more spontaneous, kind of like running in the dark, you're not really going to get hurt, but sometimes you might run into a wall.
- You get the color that you've been going for.
- A prescribed, rehearsed harmony tends to have a lot more to do with very carefully moving my throat to the right tone.
- Have to be careful not to do something that sounds really bad and embarrass yourself.
- Spontaneous stuff, more concerned with how I feel and how my friends who are participating feel.
- Singing rehearsed [harmony], concerned with how it's being heard by other people.
- I think it's more fun to make it up as I go along. Which is counter to what I prefer to hear, something that was better thought out in advance.
- 4th and 5th grade chorus
- I used to sing harmony more when I was driving, it's sort of a safe, impossible-to-be-embarrassed sort of environment. Sometimes driving with friends.
- Around 16, attached to a few albums, started to make them more my own.
- I started piano lessons about the same time that I started in that 4th grade chorus. The next year band percussion.
- There is a disconnect between a lot of the music that I've learned and music that I enjoy listening to.

- Singing karaoke with friends, I went up to the higher vocal harmony, it was cool.
- Some confidence...kind of mastery.
- I was in control of the song instead of the song being in control of me.
- I keep coming back to a song with some nice vocal harmony, constant harmony, although either of their parts would work as its own melody. That is what I think harmony really is.
- "My Girl"
- When singing in unison, it sounded good, it felt pretty good.
- Our balance was pretty good between our voices.
- When you started doing harmony I was surprised when you went down. I always go up.
- There were times where I felt like I had to put my finger over my ear just so I could make sure that I was singing the right notes.
- When I was doing the melody I was trying to catch-up.
- Singing the harmony part was, I think more fun, less that I really had to worry about. I could listen more to the way that our voices were interacting, making adjustments based on what I was collectively hearing.
- I didn't think too much. Once I knew I was gonna start on the right foot and have a reasonably okay sounding first note, I just kind of went with it.
- During the unison parts I had an awareness of my whole self.
- During the melody parts, where you were singing harmony, I was focused up here (*hand motions to head*).
- During the harmony parts, shoulders and up, more playful, "airy".
- *used hands for visual imagery a lot*
- Doing the harmony part, you were pretty steady and I was just able to skip on top of it.
- During the melody one, kind of the feeling like if you're in a car and it's skidding on ice and your whole perception is being jolted around in front of you, sort of that blurring-can't get your bearing feel.
- I find that I appreciate the presentation of a song as much as the melody or harmony sometimes if it's done really nicely.
- Once we're done with the study I'd like to ask what exactly it is you're listening for and looking for.

Initial Themes and Meaning Units

When and Where I sing vocal harmony:

- with a band
- karaoke activities with people
- if I'm really familiar with a piece of recorded music I will find that I've learned some of the harmonies and sing them
- practice and performance
- 4th and 5th grade chorus

- sometimes driving with friends

Independence:

- sometimes I'll just develop them on my own
- people sing different things in the band; parts that are written to complement each other
- the way we've described it, in our conversations with each other, is that someone will be doing something or playing something and then another person tends to hear their own part in there, and then they use their voice or use an instrument sometimes to try to get what they're hearing in their mind as an accompaniment into their hands or into their voice to see if it works
- around 16 years old I attached to a few albums and started to make them more my own

Instruments:

- play the drums mostly, also some keyboards
- started piano lessons at same time that I started in that 4th grade chorus
- next year band percussion

Imagery:

- when I'm doing something that's more spontaneous it's kind of like running in the dark, you're not really going to get hurt, but sometimes you might run into a wall
- color that you've been going for
- *used hands for visual imagery a lot*
- during the melody one, kind of the feeling like if you're in a car and it's skidding on ice and your whole perception is being jolted around in front of you, sort of that blurring-can't get your bearing feel

Technicalities:

- prescribed, rehearsed way tends to have a lot more to do with very carefully moving my throat to the right tone

Embarrassment:

- careful not to do something that sounds really bad and embarrass yourself
- do it more when I was driving; it's sort of a safe, impossible-to-be-embarrassed sort of environment

Personal enjoyment:

- more fun to make it up as I go along
- prefer to hear something that was better thought out in advance
- coming back to a song with some nice vocal harmony, constant harmony, although either of their parts would work as its own melody; that is what I think harmony really is

- singing the harmony part was, I think more fun, less that I really had to worry about
- I find that I appreciate the presentation of a song as much as the melody or harmony sometimes if it's done really nicely

Disconnect:

- disconnect between a lot of the music that I've learned and that I enjoy listening to

Spatial:

- singing karaoke with friends, I went up to the higher vocal harmony, it was cool
- when you started doing harmony I was surprised when you went down
- I always go up

Confidence, Mastery, Control:

- some confidence, kind of mastery
- I was in control of the song instead of the song being in control of me
- times where I felt that I had to put my finger over my ear just so I could make sure that I was singing the right notes

Catch-up:

- when I was doing the melody I was trying to catch-up

Relationship with Interviewer:

- singing in unison sounded good, it felt pretty good
- our balance was pretty good between our voices
- listen more to the way that our voices were interacting

Awareness, Focus:

- I didn't think too much; once I knew I was gonna start on the right foot and have a reasonably okay sounding first note I just kind of went with it
- during the unison parts, an awareness of my whole self
- making adjustments based on what I was collectively hearing
- melody parts, where you were singing harmony focused up here (*hand motions to head*)
- spontaneous harmony I am more concerned with how I feel and how my friends who are participating feel
- rehearsed harmony I am concerned with how it's being heard by other people

Motivation for participation:

- once we're done with the study I'd like to ask what exactly it is you're listening for and looking for

Expectations:

- surprised when you went down
- singing the right notes
- once I knew I was gonna start on the right foot and have a reasonably okay sounding first note I just kind of went with it

Thematic Portrayal

- 1) Various contexts of vocal harmony: 4th and 5th grade chorus; with a band; karaoke with friends and classmates; along with familiar recorded music; in the car with friends; informal practice and formal performances.
- 2) Personal preferences regarding vocal harmony. It is "more fun to make it up as I go along"; however, I "prefer to hear something that was better thought out in advance." He recalled a specific song with "constant harmony, although either of their parts would work as its own melody...what I think harmony really is". He likes to develop harmonies on his own.
- 3) Experiences of embarrassment singing vocal harmony. Need to be "careful not to do something that sounds really bad and embarrass yourself...". One reason why it is nice to sing harmony while driving is because "it's sort of a safe, impossible-to-be-embarrassed sort of environment."
- 4) Vocal harmony can involve techniques and skills. Singing in a "prescribed, rehearsed way...tends to have a lot more to do with very carefully moving my throat to the right tone." When singing in the band "people sing different parts that are written to compliment each other."
- 5) Experiences of confidence, mastery and control when singing the harmony line. He experienced "some confidence...a kind of mastery." If the first note was right then he felt confident. It felt like "I was in control of the song instead of the song being in

control of me." In order to maintain that control he "felt that I had to put my finger over my ear just so I could make sure that I was...singing the right notes."

6) The locus of awareness and focus when singing harmony. During the unison parts, he had "an awareness of his whole self". When singing the harmony line he could make "adjustments based on what he was collectively hearing." When singing spontaneous, unrehearsed harmony awareness tends to be "more concerned with how I feel and how my friends who are participating feel", versus singing rehearsed, pre-written harmony where the focus is "concerned with how it's being heard by other people."

7) When singing vocal harmony there is a relationship with the other person. "Our balance was pretty good between our voices", and "it sounded good, it felt pretty good". He was listening to "the way that our voices were interacting." He commented that "when you started doing harmony I was surprised when you went down." When singing karaoke with friends he sang a higher harmony and had a positive "cool" experience.

8) Specific imagery is elicited by vocal harmony. When singing "something that's more spontaneous" it is "kind of like running in the dark, you're not really going to get hurt, but sometimes you might run into a wall." Singing the harmony line can be "like if you're in a car and it's skidding on ice and your whole perception is being jolted around in front of you, sort of that blurring—can't get your bearings feel."

Textural Description

Singing vocal harmony occurs in a variety of contexts, generally with friends. One of his current experiences singing vocal harmony is with his band both in practice and performance. He distinguishes between two different types of harmony that he sings as being "spontaneous" and "prescribed, rehearsed" harmony. The spontaneous harmony is a creative act, in which he can "develop harmonies on his own." It is "more fun to make harmony up as I go along"; however, when listening to music, "I prefer to hear something that was better thought out in advance" and is a refined product.

Singing vocal harmony can involve elements of surprise, humor and even embarrassment. He tries to be "careful not to do something that sounds really bad and embarrass himself". That is one reason why it is nice to sing harmony while driving, because "it's sort of a safe, impossible-to-be-embarrassed sort of environment." He usually sings a higher harmonic line, especially when he wants to add a humorous element by singing in his falsetto range. Singing a higher harmonic line is very familiar and when someone sings a lower harmonic line he is sometimes surprised.

It takes technique and skill to sing vocal harmony. The "prescribed, rehearsed way...tends to have a lot more to do with very carefully moving my throat to the right tone" which takes practice and training. Similarly, to write the harmony line itself takes musical training and skill. This is demonstrated in his band where "people sing different parts that are written to compliment each other." He recalls a specific song he has recently been thinking about, *Decatur* by Sufjan Stevens. The singers in this

song have "constant harmony, although either of the parts would work as its own melody", this is one specific example of good vocal harmony exemplifying the musical skill required to create vocal harmony.

To be "in control of the song, instead of the song being in control of me" provides a feeling of "some confidence" and "a kind of mastery." In order to gain that control, sometimes he has to "put my finger over my ear" to make sure "I am singing the right notes." When he has control, attention can be placed on the balance between the melody and harmony, and he can contribute to maintaining an optimum blend. However, there are times when singing harmony can involve experiences of uncertainty and anxiety, or a lack of control. This feeling compares this to the image of "running in the dark, you're not really going to get hurt, but sometimes you might run into a wall" or when "you're in a car and it's skidding on ice and your whole perception is being jolted around in front of you..." it's a "blurring—can't get your bearings feel."

When singing harmony with another person, he simultaneously experiences "an awareness" of his "whole self" as well as the other person(s) so he can listen to the way the voices interact. This way he can make "adjustments based on what I am collectively hearing." He has an awareness of others when he is singing vocal harmony and how it is being perceived. He is "more concerned with how I feel and how my friends who are participating feel" when he sings harmony informally. When he sings rehearsed harmonies in a performance, he is "concerned with how it's being heard by other people."

Structural Description

The experience of singing in vocal harmony with another person is an expression of his musical knowledge, relation to others, and control.

He has extensive musical knowledge that has come both through exposure to varieties of music and training. He appreciates music that is a complete whole and demonstrates balance. Likewise, when singing vocal harmony he is often thinking about the technicalities involved in moving the voice from one note to another as well as the balance that is occurring between the singers.

In regards to relation to others, he has different perspectives on singing and music depending on with whom he is interacting. When working with a formal group he is more concerned about the other group members and how his part fits in. If he is interacting in more informal settings with friends, he enjoys adding his unique personality when adding his part.

There is an experience of control when he is able to master the harmonic line. He initially needs to concentrate on his part in order to learn it, and this provokes uncertainty and anxiety. This results in vulnerability, which can be both pleasant and unpleasant. However, once he feels as though he has independently mastered his part, then he can contribute to the whole and have control in the music. This establishment of control builds confidence in his musical abilities as well as in his relationships.

4.4.2. Co-Researcher #2

Invariant Horizons

- I sing harmony most of the time, I rarely choose the main part.
- In the house, in the car.
- If harmonies aren't given, I make my own.
- When I sing with my husband I try not to sing the same thing.
- With children's music I sing the main part.
- I grew up in a musical family. We sang a lot together, positive family memories.
- Harmony has always been a part of music for me/
- I probably started singing melody, that's what children mostly start out doing. Around nine, ten years old I started imitating other people as they were doing harmony in church.
- There is a degree of security in seeking other ways to harmonize, enhance or embellish the song, sometimes echoing.
- I do an upper thing above the music.
- I really love music and it's always been something that moves me.
- Singing harmony was an unconscious choice, I fell into it.
- I have seven siblings. We would have a family devotional in evening. After that, musical sport.
- Anything from very classical music, hymn-type things, to popular songs my brother had made acceptable to my parents, blues and sometimes jazz numbers.
- When you have seven, eight, nine people, you have to find your own way, that encouraged harmonizations.
- Fascination.
- I would get lost in listening to her harmonizations.
- Makes you think what next is possible, beyond.
- It is possible, within this scale, to do really anything.
- They were harmonizing with each other, like flutes.
- Their voices had a bird-like quality.
- Harmony was special and not ordinary, and I was not ordinary.
- There are some songs where I feel trapped. I physically feel like there's a wall right here and I can't sing. There is no scope.
- I feel like my throat starts to hurt.
- In a properly written song, physically there's that freedom.
- When singing harmony I feel elevated higher than anyone else even though I'm quite short.
- I feel physically very strong.
- Some songs have a crying quality, like a hawk.
- A song can make you weep it's so beautiful.
- There is an inner, physical-emotional-spiritual thing.
- When I get into that place, I don't ever want the song to end.

- There are some songs that I can't sing because they're too beautiful.
- "Open the Eyes of My Heart Lord"
- I could make three observations about this experience.
- I'm not used to singing it in that range.
- I couldn't sing with my eyes open.
- It was very hard to sing the melody line unless you were singing it with me. I really had to concentrate on that.
- I found more freedom in singing the harmony.
- I enjoyed singing with you.
- It's different to harmonize with a person I've never sung with before.
- I was thinking, "what can I do to make us blend and sound good?"
- Singing and listening is different from having to concentrate on pitch and range and whatever.
- When I'm singing, there's a part of my body that's moving in rhythm with the music.
- I was rocking and tapping.
- I feel a focused feeling, it's a core issue, a comfort feeling and a stability feeling.
- Singing the melody line was outside of my groove.
- I had thought, "I wonder if this sounds good?"...second thought was, "I think it does."
- In music leadership I can stand out and observe the me or the us doing the thing.
- I don't know if whether it's normal to be able to watch yourself in your own movie.
- Growing up in Mennonite culture there was a particular kind of harmony that was sort of dealt to me.
- When I moved to an African American culture I learned a totally different way of harmonizing.
- One woman would take the basic harmony and she would start playing with it. It was like acrobatics.
- You build and build and build, and then eliminate and come back down to it's basic again.
- Beginning to play with the harmonizations on my own was rather embarrassing at first.
- It's an art of harmonizing.
- The people singing the harmony become the leaders, even though they're not singing the melody.

Initial Themes and Meaning Units

Places where I sing harmony:

- in the house
- in the car

- in church

People with whom I sing harmony:

- husband
- family, seven siblings

What types of music I harmonize:

- classical music
- hymn-type things
- popular songs made acceptable
- blues and sometimes jazz

Creativity:

- if harmonies aren't given I make my own
- I try not to sing the same thing as my husband
- seeking other ways to harmonize, enhance, embellish the song, sometimes echoing
- beginning to play with the harmonizations on my own, which is rather embarrassing at first
- it's an art of harmonizing

Ways I relate myself with harmony:

- I sing harmony most of the time; I rarely choose the main part
- harmony has always been a part of music for me
- harmony is special and not ordinary; I was not ordinary
- inner physical-emotional-spiritual thing
- when I get into that place, I don't ever want the song to end
- more freedom in singing the harmony
- a focused feeling, a core issue, a comfort feeling, stability feeling
- I received one of the biggest compliments of my life when singing in an African American community
- when you have seven, eight, nine people, you have to find your own way; that encouraged harmonization

Leadership:

- in music leadership I can stand out and observe the me or the us doing the thing
- the people singing harmony become the leaders even though they're not singing the melody

Movement/Athletics:

- I really love music and it's always been something that moves me
- singing harmony was an unconscious choice; I fell into it
- seven siblings; had a family devotional in evening and after that, musical sport
- wrestling and singing

- physically very strong
- when I'm singing there's a part of my body that's moving in rhythm with the music; rocking and tapping
- she would take the basic harmony and she would start playing with it; it was like acrobatics
- build and build and build, and then eliminate and come back down to it's basic again

Spatial:

- upper thing above the music
- elevated high than anyone else; even though I'm quite short
- what next is possible, beyond

Metaphors:

- like flutes
- bird-like quality
- there are some songs where I feel trapped; I physically feel like there's a wall right here and I can't sing

Beauty

- some songs have a crying quality, like a hawk; it can make you weep it's so beautiful
- some songs that I can't sing because they're too beautiful

Relationship with interviewer:

- very hard to sing the melody line unless you were singing it with me, I really had to concentrate on that
- enjoyed singing with you
- it's different to harmonize with a person I've never sung with before
- what can I do to make us blend and sound good

Relationship with others:

- when I sing with my husband I try not to sing the same thing
- grew up in a musical family we sang a lot together; positive family memories
- started imitating other people as they were doing harmony
- when you have seven, eight, nine people, you have to find your own way and that encourages harmonizations
- get lost in listening to her harmonizations
- harmonizing with each other, like flutes
- elevated higher than anyone else

Thematic Portrayal

1) Harmony is something that A sings in a variety of contexts: in the house, in the car, in church, with her seven siblings and with her husband. There are several genres of music that she correlates with vocal harmony: classical, hymns, popular songs, blues, jazz, Celtic and Black Gospel.

2) The art of harmonizing. She believes that vocal harmony is an art-form laden with creativity. She takes pride in this creation, "even if harmonies aren't given, I make my own". It is an experience of beauty to sing vocal harmony as it can "enhance, or embellish the song". Sometimes a song with vocal harmony "can make you weep it's so beautiful"; meanwhile, there are "some songs I can't sing because they're too beautiful.

3) Vocal harmony can be considered a "musical sport". It is like "acrobatics". In her family, there was "wrestling and singing".

4) There is "freedom" and an "inner, physical-emotional-spiritual" component in singing vocal harmony. "When I get into that place, I don't ever want the song to end." It has a "focused feeling", "a comfort feeling", and "a stability feeling". When singing vocal harmony, she thinks about "what next is possible, beyond". When she sings the harmony line, she feels "elevated higher than anyone else" even though she is "quite short" almost like a transcendence.

5) Singing vocal harmony is a preferred experience. She chooses to "sing harmony most of the time" and "rarely chooses the main part" because harmony is "special and not ordinary and I was not ordinary". However, she originally "fell" into singing vocal harmony and believes it was an "unconscious choice". "When you have...nine people...you have to find your own way".

6) Singing vocal harmony can define roles. The people who sing the harmony line "become the leaders, even though they're not singing the melody". When she sings with her husband, she "tries not to sing the same thing.

7) Metaphors related to singing vocal harmony. You "build and build and build, and then eliminate and come back down...to it's basic again"; "like flutes"; "bird-like...like a hawk"; being "trapped...there's a wall right here".

8) There is a sense of building a relationship when singing vocal harmony with the interviewer. It was "very hard to sing the melody line unless you (the interviewer) were singing it with me...I really had to concentrate on that". The experience was enjoyable; although, "it's different to harmonize with a person I've never sung with before". While singing, she was wondering "what can I do to make us blend and sound good?"

Textural Description

Singing vocal harmony is something she unconsciously "fell into". Growing up, she found a "special and not ordinary" role in her family when singing the harmony line. "When you have...nine people (in your family), you have to find your own way." It doesn't matter what type of music, she chooses to "sing harmony most of the time", be it classical, hymns, popular songs, blues, jazz, Celtic or Black Gospel. This harmonic role that developed as a child and has continued into her own family as a mother. When singing with her husband, she "tries not to sing the same thing." Another area where this role has been illuminated is when she sings in church in a

leadership role. In certain forms of music she has noticed that the people who sing the harmony line "become the leaders, even though they're not singing the melody."

Relationships are an essential part of singing vocal harmony, whether it is with siblings, her husband, her church, or in a different culture. "It's different to harmonize with a person I've never sung with before...". She has to concentrate in order to sing the melody line when someone else is singing with her because she will instinctively sing the harmony line. When singing the harmony line with another person she is often thinking "what can I do to make us blend and sound good?" No matter with whom she is singing it is enjoyable to create a relationship in the music where the people "build and build and build, and then eliminate and come back down...to it's basic."

In some ways, singing with another person in vocal harmony is like a sport. She has always been fascinated by vocal harmony and how some people can do "acrobatics" with their voices. In her family with several siblings she remembers their evenings were filled with "wrestling and singing" and it was more like "musical sport" than simply singing.

Singing vocal harmony is an art-form that she takes pride in creating, "even if harmonies aren't given I make my own". Inherent in being an art form is an experience of beauty as vocal harmony can "enhance, or embellish the song", and sometimes it "can make you weep it's so beautiful." This beauty is powerful and can be "haunting", like a "hawk crying". There are "some songs I can't sing because they're too beautiful." Meanwhile there are some songs that do not achieve beauty

and instead they result in feeling "trapped, like there's a wall right here" in front of her voice.

Although harmony can be transfixing, it also induces "freedom" with a "focused feeling" where she finds "comfort" and "stability." It resonates in her "inner physical-emotional-spiritual" core and creates a connection within herself. This is captivating and "when I get into that place, I don't ever want the song to end." She has an experience of timelessness, of being simultaneously fully present in the moment and thinking "what next is possible, beyond." In the freedom of singing vocal harmony she is transcended to be "elevated higher than anyone else", even though she is "quite short".

Structural Description

The experience of singing vocal harmony with another person is an expression of roles, relation to others, and intimacy. Growing up in a large family, she had to choose how she would define herself by what role she would fill. There were many activities the family participated in together, and singing was a preferred family activity. By providing a harmonic line she felt she was adding something special to the family and in way defining her family role. Now in all areas of her life, singing the vocal harmony line has become a role she seeks to fulfill. She takes pride in this role and has been able to use it in transitions to a variety of different places.

Regarding relation to others, by singing the vocal harmony line she retains her identity while interacting with another person. She has always desired a feeling of uniqueness because so much of her life felt ordinary. Also, she wants to overcome

the obstacle of being short. Through singing harmony she is able to escape the ordinary of life and overcome her physical height.

Intimacy is a feeling of comfort and stability as well as a fascination. It is something she feels emotionally, physically, and spiritually. She experiences intimacy when remembering, hearing or singing vocal harmony and it establishes a connection that is beyond the moment, reaching to other times, places and people. This is an awareness of beauty, and a simultaneous realization of timelessness amidst the futility of time.

4.4.3. Co-Researcher #3

Invariant Horizons

- Usually it's in a church setting. I sing harmony on some hymns.
- In church choir I sing alto.
- I sing harmony in large group settings.
- Sometimes I'll do spontaneous harmony if my family is gathered around a piano singing.
- If I hear a song on the radio I'll add my own harmony part to it.
- I was in choir in 7th grade. Just that one year.
- Singing fixed harmony feels like an added challenge because everyone is so familiar with the melody line that if I can pitch in and do the harmony line it feels like I'm adding something to the music but I'm also challenging my musical self.
- I like adding to the group and the overall effect, something that wasn't there.
- Spontaneous harmony is more freeing.
- There isn't the risk of being wrong.
- I also sing harmony in the car, usually by myself. I'll sing with my sister in the car sometimes.
- My grandmother always takes the alto line.
- Since I could read music from a young age I always knew there was more than one line on the page
- experience of many parts coming together to form one voice. We all come together and sing our own lines, our own parts and it creates one song.
- Singing harmony is very reassuring.
- I was surrounded by other voices.
- Singing in the choir, I have more responsibility. There is less room for mistakes. It challenged me and helped me to grow in my confidence.
- I was getting a little bored singing the melody so during one of the hymns I sang the harmony. I was the only one doing it. It was comforting to have that extra part, kind of boost my self-esteem.
- I think I swayed or tapped my hands along with the beat.
- My mom was standing next to me. I was wondering what was she thinking hearing me sing.
- I was thinking, "If I was the director of this church" or "If I was in charge, how would I change it?"
- "We Shall Overcome" and "Open the Eyes of My Heart Lord"
- "We Shall Overcome" was a completely new harmonizing experience for me. I'd never really heard a pre-recorded harmony.
- I felt excitement to hear what it would sound like, the possibilities.
- Singing the harmony line was freeing, but a little anxiety-causing at the same time.
- The second song, I used to sing that song all the time. It was comforting and interesting to hear it harmonized all the way through.

- Especially when we sang the melody line together, I could hear the parts that people would do to harmony in my head.
- It was hard to resist the urge to split.
- There was a support system between the two of us being built.
- I had an uneasy feeling when I sang the harmony.
- It felt like a build-up because first you're in melody, and then I could sing melody and listen to the harmony, and then it was my turn to sing harmony.
- Physically I felt heart-racing, a little bit shaking, spinning.
- I'm not being graded on my singing ability.
- A point in the second song where I wasn't hearing the melody at all. It wasn't because I couldn't hear you, it's because I was paying attention to what I was singing and my internal dialogue telling me what to do.
- Physically, the shaking stopped when I was singing harmony.
- When you were singing harmony I was trying to listen, but at the same time trying to make sure I stayed with the melody line and didn't start to follow what you were doing.
- When I was singing harmony I was thinking about where am I within the chord structure, this note didn't sound good.
- During "We Shall Overcome", I was trying to think to what I did the first time and how I could fix or change something.
- "Open the Eyes" I was thinking back to high school. It would usually be one of the last songs and they would dim the lights and people would close their eyes. It brings back memories of coming to a spiritual state.
- In this spiritual state, all the other thoughts of the day are blocked, I'm just there in the moment, paying attention to what's going on around me, but not the details.
- Now I go to a more traditional church. This was a part of me that did not exist, or I won't tell people it did.
- It felt good to sing this song again, like "Ha, I'm allowed to sing this song".
- I swayed a little bit, that was probably physical memory transferring over.
- A sense of calming with me.
- I was thinking of the words and the harmony. In unison it is like we are one, we shall overcome together, strong, unified. Then singing it in harmony, instead of one solid line overcoming it, it's this wall overcoming something.
- It was a positive experience to get to sing harmony.
- Singing it off of chord sheets where I can see the chords because part of my brain knows the chords, knows the notes and it's not like every word has its note written above it was a good change. It felt non-restricting.

Initial Themes and Meaning Units

When & Where I sing vocal harmony:

- usually it's in a church setting
- church choir

- family gathered around a piano singing
- large group settings
- if I hear a song on the radio
- I was in choir in 7th grade; just that one year

Adding something, Challenging:

- if I hear a song on the radio I'll add my own harmony part to it
- if I can pitch in and do the harmony line it feels like I'm adding something to the music but I'm also challenging my musical self
- adding to the group and, the overall effect, something that wasn't there

Specific people:

- family
- sister, sings melody, I sing harmony
- grandmother, always takes the alto line
- thinking of my mom, wondering what was she thinking hearing me sing

Wholeness:

- experience of many parts coming together to form one voice; come together and sing our own line, our own parts and it creates one song
- surrounded by other voices
- we are one, we shall overcome together, strong, unified
- singing it in harmony, instead of one solid line overcoming it, it's this wall overcoming something
- hard to resist the urge to split

Responsibility, Leadership:

- singing in the choir, I have more responsibility and there is less room for mistakes
- I was thinking, "If I was the director of this church" or "If I was in charge, how would I change it?"

Comfort, confidence:

- very reassuring
- challenged me and helped me to grow in my confidence
- I was getting a little bored singing the melody so during one of the hymns I sang the harmony; I was only one doing it, it felt comforting to have that extra part and gave me a kind of boost to my self-esteem
- second song, used to sing that song all the time; it was comforting and interesting to hear it harmonized all the way through
- sense of calming with me

Memories:

- especially when we sang the melody line together, I could hear the parts that people would do to harmony in my head

- thinking back to high school, it would usually be one of the last songs; they would dim the lights and people would close their eyes; it brings back memories of coming to a spiritual state

Relationship with interviewer:

- support system between the two of us being built
- felt like a built-up because first you're in melody, and then I could sing melody and listen to the harmony, and then it was my turn to sing harmony
- positive experience to get to sing harmony

Physical sensations:

- tapped my hands along with the beat
- heart-racing, a little bit shaking, spinning
- physically, the shaking stopped when I was singing harmony
- I swayed a little bit; a physical memory transferring over

Attention:

- point in the second song where I wasn't hearing the melody at all; it wasn't because I couldn't hear you, it's because I was paying attention to what I was singing and my internal dialogue telling me what to do
- when you were singing harmony I was trying to listen, but at the same time trying to make sure I stayed with the melody line and didn't start to follow what you were doing
- when I was singing harmony I am thinking about where am I within the chord structure
- thinking of the words and the harmony

Judgment, Uneasiness, Secrecy, Being Wrong:

- isn't the risk of being wrong
- freeing, but a little anxiety-causing at the same time
- uneasy feeling when I sang the harmony
- I'm not being graded on my singing ability
- this note didn't sound good
- now I got to a more traditional church; this was a part of me that did not exist, or I won't tell people it did
- felt good to sing this song again, "Ha, I'm allowed to sing this song"
- singing it off of chord sheets where I can see the chords, part of my brain knows the chords, knows the notes; it's not like every word has its note written above it; it was a good change; it felt non-restricting

Fix, Change, Alter:

- "If I was in charge, how would I change it?"
- trying to think what I did the first time, fix, or change something

Spiritual memory:

- all the other thoughts of the day are blocked, I'm just there in the moment, paying attention to what's going on around me, but not the details

Thematic Portrayal

1) Various contexts for singing vocal harmony: in church; 7th grade choir; family such as sister, mother, grandmother; large group settings; along with the radio.

2) Vocal harmony is an experience of being challenged to add something. "If I hear a song on the radio...I'll add my own harmony part to it." "If I can pitch in and do the harmony line it feels like I'm adding something to the music, but I'm also challenging my musical self". When singing in a large group she enjoys adding to the "overall effect, something that wasn't there."

3) Experiences of connection and spirituality in vocal harmony. She describes singing vocal harmony as an "experience of many parts coming together to form one voice...our own line, our own parts and it creates one song." There is a sense of being "surrounded by other voices." When singing the harmony line, "instead of one solid line...it's this wall overcoming something." She recalled a memory of singing vocal harmony that lead to "coming to a spiritual state" where "all the other thoughts of the day are blocked, I'm just there in the moment, paying attention to what's going on around me, but not the details."

4) Expectations from self and others. When singing harmony next to her mother she was "wondering what was she thinking hearing me sing?" Singing spontaneous vocal harmony doesn't involve "the risk of being wrong". This experience of "singing it off chord sheets where I can see the chords...was a good change...felt non-restricting."

5) Experiences of comfort and confidence when singing vocal harmony. Singing vocal harmony is "very reassuring" and it has "challenged me and helped me to grow in my confidence." The second song was "comforting and interesting" to hear harmonized. Sometimes she gets bored singing the melody and even if she is the "only one doing it" she will sing harmony and it feels "comforting to have that extra part, kind of boosts my self-esteem." Vocal harmony gives a "sense of calming with me."

6) The creation of a relationship with the interviewer when singing vocal harmony. When she was singing the melody line she was "trying to listen" to the harmony line, "but at the same time trying to make sure I stayed with the melody line and didn't start to follow what [the interviewer] was doing." It felt like a "support system between the two of us being built." She described this as a positive experience.

7) Interpersonal experience when singing vocal harmony. While singing with the interviewer there was a time where she "wasn't hearing the melody at all...wasn't because I couldn't hear, it's because I was paying attention to what I was singing and my internal dialogue telling me what to do." When singing the harmony line, she was thinking "where am I within the chord structure?" Throughout the song she was thinking of the words and how they related to the harmony. Sometimes she was "trying to think what I did the first time" and how she could "fix, or change something."

Textural Description

One of the first memories of singing vocal harmony include a 7th grade choir, at church, and with her family around the piano at Christmas time. She did not continue with choir, until recently, but she continued to sing harmony with her family, at church and in other large group settings with friends. Her grandmother was particularly influential because she "always takes the alto line, even if everyone is supposed to be singing melody" she says smiling. Recently, while singing in church next to her mother, she sang a harmony line when nobody else was, in this way she can identify with her grandmother and she wondered what her mother thought hearing her daughter sing like that.

Vocal harmony can be spontaneous or rehearsed. The spontaneous harmony is more appealing because it is "non-restricting" and doesn't involve "the risk of being wrong." However, singing in a choir with predetermined notes offers an opportunity to "challenge [her] musical self" and this encourages her. It has "challenged me and helped me to grow in my confidence." Having a harmonic line is "very reassuring", feels "comforting" and gives "a sense of calming". Whether she is singing in a spontaneous or rehearsed way, it "kind of boosts my self-esteem" to add the harmonic line.

Sometimes she doesn't hear the melody line when she is singing the harmony line because she is "paying attention to what I am singing and my internal dialogue telling me what to do." She might be thinking theoretically about where she is "within the chord structure" or how she can "fix or change something." Other times

she is thinking how the words relate to the harmony. She becomes much more aware of herself, what she is thinking and doing.

At the same time, singing a harmony line is an opportunity to contribute to the whole. It can be a song on the radio "I'll add my own harmony part to it", it can be church or with her family. No matter what setting, she appreciates the opportunity to "pitch in and do the harmony line" because "it feels like I'm adding something to the music...". When singing in a large group of people, she thinks harmony amplifies the "overall effect" with "something that wasn't there."

She notices a connection between each person that is involved when singing vocal harmony that creates one whole. She is aware of being "surrounded by other voices" in an "experience of many parts coming together to form one voice." She believes that each person has "our own line, our own parts and it creates one song." She connects this imagery to the lyrics of the song "We Shall Overcome" and highlights the significance of the voices singing in melody that create "one solid line" versus the voices singing in harmony that become "this wall overcoming something." This connection brings a "spiritual state" where "all the other thoughts of the day are blocked. I'm just there in the moment, paying attention to what's going on around me, but not the details."

Structural Description

The experience of singing vocal harmony with another person is an expression of relation to self, others, and spirituality.

In regards to relation to self, she appreciates opportunities to challenge herself and increase her confidence. She can sometimes focus about what is acceptable or correct, and through singing vocal harmony she is able to find freedom from these concerns. Within the harmony line there is a lack of restriction and therefore reassuring.

Relating to others is marked by contribution to a larger whole. She considers each person and the unique characteristics that they bring into an interaction. Therefore, she tries to have an awareness of the other when singing and listens to how the parts can come together to form a whole. This is something that occurs within the interaction of the harmony and melody lines as well as the lyrics and the music. She sees how these things all compliment each other.

The expression of spirituality is both an internal and external event. When she has a spiritual experience she is no longer bound by the constraints of time. Instead she can simultaneously be in the present as well as the past and future. Physical sensations from the past transfer to the present, and her current thoughts are not in her consciousness. This is something that is closely related to faith experiences. She finds a way to connect with the people and space around her when singing in vocal harmony with others.

4.4.4. Co-Researcher #4

Invariant Horizons

- It was in high school when I decided that I could sing.
- Choral work, musical, and in college an acappella group of like 10 to 15 of us.
- We could sing whatever song we wanted to sing, anywhere we could.
- Sometimes when we would sing we would make money and go out to dinner.
- We would sing on the streets.
- I wish I could go back and live there again.
- Every few months or so we would go down to this area it was almost like a little community.
- People that didn't want to be in a formal group, they just wanted to sing.
- It was like we were competing against each other.
- A good friend of mine was in it. She was the one that told me to audition.
- A lot of the actual music was with your voice.
- When it all came together I think that was the most amazing feeling, "...that sounds amazing!"
- I was alto.
- Singing as hard and as loud as I could with everybody around me singing the same way.
- It was my choral teacher who was like "you can sing."
- I sang in chorus in middle school.
- I was singing "opera" songs and not anything I really wanted to be doing.
- I was in charge of the alto section, that was nice.
- I enjoy singing acappella more than anything else.
- Harmony's hard, I can't do it just on a whim, I actually have to practice it.
- I remember seeing a friend actually sing harmony just by listening to me and then being able to do it. I wish I could be able to do that.
- "My Girl"
- I have to pay a little more attention to what you're singing.
- I could just follow what you're doing.
- I can do better.
- I am able to talk about it right now.
- When you sing harmony, it feels like you accomplished something, like when you finish a paper.
- The satisfaction when you actually complete something.
- It is hard for me because I want to do well and I want to sound well.
- I was worrying that I wouldn't be able to do it.
- I was excited when I would actually hear it in harmony.
- I was disappointed when I knew I wasn't.
- You hear the way it's supposed to sound and almost know what you have to do, but if you miss that first beat or that first note it's kind of like playing catch-up.

- You're coaching yourself through it the whole time.
- I was sweating, nervous, face flushed, which always happens, I think, when I'm singing with people...that I don't sing in front of on a normal basis.
- I was moving and fidgeting a little, trying to get a comfortable position.
- You get a tight feeling in your stomach.
- It is different when you're singing the same versus singing not in like a "professional" setting, singing for the hell of it.
- My teacher would probably kill me. She'd be like, "Put your feet on the floor, and put your back straight, and breathe!"
- It was fun.
- There were certain instances when it didn't matter how many times we practiced, how many times I did it, I still wouldn't hit it.
- It was helpful for you to sing just the harmony part without anything else.
- When you get tense it's like you're focusing on the situation rather than what you actually have to sing.
- Your heart starts to beat a little faster when you feel like you're not getting it.
- You know the lines you *don't* know.
- You anticipate the anxiety of being able to sing it or not.
- I sing better, I sing louder, I sing clearer when I know what I'm singing.
- I was thinking "enjoy this, but don't focus on it too much, focus on what you have to sing next."
- I know how to play instruments. I'm very rough on guitar and I learned piano a long, long time ago. I'm big with the bass clarinet.
- The big thing was to have written music later on for people. Obviously all of us weren't there forever.
- Everybody would go into a different room and then learn their part and then we would come together.
- Hopefully if I can sing more in the next couple of years. I don't want to just stop singing altogether.
- I was so excited when I saw the sign for this, 'cause it's an opportunity to sing.
- Singing in harmony is something that I've always loved doing.
- There were certain songs where my part as an alto would be the harmony instead of the actual melody. I've found myself singing that and having it be the melody. I was so used to singing the harmony part that I didn't even think twice about singing the melody.

Initial Themes and Meaning Units

When and Where I sing vocal harmony:

- in high school
- choral work
- musical
- college in an acappella group
- sang in chorus in middle school

Benefits of singing:

- we'd make money and then go out to dinner

Fond memories of places:

- I wish I could go back and live there again
- sing on the streets
- every few months or so we would go down to this area; it was almost like a little community

Doing harmony:

- I was alto
- "harmony's hard, I can't do it just on a whim, I actually have to practice it"
- I remember seeing her a friend actually sing harmony just by listening and then being able to do it
- singing in harmony is something that I've always loved doing

Personal Desires:

- I wish I could go back and live there again
- it was in high school when I decided that I could sing
- enjoy singing acappella more than anything else

Expectations:

- I wish I could be able to do that
- I can do better
- hard for me because I want to do well and I want to sound well
- worrying that I wouldn't be able to do it
- the way it's supposed to sound; you almost know what you have to do, but if you miss that first beat or that first note, it's kind of like playing catch-up
- my teacher would probably kill me; she'd be like, "Put your feet on the floor, and put your back straight, and breathe!"
- anticipate the anxiety of being able to sing it or not

Disappointment:

- disappointed when I knew I wasn't
- certain instances when it didn't matter how many times we practiced, how many times I did it, I still wouldn't hit it!
- your heart starts to beat a little faster when you feel like you're not getting it
- singing "opera" songs and not anything I really wanted to be doing

Accomplishment, Satisfaction:

- like you accomplished something, like when you finish a paper
- we could whatever song we wanted to sing, anywhere we could

- when it all came together I think that was the most amazing feeling, "...that sounds amazing!"
- satisfaction when you actually complete something
- excitement when I would actually hear it in harmony
- enjoy this, but don't focus on it too much, focus on what you have to sing next
- different when you're singing the same versus singing, not in like a "professional" setting, but singing for the hell of it
- it was fun

Affirmation:

- choral teacher who was like, "you can sing"
- I was in charge of the alto section, that was nice

Attention:

- I have to pay a little more attention to what you're singing
- when you get tense it's like you're focusing on the situation rather than what you actually have to sing

Imitation, Following:

- I could just follow what you're doing

Relationship with the "other":

- competing against each other
- a good friend of mine was in it; she was the one that told me to audition
- singing as hard and as loud as I could with everybody around me singing the same way
- sweating, nervous, face flushed, which always happens, I think, when I'm singing with people that I don't sing in front of on a normal basis
- everybody would go into a different room and then learn their part, then we would come together

Leadership, Responsibility:

- I was in charge of the alto section, that was nice
- coaching yourself through it the whole time

Physical sensations when singing harmony part:

- moving and fidgeting a little, trying to get a comfortable position
- tight feeling in your stomach
- your heart starts to beat a little faster when you feel like you're not getting it

Instruments:

- I know how to play instruments; I'm very rough on guitar and I learned piano a long, long time ago; I'm big with the bass clarinet

Confidence:

- I sing better, I sing louder, I sing clearer when I know what I'm singing

Legacy, Future:

- the big thing was to have written music later on for people; obviously all of us weren't there forever
- hopefully if I can sing more in the next couple of years, I don't want to just stop singing altogether

Motivation for participating:

- I was so excited when I saw the sign for this, 'cause it's an opportunity to sing

Harmony as melody:

- certain songs where my part as an alto would be the harmony instead of the actual melody, I've found myself singing that and having it be the melody; I was so used to singing the harmony part that I didn't even think twice about singing the melody

Thematic Portrayal

1) Singing vocal harmony occurs in various contexts: "middle school...chorus"; "high school...choral work...musical"; "college...acappella group"; "on the streets".

2) Vocal harmony elicits personal desires and preferences. "Singing in harmony is something that I've always loved doing." It was in high school when she "decided" that she could sing, and it was singing in college when she discovered her preference for singing acappella harmony. When remembering her college acappella group, she commented, "I wish I could go back and live there again". Regarding people who can hear harmony and then sing it immediately, she says "I wish I could be able to do that". She chose to participate in this research because "I was so excited when I saw the sign for this...it's an opportunity to sing". "Hopefully...can sing more in the next couple of years...".

3) When singing vocal harmony there are expectations both internal and external.

She was "worrying that I wouldn't be able to do it". She said it's "hard for me because

I want to do well and I want to sound well"; "I can do better." Memories of her high school teacher were in her thoughts while singing harmony; "my teacher would probably kill me..." she imagined her teacher "would be like...Put your feet on the floor, and put your back straight, and breathe!" When singing in harmony she states that she will "anticipate the anxiety of being able to sing it or not".

4) There are experiences of disappointment when singing vocal harmony. She remembers singing in her acappella group, "certain instances when it didn't matter how many times we practiced, how many time I did it, I still wouldn't hit it". She said, "your heart starts to beat a little faster when you feel like you're not getting it." She was "disappointed when I knew I wasn't" singing "the way it's supposed to sound".

5) Singing vocal harmony can provide feelings of accomplishment and satisfaction. In high school she "was in charge of the alto section, that was nice". In her acappella group they could sing "whatever song we wanted to sing, anywhere we could". When you get the harmony right it is "like you accomplished something, like when you finish a paper", and like "satisfaction when you actually complete something". She felt "excitement when I would actually hear it in harmony". "I sing better, I sing louder, I sing clearer when I know what I'm singing."

6) Vocal harmony involves attention and focus. When singing the harmony line she would "coach herself" saying "enjoy this, but don't focus on it too much, focus on what you have to sing next." In order to sing the harmony line "I have to pay a little more attention to what you're singing". "When you get tense it's like you're focusing on the situation rather than what you actually have to sing."

7) Vocal harmony can become a role. There are "certain songs where my part as an alto would be the harmony instead of the actual melody. I've found myself singing that and having it be the melody. I didn't even think twice about singing the melody." "I was alto."

8) Vocal harmony is an experience in relating to others. Sometimes "competing against each other". She sang in her acapella group with a good friend, "she was the one that told me to audition". In the acappella group she remembers "singing as hard and as loud as I could with everybody around me singing the same way". When singing in the interview she was "sweating, nervous, face flushed, which always happens, I think, when I'm singing with people that I don't sing in front of on a normal basis."

Textural Description

Starting in middle school, she has developed an appreciation for vocal harmony, "singing in harmony is something I've always loved doing." Throughout her academic career she has sung in multiple choirs and musicals that have given her the opportunity to sing vocal harmony in unique and interesting ways. She has particularly fond memories of a college acappella group that enriched her understanding and love for harmony.

She remembers observing a friend listen to the melody of a song and singing the harmony line immediately. Unfortunately, she realized early on that "harmony's hard" and that she needs to practice it in order to be able to sing it. This can be frustrating because she has expectations and she can get caught "worrying that I

wouldn't be able to do it." She wants "to do well and...sound well." Sometimes she thinks of her high school teacher, who first encouraged her to sing. She can hear her teacher instructing, "Put your feet on the floor, and put your back straight, and breathe!" If her high school choral teacher saw her singing now, she can imagine that she would not approve.

Possibly as a result of thinking about her teacher and having these expectations, she has to "coach herself" and say "enjoy this, but don't focus on it too much, focus on what you have to sing next." She has to "pay a little more attention to what the other person is singing" in order to sing the harmony line. Singing harmony requires attention on the music and on both parts involved instead of on the physical sensations and frustration of previous mistakes in the song. "When you get tense it's like you're focusing on the situation rather than what you actually have to sing."

Frequently singing a harmony line can turn it into an automatic response. There are certain songs where her part as an alto would be the harmony instead of the actual melody. She found herself singing the harmony line and having it be the melody and didn't think twice about singing the melody. Singing in front of someone new has resulted in "sweating, nervous, face flushed, which always happens, I think, when I'm singing with people that I don't sing in front of on a normal basis."

There have been times when she has experienced disappointment when singing vocal harmony, "I can do better." In her acapella group there were "certain instances when it didn't matter how many times we practiced, how many times I did it, I still wouldn't hit it!" The harmony line is something she has pre-existing expectation for how it should sound and she is "disappointed when..." she wasn't

singing "the way it's supposed to sound." In the moment of singing vocal harmony incorrectly she says "your heart starts to beat a little faster when you feel like you're not getting it."

Fortunately she has also experienced mastery in singing vocal harmony and she has been rewarded in several ways such as being placed "in charge of the alto section..." In these successful moments she feels "satisfaction when you actually complete something" and it "like you accomplished something" These moments instill confidence and she sings "better, louder, clearer". This confidence allowed her acapella group to sing "whatever song we wanted to sing, anywhere we could." There is "excitement when I actually hear it in harmony." When everything "comes together, it's amazing."

Structural Description

The experience of singing vocal harmony with another person is an expression of expectations, dedication, and accomplishment. Ever since high school, she was encouraged by friends and teachers to sing harmony. She was given the responsibility of being the leader of her choral section. This was a compliment as well as an expectation to live up to the abilities others saw in her. Instructions for proper singing were given and these voices continue to replay in her head whenever she sings. When singing with another person, she hears both the voices of others as well as her own voice creating expectations for what the song should sound like and the abilities she should have to create that sound. These expectations often serve as a motivation this is why she seeks out opportunities to sing in vocal harmony.

Regarding dedication, she discovered early on that in order to live up to the expectations set for her, she has to practice. Putting time into rehearsing her part by herself and then with others is something she is willing to do and enjoys. It is a dedication to her part, the larger group that is singing together, and the music itself. This can overlap with other groups. Sometimes she will sing the harmony line she committed to memory automatically even when she is in another setting with other people and they are not expecting this part.

The expression of accomplishment is a feeling of completion and satisfaction. The result of expectations and dedication is that things come together, and that provides a sense of mastery. She is able to enjoy the act of the parts coming together and simultaneously feel physically empowered and emotionally connected to those who are singing with her as well as those who are listening. This brings excitement, amazement, and confidence, as she is both aware of herself and what she has accomplished by learning her part, and the larger group that has successfully produced the sound they desired.

4.4.5. Composite Descriptions

Composite Textural Description

Singing in vocal harmony is an experience each co-researcher has participated in since childhood. For some of the co-researchers vocal harmony is an early family memory, for others it is something that they remembering beginning in elementary and middle school choirs. A few of the co-researchers recall very vivid first memories of realizing vocal harmony was occurring and that they wanted to replicate it. Meanwhile, other co-researchers comment that vocal harmony occurred so frequently and naturally in their environment that harmony chose them.

Elements of anticipation and expectation exist in the experience of singing vocal harmony. A few co-researchers state that when singing vocal harmony they anticipate that they will make mistakes and be disappointed because they have expectations of their abilities to perform. Other co-researchers experience a sense of responsibility when singing vocal harmony. They simultaneously consider their harmony line and the other person's melody, and they think about how they can change or alter what they are doing in order to improve the music.

Singing vocal harmony with others is something that can increase anxiety, especially if it is with new people. For this reason some co-researchers report that they enjoy singing in places and situations where they know they are safe and won't be embarrassed. At the same time, other co-researchers report that singing a harmony line limits the possibility to be wrong unlike the melody line, which is established and can be sung incorrectly. Still other co-researchers seek the chance to sing the harmony line because it challenges them musically. The anxiety produced by

anticipation and expectation appear to be motivation to sing harmony for these co-researchers.

All of the co-researchers have had multiple successful experiences singing vocal harmony and this has contributed to a sense of mastery. One way co-researchers explain this mastery is an increase in confidence, which translates as feelings of comfort, reassurance, stability and control, or literally singing louder, stronger and clearer. Singing in vocal harmony is an accomplishment that is a result of musically fitting in with the melody line, as well as the product of completing a project in collaboration with another person or persons. The experience of mastery is one of the reasons why co-researchers continue to engage in singing vocal harmony.

Often singing vocal harmony can stimulate the recall of specific memories and elicit vivid imagery. Memories can be related to previous musical training and the way a vocal teacher would instruct the person to sing. The memories can be specific songs that have a particularly enjoyable harmony line. Sometimes physical memories can transfer to the present and a person will re-experience swaying, tapping or a specific movement that occurred when singing a particular song in the past. To describe memories and experiences of singing vocal harmony, co-researchers use imagery of birds, musical instruments, acrobatics, running and driving. Many of these images represent the element of beauty in vocal harmony that is otherwise difficult to describe.

Interpersonal interactions are inherent in singing vocal harmony. Every co-researcher commented on the interaction they have with others when singing vocal harmony, even if the "other person" is in the form of the radio or recorded song.

Singing with another person is collectively described as an act of building a relationship. Co-researchers are conscious of the other person(s) when singing together and how the voices are interacting. A few co-researchers are more attentive when they sing the harmony line, and they modify the notes they are singing or the volume of their voice in order to maintain balance. Each co-researcher mentioned a specific family member or friend with whom they sing vocal harmony and how singing vocal harmony determines their role in that relationship. Sometimes this role of singing vocal harmony is persistent through various aspects of their lives.

Singing vocal harmony is an intrapersonal event in which the awareness of the self is heightened. All of the co-researchers commented that they have to concentrate on their part when they sing harmony with another person whether it is the harmony or melody line. In some instances a person will sing the harmony line to purposefully have a distinct musical part that it is different than the other person. This is an expression of individualization and separation. Meanwhile, for other researchers, singing vocal harmony is at times an automatic response. A person rehearses and performs a specific harmony line multiple times, and in an alternative setting they will unknowingly sing that harmony line instead of the melody. Other co-researchers experience an internal dialogue while they are singing vocal harmony in which they are coaching, reprimanding, congratulating or reassuring themselves. These intrapersonal interactions tend to vary depending upon the song and the setting in which they are singing vocal harmony.

For all of the co-researchers, singing vocal harmony provides an opportunity to contribute to a group. Singing vocal harmony involves multiple individual parts

coming together to create a whole. There is a connection to the self as well as to the whole on both conscious and unconscious levels. When this occurs, as reported by one co-researcher, they begin to think about possibilities within the music and what is beyond the current moment. Another co-researcher states that hearing these various parts come together is amazing and contains collective excitement amongst those participating. For yet another co-researcher this is a spiritual experience described as being in the moment and yet not contained by that moment. Each co-researcher both verbally and non-verbally communicated that they experience heightened emotions that are memorable when they connect with another person or group of persons through singing vocal harmony. Singing vocal harmony is simultaneously captivating and freeing.

Composite Structural Description

The experience of singing vocal harmony with another person is an expression of relation to others, relation to self, movement, and beauty.

For each co-researcher, their initial experience of singing in vocal harmony was in interaction with another person or group of people. None of the co-researchers could recall times when they sing vocal harmony by themselves without another voice, be that a live person or a "person" in the form of recorded music. The desire to sing vocal harmony generally is the result of a desire to interact with another person.

In relation to self, co-researchers identified the ways in which their awareness of themselves increases when they sing the harmony line. Although described in different manners, all of the co-researchers seek the freedom and beauty that exists in

singing vocal harmony. This freedom and beauty is something that, while occurring within a relationship with another person, is a pleasure enjoyed by the individual as they relate to themselves in the process.

Movement is expressed both literally and figuratively. Literally there is physical movement that compels co-researchers to sing in vocal harmony. It may be in the form of a racing heart or rocking motion that stems from anticipation and anxiety when singing with a new person or a new harmony line. For others the physical movement is the technical elements involved in moving the voice to a specific pitch or the involvement of the body when singing. Every co-researcher used non-verbal communication through hand gestures and facial expressions to demonstrate the literal movement they feel when singing harmony. Figuratively, the movement is found in metaphors and imagery. The experience of singing in vocal harmony with another person is created by movement with, but separate from another person. It is like a dance in which the voices move with one another to support and compliment the other.

The expression of beauty is the element that is the most difficult to describe. Co-researchers used imagery, metaphor, and descriptive words including specifically "beauty", "fascination", and "amazing". Most significant was the facial expressions that appeared while recalling a previous experience singing vocal harmony and the exaggerated use of hand gestures while describing the experience. These non-verbal expressions seemed to be either a demonstration of the inability to contain the occurrences of beauty in words, or a depiction of the excitement involved in remembering an experience in beauty. The beauty lies in the auditory stimulation

from hearing the musical interplay of two voice parts, as well as in the connection made to the place and people involved. Some co-researchers described this connection in terms of spirituality, or as one co-researcher stated as the feeling of thinking about "what next is possible, beyond." This element of beauty captivates those involved, compelling them to seek out opportunities to sing in vocal harmony.

4.4.6. Synthesis of Meanings and Essences

Singing vocal harmony with another person is an experience that can be defined by the following concepts of relationships, intrapersonal insight, movement and action, and beauty.

This experience is something that occurs with another person, therefore it can both create and be created by the relationship with that other person. Often this can become an expression of an individual's role in that relationship. It is simultaneously an opportunity for intrapersonal insight regarding the self. Singing vocal harmony is an act of interdependency in which the each person is related to but separate from the other. In order to maintain that separate relationship each person must be aware of their part and thus themselves.

Movement and action are required to sing vocal harmony on both physical and mental levels. The theoretical aspects of singing vocal harmony require mental processes; meanwhile the technical aspects of manipulating the voice in a specific way different from the familiarity of the melody requires physical movement and action. Through it all, the physical and mental elements can lead to an experience of beauty both on an individual and communal level.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1. Overview

This study was designed to explore the experience of singing in vocal harmony with another person through in-depth interviews involving reflection on a live experience singing vocal harmony. The purpose of this discussion is to synthesize the results and the literature presented in Chapter 2 to demonstrate how they relate in order to illuminate the true essence of the phenomenon. This chapter will begin with a description of the major findings and themes found in the composite synthesis of meanings and essences. Next there will be a discussion on the clinical applications that the researcher formulated from this information. After that, the limitations of the study will be explained and discussed. The chapter will conclude with implications for future research based upon the synthesis with the literature, clinical applications and limitations.

5.2. Description of Major Findings, Themes or Outcomes

The major findings of this phenomenon are that singing in vocal harmony with another person involves the *building and expression of relationships*, the illumination of an individual's *intrapersonal and interpersonal insight*, the inspiration *movement and action*, and provides experiences of *beauty*. These will be discussed in terms of the literature presented in Chapter 2.

Building and Expression of Relationships

"Harmony is not fusion" (Lippman, 1963, p. 29). Whether using harmony as a term in a musical or non-musical way, it is a definition of the interaction between

two or more components that are occurring simultaneously. These simultaneous components are related to one another, but they are not identical. The co-researchers who each discussed singing vocal harmony in relation to the relationship that is created and expressed between the person(s) involved confirmed this.

Developmentally, children begin to demonstrate an emerging awareness of the harmonic structure and its musical function between the ages of 9-10 years (Deliège & Sloboda, 1981). This is generally credited as occurring within the education system as children sing in rounds or with ostinatos (Troth, 1963). This was both supported and refuted by the data. Two of the co-researchers recalled learning harmony within an educational setting during 4th-5th grade, which is typically age 10-12 years. One co-researcher cited family and church as where she learned harmony, and she could not recall any specific age. Another co-researcher recalls this experience as either during her middle or high school ages with friends and it was related to, but not directly a result of her academic education. The common factor in each of these experiences is the interaction with other people. The data from this research suggests that a person could learn to sing vocal harmony through imitation of another person or recorded vocal harmony.

Whether in an education, family, church, or social setting, singing vocal harmony can be a reflection of the relationships that already exist, or it can result in the creation of relationships. The harmony line follows "defined rules" of Western harmonic tonality (Kennedy, 2007) and can be defined as either consonant, a pleasing sound, or dissonant, a clashing sound. This is what literally happens in harmony, but it also represents what happens in a relationship. Within the data, it was often

referred to as balance between the voices. The relationship between the voices is often in a state of fluctuation where one voice or the other is louder, and if the individual is aware of the other person, this balance can be monitored and adjustments can be made.

Simon states "the act of singing together helps to create and reinforce more fundamental communal relationships" (2005, p. 436). When a person sings vocal harmony with someone new, it becomes an opportunity to create a relationship. This is what literally occurs in the music as one person listens to what the other person is singing and responds to their notes. It also occurs interpersonally as the two persons create a relationship through hearing each other's voice and how their voices interact. In this musical relationship is an opportunity for the persons involved to recognize when their voices are consonant or dissonant. This is a metaphor for the relationship that they are engaged in and how they are interacting with one another. When singing vocal harmony there is a rise and fall of the consonance and dissonance as the individuals focus on more or less on their part. The concepts of consonance and dissonance within the harmonic relationship is reflected in the literature regarding choir participation (Faulkner & Davidson, 2006; Miell, MacDonald & Hargreaves, 2005). In one study a participant comments "you feel much better in harmony with other. That's how it's supposed to be..." (Faulkner & Davidson, 2006, p. 227).

Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Insight

Singing vocal harmony with another person is an intrapersonal and interpersonal experience that reflects and increases the individual's relation to his or her self, as well as how they interact with others. While the initial understanding and

ability of harmony develops during childhood, the data from this study indicates that harmony typically becomes a preferred activity during the teenage years. This is when a person is developing an understanding of who they are, how they define themselves and how they respond to others. The literature supports this finding stating that people intentionally start to study harmony at the onset of the teenage years (Howard, Holland & Whitelock, 1994), and that high school students demonstrate the ability to acknowledge and play or sing with harmonic accompaniment sooner than middle school students (Brittain, 1998; Williams, 2005).

The data found that singing vocal harmony involves expectations and anticipation from internal sources. Co-researchers reported that they at times encounter an internal dialogue in the midst of singing vocal harmony that consists of either coaching, congratulating, or reprimanding the self for their performance. While this could be a hindrance to continuing to sing harmony, the co-researchers indicated that this served to be motivation to continue to live up to their expectations. Anticipation occurs as previous experiences are recalled of both success and error when singing vocal harmony. Producing vocal harmony can be difficult, as one co-researcher commented, and it can require much practice. When successfully completed, singing harmony can provide the individual with feelings of mastery and accomplishment and heighten his or her self-esteem.

A majority of the data collected from co-researchers in this study indicated that there is risk and responsibility involved when singing vocal harmony. These are related to the expectations and anticipation, but they are also concepts that relate to the individual's recognition of their identity and how they are separate from, yet

connected to the other person. In order to maintain the distinct harmony role, it is sometimes necessary to physically create a barrier to the other person by closing one's eyes or putting a finger in one's ears to allow concentration on the part.

Within this intrapersonal experience an individual can find either disappointment or satisfaction in their performance. When disappointed, a healthy individual believes that they can do better and will aspire to try again. When satisfied, they will enjoy the pleasure of their achievement and be inspired to revisit that experience. Singing in vocal harmony with another person allows for the unique opportunity to experience these intrapersonal and interpersonal events alongside another person. The music can mediate and both parties feel the contribution of the other as well as their own.

Another aspect of the intrapersonal experience is the imagery that singing vocal harmony can elicit. As Alvin comments, "our growing knowledge of man's behavior and of his response to certain experiences enables us to better understand the meaning and the significance of his responses to music..." (1975).

Co-researchers used detailed images and metaphors to describe how they understand and think of vocal harmony. It was sometimes related to specific memories of vocal harmony in order to explain the experience. Other times the imagery or metaphor was something that occurred as they were singing harmony. It gave deeper insight into understanding to the co-researchers response to singing vocal harmony, just as Alvin suggests.

Movement and Action

The invariant themes that referred to movement and action were especially difficult to categorize during the phenomenological reduction, and the researcher placed them in a variety of thematic categories. As the process of analysis continued, these concepts physically manifested themselves in the researcher's struggle to best represent the data. With time, the researcher became open to the metaphorical meaning in this conflict, and it was then that the concepts of movement and action were able to emerge.

Movement was a recurring underlying theme throughout the data analysis. There were references to movement in the metaphors, imagery, memories, and descriptions of singing vocal harmony. Closely related to the concept of movement was that of action and the compulsion to change or alter something when singing vocal harmony. Sometimes this action was a response to an unmet expectation or unwanted dissonance. Action is also a way of describing the two intertwining parts that are moving together in relation to one another, but separately.

This movement is sometimes athletic in nature like the description one co-researcher used of "acrobatics". The movement can be literally experienced in swaying, rocking or tapping the rhythm of the song. One co-researcher used hand gestures to demonstrate the movement that occurred between the two voices singing harmony with one another. No matter how it is used, movement is a salient part of vocal harmony. There is movement together and movement away from, a constant rise and fall of parts in relation to one another. This movement can also be an expression of a dystonic feeling experienced when singing vocal harmony. For

instance, one co-researcher used imagery of a car sliding on ice or running in the dark which could possibly be a reference to the risk and uncertainty involved in singing vocal harmony with another person.

There is also the desire for action in vocal harmony as evidenced by the co-researchers references to athletics and competition. One co-researcher coined the term "musical sport" to define the family activity of singing together in vocal harmony in the evenings. All of the co-researchers shared that they had thoughts of how to "alter", "change", or "fix" their harmony line while they were singing. This is an action-oriented response. It was also reported in the data collected that the harmony line is in itself an action that can "enhance" or "embellish" a song. Movement requires effort both mentally and physically, and both of these elements are necessary to produce vocal harmony.

Beauty

Singing in vocal harmony with another person is a phenomenon that can involve an experience of beauty. This term was used specifically by a few of the co-researchers, and it was alluded to by all of the co-researchers. One co-researcher referred to the "art of harmony" as something that allows a person to think about all possibilities and what is "beyond". This idea of "beyond" refers to a connection to the present as well as the future. Both of these ideas encompasses something that is indescribable about vocal harmony.

Another co-researcher spoke specifically about a "spiritual state" that singing vocal harmony induces. This state of being was described as an increased awareness of one's environment, but not the details. The experience of beauty is likewise a

connection to both the present moment without being contained by that moment. Based upon the data from this study, this researcher wonders if beauty is an instantaneous event that one stumbles upon, or if it is an unfolding process that is experienced as a result of the building and ultimate release of tension. Kreitler and Kreitler discuss that "dissonant chords serve in music as a source of tension, for which adequate relief is supplied by consonant chords" (1972, p.130). The co-researchers seemed to indicate that the beauty they experienced singing vocal harmony with another person was created within the context of risk, uncertainty, anticipation and ultimately relief.

It is this aspect of beauty that is likely the most captivating element in the experience of singing vocal harmony with another person. It beckons someone to participate and to engage in its creation. Most of the co-researchers referred to the satisfaction they gain from creating vocal harmony, especially when it is "spontaneous" and not predetermined. The concept of beauty incorporates a piece of each of the previously mentioned themes and is possibly one of the main motivations for singing vocal harmony. Every co-researcher independently stated that they had an underlying reason for volunteering for this research including a desire to sing vocal harmony, excitement for an opportunity to sing vocal harmony again, interest in what the researcher was looking for in this study, and an appreciation for vocal harmony. Desire, excitement and appreciation for the beauty of vocal harmony.

5.3. Clinical Applications

This study had a small sample size of four participants, and it was limited to healthy adults who expressed a preference for singing vocal harmony. Therefore, the following clinical implications are suggestions based upon the findings of this study and further research should be conducted to validate their use. One inclusion criteria for this study was that the volunteer must have previous experience singing vocal harmony. It is suggested that this also be a prerequisite for potential clients when applying the results of this study to clinical settings. The music therapist should conduct a careful assessment of the client to determine if vocal harmony is a preferred and familiar activity.

Music therapy occurs in individual as well as group settings. Although this study involved one-to-one live experiences of singing vocal harmony, all of the co-researchers referred to experiences of singing vocal harmony in group settings. The themes in the co-researchers' descriptions about their experiences singing vocal harmony were similar for both one-to-one and group settings. Therefore, the clinical applications will be presented as applicable to both individual and group settings unless otherwise noted. This will be followed by a section discussing possible contraindications for using vocal harmony in clinical settings as supported by the results from this study.

Building and Expression of Relationships

Working to establish the therapeutic relationship is a significant element of music therapy. One of the results of this study was that within the experience of singing vocal harmony with another person a relationship is both built and expressed.

Singing a familiar song in vocal harmony could be beneficial to building the therapeutic relationship. The results indicate that when participating in singing vocal harmony a person is able to simultaneously engage with another person while retaining their independence. This is important in establishing a healthy relationship and the act of singing in vocal harmony with another person becomes a literal translation of a healthy relationship. Singing in vocal harmony allows for a "corrective emotional experience" which "is to expose the patient, under more favorable circumstances, to emotional situations that he could not handle in the past" Franz Alexander (as cited in Yalom, 2005, p. 27). The dissonance created in vocal harmony followed by its resolution to consonance can be a "corrective emotional experience" for the client. The results of this study found that singing in vocal harmony involves unique emotional responses and recognition of the other part which is similar to the "emotional component" and "systematic reality testing" that is required to have an "emotional corrective experience" (Yalom, 2005, p. 27).

Singing vocal harmony can also be applied to the relationships of members in a group setting. MacKenzie and Livesley encourage clinicians "to consider the relationship between the group as a whole and the personality of the individual member" (MacKenzie & Livesley, 1983, p. 78). Roles are "a critical construct for group dynamics" (Munich, 1993, p. 26) and make it possible "to view the contributions individual members make to the accomplishment of group tasks" (MacKenzie & Livesley, 1983, p. 78). Just as the results found that singing in vocal harmony involves individual contributions that result in group accomplishment. Therefore, it is suggested that when in group settings a music therapist encourage

vocal harmony when engaging the group singing activities. This technique can be used to achieve goals related to establishing individual roles, providing the group with a sense of accomplishment. Also, this can be used by the clinician for assessment of the each group member's style of interaction.

Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Insight

Singing in vocal harmony with a client can also provide an opportunity for the client to express their experience of a relationship. The therapist can engage the client in a process of singing songs in unison, followed by splitting into parts and alternating who sings the melody line and who sings the harmony line could allow patterns to emerge which may indicate the client's perspective of their role in the therapeutic relationship. Following this process with verbal discourse about the client's experience singing vocal harmony could provide further affirmation or contradiction to the musical data.

The results also indicate that intrapersonal insight is elicited when singing in vocal harmony with another person. If the client is capable of intrapersonal insight, it is suggested that during the session, with the client's permission, the vocal harmony experience be recorded and then listened to by the therapist and client. The therapist can then encourage the client to observe their intrapersonal experience by verbally processing what they have heard. The therapist is a witness to the intrapersonal experience and can highlight insight that the client discovers through this process.

Similarly, within a group setting it is important for each individual client to gain insight into their intrapersonal experience. In the data of this study, one co-researcher shared that members of his band have processed their use of vocal

harmony indicating the potential of using vocal harmony followed by verbal processing as a group music therapy technique. With permission of the group members, the therapist can record group singing experiences involving vocal harmony. Then the group can listen to the recording and verbally process their individual experiences of singing vocal harmony. This discussion can allow group members to illuminate insight for each other, as well as for themselves. It can also provide the therapist with insight regarding individual client's intrapersonal experiences to aid in goal formation and planning interventions.

Movement and Action

The results found that singing in vocal harmony elicits movement and inspires action both literally and figuratively in imagery and metaphors. For clients who do not present with symptoms of poor reality testing or a thought disorder, singing vocal harmony can be used to elicit memories, imagery or metaphors. After singing in vocal harmony with a client or group of clients the therapist can ask for the participants to share any images or memories they experienced during the process of singing. Eliciting memories can be used for therapist goals such as encouraging reminiscence or building rapport. Imagery can stimulate imagination and creativity. Since many of the images reported in the data of this study were related to movement, this can be useful with clients who have limited or restricted mobility to experience movement both vocally as well as figuratively in their minds.

Beauty

The experience of beauty that exists in singing vocal harmony with another person was a significant finding in this study. It was found to be significant because

it was referred to by each co-researcher in a variety of ways throughout their descriptions using both verbal and non-verbal forms of expression. Co-researchers often had a difficult time containing their explanation of beauty in words, and used facial expressions and non-verbal gestures to communicate this concept. Beauty was also referred to by the co-researchers in references to nature, spirituality, and a deeper connection to the people and places that are involved in singing vocal harmony.

Singing vocal harmony can and should be used with appropriate clients for the purpose of providing experiences of beauty. Maslow (1976) lists *Beauty* as one of the "Being Values", which are characteristics of being "fully human" and "peak experiences" (p. 128). Increasing an individual's overall health can be related to their opportunities for "self-actualization" and "peak experiences" (Maslow, 1976). Also, Carolyn Kenny discusses that many people are unaware of the "preventative and curative effect" that aesthetic experiences can have (1982, p. 78). Therefore, experiences of beauty are especially relevant when working with clients who have limited experiences of beauty due to factors such as medical illness, socio-economic restrictions, limited social. According to Kenny, "Music fulfills man's need for beauty, and can satisfy his search for meaning in the world" (1982, p. 78).

Clinical Use of Vocal Harmony

The following are specific ways that vocal harmony could be incorporated into the clinical practice of music therapy based upon this research.

When assessing the client(s), their preference and ability for vocal harmony should be included. This can be done either through specific background questions, "What experience do you have with vocal harmony?" or through musical interaction

when singing by either asking the client to sing the vocal harmony line or by having the client continue to sing melody while the therapist adds the vocal harmony line.

The therapist can engage high-functioning clients who have prior experience and preference for vocal harmony to select a song to which vocal harmony can be added or to engage in improvisational singing with vocal harmony. The therapist and client can take turns singing different harmony lines to encourage cognitive functions and/or emotional expression.

In songs familiar to the client the therapist can begin to sing the harmony line to provide experiences of separation and individual. Then ask the client to reflect upon the experience of singing the melody line, "did you hear the harmony line?", "was it difficult to continue to sing the melody line while another part was present?", and other questions that facilitate intrapersonal and interpersonal reflection. As the client is able, encourage the client to sing the harmony line while the therapist sings the melody line and ask correlative questions to further the client's experience of individuation within an established relationship, mastery and intrapersonal and interpersonal insight.

For clients who have limited opportunity for socialization, or clients who are confined to being indoors due to a medical or mental cause, the therapist should incorporate vocal harmony as possible into music therapy sessions. The therapist can sing harmony using recorded music, a co-therapist, a family member, visitor or staff member present in the session, or the client as he or she is able to sing the melody or harmony line, depending upon their preference and ability. The incorporation of

vocal harmony can be to enhance the client's feeling of community or provide them with an experience of beauty.

Contraindications for Clinical Use of Vocal Harmony

Based upon this research, it cannot be guaranteed that the positive things experienced by the co-researchers will be also that of a client's experience in a music therapy session. Also, this research in itself does not support the use of vocal harmony with clients who do not have prior experience and some ability to sing vocal harmony. As a result of the co-researchers' mention of feelings of being nervous, some anxiety and risk, it should be cautioned against using vocal harmony with clients who present with symptoms of thought disorder or poor reality testing due to the potential for internal dialogue and imagery that might provoke such symptoms.

5.4. Limitations of the Study

The small sample size was a significant limitation to this study. There were only four participants in this study due to time and resources. Therefore, this study is limited in the applicability of its findings to a larger population. Another limitation was that it included only healthy adults. This limitation was made to reduce any potential unforeseen risks as well as to establish a baseline understanding of the experience of singing vocal harmony as a result of the lack of literature on this topic. As a result of this limitation, more research must be conducted within other populations and a wider age range. The ages were limited to adults due to research that cited vocal harmony as a musical ability that begins developing around the age of 9 years and continues through the teenage years. This may have limited the amount

of description that participants were able to give regarding their experiences of developing the skills to sing vocal harmony.

The study was limited by geographical location, which may have hindered the amount of diversity regarding experiences of previous experiences singing vocal harmony. Also, all four participants were Caucasian and this may have also been a hindrance to more diverse recollections of singing vocal harmony. Volunteers were recruited who have had previous experience singing vocal harmony. Again, this limitation was due to a lack of literature and the desire to establish a baseline of the experience. Similarly, another limitation might be that only persons who enjoy singing vocal harmony participated; therefore, eliciting a majority of favorable experiences and reducing the amount of unfavorable descriptions.

The researcher's personal experience can be a limitation within phenomenological research. Even though the researcher engaged in the epoche, the bias and assumptions were never completely exempt from the analysis.

5.5. Implications for Future Research

From the results of this study, there are implications for future research including the following suggestion. In order to validate and build upon this study, a similar study should be conducted with a larger sample size and covering a larger geographical location to provide an increased diversity of ages, cultural, socio-economic and religious backgrounds. A survey of music therapists should be administered and analyzed regarding current trends of using vocal harmony in clinical settings. This could possibly lead to further studies as indicated by the discovery of

patterns in the clinical populations or specific applications of vocal harmony by current music therapists. Likewise, it could lead to further studies about the omission of vocal harmony within clinical settings by music therapists. Also, there is a need to study if and how vocal harmony could be incorporated with clients who do not have previous experience singing vocal harmony. Methods for the teaching and implementation of vocal harmony in sessions should be developed and studied to encourage evidenced-based practice for practicing music therapists.

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This research study asked the question: What is the essence of a person's experience singing in vocal harmony with another person? This study's objective was to find unique exceptions as well as commonalities of individual experiences singing vocal harmony. This research investigated the essence of the experience of singing in vocal harmony with another person through a phenomenological method using in-depth interviews for data collection. The existing literature was searched and reviewed; however, the researcher was unable to find literature specifically discussing the experience of singing vocal harmony. The literature review contains literature and research in regard to the historical background of the musical use of the term harmony, musical development of children recognizing and learning Western harmony, research and articles in which harmony is mentioned as a component of musical activities such as choir participation, and literature in music therapy where vocal harmony is mentioned as an element in the practice of music therapy.

The results of the study were obtained through a phenomenological analysis of the data. The essence of the experience emerged as the results were synthesized with the literature review, and the final results indicated that the building and expression of relationships exist in the experience of singing vocal harmony with another person. It was also found that intrapersonal and interpersonal insight could occur through this phenomenon. Movement and action were also significant elements in the essence of the experience of singing vocal harmony with another person.

Finally, it was discovered that the experience of beauty in a variety of forms is an essential element of singing vocal harmony with another person.

Implications were discussed about the use of vocal harmony in the practice of music therapy with clients who express prior ability and desire to sing vocal harmony. The findings of this study indicate that there are potential benefits to using vocal harmony in group and individual settings to encourage the expression or building of relationships. Another possible implication is to incorporate vocal harmony in clinical practice to provide experiences of beauty within either group or individual sessions.

The study concludes with the recommendation that further research be conducted with a larger sample size and regarding the current trends of music therapists for using or omitting vocal harmony within clinical settings. Also, it is suggested that the use of vocal harmony be studied with a wider variety of populations and over a larger geographical area in order to increase the diversity of experiences. It was also recommended for studies to include persons who do not particularly enjoy singing vocal harmony in order to determine contraindications for its clinical use. One last suggestion was stated to study methods for incorporating and teaching vocal harmony to clients who do not have previous experience.

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APPENDIX A: Print Ad for Recruitment



**Drexel University
Recruiting Volunteers for a Research Study**

Research Title

A Phenomenological Experience of Singing in Vocal Harmony with Another Person

Research Objectives

Music therapists engage in vocal singing with clients during sessions and choose to either sing in unison or harmony. There is an overall limited field of knowledge regarding vocal harmony from a person's development of the ability and desire to sing it to inform a music therapist's choice of when and how to use vocal harmony. The purpose of this one-year study is to begin developing an understanding of the subjective experience of normal adults' singing vocal harmony with another person.

During the interview, the volunteer will be asked to recall and describe previous experiences they have had singing vocal harmony. Volunteers will be asked to sing 1-2 songs in vocal harmony with the researcher and describe their experience. This interview will take 30-45 minutes to complete.

Information for Research Subjects Eligibility

You can participate in this study if you are 18 and older years of age, are not diagnosed with a mental disorder, are able to read and speak English and have had previous experience and ability to sing vocal harmony. If you meet the above criteria, please contact us using the contact information provided below.

Location of the research and person to contact for further information

If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact

Paul Nolan and Krista Winter
(215)-762-6927

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

**DREXEL UNIVERSITY
CONSENT TO TAKE PART IN A RESEARCH STUDY**

1. **PARTICIPANT'S NAME:** _____
2. **TITLE OF RESEARCH: A Phenomenological Experience of Singing in Vocal Harmony with Another Person**
3. **INVESTIGATOR'S NAME: Paul Nolan, M.C.A.T., MT-BC, LPC, Principal Investigator; Krista Winter, Co-Investigator**
4. **CONSENTING FOR THE RESEARCH STUDY:** This is a long and an important document. If you sign it, you will be authorizing Drexel University and its researchers to perform research studies on you. You should take your time and carefully read it. You can also take a copy of this consent form to discuss it with your family members, attorney or any one else you would like before you sign it. Do not sign it unless you are comfortable in participating in this study.
5. **PURPOSE OF RESEARCH:** You are being asked to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to begin developing an understanding of the subjective experience of normal adults' experience of singing in vocal harmony with another person. This research study is being performed by a graduate student in partial fulfillment of a master's degree in music therapy.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you meet the inclusion criteria, which is you must be 18 years of age or older, and from the general community. Other criteria for this study that you have met is that you have sung vocal harmony, do not have a mental disorder, and are able to read and speak English. There is no inclusion or exclusion criteria based on gender or racial/ethnic characteristics to participate in this research study.

Approximately 3-5 persons will be recruited for this study. You may withdraw from the study at any point.
6. **PROCEDURES AND DURATION:** You understand that the following things will be done to you.
 - You will participate in one interview that will include singing 1-2 songs with the researcher (Co-Investigator) both in unison and in harmony and

describing what this experience is like. This may involve talking about feelings of a physical, emotional and intellectual nature as well as other thoughts, sensations and responses.

- The interview will last approximately 30-45 minutes. You will meet with the researcher in New College Building #4417 and be audio taped for further study and evaluation by the researcher.
- The purpose of the study will be explained to you at the beginning of the interview.
- The researcher will review the consent form with you and you will be asked to sign them, if you agree of your own free will, to participate in the study.
- After the researcher collects the consent form and you have confirmed your participation in this study, you will be asked to describe your participation in this study, you will be asked to describe your subjective experience of singing in vocal harmony with other people. After you feel you have described this experience completely, you will be asked to select from a list of songs a familiar song that you would like to sing with the interviewer in vocal harmony. After singing the selected song, you will be asked to describe your subjective experience of singing the selected song in vocal harmony. If you choose, a second song can be selected and sung with the interviewer in vocal harmony. After singing the 2nd song you will again be asked to describe your subjective experience of singing this song in vocal harmony and given the chance to add to your previous descriptions if additional thoughts or recollections come to mind.
- After completion of the interview, the audiotape will be turned off and the researcher will debrief you. You will be given an opportunity at this time to express questions and/or concerns as a result of your participation in the study.

7. **RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS/CONSTRAINTS:** There are no known risks or discomforts reported when speaking about feelings, memories, or other responses to singing a song. You may experience a small degree of anxiety as in any interview or situation, or while singing an emotionally arousing song. This study is exploring your experience and description of singing in vocal harmony, thus there are no expectations or judgment upon your musical abilities other than that you have sung in vocal harmony with other persons prior to the interview. If at any point you are uncomfortable with the music or the interview, you may choose to discontinue your participation in this study.
8. **UNFORESEEN RISKS:** Participation in this study may involve unforeseen risks. It is possible you may experience some anxiety as in any interview situation. To minimize or avoid this risk you may withdraw from the interview at any time and ask questions whenever they may arise. You will also be offered the telephone number of the principle investigator, Paul Nolan,

who is a Licensed Professional Counselor, as well as the number of Drexel University's Student Counseling Center.

9. **BENEFITS:** There may be no direct benefits from participating in this study.
10. **ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES:** The alternative is not to participate in this study.
11. **REASONS FOR REMOVAL FROM STUDY:** You may be required to stop the study before the end for any of the following reasons:
 - a) If all or part of the study is discontinued for any reason by the investigator, or university authorities.
 - b) If you are a student, and participation in the study is adversely affecting your academic performance.
 - c) If you fail to adhere to requirements for participation established by the researcher.
12. **VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION:** Participation in this study is voluntary, and you can refuse to be in the study or stop at any time. There will be no negative consequences if you decide not to participate or to stop.
13. **RESPONSIBILITY FOR COST:** You will not be responsible for any costs relating to the study.
14. **IN CASE OF INJURY:** If you have any questions or believe you have been injured in any way by being in this research study, you should contact Paul Nolan at telephone number (215) 762-6927. However, neither the investigator nor Drexel University will make payment for injury, illness, or other loss resulting from your being in this research project. If you are injured by this research activity, medical care including hospitalization is available, but may result in costs to you or your insurance company because the University does not agree to pay for such costs. If you are injured or have an adverse reaction, you should also contact the Office of Regulatory Research Compliance at 215-255-7857.
15. **CONFIDENTIALITY:** In any publication or presentation of research results, your identity will be kept confidential, but there is a possibility that records which identify you may be inspected by authorized individuals, representatives of the institutional review boards (IRBs), or employees conducting peer review activities. You consent to such inspections and to the copying of excerpts of your records, if required by any of these representatives.

Audio recordings will be transcribed by the researcher and then deleted and destroyed by the Co-Investigator in the presence of the Principal Investigator. The transcriptions will be kept by the Co-Investigator in a secure place in her

home until completion of the study at which time they will be shredded with the Principal Investigator as witness.

- 16. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:** If you wish further information regarding your rights as a research subject or if you have problems with a research-related injury, for medical problems please contact the Institution's Office of Regulatory Research Compliance by telephoning 215-255-7857.
- 17. CONSENT:** As a participant in this research, I have given my permission to Drexel University to keep, preserve, publish, use, or dispose of the results of this research study. If the information given from the interview is used in any publication or presentation of research, I will not be identified by name, but by gender and age. The audio tapes will be stored in a locked cabinet in the principle investigator's office for approximately one year; at the completion of this study the tapes will be destroyed.
- I have been informed of the reasons for this study.
 - I have had the study explained to me.
 - I have had all my questions answered.
 - I have carefully read this consent form, have initialed each page, and have received a signed copy.
 - I give consent voluntarily.

 Subject

 Date

 Investigator

 Date

Individuals authorized to obtain consent:

<u>Name</u> <u>Phone #</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Day Phone #</u>	<u>24hr.</u>
Paul Nolan	Principle Investigator	215-762-6927	215.762.6927
Krista Winter	Co-investigator	215-762-6927	215.762.6927

APPENDIX C: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) When and where are places that you engage in singing vocal harmony?
 - 2) When do you remember starting to sing vocal harmony?
If yes, follow up with: Why?
 - 3) Recall a recent experience in which you sang in vocal harmony with another person and take sometime to think about it. When you are ready, describe that experience.
- *Questions to lead to further information:
- Do you remember any feelings you have while you were singing?
 - Do you recall what you were thinking about?
- *Engage in singing vocal harmony with interviewee/interviewer.
(after singing song take a minute to put away guitar and allow interviewer to collect thoughts)*
- 4) Can you describe what it was like singing in harmony?
 - 5) How much attention did you have on the melody/harmony while singing the harmony/melody part?
 - 6) Did you have any thoughts while singing harmony?
 - 7) Were you aware of anything going on in your body while singing?
 - 8) Can you describe anything else about the experience of singing in harmony today?
-Is there anything else you want to describe about when you sang the harmony part and/or the melody part in any other situation?

APPENDIX D: SONG LIST & LYRICS

Song List

Amazing Grace
America the Beautiful
Be Thou My Vision
Blowin' in the Wind
Garden Song
He's Got the Whole World
Home on the Range
I Shall Be Released
If You Want Me
I'll Fly Away
Kumbaya
Lean on Me
My Girl
Open the Eyes of My Heart
The John B. Sails
This Land is Your Land
This Little Light of Mine
We Shall Overcome
Weave Me the Sunshine
You Are My Sunshine

Co-Researcher Chosen Songs

My Girl

I've got sunshine on a cloudy day
 When it's cold outside, I've got the month of May
 I guess, you'd say, what can make me feel this way?
 My girl, talking 'bout, my girl...my girl
G C G C (2x) // G am C D (2x) / G - - - C - D7 -

I've got so much honey, the bees envy me
 I've got a sweeter song than the birds in the tree

I don't need no money, fortune or fame
 I've got all the riches, baby, one man can claim

William (Smokey) Robinson & R. White (Bobby Rogers)
 © 1965 Jobete Music Inc.

Open the Eyes of My Heart

G
 Open the eyes of my heart, Lord
D
 Open the eyes of my heart
C G
 I want to see you, I want to see you (2x)

D em
 To see you high and lifted up
C D
 Shining in the light of your glory
em
 Pour out your power and love
C D
 As we sing holy, holy, holy

G
 Holy, holy, holy
D
 Holy, holy, holy
C D
 Holy, holy, holy
G
 I want to see you

Paul Baloche
 © 1997 Integrity's Hosanna! Music

We Shall Overcome

C **F** **C**
 We shall overcome (x2)
C **FG** **am** **D** **G**
 We shall overcome, some day
F **C** **G** **am**
 O deep in my heart, I do believe
C **F** **C** **G** **D**
 We shall overcome some day.

We shall live in peace...

We shall all be free...

We'll walk hand in hand...

– new w & m arr by Zilphia Horton, Frank Hamilton, Guy Carawan & Pete Seeger
 © 1960 & 1963 Ludlow Music, Inc. NY, NY.