

PARKER, QUINTON DOUGLAS. Ph.D. *We Wear the Mask: The Lived Experiences of Black Undergraduate Music Education Students in Predominantly White Schools of Music (PWSOM)*. (2021)

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The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to examine the lived experiences of Black undergraduate music education students in predominantly White schools of music (PWSOM) in the United States. Special attention was paid to exploring if and how the Du Boisian concept of double consciousness manifested within the participants. Critical race theory and double consciousness theory served as appropriate interpretive frameworks for this inquiry.

Nine participants reflected on and interpreted their experiences in PWSOM. Data were collected primarily using open-ended interviews. The data were coded and analyzed, a process which yielded nine emergent themes. Findings revealed that participants faced a particular set of issues that negatively affected their experiences in their PWSOM. Participants did not see themselves represented in their student bodies, amongst the faculty, or in the curriculum; contended with White peers' and professors' negative stereotypes of Black students and Black musicianship daily; and described a culture of racial and cultural insensitivity that led them to question their belonging. Participants found themselves in the midst of two internal battles. The first, between two identities – being Black and being students in predominantly White spaces. Secondly, between believing that they deserved to attend their schools and feeling that they must prove themselves daily.

Keywords: Black undergraduate, music education, predominantly White school of music

WE WEAR THE MASK: THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF BLACK UNDERGRADUATE
MUSIC EDUCATION STUDENTS IN PREDOMINANTLY
WHITE SCHOOLS OF MUSIC (PWSOM)

by

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Mr. Hughie Edward Owens (1920-2002) and Mrs. Sarah Allene Owens (1923-2020).

APPROVAL PAGE

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

My interest in the experiences of Black undergraduate music education students in predominantly White schools of music (PWSOM) stemmed from my experience navigating the decidedly White field of music education. During high school, I participated in numerous ensembles and honors clinics. While I enjoyed and benefitted greatly from these experiences, I repeatedly found myself asking one question: “Where are all the people who look like me?” I was painfully aware of the underrepresentation of people of color in these various settings and often felt isolated and invisible.

Upon completing my undergraduate studies at a Historically Black University, I pursued graduate studies at a small PWSOM. It was there that I was once again confronted with the feelings of isolation that accompany being only one of a small handful of Black students in the entire institution. Race played an integral role in how I navigated this environment. Through numerous conversations and interactions with my White classmates, it became evident to me that my experiences were markedly different than theirs.

I specifically remember the sense of pride that I felt after auditioning for the symphonic band and earning the principal position. I considered it a victory to be a Black, principal trumpet player at a PWSOM and remember sharing the great news with my loved ones back home. After the initial excitement had worn off, I questioned why earning this position was so important to me. Were my classmates as excited to be White, principal clarinetists and trombonists as I was to be a Black, principal trumpeter? It was at that moment that I recognized how deeply race influenced my experience as a Black student in a PWSOM.

During my graduate studies, I was introduced to the writings of the scholar-activist W.E.B Du Bois and immediately took to Du Bois’s (1903) theory of double consciousness.

Du Bois's (1903) poignant depiction of the Black American's "unreconciled strivings" (p. 5) was emblematic of the feelings with which I had wrestled for most of my life. I found in Du Bois's description of "two-ness" (p. 5) the perfect encapsulation of my experiences as a Black student in a PWSOM and in American society at large.

The convergence of my experiences as a Black student at a PWSOM and my interest in the concept of double consciousness prompted me to ask the following questions: What does it mean to be a Black student in a PWSOM? What are the experiences of other Black students in PWSOM? Are these experiences common to all Black students in PWSOM? Do all Black students in PWSOM experience double consciousness? This study was designed to explore these questions and provide insight into the lived experiences of Black undergraduate music education students in PWSOM.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to examine the lived experiences of Black undergraduate music education students in PWSOM in the United States. I was particularly interested in exploring if and how the Du Boisian concept of double consciousness manifested within these students. This study was guided by the following research questions:

- 1) How does race impact the daily experiences of Black music education students in PWSOM?
- 2) How, if at all, do Black music education students in PWSOM experience the concept of double consciousness?
- 3) How, if at all, do PWSOM perpetuate Black students' feelings of double consciousness?

- 4) What coping strategies do Black undergraduate music education students in PWSOM employ?

Interpretive Frameworks

Critical Race Theory

Researchers have used Critical Race Theory (CRT) as an interpretative framework when seeking to challenge the formal and informal aspects of society that perpetuate racism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Yosso, 2017). Critical race theory was established in the 1970s in response to the slow, incremental progress of Civil Rights legal efforts of the 1960s (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Yosso et al., 2004). Proponents of CRT adopted principles from the radical feminist and Critical Legal Studies movements that came before it (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Martinez, 2014; Yosso et al., 2004). Critical race theorists drew on feminist insights into the interaction between power, socially constructed gender roles and the concept of domination. Critical race theorists adopted the skepticism of traditionally heralded landmark court cases such as *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) from the Critical Legal Studies movement (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Critical race theory was based on the work of many European and American thinkers, such as Antonio Gramsci, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, W.E.B. Du Bois, Martin Luther King, Jr., Sojourner Truth, and Frederick Douglass. Professor Derrick Bell was credited as the movement's "intellectual father figure" and introduced the concept of interest convergence, a central tenet of CRT (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 6). Numerous scholars and activists have contributed to CRT in the years since its inception, including Alan Freeman, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and Richard Delgado. While CRT grew out of the legal tradition, scholars in many disciplines have used it as an interpretive lens (Cooper et al., 2017; Joseph, 2020; Picart, 2013).

Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Tate first introduced CRT to the field of education in *Toward a Critical Race Theory of Education* in 1994 (Ladson-Billings, 2014). Dixson and Rousseau (2017) described the origins of the CRT movement in education:

[Ladson-Billings and Tate] asserted that race remains a salient factor in U.S. society in general and in education in particular. Moreover, they argued, however, that race at that time was under-theorized in education. To begin to fill this theoretical gap, they proposed that CRT, an intellectual movement rooted in American jurisprudence scholarship, could be employed to examine the role of race and racism in education. (p. 1).

Many scholars have since used CRT to identify and analyze social inequality in education (Brown & Jackson, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Yosso, 2017; Yosso et al., 2004).

“Ordinariness” of Racism

While CRT has expanded and evolved since its founding in the 1970s, most theorists and scholars agree on four central tenets, including: (a) the ordinariness of racism, (b) interest convergence, (c) the social construction thesis, and (d) counter-storytelling (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). A principal component of CRT is the belief that racism is embedded in the very fabric of American society (Bell, 1989; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Feagin, 2006). This “ordinariness” of racism “means that racism is difficult to address or cure because it is not acknowledged” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 8). Ladson-Billings (2006) detailed how central racism and White supremacy were to her experience as a person of color in the United States:

By the time I reached adulthood, I had suffered hundreds of what critical race theorists refer to as "microaggressions." The dailiness of racism had worn on me, and I felt thwarted at every turn. School desegregation was the law, but nearly every major city was working actively to subvert it. Civil rights leaders lived in constant terror of assassination

and fire bombings of their homes. And African American people remained disproportionately poor in the land of opportunity. But it was not these macro challenges that bothered me directly. It was the thousand tiny cuts: being passed over by teachers in my integrated junior high school, being excluded from study groups by White classmates, being misled by my college guidance counselor, being second-guessed about my academic ability. These are just a few examples of the way issues of race were trumping my ability to lay claim to my Americanness. (pp. 586–587).

Interest Convergence

When the efforts to challenge systemic oppression are only successful when the interests of the oppressed are aligned with the interests of the oppressor, it is called interest convergence (Bell, 1989). Critical race theorists have remained skeptical of the “triumphalist history” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 5) of historic legal cases such as *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). While this landmark Supreme Court decision of 1954 mandated the end of state-sanctioned segregation of public schools in the United States, Bell (1989) contended that it was an example of interest convergence.

From a Civil Rights perspective, the decision represented a victory in the hard-fought battle toward equality under the law. However, to the critical race theorist, the *Brown* ruling represented a foreign policy decision that was made to help the United States win the Cold War. Bell (1980) proposed that in the midst of the Cold War, both the United States and the Soviet Union vied for the support of non-aligned nations. The Soviet Union, in an attempt to entice countries to align themselves with its views, cited racial discrimination and segregation in the United States as evidence of the inherent hypocrisy of a country that purported to be a beacon of democracy. The Eisenhower administration then used the *Brown* decision to show that the

United States was indeed the democratic nation that it claimed to be. According to Bell (1989), the interests of the Civil Rights movement converged with the interests of the United States foreign policy.

Social Construction Thesis

The social construction thesis holds that race is a socially constructed concept that was formulated to maintain the dominance of one group over another (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Yosso et al., 2004). The social categorization of race has persisted, despite the fact that modern scientists have advanced the concept that there is no biological basis for it (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Smedley & Smedley, 2011). Smedley and Smedley (2011) referred to this paradox as “a great disjunction between the no-races position of modern scientists on the matter of biological races and the social parameters of race by which we conduct our lives and structure our institutions” (p. 18). Critical race theorists have accepted the scientific basis for the “no-race” argument and have asserted that race is a socially constructed determinant of position and status in society.

Counter-Storytelling

Van Manen stated that the essence of a phenomenon is found in the meanings of lived experiences, and that the meanings of lived experiences are to be found in discourse. Therefore, there is value in examining the stories of people in a racialized society (Brown & Jackson, 2014; Delgado, 1989; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso et al., 2004). This concept, referred to by critical race theorists as counter-storytelling or the “voice of color” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 11), has served as a central tenet of CRT (Brown & Jackson, 2014; Delgado, 1989; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso et al., 2004). Feagin (2006) expanded upon the importance of counter-storytelling in challenging institutional racism:

When African Americans assess the reality of being Black in institutions controlled by Whites, they speak not just in abstract concepts but recount in specific and often graphic terms the oppressiveness of routinized encounters with Whites ... These real-life accounts from Black women and men offer us not only a window into their personal microlevel experiences, but also insight into the ways in which the broader structure of racial oppression impinges on and shapes many aspects of their everyday lives. (p. 193)

Through these counter-stories, members of marginalized populations are empowered to challenge the narratives of the majority and name their social realities (Brown & Jackson, 2014; Delgado, 1989; McCall, 2015; Rice, 2004; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

Summary: Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory was born out of the desire to challenge the aspects of society that perpetuate racism. The theory provides a lens through which researchers may examine dominant narratives and existing counter-narratives in educational settings. Researchers have found that Black students in predominantly White institutions experience feelings of isolation, rejection, and powerlessness (Feagin & Sikes, 1994; Hedegard, 1972; Jackson & Swan, 1991). Such feelings are the result of the immersion in White culture, racial hostility, and underrepresentation (Caldwell & Stewart, 2001; Feagin & Sikes, 1994; Fleming, 1984; Patterson, 2018). As I have detailed in subsequent chapters, the field of collegiate music study has been plagued with issues of diversity, access, inclusion, and equity. The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experiences of Black undergraduate music education students in PWSOM. Using the interpretive lens of critical race theory provided a race-conscious approach to understanding the policies and practices that affect the experiences of Black students in PWSOM.

Double Consciousness

Dr. William Edward Burghardt Du Bois introduced the concept of double consciousness in the essay *Strivings of the Negro People* in 1897. Du Bois (1903) most famously described the concept as follows:

It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body. (p. 2)

Du Bois asserted that this double consciousness, or “two-ness” (p. 5) of self, promoted a distorted sense of identity and an internal struggle (Caldwell & Stewart, 2001; Du Bois, 1903; Wainwright, 2016).

In developing the concept of double consciousness, Du Bois's added to the contributions of three well-known social theorists, including William James, George Herbert Mead, and Charles Horton Cooley. James, a Harvard professor and mentor to Du Bois, theorized that the concept of self could be divided into four components: (a) the material self, (b) the spiritual self, (c) the pure ego, and (d) the social self (James, 1890). James further theorized that the social self was developed through interaction with and recognition by others and was a product of the internalized images that others carry of us. James asserted that the lack of recognition in society could prove detrimental to the formation of an individual's identity. Itzigsohn and Brown (2015) maintained that Du Bois developed the concept of two-ness upon James's theories of mutual recognition.

The social theorist and philosopher George Herbert Mead theorized that in addition to social interaction, an individual's sense of self emerged from their ability to reflect on themselves through taking the position of others (Mead, 1964). Like James, Mead emphasized the importance of recognition to the formation of a sense of self. Similarly, Charles Horton Cooley (1902) advanced the notion that individuals learn who they are by viewing themselves through the imagined eyes of others, a concept that he coined the "looking glass self" (p. 184). While Cooley began to question how this concept could affect those who were racialized, Du Bois was the first to theorize about the social identity formation of individuals in racialized environments (Itzigsohn & Brown, 2015).

Most scholars have agreed on three essential elements of double consciousness. These elements include the veil, two-ness, and second sight (Du Bois, 1903; Du Bois & Chandler, 2014; Itzigsohn & Brown, 2015; Pittman, 2016). Du Bois (1903) employed the use of the veil as a metaphor for the invisible but very present color-line that divides the Black population from the White population in America. Itzigsohn and Brown (2015) elaborated on Du Bois's metaphor:

For the racializing subject, the racialized subject is invisible. Therefore, the racializing subject cannot take the position of the racialized. Whites project their own constructions of Blacks onto the veil, and in this way the veil works as a one-way mirror: those on the dominating side of the veil see their projections of the racialized reflected on it. On the other hand, the projections of Whites onto the veil become realities that Black subjects have to process in their self-formation. (p. 235).

Du Bois (1903) asserted that the veil served as a socially constructed barrier that dictated how those on either side experienced the world.

Du Bois's concept of two-ness referred to Blacks' bifurcated view of themselves as members of two distinct cultures – Black and American. James (1890), Mead (1964), and Cooley (1902) each maintained the concept that mutual recognition in society played a key role in the formation of an individual's self-identity. Du Bois further contended that two-ness emerged as the result of Whites' refusal to recognize Blacks as members of the American society (Du Bois, 1903; Itzigsohn & Brown, 2015).

Du Bois asserted that Black people were imbued with a second sight. While the nature of the previously mentioned veil perpetuated the dehumanization of racialized people, it also allowed them to identify and understand Whites' perceptions of them (Du Bois, 1903; Itzigsohn & Brown, 2015). Du Bois believed that possessing second sight enabled Black people to rise above the veil and better navigate in a White world.

Summary: Double Consciousness

Du Bois's (1903) theory of double consciousness was based on the premise that Black people's concept of self is substantially affected by the way in which members of the dominant population view them. The theory was built upon the works of other social theorists who acknowledged the detrimental effects that a lack of recognition by others may have on an individual. Du Bois extended the theory to examine the experiences of racialized individuals.

Researchers have often used double consciousness as an interpretive lens through which to understand the experiences of Black students in predominantly White educational settings (Brannon et al., 2015; Caldwell & Stewart, 2001; Hickman, 2008). Caldwell and Stewart (2001) contended that double consciousness in higher education occurred as the result of the strict, unchallenged adherence to Eurocentric beliefs and ideals. Researchers have described American collegiate musical study as being strictly adherent to Eurocentric beliefs thus making it an ideal

incubator for double consciousness (Bradley, 2012; Hess, 2015). Therefore, Du Bois's theory of double consciousness served as an appropriate interpretive framework for examining the lived experiences of Black students in PWSOM.

Education and the Black Experience

An understanding of the experiences of Black undergraduate music education students in PWSOM requires a contextual understanding of the history of Blacks and education in America. In this section, I provide an overview of the historical trajectory of Blacks in education, paying particular attention to legislative considerations surrounding Blacks and education.

The first institution of higher education in the New World, Harvard College, was established in 1636. It would be nearly two hundred years before the first Black students were allowed access to higher education in the United States. Dartmouth College and Oberlin College were among the first institutions to admit Black students in 1824 and 1833, respectively (Slater, 1994). While universities such as Dartmouth and Oberlin admitted Black students, very few Black students were admitted to other American colleges and universities. This was largely due to the belief that Black students were inferior and intellectually incapable of higher education (Slater, 1994).

Given the Southern states' history of discriminatory practices and explicit racism, one might presume that Blacks were met with less opposition to college admittance in Northern states than in Southern states. However, it was the failure of colleges and universities in the Northern states to admit Black students that prompted Black leaders to advocate for separate institutions of higher education for Black students (Bowles & DeCosta, 1971; Clewell & Anderson, 1995; Obas, 2018). The advocacy efforts on the part of Black leaders and White religious missionary groups led to the establishment of the nation's first Historically Black

Colleges and Universities (HBCUs): the Institute for Colored Youth, later Cheyney State College (1837); Lincoln University (1854); and Wilberforce College (1856). By the beginning of the Civil War in 1861, twenty-eight Black students had earned degrees from American colleges and universities (Clewell & Anderson, 1995, p. 58)

The end of the Civil War in 1865 brought about a period commonly referred to as Reconstruction (1865–1877). During Reconstruction, there was an organized effort to assimilate emancipated slaves into American society. This effort included organized attempts to provide Blacks with the educational opportunities that had long been denied them (Clewell & Anderson, 1995). In 1865, the United States Congress established the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands. Better known as the Freedmen’s Bureau, the organization assisted religious and aid societies such as the American Missionary Association (AMA) in meeting the demand for Black education in the Southern states (Clewell & Anderson, 1995; Obas, 2018; Slater, 1994). Between 1860 and 1871, the AMA established seven Black colleges and 13 normal schools to educate emancipated slaves (Browning & Williams, 1978).

While the efforts of White, Christian missionary organizations appeared to be altruistic, there existed a racist justification for their labors. Many White missionaries believed that Blacks were not capable of higher learning and argued that their education should be relegated to industrial and manual training. This was reflected in the curricula of White missionary-sponsored institutions, with the exception of Wilberforce University in Ohio and Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, which offered a liberal arts education during the antebellum period (Obas, 2018)

Legislative Considerations

Antebellum Legislation

The history of Black education in America may best be understood through an examination of the legal issues surrounding the topic. The oldest examples of laws affecting the education of Black people in the United States were slave statutes designed to forbid the instruction of enslaved and free Blacks. Legislators in the state of North Carolina established that state's first slave reading statute in 1818, and later reinforced their position on the instruction of slaves in 1830:

Whereas the teaching of slaves to read and write has a tendency to excite dissatisfaction in their minds and to reduce insurrection and rebellion to the manifest injury of the citizens of this state ... Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina, and it is hereby enacted by the authority of the same, that any free person who shall hereafter teach or attempt to teach any slave within this State to read or write, the use of figures excepted, Shall be liable to indictment in any court of record in the State (An Act to Prevent All Persons from Teaching Slaves to Read or Write the Use of Figures Excepted, 1830)

Such statutes were designed with the objective of actively suppressing literacy as a means of maintaining economic and physical control over Blacks.

By the year 1840, every slave-holding state in the South had enacted statutes to ensure the suppression of slave education (Clewell & Anderson, 1995). Failure to abide by these statutes often resulted in brutal, physical punishment when the offender was Black, and monetary penalties when the offender was White. Despite the legal suppression of literacy amongst the slave population, enslaved and free Blacks acquired literacy skills through informal systems.

These systems included craftsmanship and apprenticeship training, religious education, and secret self-study (Bullock, 1967; Clewell & Anderson, 1995; Obas, 2018).

Slavery in Massachusetts was abolished in 1783. However, public schools in Boston remained segregated in 1845. By the mid-1840s, each of Benjamin Roberts's four attempts to enroll his five-year-old daughter, Sarah, in a nearby school for White students had been denied. Roberts filed suit with the Massachusetts Supreme Court in what became known as *Roberts v. City of Boston* (1850). The State Supreme Court ruled in favor of the City of Boston, contending that elected officials were authorized to control local public schools and that separate schools did not violate Black students' rights. The precedent established in this ruling was repeatedly cited as justification for segregation in later court cases (Brown Foundation, n.d.). The decision prompted Roberts and other local parents to organize a school boycott and statewide protests. City officials in the Massachusetts legislature eventually presented and passed a bill outlawing discrimination in school admittance processes (Lewis & Taylor, 2019). This legislation was the first in the United States to ban segregated schools and served as a legal precedent to *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) nearly 100 years later.

In 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. In signing this executive order, Lincoln mandated the emancipation of all enslaved people in states considered to be in rebellion to the United States. While this executive order mandated the theoretical abolishment of slavery, it would be nearly three years before all Confederate states complied with the proclamation (Parker, 2020).

Postbellum Legislation

During Reconstruction, military forces occupied Southern states to protect recently emancipated Blacks from the physical dangers of White supremacist groups such as the newly-formed Ku Klux Klan (Sefton, 1967). During this time, the Reconstruction amendments were ratified. These amendments included the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth amendments to the United States Constitution. The thirteenth amendment called for the abolishment of slavery and involuntary servitude (U.S. Const. Amend. XIII, 1865). The fourteenth amendment addressed the rights of citizens and equal protection of the laws for all individuals (U.S. Const. Amend. XIV, 1868). The fifteenth amendment prohibited discrimination in citizens' right to vote on the basis of "race, color, or previous condition of servitude" (U.S. Const. Amend. XV, 1870). The ratification of these amendments represented a major milestone in the Black experience.

In 1875, Charles Sumner introduced the nation's first civil rights act. Sumner designed the legislation to guarantee equal access to accommodations, theaters, public schools, churches, and cemeteries regardless of color. Additionally, an individual who was denied access to these facilities based on race would be entitled to monetary restitution under a federal court of law. Sumner's proposed legislation was met with resistance and only supported once the provision guaranteeing equal access to public schools was removed (Lewis & Taylor, 2019).

The presidential election of 1876 between Rutherford B. Hayes and Samuel J. Tilden has been considered one of the most controversial presidential elections in American political history (Schlesinger et al., 2003). While Tilden won the majority of votes, there was much debate as to who would secure the electoral votes of Louisiana, Florida, and South Carolina. A compromise was reached in 1877 in which Tilden and the Democratic party conceded the disputed electoral votes to Hayes. Tilden's concession was predicated on Hayes's withdrawal of military troops

from the South (Schlesinger et al., 2003). Hayes ceded power to the Southern states and removed Blacks' primary line of defense against White supremacist groups in exchange for securing the electoral votes need to secure the presidency.

Feeling a sense of freedom due to the withdrawal of military troops, legislators in Southern states implemented and enforced new statutes, rules, and regulations that were aimed at bypassing the rights afforded Blacks in the Reconstruction amendments. The most notable of these were the Jim Crow laws, which represented an unspoken code of conduct to which Blacks were expected to adhere. According to Lewis and Lewis (2009), this unspoken code of conduct "evolved into a restrictive, punitive system of widespread segregation ... concentrated in the American South" (p. 43).

In 1883, the Supreme Court declared the Civil Rights Act of 1875 to be unconstitutional. In a consolidated case known as the *Civil Rights Cases*, the court ruled that the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution granted Congress the right to regulate the behavior of states not individuals. Therefore, any individual was legally justified in denying Blacks equal access to public accommodations. This ruling served as a legal precedent for *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896).

Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) was perhaps the most detrimental court ruling to Blacks' struggle for equality (Karson, 2005). In the 1880s, state legislatures passed laws that required railroad companies to provide separate cars for Black passengers. In 1890, a Black man named Homer Adolph Plessy purchased a train ticket and sat in a vacant seat of a Whites-only rail car. He was promptly arrested and jailed for violation of the law. Plessy filed suit against the presiding judge, John H. Ferguson, and claimed that his arrest and detention violated his rights under the fourteenth amendment. The Supreme Court delivered its verdict in *Plessy* on May 18, 1896, upholding the constitutionality of racial segregation under the separate but equal doctrine

(*Homer Adolph Plessy v. John H. Ferguson*, 1896). This ruling allowed for legal segregation and discrimination on the basis of race and aided the survival of Jim Crow laws for the next 50 years.

Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada (1938) was one of the most significant United States Supreme Court decisions affecting Blacks in education (Endersby & Horner, 2016). Lloyd Gaines attended Lincoln University, a predominantly Black institution in Jefferson City, Missouri. Upon graduation, he applied to the University of Missouri Law School in 1936 and was denied admission because Missouri's constitution forbade Blacks and Whites to attend the same school at all levels. The law school at the University of Missouri was the only one in the state at the time. At this time, State governments were required to provide students with access to graduate education at other universities when they were denied admission due to race. Gaines, with the assistance of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Legal Defense Fund, filed suit against the registrar of the University of Missouri. Gaines argued that denial, based solely on his race, was a violation of his fourteenth amendment right to equal protection of the law. The Supreme Court ruled that the state of Missouri must establish and fund a separate but equal law school for Black students. Though the court did not overturn the *Plessy* decision of 1896 as intended, it did set the precedent for the establishment of graduate and professional schools at predominantly Black institutions in the United States. Many existing graduate and professional schools at HBCUs owe their establishment to the ruling handed down in *Gaines* (1938) (Endersby & Horner, 2016).

It would be 54 years before the precedent established in *Plessy* was successfully challenged. In *Sweatt v. Painter* (1950), Herman Marion Sweatt filed suit against the University of Texas in Austin after being denied admission to the law school by the University's President, Theophilis Painter. Law schools in the state of Texas did not admit Black students at that time.

Sweatt argued that Painter's actions violated his fourteenth amendment right to equal protection under the law. The case was eventually heard by the Supreme Court, which ruled that Painter's actions were in fact a violation of the equal protection clause of the fourteenth amendment. The precedent established in *Sweatt* paved the way for many other court cases, such as *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954).

The decision in *Brown* has been heralded as one of the most important legislative milestones for equality in education (Daughterity & Bolton, 2008; Franklin, 2005; Sarat, 1994). In 1951, Oliver Brown filed a class action lawsuit against the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas when his daughter was denied admittance to an all-White elementary school. Brown argued that segregation in public schools was a violation of the fourteenth amendment. The United States District Court in Kansas upheld the separate but equal doctrine of *Plessy*. In 1952, the case was heard by the Supreme Court, which ruled that "in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place" (*Oliver Brown, et al. V Board of Education of Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas, et. Al*, 1954). The Supreme Court ruled that the precedent established in *Sweatt* also applied to primary and secondary schools, effectively overturning the precedent established in *Plessy*.

While the court's ruling in *Brown* failed to establish or mandate a timeline for the process of desegregation, it did establish a powerful legal precedent for *Hawkins v. Board of Control of Florida* (1958). Virgil Hawkins was denied admission to the University of Florida law school on May 13, 1949. Hawkins, represented by the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, appeared before the Supreme Court on four separate occasions in defense of his fourteenth amendment right to equal protection under the law. After six years and based on the precedent established in *Brown*, the

Supreme Court ruled to allow equal access to institutions of higher education in the state of Florida.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was perhaps the most notable legislation in the battle for racial equality rights of the twentieth century (Levy & Miller, 1998). This legislation prohibited discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin. By 1964, many officials of school districts in the South had created separate school systems for White and Black students to bypass the fourteenth amendment. Title IV of the Civil Rights Act dictated that entities that supported segregation would not be eligible to receive federal funding (Civil Rights Act, 1964). Many Southern school districts remained in noncompliance with Title IV and continued to benefit from federal funds for decades. In 1970, the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare was found guilty of violating Title IV of the Civil Rights Act when it was discovered that the department had continued to allocate funds to 19 states that supported segregation and maintained separate school districts for Black and White students. As a result, the court mandated the implementation of programs designed to monitor those 19 states' compliance with Title IV (Palmer et al., 2011).

In 1965, the United States congress passed the Higher Education Act of 1965. Title III of this legislation, entitled "Provisions for Strengthening Developing Institutions", authorized funding to further develop the academic and financial stability of HBCUs. The Higher Education Act defined HBCUs as "an institution established prior to 1964 whose principal mission was, and is, the education of Black Americans" (Higher Education Act, 1965).

In 1975, the United States interceded on behalf of a group of Black students at the University of Mississippi in a class-action lawsuit against the Governor of the state of Mississippi. In *United States v. Fordice* (1992), the United States alleged that the state of

Mississippi had failed to completely dismantle its system of segregation among the state's institutions of higher education. The Supreme Court ruled that the State of Mississippi was in violation of the equal protection clause of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as well as the fourteenth amendment. The court mandated that all public institutions of higher education in Mississippi implement affirmative actions to eliminate any remnants of dual systems of education. Additionally, the state government was required to financially support new academic programs, construction, and endowments for the state's HBCUs. The state of Mississippi agreed to contribute \$503 million to HBCUs over the course of 17 years (Lee, 2010).

Rationale for the Study

The trajectory of Blacks in higher education has been beset by many challenges and difficulties. Black students in higher education continue to face numerous challenges and issues related to race and racism (Feagin & Sikes, 1994; Fleming, 1984; Hedegard, 1972; Jackson & Swan, 1991; Patterson, 2018). Researchers have revealed that Black students at predominantly White institutions (PWIs) often feel isolated, endure racist jokes, and encounter racist stereotypes, while simultaneously being forced to assimilate to a campus culture that values White principles and ideals above all else (Feagin & Sikes, 1994; Fleming, 1984; Jackson & Swan, 1991; Jones et al., 2002).

Similarly, authors and researchers have sought to better understand the mediation of race in PWSOM (Bradley, 2015; Hess, 2017; Koza, 2008; Wagoner, 2016). However, the majority of the published works examining race and racism in music education have been contributed by White authors. At the heart of this study lies the question: "What does it mean to be a Black student in a PWSOM?" There is a need for systematic inquiry that allows this question to be answered by those who are best positioned to answer it. This study will be used to fill a void in

music education research concerning the experiences of Black students in PWSOM through an understanding of these students' lived experiences. Additionally, this study will add to the existing literature related to the experiences of Black students in higher education.

Guiding Definitions

Predominantly White Institution (PWI)

Brown & Dancy (2010) defined predominantly White institution (PWI) as an “institution of higher learning in which Whites account for 50% or greater of the student enrollment” (p. 523). The designation of PWI is not an official one but has its origins in the historical context of segregation.

Predominantly White School of Music (PWSOM)

I define predominantly White schools of music as schools, colleges, or departments of music in which Whites account for 50% or greater of the student enrollment. Not all predominantly White schools of music are found on the campuses of colleges and universities that are designated as PWIs. Therefore, I use the term predominantly White school of music to distinguish between the two.

Delimitations

Nine students participated in this hermeneutic phenomenological study. Each has experienced the phenomenon of being a Black undergraduate music education student at a PWSOM. Findings of this study are limited to only these individuals and are not necessarily representative of all Black undergraduate music education students in predominantly White schools of music.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experiences of Black undergraduate music education students in PWSOM. I begin this chapter with a review of literature related to the experiences of Black students enrolled in PWIs. Next, I explore issues of race in the field of music education. Finally, I conclude with a review of literature related to the experiences of Black students in PWSOM.

Experiences of Black Students in Predominantly White Institutions

Pursuing higher education and subsequently earning a college degree has become an indicator of status in American society (Brower & Ketterhagen, 2004; Clewell & Anderson, 1995; Haveman & Smeeding, 2006). Scholars have suggested that this is especially true for members of historically marginalized populations, for whom higher education represents a means of upward mobility and improving one's political, economic, and social standing in American society (Barnett, 2004; Billingsley & Hurd, 2019; Clewell & Anderson, 1995; Cureton, 2003; Deskins, Jr., 1991; Epps, 1991; Holmes et al., 2000).

As was illustrated in chapter one, much progress has been made in the struggle for educational equality for Blacks in America. However, researchers have revealed that Black students enrolled in PWIs encounter a particular set of issues that hinder their social adjustment, academic success, and negatively affect their overall college experiences (Allen, 1988; Feagin & Sikes, 1994; Fleming, 1984; Patterson, 2018; Shahid et al., 2018, 2018; Smedley et al., 1993). Allen (1988) asserted that Black students enrolled in predominantly White institutions commonly report three types of issues: (a) cultural adjustment issues, (b) academic issues, and (c) racism and discrimination.

Cultural Adjustment

Brown and Dancy (2010) defined PWIs as “institution[s] of higher learning in which Whites account for 50% or greater of the student enrollment” (p. 523). However, Black students on predominantly White campuses are often confronted with the realization that these environments are more than demographically White, they are culturally White (Feagin et al., 1996; Feagin & Sikes, 1994).

Sociologists have demonstrated that White culture, principles, values, and traditions are revered in American society (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2009; A. Lewis, 2003; Omi & Winant, 1999). The development of the American system of higher education has paralleled that of the institutions of race-based enslavement, state-sanctioned segregation, and racism in America (Smith et al., 2002). Therefore, as Harper et al.(2009), Mustaffa (2017), and Prelow et al. (2006) contended, it is plausible that the presumed superiority of White or Eurocentric cultural values and ideals that exists in American society at large has permeated into the system of higher education in America.

Feagin and Sikes’s (1994) examined the lived experiences of 209 middle-class Blacks in America and found that Black students felt pressured to adapt to White “ways of talking, dressing, and acting” (p. 94) in an effort to become what one participant described as “Afro-Saxon” (p. 94). Sedlacek (1970) asserted that Black students experience the added pressure of “[bridging their] Black culture with the prevailing one at the White university” (p. 538). Additionally, DiCesare et al. (1972) found that Black students who better navigated this cultural bridge were more likely to remain enrolled.

Researchers have suggested that the forced adoption of and adherence to White cultural norms, values, practices, and traditions resulted in feelings of isolation, alienation, and crises of

self-identity (Cureton, 2003; Feagin & Sikes, 1994; Hedegard, 1972; Jackson & Swan, 1991; Patterson, 2018; Smedley et al., 1993). In a nationwide survey study of 785 Black students across 40 colleges in the United States, Boyd (1974) found that in addition to criticisms of low minority enrollment, feelings of social isolation and alienation were chief among the complaints of Black students.

Ron Wakabayashi, National Director of the Japanese American Citizens League, described what it felt like to be a member of a minority group immersed in the culture of the dominant group: “We feel that we’re a guest in someone else’s house, that we can never relax and put our feet up on the table” (Daniels, 1991, p. 5). Turner (1994) extended this metaphor to include the experiences of minority students in PWIs:

Like students of color in the university climate, guests have no history in the house they occupy. There are no photographs on the wall that reflect their image. Their paraphernalia, paintings, scents, and sounds do not appear in the house. There are many barriers for students who constantly occupy a guest status that keep them from doing their best work. (p. 356)

Turner’s metaphor provided insight into the perspectives of underrepresented students on college campuses and hinted at the accompanying negative effects.

The effects of immersion in White culture and the attending requirement to assimilate to White cultural values on the formation of Black students’ identities has been the subject of much research. Bayer (1972), Gruber (1980), and Stikes (1975) found that Black student self-identity is related to Black students’ level of adjustment at White institutions. However, a number of researchers and scholars have indicated that Black students adjust poorly to the cultural climates found at PWIs (Allen, 1988, p. 65; Feagin et al., 1996; Fleming, 1984, p. 18; Gibbs, 1974). In a

comparative study of students' success in Black and White institutions, Fleming (1984) found that Black students on predominantly White campuses scored low on identity affirmation, a factor of the Black Ideology Scale. Fleming (1984) asserted that this finding was "highly suggestive of alienation" (p. 66).

Feelings of isolation and alienation are compounded by Black students' interactions with White faculty members (Allen, 1988; Feagin & Sikes, 1994; Fleming, 1984; Nettles, 1988). Nettles et al. (1986) found that contact with faculty outside of the classroom was a significant predictor of Black students' grade point averages. Braddock (1981) found that the relationship between contact with faculty outside of the classroom and grade point average was especially important for Black students on predominantly White campuses. However, Fleming (1984), Mayo et al. (1995), Sedlacek (1970), and Schwitzer et al. (1999) found that Black students were often unable to form strong relationships with White faculty at PWIs.

Love (1993) found that Black students viewed White faculty with mistrust and suspicion and perceived interactions with them as negative. Katz (1983) stated that "Black students reported that White professors avoided eye contact with them and engaged in other forms of behavior that limit contact and recognition of the contributions and thoughts of Black students" (p. 35). Rich (1994) described the detrimental effects that a lack of recognition may have:

When those who have power to name and to socially construct reality choose not to see you or hear you, ...when someone with the authority of a teacher, say, describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing. (p. 199).

According to noted social identity theorist George Herbert Mead (1964), this lack of recognition may have detrimental effects on the development of an individual's sense of identity.

Black students have often criticized the lack or underrepresentation of Black faculty, staff, and administrators at predominantly White institutions (Boyd, 1974; Willie, 1971). Sedlacek (1970) contended that the low prevalence of Black role models in institutions of higher education compounded the feelings of isolation and alienation experienced by Black students in PWIs. Additionally, Sedlacek (1970) suggested that the lack of cultural diversity in perspectives hindered Black students' academic progress, development, and identification with the institution.

Academic Issues

In their examination of the lived experiences of 209 middle-class Blacks in the United States, Feagin and Sikes (1994) found Black students endured issues of race and racism in exchange for an academic experience that would “give them a boost in the outside White world” (p. 95). However, researchers have found that Black students in PWIs experience a multitude of racial issues that negatively affect their academic performance (Allen, 1988; Braddock & Dawkins, 1982; Campbell et al., 2019; Cheatham et al., 1987; Fleming, 1984; Gallagher, 1992; Suen, 1983; Zirkel, 2004).

Black student academic performance has most often been measured by grade point average (GPA) and attrition rates. In a comparative study of Black students' success in HBCUs and PWIs, Fleming (1984) found that Black students in PWIs were more likely to show evidence of decreased intellectual development as measured by GPA. Similarly, Cokley (2000) found that despite entering college with higher GPAs than Black students attending HBCUs, Black students attending PWIs reported lower GPAs, lower academic success, and academic self-concept by the end of their first year in college. Loo and Rolison (1986) attributed the negative effects on GPA to the alienation and social estrangement that Black students experience in PWIs.

Many researchers have examined the attrition rates of Black students in PWIs (Braddock, II, 1981; DiCesare et al., 1972; Suen, 1983). Black students at PWIs have continued to earn college degrees at a lower rate than White students (Cross, 2002; de Brey et al., 2019) and Black students at HBCUs. Chavous (2002) and Suen (1983) attributed the discrepancy between the attrition rates of Black students in PWIs and those in HBCUs to the increased feelings of social estrangement and alienation experienced by Black students on predominantly White campuses.

Central to an examination of the academic experiences of Black students at PWIs is the role of curriculum (Caldwell & Stewart, 2001; Feagin & Sikes, 1994). Feagin and Sikes (1994) asserted that while schools and universities have become demographically integrated, the school curriculum continues to represent the interests of White stakeholders. The lack of representation of Black students in school curriculum compounded feelings of isolation and alienation (Feagin & Sikes, 1994) and perpetuated the phenomenon of double consciousness in minority students in PWIs (Caldwell & Stewart, 2001).

Racism

In the United States, institutions of higher education are often represented as centers of progressive thought and hubs of diversity (Feagin et al., 1996). However, qualitative examinations have revealed that Black students in cs frequently endure racist jokes, negative stereotypes, covert racism, and overt acts of hostility and discrimination (Feagin & Sikes, 1994; Fleming, 1984; Jackson & Swan, 1991; Jones et al., 2002; Patterson, 2018). In 1962, Myrdal (1962) stated that racist joking, stereotypes, and popular fictions about Blacks acted as a “sounding board for and as a magnifier of popular prejudices” (p. 101) of Black ineptitude. Researchers have indicated that Black students continue to face such indignities on the campuses of predominantly White institutions (Cabrera, 2018; Feagin & Sikes, 1994; Sleeter, 1994).

Black students and graduates of PWIs reported daily occurrences of racist joking and negative stereotyping (Feagin & Sikes, 1994). For many of them, it was through enduring racist jokes and stereotypes on campus that they become aware of “what it meant to be Black in the United States” (Feagin & Sikes, 1994, p. 98). In a survey study of the experiences of Black students at a large PWI, D’Augelli and Hershberger (1993) found that 89% of respondents reported hearing negative comments about Black students on campus, and 59% reported being verbally insulted due to their race. In Cabrera’s (2018) self-described “unapologetically radical approach to the study of Whiteness” (p. xii), the researcher found that racist jokes were reported by White males to be the most prevalent examples of racist behavior on their college campuses.

In addition to the daily occurrence of racist joking and stereotyping, Black students at PWIs also endure acts of blatant racism and hostility. According to a report filed by the United States Department of Education and Bureau of Justice Statistics, race was the most frequent category of motivating bias associated with hate crimes on college campuses (Musu-Gillette et al., 2018). In September of 2020, members of Taking Back Alamance County, a neo-confederate hate group, demonstrated on the campus of Elon University in Elon, North Carolina. Members of the group exclaimed “White Power!” and “No they don’t” in response to demonstrators who held “Black Lives Matter” signs. Students at Elon University expressed a desire for representatives from the University to acknowledge the event and make better attempts to protect students from harassment (Norcross & Terry, 2020). At the time of this writing, Black students comprised 5% of the undergraduate population at Elon University (*Campus Racial Incidents*, 2020a).

Acts of racial hostility are not restricted to campuses in Southern states of the United States. In November of 2020, a t-shirt with the slogan “Yes they do,” in support of the Black Lives Matter movement, was found defaced with a racial slur in the laundry room of a dormitory

of Gordon College in Wenham, Massachusetts. While campus police were reported to have initiated an investigation, many students stated that the college was slow to address this and other acts of racial hostility (Fernandes, 2020). At the time of this writing, Black students comprised only 4% of the undergraduate population at Gordon College (*Campus Racial Incidents*, 2020b)

In November of 2020 on the campus of Arizona State University, the word “nigger” was found painted on a sidewalk. Representatives from the university’s Black African Coalition (BAC) released the following response in the campus newspaper:

The BAC recognizes that due to the upcoming election that tensions may rise, and it is very likely that incidents like this will continue to happen around our campuses and the surrounding area...It is important that our students feel comfortable, safe, and wanted at Arizona State University. (Myskow, 2020)

In addition to the relationship between racial hostility on campus and the state of race relations in the country at-large, the BAC’s statement illustrated that students on campus had grown to expect such examples of racial hostility. At the time of this writing, Black students comprised 3.5% of the student population (*Arizona State University-Tempe – Data USA*, 2017).

In November of 2019, five members of the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire football team were suspended after making offensive social media posts directed toward the university’s Black Male Empowerment. The posts included a photo of a burning cross and read: “For all who can’t make the BME meeting, [we] are holding a WME tonight at 7.” One response read: “Idk why you guys are wasting wood burning a cross tho. Honestly just find someone who doesn’t have the same views as your or looks a little different and burn them” (*Campus Racial Incidents*, 2019). The players were reinstated once it was determined that their actions did not violate Wisconsin’s Administrative Code UWS 17 (Dohms-Harter, 2020). As of 2017, Black students

comprised 1% of the entire student population of the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire (*University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire – Data USA*, 2017).

Despite the numerous legislative advances that have been made in search of equality in education, Black students have continued to endure racial hostility reminiscent of a time past. These incidents are representative of the ongoing racism that many Black students on the campuses of PWIs experience.

Coping Strategies

Gibbs (1974) found that Black students employ one of four modes of adaptation in response to their marginality at PWIs: (a) withdrawal, (b) separation, (c) assimilation, and (d) affirmation. Withdrawal was the most prevalent mode of adaptation, accounting for 51% of the participants. Gibbs characterized withdrawal by “apathy, depression, feelings of hopelessness, alienation, and depersonalization, culminating in the student’s wish to avoid contact with conflict-producing situations” (p. 732). Withdrawal was associated with academic failure and feelings of inadequacy.

Separation was the second most prevalent mode of adaptation. Gibbs (1974) stated that separation was characterized by “anger, hostility...contempt for white values and behavior patterns, and active protests against White institutions and customs” (p. 734). Separation is often associated with political activism and is therefore the most noticeable coping mechanism of Black students. In their study of Black students in predominantly White colleges and universities in North Carolina, Davis and Borders-Patterson (1973) found that Black student’s experiences often led them to “an increasing consciousness of [their] Blackness, toward an identity not with all people, but with Black people” (p. 8).

Gibbs (2014) characterized assimilation by a desire for acceptance and approval from the dominant cultural group, social anxiety, conformist behavior, compensatory overachievement, and a heightened sensitivity to ethnic references and cues. Participants who displayed indicators of an assimilation mode of adaption often avoided social interaction with other Black students who ridiculed them due to their interests in traditionally White activities.

Gibbs (1974) characterized affirmation by self-acceptance, positive racial identity, hyperactivity, high achievement motivation, and autonomous self-actualizing behavior. It was the most positive mode of adaptation and the least prevalent. Students who developed an affirmation mode of adaptation struggled with competing pressures from both Black and White cultural expectations.

Other researchers have identified three categories of coping skills that are frequently used by Black students (Shahid et al., 2018). These forms of coping include social support, spiritual or religious practices, and avoidance coping. Social support was especially important to Black students' adjustment to PWIs (Barnett, 2004; Constantine et al., 2003; Hinderlie & Kenny, 2002; Negga et al., 2007; Prelow et al., 2006) and Constantine (2003) and D'Augelli and Hershberger (1993) found that Black students at PWIs rely more heavily on social support than do White students in the same environments. Students who utilized spiritual or religious coping mechanisms possessed a stronger sense of purpose (Smith, 2012) and displayed increased positive academic performance (Greer & Chwalisz, 2007; Patton & McClure, 2009). In addition to social support and spiritual practices, Black students also relied on coping mechanisms aimed at reducing the stress associated with negative situations. These avoidance coping mechanisms included mental distraction, disengagement, and detachment (Greer et al., 2015; Hoggard et al., 2012).

Summary: Experiences of Black Students in Predominantly White Institutions

Researchers have been concerned with the experiences of Black students on the campuses of PWIs for over 60 years. Hedegard and Brown (1969) published one of the first studies aimed at examining the experiences of Black students on the campuses of PWIs in 1969. Unfortunately, the results of such studies have remained consistent. Race-related stressors have remained just as prevalent today as they were six decades ago. Black students at PWIs have continued to face issues that negatively affect their academic progress, cultural adaptation, and overall college experiences. Factors such as the immersion in White cultural expectations and underrepresentation amongst the student body have contributed to Black students feeling isolated and alienated. Researchers have found that these same contributing factors are characteristic of American music education, thus warranting an exploration of the experiences of Black music students in PWSOM.

Exploring Race in Music Education

An understanding of the experiences of Black undergraduate music education students in PWSOM requires a contextual understanding of the mediation of race in the field of music education. Issues of race in music education may be best classified into the following categories: (a) issues of diversity, (b) barriers to access, and (c) the colonizing nature of music curriculum.

Diversity in Music Education

The past decade has brought about a substantial demographic shift in the United States public-school population. By the year 2014, the percentage of minority students enrolled in public schools had increased to over 50% of the overall public-school population. United States Census projections indicated that this trend would continue; with 52% of the population

identifying as minority in the year 2022 (Krogstad & Fry, 2014). Populations that had traditionally been referred to as minority populations have become the statistical majority.

Despite the increasing diversification of the United States population, there has existed an underrepresentation of minority populations in music education (Elpus & Abril, 2019, 2011; Rickels et al., 2013). This lack of diversity is evidenced by a demographic examination of those who study and teach music. In a demographic profile of high school music ensembles, Elpus and Abril (2019) found that Black students were significantly underrepresented in high-school music ensembles. Black students comprised 13% of the total population of students who participated in high school instrumental music ensembles, whereas White students comprised 58%. These findings supported prior research by Elpus and Abril (2011) and highlighted the racial imbalance between those who choose to participate in high-school instrumental music education and the public-school population. In a survey study of 250 high school seniors who were auditioning for admittance into American university music education programs, Rickels et al. (2013) found that the Black students represented only 9.2% percent of the respondents, while White students represented 80.8%.

The lack of diversity in music education is also represented in the music teacher education workforce (2013). Elpus (2015) found that while Whites comprised 66% of the adult population in the United States, they comprised 81.9% of the music teacher workforce. Conversely, Blacks, who accounted for 12% of the adult population, accounted for only 6.8% of the music teacher workforce. This imbalance is likely to persist, as Elpus (2015) found that 86% of music teacher licensure candidates identified as White, while only 7.07% identified as Black.

Barriers to Access

Wagoner (2016) stated that music education “continues to struggle with a double-pronged issue of both access and participation” (p. 6). This is as equally true for the secondary level as it is for post-secondary study in music. Socioeconomic status and implicit bias are two factors that have contributed to Black student’s restricted access to music education on the secondary level.

Socioeconomic Status and Access to K–12 Music

Numerous authors have detailed the relationship between socioeconomic status and access to music education in K–12 settings (Bradley, 2015; Hess, 2017; Koza, 2008; Wagoner, 2016). Clements (2009) found socioeconomic status to be a significant factor in determining access to music education. According to researchers, schools with larger concentrations of poverty were less likely to offer music instruction than schools with lower concentrations of poverty and offered a less diverse array of music courses from which to choose (Abril & Gault, 2008; Parsad & Spiegelman, 2012; Smith, 1997; Woodworth et al., 2007). Similarly, schools with higher rates of poverty and a larger minority population received less financial support for the arts, contained smaller number of students taking private lessons and had less adequate facilities and technological resources than schools with fewer minorities and a smaller rate of poverty (Costa-Giomi & Chappell, 2007; Elpus, 2017).

Some researchers have suggested that costs associated with instrument rentals and purchases, accessories, ensemble fees, uniform purchases, private lessons, and travel for auditions may prove to be a hinderance, preventing minority students’ participation in music (Albert, 2006; Phillips, 2003). However, there has been little empirical evidence to support the assertions that the added financial obligations of music ensemble participation restrict minority

student access. These findings are especially important considering the strong relationship between race and socioeconomic status. Kozol (2005) found that the probability of poverty in urban schools with high concentrations of Black students is nearly six times higher than that of schools with a large percentage of White students.

Implicit Bias

Chief among the barriers to minority access to music education is implicit racial bias. The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity defined implicit bias as the “attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner” (*Understanding Implicit Bias*, 2015). In the field of education, implicit attitudes have been found to contribute to discipline disparities, contribute to the shaping of teacher expectations of student achievement, and influence the evaluation of student progress (Staats, 2016; van den Bergh et al., 2010).

The effects of implicit racial bias in music education may most readily be observed in the heavy reliance on evaluations of musical performance. Music educators rely on formal and informal evaluations of music performance such as chair tests and auditions or college music programs. Such evaluations serve as the gateway to advanced musical study and should be objective and free of bias. However, researchers have found that implicit biases may have an effect on music educators’ judgments of musical performance (Elliott, 1995; VanWeelden & McGee, 2007). Elliott (1995) found that a performer’s race significantly affected the judgments of musical performance ($p < .0001$), with Black students being rated lower than White students. Similarly, VanWeelden and McGee (2007) found conductor race to be a significant factor in evaluations of ensemble performance ($p < .001$). Elliott (1995) asserted that “prior expectations an evaluator may have regarding the individual performer or ensemble to be judged and certain

beliefs evaluators may hold about particular groups of people or particular styles of music have all been found to influence judgments of musical performance” (p. 53).

Access to Music Teacher Education Programs

Issues of access to K–12 music education have implications for who will gain access to music education on the post-secondary level. As Black student access to and participation in K–12 music programs diminish, so does the pool of prospective Black music education candidates at the post-secondary level. Thereby, greatly reducing the chance of diversifying the music teacher workforce. This is especially important given the critical role that minority teachers play in the lives of minority students (Hamann & Walker, 1993; Spearman, 1999).

Koza (2008) suggested that for minority music teacher candidates, access is further restricted through categorizing, or “binning” (p. 146), that occurs in the admissions, audition, and licensure processes. The process of categorizing students by race has further contributed to the systematic disenfranchisement of minority students.

Admissions Processes

The primary obstacle to access to higher education has been selective admissions processes that rely heavily on standardized tests. The vast majority of four-year institutions have required admissions tests such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and Academic College Test (ACT) for admission (Breland et al., 2002). However, researchers have contended that the disparities in standardized test scores between students of color and White students have played a significant role in who gains access to higher education (Astin & Oseguera, 2004; Knoester & Au, 2017; Rosales, 2018; Yosso et al., 2004; Zwick, 2007). Fleming (1990), Valencia and Aburto (1991), and Walpole et al. (2005) found that students from communities of lower

socioeconomic status tend not to perform as well on standardized tests than students of higher socioeconomic status.

Rosales (2018) attributed the discrepancy between Black and White students' performance on standardized tests to the troubled history of their creation. The SAT was adapted from aptitude tests that were used to promote segregation in the United States Army during World War I. The inventor of Army aptitude tests, Carl Brigham, was an early 20th- century psychologist and avowed eugenicist who believed that Black people operated at the lower end of the intellectual spectrum (Rosales, 2018). Many researchers have contended that standardized tests contain cultural biases that disadvantage members of minority populations, effectively serving as means of screening on the basis of race (Astin & Oseguera, 2004; Knoester & Au, 2017; Rosales, 2018)

Audition Processes

The audition processes commonly used in post-secondary music programs have served as a means of categorizing potential students according to race. Koza (2008) contended that this process of racialization in the context of auditions occurs through the categorizing of certain “bodies” (p. 146) and musics.

Koza (2002) asserted that racialization in the context of auditions occurs through the categorization and classification of music. The repertoire performed in bands, orchestras, and choirs is based in the western European classical tradition and has continued to serve as the basis for knowledge in musical study. Bradley (2012) said that:

... a more narrow understanding of music education has grown up around school-based choirs, bands, and orchestras. In such circumstances this idea of music education is more or less synonymous with large ensemble experience, and Western classical music is

privileged as the knowledge worth having. Indeed, it is the only recognized form of musical knowledge considered valid for entry into many North American university music schools. (p. 669)

The deferral to the western European canon as superior limits who chooses to participate in and pursue music in college.

Koza (2008) maintained that while audition requirements may not explicitly connect race and musical genre, the connection is evidenced through an examination of the relationship between musical preferences and race. Mizell (2005) found that Whites were more likely to enjoy classical music than non-Whites and less likely to enjoy music with roots in other cultures. Koza (2008) concluded that students who are more likely to enjoy classical music are also more likely to meet audition requirements that are deeply rooted in the western European classical tradition.

Licensure Processes

According to Koza (2002), Black prospective music teachers have faced numerous difficulties in gaining admission to teacher education programs, largely in part to high-stakes teacher licensing assessments. In addition to high-stakes tests to gain admission to a college or university, students in music teacher education programs across the United States are required to earn passing scores on the *Praxis® Core Academic Skills for Educators* and *Praxis® Music* assessments. The *Praxis® Core Academic Skills for Educators* assessment was designed to measure academic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics, and serves as the gateway to teacher preparation program admittance. The *Praxis® Music* assessment was designed to measure licensure candidates' readiness and preparation in the field of music.

Many researchers have examined the performances of Black students on the *Praxis*® series examinations (Elpus, 2015; Nettles et al., 2011). Nettles et al. (2011) highlighted the relationship between the absence of Black teachers in teaching profession and the disparity in passing rates on *Praxis*® series assessments. Similarly, Elpus (2015) attributed the shortage of Black music teachers to Black students' inability to pass the *Praxis*® *Music* assessment. Elpus's (2015) examination of *Praxis*® *Music* scores revealed a large performance gap between Black and White students. Black candidates were significantly more likely to fail the Praxis II assessment than White students.

Music Curriculum as Colonizer

The American music education system is steeped in the traditions of western European classical music (Bowman, 2007; Bradley, 2012; Wagoner, 2016). The elevation of this tradition in K–12 and collegiate settings produces an inherent value-judgment on types of music that are not of the tradition (Bradley, 2006). Musical traditions that utilize alternative methods of transmission or stray from the practices of Western Classical music are often relegated to the margins (Bradley, 2012; Hess, 2015; Koza, 2008). Bradley (2007) further illustrated this point:

Our music education curricula continue to validate and recognize particular (white) bodies, to give passing nods to a token few “others,” and to invalidate many more through omission. The western musical canon predominates our curricula, while we continue to argue whether popular music should have a place in what our students learn, and which styles of popular music are “appropriate.” Musical practices from around the world remain marginalized as curricular add-ons, if acknowledged at all. (p. 134)

The convergence of the strict, unchallenged adherence to Eurocentric values and the marginalization of other music and cultures serves as an exclusionary paradigm that discourages participation by minority students and serves as colonizer (Bradley, 2015; Hess, 2015).

Excluding the expansion to include 20th- and 21st-century repertoire, technological advancements, and coursework in music education and ethnomusicology, the present-day curricular structure of university music programs mirrors that of nineteenth-century institutions (Walker, 2020). This curricular structure includes required coursework in music theory, music history, and participation in large ensembles. It is through these three foundational elements of the curricular structure that the colonizing nature of music education is most readily observed.

Music Theory

Music theory and aural skills are primarily approached with a strong emphasis on and strict adherence to the rules and practices of the western European musical tradition (Hess, 2015). The current curricular model of music theory operates as a self-serving system that perpetuates the superiority of the European tradition (Ewell, 2020). Musical traditions that do not align with Western Classical principles are relegated to the category of “other” or are viewed as inferior (Bradley, 2007; Hess, 2015).

Additionally, there is a tremendous underrepresentation of people of color in music theory pedagogy. In an examination of the most commonly used textbooks in undergraduate music theory courses, Ewell (2020) found that 98.3% of the music taught in the seven textbooks was written by Whites. However, as Ewell (2020) has suggested, racism and colonization in music theory will not be solved by “stocking our textbooks with musical examples by these Black composers” (p. 3).

Music History

Helm (1994) suggested that the curricular structure of music history at the university level has remained relatively unchanged since the 1950s. University music programs continue to present Western Classical music as the history of all music, thereby producing an inherent value-judgment on music that is not of that tradition (Walker, 2020).

Music history, as is the case with most historical courses, is approached temporally. The content presented in music history courses is organized into historical periods (i.e., medieval, baroque, renaissance, classical, and romantic). The names of these periods have been derived from the history of Europe and are characterized by the practices and values of European culture. Thus, the exploration of the history of music is approached through the lens of western Classical temporality. Undergraduate music students have been taught to believe that the western Classical approach to the history of music is the sole approach. This exclusionary paradigm contributes to the marginalization of musics and cultures that do not fit into the European categorization of history. When other types of music are included in music history curriculum, they are done so sparingly and as curricular add-ons (Bradley, 2007; Hess, 2015). This model of including singular multicultural units positions western Classical music as the home-base to which all instruction must return (Hess, 2015). Hess (2015) referred to this paradigm as the “Musician-as-Tourist Model” (p. 342) and suggested that using it amounted to colonization in music education. Walker (2020) asserted that instructors that fail to recognize the colonality of music history curriculum “contribute to racism through erasure” (p. 17).

Despite these issues, the music curriculum has remained foundational to successful completion of an undergraduate degree program in music. In this way, upward mobility or educational advancement is held ransom in exchange for renouncing one’s own culture and

accepting the culture, practices, and traditions of the dominant group – a defining characteristic of colonization.

Experiences of Black Students in Predominantly White Schools of Music

Race has played an extensive role in the experiences of Black students in PWSOM (Anderson, 2018; Delorenzo & Silverman, 2016; Fitzpatrick et al., 2014; McCall, 2015; Robinson & Hendricks, 2018). Black students have experienced feelings of isolation and loneliness (Delorenzo & Silverman, 2016; Fitzpatrick et al., 2014; McCall, 2015; Robinson & Hendricks, 2018). McCall (2015) examined the degree perseverance of eight African-American males who had attended HBCUs for undergraduate music studies before transitioning to PWSOM for graduate studies. Participants in the study reported feeling isolated in academic and social settings. Many Black students in PWSOM have cited isolation and loneliness as reasons for questioning their place in their respective music programs, and their reasons for wanting to leave (Anderson, 2018).

A socio-cultural mismatch, the lack of Black representation amongst peers and faculty, and experiences of blatant and subtle racism compound feelings of isolation and loneliness (Anderson, 2018; McCall, 2015). Black students in PWIs have often contended with what Brower and Ketterhagen (2004) described as an “inherent mismatch” (p. 96) between their expectations and those of the prevailing White culture found in predominantly White spaces. In addition to the socio-cultural adjustment experienced by Black students on predominantly White campuses (Hinderlie & Kenny, 2002; Prelow et al., 2006; Schwitzer et al., 1999; Smedley et al., 1993), Black students have experienced “inherent mismatch” in PWSOM. Inherent socio-cultural mismatch in PWSOM is best exemplified by the strict adherence to western European classical

traditions (Fitzpatrick et al., 2014; Robinson & Hendricks, 2018). Robinson (2018) detailed how the deferral to western Classical music contributed to their feelings of isolation:

My collegiate experience left me feeling marginalized because I was different. I was different because I had not been steeped in Western European classical music like my colleagues ... I was an anomaly because I was the only Black person in most of my music classes. I felt even more isolated in less theoretical classes such as music history and music education because they too exposed how different my music background was from those about whom I read in history or method books... I found myself studying the uniqueness of Whiteness and the superiority of White ingenuity. Instead of feeling like a musician, I began to feel like a problem and became aware of the inherent difference between my White counterparts and me. (pp. 33–34).

Robinson's description, while sobering, encapsulated the way in which the strict adherence to European traditions and values in music education influence the experiences of Black students in PWSOM.

Black music education students' feelings of isolation and loneliness have been further exacerbated by the underrepresentation of Black peers and faculty members (Anderson, 2018; Robinson & Hendricks, 2018). While Black students in PWSOM have expressed a desire for social interaction with peers and faculty who possess the same characteristics and are of the same backgrounds (Anderson, 2018; Fitzpatrick et al., 2014), demographic surveys have revealed that Blacks are underrepresented amongst both the student and faculty populations. An examination of the most recent data revealed that Black students and faculty comprise only 7.07% (Elpus, 2015) and 3.6% (Hewitt & Thompson, 2006), respectively, of the music education student and

faculty populations. Delorenzo and Silverman (2016) found that the underrepresentation of minority music faculty caused students to question their places in the music teaching profession.

According to researchers, Black students in PWSOM endured explicit and implicit racism as well as negative stereotypes from peers and professors (Anderson, 2018; McCall, 2015). Explicit racism manifested itself in the form of racist jokes and remarks made at the expense of Black students. Black students in PWSOM reported professors' unequal distribution of time, attention, and information as examples of subtle racism. White professors were reported to have ignored Black students when they spoke and averted eye contact. In addition to worsening feelings of isolation, these oppositional behaviors caused Black students in PWSOM to feel rejected, devalued, frustrated, and disheartened. Such examples were commonplace in the experiences of Black students in PWSOM (Anderson, 2018; McCall, 2015), and illustrated the "ordinariness" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 8) of racism for Blacks navigating predominantly White spaces.

Anderson (2018) investigated how Black doctoral music students identified and responded to identity stereotypes throughout their music education. Participants often reported encountering negative stereotypes about Black people in general and about Black musicianship. Participants felt that they had to work twice as hard to succeed and break the stereotypes held by White peers and professors. The convergence of isolation and the desire to break stereotypes imbued participants with the feeling that they were representatives of their entire race. Participants suggested that this feeling motivated them to succeed to pave the way for future potential Black students. Anderson (2018) found that participants attempted to manage the perceptions of White peers and professors by managing Whites' perceptions of Blacks, including altering their dress, physical appearance, and speech to be more in line with the prevailing White

culture. Both McCall (2018) and Anderson (2018) found that Black students possessed an understanding of the way in which White peers and professors viewed them. This double consciousness served both negative and positive purposes. First, the keen awareness of Whites' perceptions of them increased Black students' "inferiority anxiety" (Steele & Aronson, 1995, p. 797) – a negative state provoked by the race-related cues in their environments. Second, double consciousness served as a tool for navigating White spaces (Du Bois, 2012).

According to researchers, race has played a substantial role in the experiences of Black students in PWSOM (S. Anderson, 2018; McCall, 2015). Black students have experienced isolation, rejection, and powerlessness because of exclusionary paradigms in music and negative interactions with peers and professors. Given the increasing focus on issues of social justice, the mediation of race, and culturally relevant practices in music education, it is incumbent upon leaders in PWSOM to listen to and learn from the lived experiences of those who have endured issues of race and racism throughout their music education.

CHAPTER III: DESIGN AND METHOD

Introduction

In this study, I examined the lived experiences of Black undergraduate music students in PWSOM in the United States. In this chapter, I detail and support my choice of research methodology, criteria for the selection of participants, and methods for data collection and analysis. Finally, I outline the strategies for ensuring trustworthiness and ethical research.

Purpose and Problem

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to examine the lived experiences of Black undergraduate music education students in PWSOM. This study was guided by four research questions related to the experience of being a Black music education student in a predominantly White school of music: (a) How does race impact the daily experiences of Black music education students in PWSOM?, (b) How, if at all, do Black music education students in PWSOM experience the concept of double consciousness?, (c) How, if at all, do PWSOM perpetuate Black students' feelings of double consciousness?, and (d) What coping strategies do Black undergraduate music education students in PWSOM employ?

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is based on the philosophical assumption that reality is not objective, but socially constructed (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Neuman, 2000; Schwandt, 1993). Researchers using this approach formulate understanding based on the meanings that individuals, groups, and cultures ascribe to their experiences. Using this paradigm requires that those engaged in qualitative inquiry seek to understand how people interpret their experiences and construct social realities (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Each participant in this study offered a wide-ranging array of beliefs and

understandings of what it means to be a Black undergraduate music education student in a predominantly White school of music. Interpreting these beliefs was central to formulating an understanding of the participants' experiences.

In this study, I examined the lived experiences of nine Black undergraduate music education students who were enrolled in PWSOM in the United States. More specifically, I examined if and how the social construct of race influenced their lived experiences (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; van Manen, 1990). Using a qualitative approach to this study was appropriate because it provided a platform for the participants' voices and placed value on their socially constructed realities (Creswell, 2013).

Qualitative researchers take upon themselves the responsibility of interpreting individuals' beliefs and understandings. In doing so, they bring with them their personal philosophical beliefs, assumptions, and worldviews. Additionally, qualitative researchers engage with participants in their natural environments over extended periods of time. Creswell (2014) suggested that the interpretive and immersive natures of qualitative research introduce a "range of strategic, ethical, and personal issues into the qualitative research process" (p. 187). However, there is considerable value in researchers acknowledging their personal biases. Peshkin (1988) contended that "one's subjectivities can be seen as virtuous, for it is the basis of researchers making a distinctive contribution, one that results from the unique configuration of their personal qualities joined to the data they have collected" (p. 16). Qualitative researchers must acknowledge the influence that their subjectivities may have on the development of procedures, research questions, and the interpretation of their studies.

Phenomenology

A phenomenological approach is aimed at reducing “individuals’ experiences with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence” (Creswell, 2018, p. 121). Individuals attribute meaning to their experience through the process of speaking about their lived experiences (van Manen, 1990). Therefore, it is through the examination of language that the researcher may truly grasp and interpret the meaning of an individual’s, group’s, or culture’s experience. Van Manen (1990) stated that “experience and (un)consciousness are structured like a language, and therefore one could speak of an experience, all human interactions, as some kind of text... If this metaphor is taken literally, all phenomenological description is text interpretation...” (p. 39). The linguistic nature of a phenomenological approach allows the researcher to formulate an understanding of the phenomenon based on the “ways in which it appears to us” (van Manen, 1990, p. 183). The phenomenon of interest in this study is that of being a Black undergraduate music education student enrolled in a predominantly White school of music in the United States.

Kafle (2013) detailed three schools of phenomenology: (a) transcendental phenomenology, (b) existential phenomenology, and (c) hermeneutic phenomenology. Transcendental phenomenology is the oldest school of phenomenological thought, and the closest to the original philosophical practice as advanced by Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) (Kafle, 2013). Philosophers who subscribe to this school of phenomenology are primarily concerned with the suspension of subjective experience in an effort to arrive at a single, objective lived truth (Husserl & Welton, 1999; Kafle, 2013). A transcendental phenomenological perspective would not have been appropriate for this study as using it would not allow for the formation of knowledge based on the participants’ subjective beliefs.

The development of existential phenomenology is more recent, having been advanced by Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), Jean Paul Sartre (1905-1980) and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961) in the early 19th century. A central characteristic of existential phenomenology is the rejection of the transcendental belief that subjective experience must be suspended in an effort to arrive at one objective lived truth. Existential phenomenologists are concerned with the individual's everyday lived experience and what it means to exist as one experiencing the phenomenon (Kafle, 2013).

Hermeneutic phenomenology, in sharp contrast to transcendental phenomenology, is based on the premise that the suspension of personal subjectivity is impossible. The primary difference between hermeneutic and existential phenomenology is that hermeneutic phenomenology is aimed at the production of "rich textual descriptions of the experiencing of selected phenomena in the life world of individuals that are able to connect with the experience of all of us collectively" (Smith, 1997 in Kafle, 2013, p. 191).

Hermeneutic Phenomenology

I chose a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to examining the lived experiences of Black undergraduate music education students in PWSOM because it allowed for the interpretation of the participants' subjective beliefs and meanings. Using hermeneutic phenomenology, I examined and interpreted participants' lived experiences as they related to the phenomenon of interest (van Manen, 1990). A central component of this approach was the production of rich, textual descriptions of participants' experiences with the phenomenon. I then engaged in the detailed process of reading, reflective writing, and interpretation to analyze the commonalities between participants' stories (Laverly, 2003). Van Manen (1990) outlined four conditions for the text upon which researchers formulate their understanding. The text must be

oriented, strong, rich, and deep. Orientation refers to the positioning of the researcher's interpretations as the answer to a larger problem. According to Van Manen, textual strength refers to the text's ability to convey the writer's true meaning and intent. Van Manen described rich text as text that evokes a response from the reader and elicits the full use their senses, thus allowing the reader to relive the participants' experiences. The concept of depth refers to the need to generate text that examines beyond the surface and explores the nature of occurrences in the participants' lives that may have otherwise been taken for granted.

Participant Selection

Maxwell (2012) suggested four considerations for participant selection: (a) the feasibility of access and data collection, (b) research relationships with participants, (c) validity concerns, and (d) ethics. I chose to use purposive sampling to ensure that each selected participant represented a person who had experienced the phenomenon of being a Black undergraduate music education student in a predominantly White school of music (Creswell, 2018).

Polkinghorne (1989) recommended that phenomenological researchers recruit between five and twenty-five participants. I used snowball sampling to recruit nine participants from PWSOM. The participants represented a population that has been historically marginalized in the field of music education (Bradley, 2007; Koza, 2008; Robinson & Hendricks, 2018). For this reason, it was essential that the design of this study reflect sensitivity to potential imbalances of power (Creswell, 2013). This included the process of participant selection. Therefore, I chose not to recruit potential participants through contacting music education professionals at PWSOM. I anticipated that doing so may limit the number of potential participants or cause participants to censor their responses. I used a snowball sampling technique that consisted of posting the recruitment script (Appendix A) and my contact information to online social networks. Interested

potential participants were asked to forward the recruitment script and contact information to other individuals who met the following selection criteria:

- 1) Self-identify as Black
- 2) Are currently enrolled as an undergraduate music education major at a predominantly White school of music
- 3) Are at least 18 years of age

Data Collection

Data were collected primarily through three open-ended interviews with each participant. Additionally, I solicited each participant to capture their thoughts and reflections in a journal and share any documents or media that may provide additional context for their experiences.

Interviews

I used in-depth individual interviewing as the primary method of data collection. These interviews consisted of open-ended questions that built on the participants' responses, enabling them to reconstruct their lived experience. Using this method of data collection allowed for the understanding of individuals' lived experiences and the meanings that they ascribed to those experiences (Seidman, 2006; van Manen, 1990).

Each interview was conducted using the Zoom (www.zoom.com) virtual meeting platform. Using the Zoom platform allowed me to more easily communicate with participants who were in different regions of the United States and maintain compliance with social distancing regulations implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic. I used the three-part interview structure recommended by Seidman (2006). Seidman recommended that the first interview be dedicated to establishing the context for the participants' experience with the phenomenon of interest. Questions in the first interview were centered around participants'

experiences before attending a PWSOM. According to Seidman, the second interview should allow for the participants' reconstruction of the details of their experience. Questions in the second interview revolved around what the participant experienced while attending a PWSOM. In the third interview, I encouraged the participants to reflect on the meaning of their experience. Questions in the third interview were targeted toward formulating an understanding of how the participants constructed the social reality of their experiences in a PWSOM (Seidman, 2006).

I captured the audio and video from each interview using the 'record' feature of the Zoom platform. The recordings were saved to the internal memory of a password-protected computer as well on the Box online cloud management platform (www.box.com) as required by my institution. I also used a digital voice recorder to create backup versions of each interview. Next, I uploaded the audio from each interview to Otter (www.otter.ai), an internet-based speech-to-text application used to aid in the process of transcription.

Solicited Journals

Meth (2003) asserted that the use of solicited journals aids in the process of conducting qualitative inquiry. While interviews offer insight into the phenomenon at the time in which they are conducted, using participant journals allowed me to understand how their insights may have changed over the course of the study (Meth, 2003). Utilizing solicited journals in qualitative inquiry allowed for insight into participants' priorities and empowers them to choose which events and concepts they wish to discuss (Meth, 2003; Elliott, 1997 in Meth, 2003). Each participant was asked to maintain a weekly journal throughout the entirety of the data collection process.

Data Analysis

Van Manen (2001) recommended three approaches to thematic phenomenological analysis, including: (a) the wholistic approach, (b) the selective or highlighting approach, and (c) the detailed or line-by-line approach. Van Manen (1990) described the wholistic approach as a reading of the collected phenomenological material (data) in its entirety, in search of a “sententious phrase” (p. 93) that characterized the fundamental meaning of the text. According to van Manen, meaning is derived from the expression of the sententious phrase. Van Manen stated that the selective approach involved reading the phenomenological text (data) multiple times in search of phrases or words that are particularly revealing about the phenomenon in question.

The detailed approach involves reading each line of the phenomenological text while asking “what does this sentence...reveal about the phenomenon or experience being described?” (p. 93). Van Manen asserted that the aim of each of the three approaches is the creation of thematic units upon which the researcher and participant may reflect. Van Manen (2001) further contended that the true meaning of the lived experience, or phenomenon, was derived from the hermeneutic act of reflecting on the “appropriateness” (p. 99) of the emergent themes

For this study, I used a combination of the wholistic and selective approaches. I began the process of data analysis by reading the transcripts of the interviews and journal entries to understand the whole account of participants’ experiences. Next, I reread the transcripts and journal entries in search particular phrases that were revealing of the phenomenon. This process resulted in the development of preliminary “meaning units” (Giorgi, 1985, p. 10), or themes, related to the phenomenon of interest. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) described meaning units as isolated selections of data that are characteristic of the phenomenon of interest. The following is an example of two meaning units found in a participant’s description:

- 1) *“No one has explicitly told me that I don't belong. But it's like I've almost been shown in every way possible that I don't.”* (Kimberly, Interview 2, February 12, 2021).
- 2) *“What's happening that there aren't more Black people in higher education in music specifically? And what [pauses] what makes me think that I get to be one of them?”* (Kimberly, Interview 2, February 12, 2021).

The first meaning unit was as an example of Kimberly's feelings of not belonging in the school of music, while the second was indicative of her feelings of self-doubt because of the underrepresentation of Black faculty members in the school of music.

After developing a list of preliminary meaning units, I coded the interview transcripts using HyperRESEARCH, a software designed for qualitative analysis. I used a combination of first-cycle coding methods, including: (a) in vivo coding, (b) emotion coding, and (c) versus coding (Saldaña, 2013). In vivo coding is appropriate for studies in which the researcher seeks to “prioritize and honor the participant's voice” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 91). Using this method of coding allowed me to formulate an understanding based on interpretations of the participants' words rather than my own (Stringer, 1999). I used emotion coding to isolate and label the emotions that participants recalled and experienced. Corbin and Strauss (2008) contended that emotion and action are not separate as “they are part of the same flow of events” (p. 7). Using emotion coding provided me with deeper “insight into the participants' perspectives, worldviews, and life conditions” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 106). The following two examples of emotion coding were taken from participants' descriptions.

- 1) *“It makes me feel lonely”* (Bryson, Interview 2, February 12, 2021).
- 2) *“If I don't prove myself then I'm seen as less than, which is another anxiety-inducing thing”* (Kimberly, Interview 2, February 12, 2021).

The first example was Bryson's description of how he felt being one of the few Black students in the school of music. I assigned the code 'lonely' to this selection of text. The second example was Kimberly's response to being asked why she felt pressured to prove herself in the school of music. I assigned the code 'anxiety/anxious' to this selection of text.

I used versus coding to identify competing aspects of social life (Saldaña, 2013). Saldaña (2013) described this method of coding as especially appropriate for studies that are aimed at exploring the concepts of social domination, hierarchy, and social privilege. Many researchers have detailed the role of the dominant power structures that exist in the field of music education (Bradley, 2012; Hess, 2015). Using a versus coding method allowed me to formulate an understanding of the participants' lived experiences as they related to the concept of racial power and dominance in PWSOM. The following two examples of versus coding were taken from two participants' descriptions.

- 1) *"And then we have to be [pauses] professional about how we confront these people who are White, are handling our grades, and have our degrees in their hands. And we have to [pauses] walk, or tread lightly [pauses] in the way we approach things"* (Taylor, Interview 2, March 22, 2021).
- 2) *"You can never fully understand the experiences of a person of color because you sit in a place of privilege. You live in an environment that is never seen you as less of a person, that's never oppressed you, or treated you any differently"* (Bryson, Interview 3, February 24, 2021).

I assigned the code 'power' to Taylor's description of the power dynamic between Black students and White professors. I assigned the code 'White privilege' to Bryson's response to

being asked what he would say to White peers and professors to better illustrate the experiences of Black students in the school of music.

According to Saldaña (2013), the goal of second-cycle coding is the conceptual, thematic, theoretical, and categorical organization of first-cycle codes. I used a focused coding method in search of themes pertinent to the purpose of the study and assigned each emergent theme a unique name (Saldaña, 2013).

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) provided a list of five criteria pertinent to the process of creating themes, including that themes should: (a) reflect the purpose of the research study, (b) be exhaustive, (c) be mutually exclusive, (d) be sensitizing, and (e) be conceptually congruent. After coding the data, analyzed the codes in search of themes and relationships that were common to the participants experiences. This process of data analysis yielded nine emergent themes, including: (a) Navigating the perceptions of White people, (b) Making White people comfortable, (c) Working harder to prove myself, (d) “Do I belong here?”, (e) A climate of racial and cultural insensitivity, (f) Distrust of White faculty, (g) I’m just a quota-filler, (h) You can’t escape being Black in a PWSOM, and (i) Sacrifice.

Trustworthiness

Researchers use a variety of terms to refer to the trustworthiness of a qualitative study (Creswell, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Creswell (2018) recommended using at least two of the following strategies for ensuring trustworthiness. These strategies include the triangulation of data, including disconfirming evidence, engaging in researcher reflexivity, member checking, prolonged engagement in the field, collaborating with participants, soliciting external audits, generating a rich and thick description, and peer review (pp. 340–343). In the following sections, I describe the strategies that I used to ensure trustworthiness in this study.

Triangulation

Triangulation served as a powerful strategy for ensuring the trustworthiness of this qualitative study (Creswell, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2002). Denzin (1978) detailed four types of triangulation: (a) method, (b) investigator, (c) theory, and (d) data source. I used triangulation of theories and sources of data. I used two interpretive frameworks as suggested by Creswell (2018). I collected and analyzed data from multiple sources including phenomenological interviews, solicited journals, and informal and formal correspondence in search of confirming and disconfirming evidence.

Rich, Thick Description

Qualitative researchers generate rich, thick descriptions as a means of facilitating transferability (Creswell, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Through giving a detailed and sensory-rich account of the participants' backgrounds, environments, and experiences, I was able to effectively describe participants' lived experiences. According to Elpus (2015), only 7.07% of music teacher candidates across the United States identified as Black (p. 320). It is conceivable that most in the field of music education do not readily identify with the experiences of this underrepresented population. Rich, thick descriptions were used to create for the reader a sense that they had experienced, or could experience the phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Miller, 2000). This strategy included creating descriptive portraits of each participant (Chapters 4 and 5).

Member Checking

Member checking, or seeking participant feedback, was extremely useful in ensuring the credibility of this study (Hays & Singh, 2012; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maxwell, 2012; Stake, 1995). I solicited participants to examine, proofread, and "reflect on the accuracy" (Creswell,

2018, p. 342) of my interpretations of the raw data. Creswell (2013) asserted that when conducting phenomenological inquiry, researchers must formulate understanding based on the meanings that those who have experienced the phenomenon of interest have ascribed to their experiences. Therefore, every effort was made to ensure that my interpretations were “grounded in the data” (Creswell, 2013, p. 366). This was especially important in this study because participants were members of an underrepresented population. I asked participants to examine and judge the accuracy and credibility of the interview transcripts, preliminary analyses, emergent themes, and their descriptive portraits. Conversations with participants about my preliminary analyses led me to gain a deeper and more accurate understanding of their experiences. These conversations also led me to make changes to my initial descriptive portraits.

Researcher Reflexivity

Qualitative researchers operate on the general assumption that reality is socially constructed (Berger & Luekmann, 1967; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Neuman, 2000; Schwandt, 1993). Researchers formulate knowledge based on their interpretations of an individual’s lived experience (van Manen, 1990). Therefore, the researcher serves as the primary instrument during data collection and analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Creswell (2000) asserted that researchers must identify, reflect upon, and disclose to the reader their preconceived notions, beliefs, and biases early in the research process (p. 127). Researchers must suspend their subjectivities throughout the processes of data collection, analysis, and interpretation to ensure credibility and trustworthiness in the findings. I identified, analyzed, and reflected upon my subjectivities through maintaining a researcher journal throughout the entirety of the research process. I

discuss the ways in which my subjectivities influenced the design and implementation of this research in chapter four.

Ethical Considerations

I sought and received exempt status and approval for the data collection process from my university's institutional review board (Appendix C). Creswell (2013) recommended that researchers examine the standards for ethical research established by professional organizations (p. 57). Based on the standards dictated by the American Psychological Association, I took the necessary steps to follow guidelines of informed consent and respect the confidentiality and privacy of the participants (p. 56) (Smith, 2003).

Participant Consent

In adherence to the code of ethics as dictated by the American Psychological Association and requirements of my university's Institutional Review Board, I developed an information and consent form that included the purpose of the study, participants' right to decline participation and withdraw from the study, potential risks, prospective benefits, any incentives for participation, my contact information, and the contact information for my university's institutional review board (see Appendix A).

Confidentiality and Privacy

Researchers must be "sensitive to the nature of the interview process" (Creswell, 2013, p. 60) and its potential to perpetuate an imbalance of power. While I did not anticipate an unequal power dynamic between participants and myself, I did recognize the potential for one to exist between participants and music education faculty at their institutions. Therefore, it was essential that I protected the identities, confidentiality, and privacy of the participants. I did not enlist the assistance of music education professionals at predominantly White school of music in the

recruitment process. Each participant selected a pseudonym to be used in the reporting of findings and I used pseudonyms for the names of all other persons, institutions, and places. Additionally, I altered participants' identifying information to protect their confidentiality. Potential identifying information included classification, area of specialization (general music, vocal music, instrumental music, etc.), and instrument played. Participants were given the opportunity to review and clarify transcriptions of their hs and descriptive portraits to ensure the protection of their private information. In accordance with the ethical standards of the American Psychological Association, I informed the participants of the measures used to protect their information, as discussed in data collection section of this chapter, as well as any limitations of confidentiality (Smith, 2003).

CHAPTER IV: PARTICIPANT BACKGROUNDS

Introduction

I developed participant portraits to provide contextual information about their lives prior to attending a PWSOM. These portraits illustrate the participants' personal backgrounds and musical experiences before experiencing the phenomenon of being a Black undergraduate music education student in a PWSOM. To acknowledge the influence that my subjectivities may have on the development of procedures, research questions, and the interpretation of the participants' experiences, I have included a self-portrait. I provided pseudonyms for all names, institutions, and places other than those introduced in the self-portrait.

Quinton: A Self-Portrait

At the time of this writing, I am a 33-year-old Black male. I was born and raised in Durham, a mid-sized city in North Carolina and grew up in a middle-class home. My mother was also born in Durham and attended North Carolina Central University (NCCU), a historically Black institution of higher education. While attending NCCU, she earned the Bachelor of Science in Family and Consumer Science, Master of Science in Human Development and Family Studies, and Master of Education in Exceptional Children. She subsequently earned her Doctor of Philosophy in Family and Consumer Education and Business from a PWI in North Carolina. My father was born and raised in Hillsborough, North Carolina. When he was ten years old, his family moved to Cedar Grove, North Carolina where they briefly worked as sharecroppers. He attended NCCU and earned the Bachelor and Master of Arts in History. He subsequently earned his Doctor of Philosophy in American History from a PWI in North Carolina.

While the importance of an academic education was a major running theme in my household, I was introduced to the importance of another type of education long before I ever set

foot into a classroom, an education centered on navigating White spaces as a Black male. I earned a bachelor's degree in Store Etiquette for Black People, learning such lessons "keep your hands out of your pockets," "don't look suspicious," and "never leave without a receipt and your items in a bag."

When I began driving, I earned my master's degree in Driving While Black. I learned such lessons as "don't play your music too loud," "if you're pulled over, keep your hands on your steering wheel," and "always keep your license and registration out and visible." I was made painfully aware of White people's perceptions of Blacks in America early in my life, an awareness that has continued to influence many aspects of my life.

My personal experiences navigating predominantly White spaces have influenced how I conducted this examination, including the following elements: (a) participant selection, (b) the construction of interview questions, and (c) participant interaction. Having experienced the phenomenon of being a Black student in predominantly White spaces, I was aware of the influence that an unequal power dynamic may have on underrepresented students' willingness to be forthcoming. Knowing that the participants in this study would represent a population that has been historically marginalized in the field of music education, I chose not to recruit potential participants through contacting music education professionals at PWSOM. Instead, I used a snowball sampling method as described in chapter three. My experiences also influenced the line of questioning for participant interviews. In developing the interview questions, I engaged in the practice of reflexive journaling and discussed my experiences with friends, family, and colleagues. Our shared background helped me develop rapport with the participants, many of whom indicated that they felt more comfortable discussing their experiences with someone who had "been through the same thing" (Dinah, Interview 1, February 19, 2021).

Kimberly

Kimberly was raised in a middle- to upper-class suburban neighborhood in the predominantly White city of Millstone. She credited her mother with providing everything that she and her younger sister would ever need to thrive and be successful. She attended a local Montessori elementary school where she auditioned for all-county chorus and fell in love with the idea of making beautiful music with others. Kimberly chased that feeling as she joined her middle school orchestra and continued to play throughout high school.

While in high school, Kimberly was selected for numerous honors ensembles at the county, district, and state levels, and served as a principal player in the Millstone Symphony Youth Orchestra. Despite her successes, she never felt that she belonged in any classical music setting. She recalled being discouraged by the fact that she could count all the Black students in her honors ensembles during a four-measure rest in her music. It was this underrepresentation of Black students that motivated her to pursue music education in college.

Before attending her PWSOM, Kimberly's only knowledge about navigating White spaces was related to the high prevalence of police brutality against Black Americans. This admittedly made her fearful and anxious about her future. She described her first encounter with issues of racial identity while she was a student in an arts-based high school in Millstone:

I was always that person who was too Black for the White kids, but too White for the Black kids. We had majors in high school and people would ask, "What's your major?" And when I would tell them, "I'm an orchestra major," their responses would be something like, "That doesn't sound very Black," whatever that means. I like to play chess and I bowl. None of those things are stereotypically Black. So, I never quite fit anywhere. (Kimberly, Interview 1, February 3, 2021)

Kimberly learned early on in her life that being Black would influence how she navigated the world.

People always told me that I talked like a white person or that I acted White because I came from a family that had some money, or because I talked the way I talk. I told my mom that someone said that I sounded White, and she said, “You don't sound White. You sound like you know what you're talking about.” I learned that White equals educated, Black equals uneducated, and that I am automatically labeled because of how I look. And I have to automatically work harder to prove myself. (Kimberly, Interview 1, February 3, 2021)

This lesson remained with Kimberly and continued to influence her worldview.

Bryson

Bryson and his family lived in four different cities before settling in Upton Grove, a small Southern city that he described as racist. In the middle of downtown Upton Grove stood a market house in which slaves had been auctioned and was a constant reminder of that city's racist past. Bryson recalled that a Black Lives Matter mural at the site of the market house had been vandalized as recently as 2020.

Bryson attended predominantly White schools for most of his life, enduring microaggressions, being singled out for his race, and hearing jokes about the color of his skin as early as the first grade. He took comfort in his love for music and joined the orchestra in middle school. His high school orchestra teacher encouraged him to audition for his county and state honors ensembles. He auditioned and was selected during his junior and senior years of high school. He considered this a major accomplishment because he was competing with students who, unlike him, could afford to take private lessons.

Race played a significant factor in Bryson's musical experiences. He described the reactions he received when he performed in honors ensembles:

People were astonished that there was a Black boy playing violin that was doing so well. Especially coming from my county where the predominantly Black schools are the poorest schools. And so, when they see students that come from those schools playing string instruments, they think they're the worst. And people were astonished that I got to the places I went. I was just trying to prove myself. I felt that I was trying to show that yeah, I'm Black, I play the violin, and I'm good at it. (Bryson, Interview 1, February 17, 2021)

Bryson's experience navigating in White musical spaces as a Black student have influenced his reasons for choosing to study music education. He decided to pursue music education to be a sign of encouragement and motivation for future Black musicians.

Sally

Sally was born and raised in Dodge Hills, a predominantly Black town that served as a point on the underground railroad during slavery. It was a rural town that suffered from high rates of poverty and was once known as one of the poorest suburbs in the United States. Sally was raised by her mother and grandmother in what she described as a religious and sheltered household. Her grandmother was born in and lived in Mississippi in the 1930s and often told Sally and her sister about her experiences growing up in the segregated South.

She would talk to us about her experiences with segregation, and she would tell us, "Don't trust white people." She would talk about when she was growing up, there was a white boy that they would play with. They would be playing and he would call them "little niggers," and she hit him. So, she was scared that they would have to move. Even

when she was an adult and she was teaching in Dodge Hills, there was a little White boy, that was also calling her the N-word. And he was a student. Even though these were children, and she was a grown woman, she felt like her interaction with that child would uproot her entire life. (Sally, Interview 1, February 6, 2021)

Sally's grandmother's stories and warnings have influenced the way Sally interacts with White people. From a young age, she learned to be cautious around White people. She said that she is constantly aware of her race when she visits stores in the nearby city, reminding herself to always keep her hands out of her pocket and to expect to be followed by White employees.

Sally admitted that she is equally cautious around White people in musical settings. Although she attended a predominantly Black high school, her band director was White, and she was the only Black flute player in her ensemble. These experiences led her to feel that she did not belong in music education. She decided to pursue a career as a music educator to prove that Black women could succeed in the "overwhelmingly White" (Sally, Interview 1, February 6, 2021) field of music education.

Angel

Angel was born in Yelverton, a predominantly White city located in the Northeast region of the United States. He and his family later moved to Azalea, a large predominantly Black city in the South. The family moved back to Yelverton when Angel was ten and remained there until he graduated from high school. He also spent many years with his father in New York. He credited his ability to code-switch and adapt to different environments to his experiences in both predominantly White and predominantly Black cities.

Angel first encountered the harsh reality of racism when he moved to the Southern United States after high school.

When I first moved down to the South, I got a job at McDonald's. I was working there one day, and there was a couple who was coming to the drive thru, and they had a confederate flag on their truck. They had to wait for their food, and I was supposed to tell them that we were waiting on their food to finish, and ask them to please park in lane number one and wait. They refused to go and then when I asked them again, the person driving actually put a gun on his lap and tried to intimidate me, and just started calling me racial slurs. (Angel, Interview 1, March 1, 2021)

Situations such as this were an example of Angel's everyday experiences in the South.

Angel began singing at an early age. His musical experiences include performing in musical theatre, singing gospel, R&B, classical, and pop music. He was motivated by the underrepresentation of Black people in the field of classical music to pursue music education. Before attending his current PWSOM, Angel studied at an HBCU. While race was a consideration for him when deliberating switching schools, he was more influenced by how Black students would perceive his decision to study at a PWSOM. He ultimately chose to study at a PWSOM that is located near an HBCU.

Taylor

Taylor was born in Xavier, a large city in the Southern United States. He cannot remember a time in his life when he was not singing. He became involved in music when he started singing at the church in which his grandmother was heavily involved. One of his fondest memories is singing hymns with his mother, who led her own choir in their hometown.

Taylor attended predominantly White schools for the entirety of his K–12 education. His interest in singing in choir grew while he was in middle school. His high school choir director often programmed a diverse selection of music, including barbershop quartets, men's choir

selections, and music in the classical tradition. He credited his high school director with exposing him to different types of music and fostering his musical curiosity. While Taylor described that he benefitted from his K–12 experiences, he was impacted by the underrepresentation of Black students in his choirs. He described how it felt to be Black in his predominantly White musical spaces:

It made me feel like, “Wow, there's not many of us. Should I really be here? Where are all the Black people?” So, it's like having that awkward out-of-body experience. I get this [hesitates] is this for me? (Taylor, Interview 1, February 18, 2021)

Taylor stated that race was a factor that he considered when looking for a school of music to attend. He had been taught the same lessons as many young Black men in America:

From even a young age, my mom always instilled in me and my brother that “You are a Black man.” So, we already knew the “two strikes against us rule.” One for being a male, and then another one for being Black. Because, African American males are targeted, and we shouldn't give them any reason to say [pauses] just always, when we are out, make sure we are on our Ps and Qs. (Taylor, Interview 1, February 18, 2021)

Taylor recognized the potential for his experiences at a PWSOM to mirror his experiences as a young Black male in his K–12 musical environments and ultimately decided to attend a PWSOM located near an HBCU.

Doreen

Doreen was born in Dalton Grove, a small village located in the Midwest United States. She and her sister were raised by their mother and grandmother in what Doreen described as a religious and sheltered household. Like Sally, Doreen’s grandmother had spent many years in the

segregated South before moving to Dalton Grove. Doreen's grandmother's experiences influenced the way in which Doreen navigates White spaces and interacts with White people.

Something that I remember is just trying to make white people comfortable. Like, if I'm at the store, I'd probably wait for them to leave the aisle, because I don't want them to think I'm rolling up on them or anything. Or usually when I go in the store, if I have a bag, I'll tie it up where they can see me or something like that. I think we just are trying to make white people comfortable. We kind of go out of our way to do that. (Doreen, Interview 1, February 20, 2021)

Doreen's need to make White people comfortable was born out of self-preservation and caused her a great amount of stress and anxiety.

Doreen began playing piano in church and was introduced to the clarinet in the fourth grade. While her high school was predominantly Black, her band director was White. Doreen was often puzzled at the lack of representation of Black musicians, conductors, and composers of the music that her director programmed. Doreen recounted:

I remember high school, I would wonder. I mean, I could have looked it up, but I used to wonder "are there any Black conductors or composers?" So, not seeing them or not having music by them, I just thought it meant they didn't exist. It made me feel like "is that the right major for me?" You know? "Is there a space for me there?" But I guess, you know, we kind of just have to make a space. (Doreen, Interview 1, February 20, 2021)

Having never had a Black band director, Doreen decided to pursue music education to make a space for more Black teachers in the field of music.

Jesse

Jesse was born in Somersville, a small city in the Southern United States. While she grew up in a very diverse atmosphere, she was often made aware of her skin color and the fact that she was different from others around her.

I remember a little girl cut my hair when I was five. That's when I stopped wearing my hair out. I didn't start wearing my hair back out until like my junior year of high school, because my hair was curly and kinky. She was like, "This is ugly," and cut it. I remember I went home to my mom, and I was crying. And I was like [pauses] this has never happened to me before. The daycares that I went to everybody looked like me, and then now I go to public school and this little girl comes up and cuts my hair because she thinks it's not as pretty as her straight blonde hair. That had a really big impact on me. It took me a while to feel comfortable in my own skin and feel comfortable with the way that I looked. I was constantly trying to make myself into what I thought was socially acceptable. (Jesse, Interview 1, March 24, 2021)

The ramifications of this incident remained with Jesse until her junior year of high school when she decided to resist the urge to conform to expectations and ideals of White students around her. She found comfort in her own appearance and chose to begin wearing her natural, curly hair.

Like many of the participants' parents, Jesse's parents were dedicated to preparing her to navigate the world as a Black female. She recounted a lesson that her parents taught her:

... especially when you would hear about things on the news, like somebody being killed or somebody being shot or something. And of course, we have to have the conversation about if something happens and a police officer comes to you, always cooperate. Or if something happens and let's say like a White person came up to me and was questioning

me, always speak with poise, always speak well, always use proper vocabulary, don't use slang around people who you want to take you seriously. Because, then they're not going to take you as seriously as others. They're going to take you as the uneducated Black girl across the street. (Jesse, Interview 1, March 24, 2021)

Such lessons have remained with Jesse and influenced her worldview.

Jesse excelled on her instrument throughout high school. She participated in all-county, all-state, and her county's youth orchestra. While she had accepted and was used to being the only Black student in these honors ensembles, Jesse longed for more Black participation.

It was kind of something that I was used to at that point. It would just be nice to have like a familiar face or like a friendly face to look at or like somebody to reassure me and make me feel more welcome. I would try to get more people from my school to audition. I would say, "Hey, you sound good, and I would love to have somebody else up there with me." But people were like, "No, I don't want to do that." Because they knew they would be the only ones. (Jesse, Interview 1, March 24, 2021)

Despite not feeling welcome in these predominantly White musical settings, Jesse decided to follow her love for teaching and pursue music education in college. She did not consider race when choosing a school of music, because she accepted that she would be a minority in any school of music that she attended.

Marian

Marian (pseudonym) was born and raised by her mother and great-grandmother in the suburbs of Romero (pseudonym). She described her upbringing as average and very family oriented. While Romero is a predominantly White city, Marian lived in the West suburbs, which was majority Hispanic and Black.

Marian often felt that she did not fit in with the students around her, never feeling fully accepted by Black or White students. Due to her light complexion, she was often mistaken for being biracial or Hispanic. She recalled a teacher using her as an example of someone who was biracial in class. Such instances of cultural insensitivity left her feeling “culturally insecure and awkward” (Marian, Interview 1, February 12, 2021). She often wished that her skin was a few shades darker, so that the people around her would know that she was indeed Black.

Marian felt the most comfortable in her middle and high school orchestra and chorus classes. She enjoyed the opportunities to travel and perform with award-winning ensembles and play music that she really loved. She is most proud of her role as concertmaster for her high school orchestra. She credited her high school orchestra director for inspiring her to pursue music education. Marian followed in his footsteps, auditioning for, and being accepted to study at the same school of music.

Dinah

Due to her father’s military career, Dinah’s family lived in many different cities before settling down in the “very White suburbs” of Lovett’s Park (pseudonym) (Dinah, Interview 1, February 19, 2021). The frequent moving from city to city made it increasingly difficult for her to make and keep friends.

Dinah described herself as an introvert who never really fit in and “always felt outcasted” (Dinah, Interview 1, February 19, 2021). She attributed her feelings of being outcasted to being one of two Black students in her community. In addition to feeling excluded by White students, she was often made fun of by Black students because of her participation in band. Band was, in their eyes, a stereotypically White activity. Dinah described how she endured such challenges to her Black authenticity from her own family:

[A]nd then my extended family, it even starts there. My cousins don't even talk to me anymore. Because they're like, "Oh, you're so proper and posh." I can't help it because that's where I was raised. I was raised in [Lovett's Park]. (Dinah, Interview 1, February 19, 2021)

She found it difficult to fit in anywhere, and like many participants, was too White for the Black kids and too Black for the White kids.

However, searching for an outlet and a means of connecting with others, Dinah joined the band in middle school. She believed that her participation in band allowed her to interact more with people. Having participated in predominantly White musical ensembles, Dinah is familiar with stereotypes of Black people in general and of Black musicians. Her decision to teach music is driven by the desire to combat negative stereotypes of Black students in the field of music education.

Summary: Participant Backgrounds

The preceding portraits have been included to provide the reader with a context for understanding each of the participant's experiences prior to experiencing the phenomenon of interest. I provided pseudonyms for the names of all individuals, places, and institutions. In the next chapter I provide descriptive portraits of each participant's experiences in their respective schools of music.

CHAPTER V: PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCES

Introduction

In this chapter, I provide portraits to illustrate each of the nine participants' experiences in their respective schools of music. I created these portraits by synthesizing the data collected from the interviews conducted with each participant and their solicited journal entries. Portraits include information pertaining to the challenges that participants have faced, the meanings they have ascribed to their experiences, their strategies for adaptation, and their advice to Black students who may be interested in attending their schools. The stories included in each portrait were directly relayed to me by the participants.

Kimberly's Experience

"No one has explicitly told me that I don't belong.

But it's like I've almost been shown in every way possible that I don't."

– Kimberly, Interview 2, February 12, 2021)

Kimberly sat paralyzed as her mouse hovered over the submit button on her recently completed change of major form. She was faced with having to choose between her passion, music, and finally obtaining some semblance of peace, comfort, and mental stability. Her passion for music and teaching led her to pursue music education as a career. She fell in love with music and performing at an early age and had dedicated her life to making the field of music education more inclusive for students from marginalized populations. She ultimately chose her school of music because of her familiarity with the renowned faculty and the school's reputation and prestige. This was a decision that she would come to regret in a matter of months.

Kimberly described her experience in her school of music as "one big question mark" (Kimberly, Interview 2, February 12, 2021). She questioned if she truly belonged, questioned if

she was inadequate, and questioned if music education was the right choice for someone like her. She attributed the most negative aspects of her experience to the underrepresentation of Black students and faculty in her school of music.

While Kimberly was aware of the small number of Black students and faculty members who would be in her school of music, she was surprised by how that underrepresentation would affect her experiences there. She described what it felt like to be only one of a small number of Black students in her school of music:

It's like you walk into a restaurant looking for your family. You don't see them. So, you turn around and leave. It's like that's not where you're supposed to be. And that [pauses] that's a really anxiety-inducing and stressful situation. It's like [pauses] it almost doesn't feel safe. No one has explicitly told me that I don't belong. But it's like I've almost been shown in every way possible that I don't. (Kimberly, Interview 2, February 12, 2021)

The stress and anxiety that Kimberly described have continued as daily components of her experience as a Black music education student in her PWSOM.

Far more disheartening for Kimberly was the underrepresentation of Black faculty members in the music education department. While there was one Black faculty member in the music education department, she had never studied with or taken a course with them. She described how the underrepresentation Black faculty affected her:

... especially looking around and not seeing anyone who looks like me and never having a teacher that looks like me, it feels like I can't do it. If nobody has made it this far. If I haven't met anybody who has come this far to be a Black teacher, why should I be a Black teacher? And you feel kind of like lost. It's just another thing that concerns me about getting through this. Because my ultimate goal is a Ph.D. And I get scared, like,

how am I going to make it there? What's stopping everyone who has tried to make it there? Is there some barrier? Like, "No, you're Black, you can't pass." What's happening that there aren't more Black people in higher education in music specifically? And what [pauses] what makes me think that I get to be one of them? (Kimberly, Interview 2, February 12, 2021)

Kimberly described how the underrepresentation of Black students and faculty led her to question if she is truly worthy of attending her school of music:

[A]nd that kind of impostor syndrome thing. Do I have a place? Do I deserve to be here? What if I do all of this and I'm wrong? It's just questioning yourself. Questioning your abilities, questioning the people around you. It's just one big question mark. It's confusion, worry, and a lot of anxiety around everything that you do. Do I have to try extra hard? Do I need to actually dress up? Is my casual wear too casual for them? Just ... you feel like you don't know who you are and what you're doing? I've never felt comfortable, really, in music. But specifically, music ed here. Not only is it just an intimidating major in general, but it's just I feel like I'm competing, but everybody started 30 minutes before I did. Like they just told me to sit down and wait while everybody started the race. And then they say, "Alright, you can go now." And it's like, everybody knows I'm behind, even though I know I'm fine. I'm doing great. But it feels like everybody's 20 steps ahead of me. By everybody, I mean, everybody who's not Black. Just because they don't have to fight harder to prove that they're worthy. I'm not as sure of myself as I thought and I'm not as confident in my musical ability as I thought. As much as I want to be who I am and love who I am, I don't have that comfort in myself. Because

I still get scared when I walk into a room of White people, which is just my everyday experience. (Kimberly, Interview 2, February 12, 2021)

The underrepresentation of Black students and faculty had a substantial impact on Kimberly's self-concept. She questioned if she, as a Black student, had a place in the school of music and the field of music education. She had lost confidence in her abilities and often felt that she was in competition with her White peers. Additionally, she questioned if she was wrong for wanting to work towards making the field of music education more inclusive for students from marginalized populations. Her experiences led her to experience high amounts of stress and anxiety when interacting with groups of White students.

Kimberly's stress and anxiety were compounded by her daily interactions with White peers and professors. She stated that she prepared for classes and ensembles in the same manner as many of her peers. She practiced daily, completed assigned readings and assignments, and read over her notes from previous class meetings. However, there was an additional checklist that she must complete before setting foot in the music building, a list specific to her as a Black student navigating in a White world. Items on this checklist included ensuring that her hair is presentable and acceptable by White standards, ensuring that her attire is professional, and ensuring that she is wearing the biggest, most inviting smile possible. For Kimberly, completing these tasks was a means of combatting what she believed were White peers' and professors' negative perceptions and stereotypes of Black people. She expressed that she walks a very delicate line as she managed the perceptions of White peers and professors. She explained:

I put on the biggest smile possible, especially when I'm wearing a mask. Because I need you to see my cheekbones, and my eyes squint a little bit. I really need you to know that I'm smiling at you, so that you know that I'm not frowning at you. I smile at everyone I

see. Because that's how I show that I'm not aggressive. I don't know. But that's one way that I communicate with people that they're safe ... and I don't want to say the wrong thing or sound too aggressive or too angry, or whatever it is, and prove all of their assumptions about me correct. I think when people see a Black woman, in general, they automatically assume that she's all these angry Black woman things, which I've tried to avoid my entire life. I'm a very, very nice person. All the assumptions are wrong, but I know they're being made anyway. Just because that's what happens. That's what happens in society. People make assumptions. As a Black woman, I can't just walk around with holes in my face and tattoos on my arms because I'm already viewed as less than. Like, "She's unprofessional because her hair has dreadlocks, or she wears an afro." I feel like I'm constantly [pauses] even if I don't know that they're judging me in the moment, I have to judge myself to make sure that they have nothing to judge me about, which isn't fun. Because I'm supposed to be in a safe place, but I'm constantly on guard. (Kimberly, Interview 2, February 12, 2021)

At the crux of Kimberly's remarks was the concept of navigating White people's perceptions as a means of surviving her environment, an environment in which she did not feel free to be herself. She described this concept as exhausting and anxiety-inducing. She expressed that as a Black student, she must work twice as hard as anyone else to make a good impression and "prove that [she] deserve[s] to be there" (Kimberly, Journal entry, February 10, 2021). She explained how heavily the perceptions of White faculty influenced her choice of accompanist for a semester-end jury performance.

Things like my accompanist. There's this Black piano player. She graduated from [omitted] last year. But what is the jury panel going to think with a Black viola player and

Black piano player? Like, should I get a White piano player, so they think maybe I paid more money, think that I committed more to what I was doing? I don't know. You just question everything. You really start to question yourself in this internal battle. I'm not really sure of anything right now. (Kimberly, Interview 3, February 17, 2021)

Kimberly also explained how the need to counteract White peers' and professors' perceptions Black students affected her willingness to seek help:

I get terrified to ask people for help. Honestly, I won't ask people for help. I figure things out for myself, or I fail. That's just kind of it. Because I already feel less than. I already feel like they think I'm less than. I'm not going to ask them for help. Because then, I'm definitely less than because I'm coming to them. (Kimberly, Interview 3, February 17, 2021)

Another contributing factor to Kimberly's feelings of not belonging was being singled out by White professors. She described one example of being singled out for her Blackness and how it affected her:

One professor, she'll say, "Yeah, let's talk about this Black composer." Then, she says, "I see Kimberly and I see Candace up first on my Zoom. What do you guys have to say?"

We're the only two Black people in the class. (Kimberly, Interview 2, February 12, 2021)

For Kimberly, being singled out to speak about Black composers because of her Blackness highlighted the notion that being Black in this setting was not the norm, further reinforcing that as a Black student she had no place in the school of music.

Kimberly has not coped well with her negative experiences. She withdrew from social interaction with students in the school of music and spent most of her time in her dorm room. She stated that she has no one in whom she can confide and share her feelings. Participating in

the interviews for this research study provided Kimberly with her first opportunity to discuss her experiences, and she likened her participation to therapy.

While Kimberly was discouraged by the underrepresentation of Black students in her school of music, she was motivated by it to stay the course, complete her degree, and serve as an example for future Black students in music. She explained that she “[has] this dream of being a music teacher...and knowing how hard I worked and how hard this has been so far, once I hold that Diploma in my hand, I know it'll be worth it” (Kimberly, Interview 1, February 3, 2021).

Bryson's Experience

“You cannot escape being Black. It's something that I always have to think about – that the first thing people see is the color of my skin.”

– Bryson (Interview 2, February 19, 2021)

By the time Bryson had graduated from high school he had become accustomed to having to prove himself in predominantly White musical settings. He attributed this to the racial atmosphere of his hometown and was excited to pursue a degree in music education at an institution that had an established record of serving diverse populations. However, he was surprised at the tremendous lack of diversity in the university's school of music.

The pervasive need to prove himself and work harder remained with Bryson throughout his college experience. He described the reasoning behind his need to work harder and prove himself:

And then the proving yourself. Just having to work extra hard to be seen and heard and make sure you're doing well. It's just, it's a lot, and sometimes can be too much. I don't feel like my White peers have to feel [pause] they don't have that. You cannot escape being Black. It's something that I always have to think about – that the first

thing people see is the color of my skin. I just don't want to be a stereotype. So, yeah, I have to prove myself. I guess [pauses] I find myself being hard on myself for not doing as well as my White colleagues. So, anytime that I have to perform in front of everyone or something like that, I hold myself to a higher standard than anyone else. (Bryson, Interview 2, February 19, 2021)

Bryson felt pressured to navigate the perceptions and stereotypes of White peers and professors. In addition to the expected challenges of performing, Bryson carried the added pressure of performing as someone who will be judged through the filter of the social construct of race.

Bryson was unable to completely be himself in his school of music and admitted to both consciously and subconsciously taking steps to make himself more acceptable to his White peers and professors. These steps include code-switching, hiding his emotions, and withdrawing from class conversations. He explained:

I tend to code-switch a lot – subconsciously. I don't even realize when I'm doing it. I try to either speak out, or I don't at all. But I find myself staying quiet. Because, if I'm not right, or if I seem naive or something, I feel like, it's a reflection on me being Black. So, in some cases, I just stay quiet because I don't want to be wrong. Because I feel like it would look bad on me. (Bryson, Interview 2, February 19, 2021)

He likened his efforts to that of “wearing a mask” (Bryson, Interview 2, February 19, 2021) that he must put on each time that he enters the music building or interacts with White peers and professors.

Bryson found himself in the midst of an internal conflict between being his authentic self and being a version of himself that would be palatable to White peers and professors. While he

felt the need to wear a figurative mask, he also admonished himself for doing so. He solemnly reflected:

I don't know [pauses] the only word that's coming to mind is [pauses] dirty. I don't know why. It just, it's kind of [pauses] shameful. The audacity of me to change myself for someone else is frustrating, and gross that its kind of subconsciously happens. And you know, that's nobody's fault but racism and the experiences of Black people in the United States, period. (Bryson, Interview 2, February 19, 2021)

Socio-cultural factors of the Black experience have continued to influence his experience as a Black student in his PWSOM.

For Bryson, having to constantly prove his worth reinforced the idea that he does not belong. He often reflected on his audition for the school of music and asked himself, “Why am I here?” He regarded his audition as mediocre and wondered if he was selected to “fill a quota” (Bryson, Interview 2, February 19, 2021).

Bryson expressed that while there are White professors who are making noble efforts related to social justice in music education, many remain aloof from the experiences of their Black students. This led him to lose trust in his White professors. He found it easier to discuss issues of race with the few Black faculty members and graduate assistants with whom he has interacted. He admitted that he would not have agreed to participate in this study and discuss his experiences with me if I were not Black.

His lack of trust in White professors was exacerbated by their relegating Black music and other relevant topics to Black History Month. He explained:

We were playing “We Shall Overcome” and they had like the brief rundown of the history of that song. It felt awkward. And doing it during Black History Month just

confuses everything, because I don't know if you're doing it just because of Black history month, or if you're doing it genuinely to promote equity and bring awareness to the issues, because she could have easily waited till March. (Bryson, Interview 2, February 19, 2021)

He viewed his professor including “We Shall Overcome” during Black History as an attempt to pacify the interests of Black students during the one month set aside for topics and issues pertinent to Black people. For Bryson, if professors were truly interested in, educated about, and valued the contributions of Black music, Black composers, and Black musicians, they would include such elements in the curriculum throughout the semester.

Bryson had the following advice for White peers and professors in his school of music: Listen to them. Listen to your students of color. I think that's what it comes down to. You will never completely understand because you're not a person of color. You can never fully understand the experiences of a person of color because you sit in a place of privilege, you live in an environment that has never seen you as less of a person, that's never oppressed you, or treated you any differently for any reason. But if you listen to them, and educate yourself on their experiences, that makes all the difference. And that's what we need. We just need white people who claim to be our allies to listen. (Bryson, Interview 3, February 24, 2021)

Bryson viewed his experience in his school of music as “revolutionary” because it served as a representation that Black students can survive in PWSOM (Bryson, Interview 3, February 24, 2021).

Sally's Experience

"I feel like there's no place for Black people in music education."

– Sally (Interview 3, February 15, 2021)

Sally characterized her experiences in her school of music as being plagued by feelings of self-doubt, racial insensitivity, and overt racism. Each of these contributed to her sobering realization that she did not belong there, and ultimately led to her leaving the school years ago.

Many aspects of Sally's experiences in her school of music have contributed to her feelings of not belonging, including the invalidation of Black art forms, racial insensitivity, feeling invisible, and being reduced to her race. While Sally was particularly discouraged by the invalidation of Black musicians and composers through their omission in the curriculum, she was far more disheartened by professors' and peers' explicit rejection of the legitimacy of Black musicians and composers.

Let's say we're having a conversation about gospel music or jazz, or spirituals, or rap music, they say that music that they perform, or Western music, is more sophisticated. Like, there's nothing to art forms that are created by Black people. There's just no representation whatsoever. Like, it could even be a piece that sounds Western from a Black composer, that's fine. Just to show that somebody who looked like me or had the same background as me did something, and it's worthy enough to be put on a program would have been nice. So, I guess there's [pauses] there's just no place for [pauses] and it may be extreme to say, but I feel like there's no place for Black people in music education. Or it's made to seem that way. (Sally, Interview 2, February 13, 2021)

Sally said that on the rare occurrence that Black music was performed, White students viewed it purely as performative and devoid of serious study. She recalled a particular instance in which a

White student said, “Oh, it's time to put my Black on” (Sally, Interview 2, February 13, 2021) in response to the choral director’s introduction of a Black spiritual.

In addition to the invalidation of Black musical contributions, Sally has endured an overwhelming amount of racial insensitivity on behalf of peers and professors. She recounted:

We were in flute ensemble, and there’s this thing called flute face, where the tarnish comes off on your skin. And of course, I was the only dark-skinned person there. And this White girl says, “Hey, some people are born like that.” And she looks at me and says “Sorry, Sally.” And everybody thought it was funny. I was stuck. I didn't know what to say. Because at that point [pauses] I think, because I was 18. I didn't know how to speak up for myself at that point. I didn't know what to say. But I kind of just [pauses] I kind of just hung my head. (Sally, Interview 2, February 13, 2021)

The freedom and comfort with which this student made the comment, and the acceptance of it by her peers left Sally feeling humiliated, rejected, and debased. Furthermore, the instructor of the class remained silent. Days later, Sally received an email from the instructor not apologizing for the student’s comments but rather explaining that the student did not mean any harm. At no point did the instructor admonish the student or her racially insensitive comments. This further solidified Sally’s feelings of defeat, humiliation, and distrust of White faculty. For Sally, this event, as well as the response from her instructor, reinforced that she did not belong, and made her feel more removed from the community.

Sally was asked such questions as, “How do you go here?” and “How’d you get here?” For Sally, such questions illustrated that White students did not believe that Black students were skilled enough to gain admittance to the school. She recalled an interaction with the president of the school that she found particularly offensive:

Even Dr. [omitted]. One time he saw me on my laptop. I had a MacBook, and he was like, “How'd you get that?” I responded, “What do you mean?” He didn't say anything. He just did his little, stupid laugh and walked away. (Sally, Interview 3, February 15, 2021)

She interpreted the president's comments as a joke about her financial need.

That incident was neither the first nor last time that Sally would experience being on the receiving end of racial insensitivity jokes. She recalled volunteering at an open house event, then being called into a meeting with the president of the school of music after he had received a complaint from a parent:

I said, “Well, how did you know they were talking about me?” Then he responded, “They said, somebody wasn't smiling.” It was me and a White student at the table. And he said, “They said it was the Black girl.” And that, that [pauses] I don't know why, but like that really hurt my feelings. And I think it's because at that moment I realized that people see me and they don't see me for what I do, or who I am, or the things that I have to offer, but they see me as the Black girl. (Sally, Interview 2, February 13, 2021)

This represented one of the many times that Sally had been admonished for not “smiling more” (Sally, Interview 2, February 13, 2021). However, Sally found it difficult to smile in a place plagued by such racial insensitivity and covert and overt racism. For her, this event reinforced the concept of having to make herself more acceptable to “make White people comfortable” (Sally, Interview 2, February 13, 2021). The anxiety that Sally experienced because of the need to present herself as acceptable manifested in her daily life. For example, she stated that she stressed over such decisions as whether to wear a Black Lives Matter shirt on campus.

In addition to racially insensitive jokes, Sally witnessed examples of overt racism in her school of music. She recounted:

One student, I guess he sat in this White girl's chair and, I guess she wanted him to move. So, she just walked up to him and said, "What's up nigga?" As if to say, "Get out my chair." (Sally, Interview 3, February 15, 2021)

This exchange reminded Sally of her grandmother's stories of life in the 1930s segregated South, a far cry from the type of conversation she expected to hear in a classroom of such a prestigious institution of music teaching and learning. Sally took her concerns to the dean of undergraduate studies. However, as she described, she was met with insincerity:

Then I had conversations with my dean about concerns that I had. And basically, what came from it was that I was overreacting. She responded that, "Oh. Well, when people make a fat joke, I assume that they're talking about me." So, she equated me hearing comments made about African Americans with her being insecure about their weight. So, that made me know that I couldn't talk to her. (Sally, Interview 2, February 13, 2021)

Accepting that the professors and leadership of her school of music were complicit in fostering a climate of racism, Sally decided to leave. Years later, she was contacted by the very dean who had dismissed her concerns. The dean offered her scholarship funds to return and complete her degree. She recounted:

But something that kind of rubs me the wrong way is the fact that since I have been back, nobody has ever brought up or apologized for our first time there. It was terrible.

Especially Dean [omitted], she was there and we had meetings with her. She was sitting there writing notes, probably like three or four different times. So, for that to have been our last experience there, and then they hit us up and say, "Hey, we want you to come

back.” And we went out somewhere, and we're sitting around talking and it's like, it just never happened. (Sally, Interview 2, February 13, 2021)

She wondered if she was invited back to fulfill an institutional diversity quota.

Sally found some degree of comfort amongst the four other Black students in the school. They have often discussed their experiences and interactions with White peers and professors in a group chat. Members of that group chat included Black students, both past and present, and a former professor who sent messages of encouragement as they face challenges that are exclusive to their experience as Black students there. The members of this small community have coalesced around the shared experiences of being Black in their school of music.

Sally had the following advice for White faculty members and school leaders:

My biggest thing would be to try to get them to understand that they can control whether or not students have the same experiences that I have. And just by simply representing and advocating for their students that have different experiences than them, they can create a more positive experience for students and their classes. If they have Black faculty, they'll have more Black students. I feel like everybody needs to be, or needs to feel represented. I think that having that representation, people will be able to see themselves in those spaces. I mean, that's just that's just how representation works. If I see somebody who looks like me do something, then I'm going to know that I can do that as well. And because of where they may be from and people that they know, they may be able to encourage Black students to come as well. (Sally, Interview 3, February 15, 2021)

Sally's comments highlighted the importance of diversity and representation in fostering a more positive and inviting atmosphere for Black students in her PWSOM.

Due to Sally's experiences during the first year in her school of music, she stated that she would not recommend the school to any other students of color. In fact, she actively dissuaded students who asked her about the school from attending. She explained:

I would tell them that if this was a school that they were going to choose then it might be difficult, and that they may find somewhere that's a better fit for them. But if they would like to go to a school with a really good program, and they're able to put up with the mental acrobatics, then go for it. But it's not worth it. (Sally, Interview 3, February 15, 2021)

Despite Sally's belief that "it's not worth it" (Sally, Interview 3, February 15, 2021), she decided to return to the school for the financial benefit offered to her by the school's leadership and her dedication to improved representation of Black students in the music teaching profession. She explained:

I hate to keep saying money, but just the fact that I guess I have a special situation. That is the reason why I'm there. I really [pauses] I had no intention of coming back to [institution]. I'm specifically there because I just [pauses] I want more representation in this particular field. I've never had a Black band director and I think that it would be beneficial for students from areas that I came from to have a Black band teacher, especially a Black woman as a band teacher. So, for me, I'm doing it for other people not necessarily doing it for myself. I feel like I'm fighting. I don't want to be a part of their community. I just want my degree. And that's probably because of my past experiences. I just feel like it's not something that I want to be a part of. But I feel like I do have to [pauses] I have to go along to get along. So, I'm just doing what I have to do so that I could get out of there. (Sally, Interview 2, February 13, 2021)

While many other students have attended her school of music to improve their skills and prepare for their careers, Sally resigned herself to enduring years of racial insecurity and mental acrobatics in order to obtain her degree and serve as a representation for future music students of color.

Angel's Experience

“Part of myself kind of died down because I was more so like, do I look good for them?

Am I speaking right for them? Am I singing right for them?”

– Angel (Interview 2, March 8, 2021)

Prior to attending his predominantly White school of music, Angel studied music at a historically Black institution. Before transferring, he had accepted the fact that he would not find many other students who looked like him. He explained:

I knew I wasn't going to find many Black people here in the music building. The school has a bunch of Black people, but not the Music Building. I already had the mindset not to go there looking for this diverse environment or looking for a bunch of people that's going to look like me, or act like me, or think like me. (Angel, Interview 2, March 8)

He found that the underrepresentation of Black students in his school of music affected his experience. He learned that he must work harder than his White peers. He explained:

We have to work three times harder to get the same results as White people do. And especially in music. It's such a White-dominated industry that even if I did want to become an opera singer, for example, I would literally have to work so much harder. Even if I was more talented than my white counterpart, I would literally have to prove myself to be a better singer. (Angel, Interview 2, March 8, 2021)

A large part of Angel's daily experiences involved navigating the perceptions of White peers and professors. He explained:

All eyes are on you. They're really expecting you not to finish. There are so many Black music education majors that I know who have switched their majors. They're really expecting us to not stick it out. And when you're one of the very few, they're really going to be paying attention to you. Because you can either rise to the occasion or you can become a statistic. I do think that there are certain Black people that are accepted more than others because of how they choose to express their culture and who they are as Black people. (Angel, Interview 2, March 8, 2021)

Angel found himself fighting against what he believed were the perceptions and stereotypes held by White people in his school of music to present himself as an acceptable Black person. He became fueled by the need to disprove White stereotypes of Blacks in music.

Angel explained that during his first year, he found himself changing certain aspects of himself to make himself more appealing to students and professors:

I do think that there were elements of myself that I either dialed down or that I brought forth more to seem more appealing to people. Just because I didn't really know what they liked. Part of myself kind of died down because I was more so like, "Do I look good for them?", "Am I speaking right for them?", "Am I singing right for them?" (Angel, Interview 2, March 8, 2021)

Angel found himself basing his self-concept and self-image primarily on the perceptions of the dominant population in his school of music. As a result, he fought hard for the approval of his professors and peers during his first year.

Angel accepted that he could not please everyone and found comfort in being himself. He said, “I’m just my own person now. But I think that first year was necessary just to get the lay of the land and understand what was going on.” He became an outspoken voice amongst Black students in his school of music and has had many conversations about the experiences of Black students in his institution with faculty and students.

Angel offered the following advice to Black students interested in attending his school of music:

Definitely be wary. If you are looking for a place that’s really diverse, or if you’re looking for a place where you’re going to see all types of people all the time, this is really not the place for you. This is not a place where diversity and inclusion are the main focus.

They’ll say that and they’ll try to work towards it. But as of now, that’s not really the case.

You’re going to get an education here. That’s not really the issue. But if you want to see an employee that’s going to represent you well and include things in their curriculum that you’re really interested in as a Black person that come from your background, you’re not going to see a lot of that. But if that doesn’t discourage you, then I would say come and audition. It is a great school but know that you’re probably going to work harder than most people just because you’re Black. Simply be yourself. Don’t try to be somebody else to fit in. (Angel, Interview 3, March 17, 2021)

Angel accepted that he would not be represented in the population or curriculum of his school of music and resigned himself to “just [doing] what [he has] to do to pass [his] classes, graduate, and move on” (Angel, Interview 2, March 8, 2021).

Taylor's Experience

"We are trying to fit into a space that doesn't want us and that affects our morale. I can see this is not for me, because I don't see me in any of these classes or the curriculum."

– Taylor (Interview 2, March 16, 2021)

Taylor considered many factors when choosing a school of music, including size and reputation. He ultimately chose his school because it was small and had a reputation as one of the premiere programs for music education in its state. However, there was another factor that influenced his decision: race. Having experienced the isolation associated with being a Black student in predominantly White musical settings during his high school years, Taylor knew that the underrepresentation of Black students and faculty would have a substantial impact on his experience. He accepted that there would be few Black students regardless of the school he attended, and ultimately chose to attend a PWSOM that was in close proximity to a historically Black institution. He spent much of his time on the campus of that HBCU since becoming a student in his school of music.

While Taylor stated that the most challenging aspects of his experience in the school of music were microaggressions, overt racism, and White students' and professors' aloofness from the experiences of Black students, he recalled one particular occurrence of overtly racist behavior that reinforced the idea that he was not welcome. He recounted:

There have been incidents where we've found racial slurs posted in the bathroom. Some of the racial slurs that I saw in the school of music have been like, "I'm tired of these Black people in the school." There was another one up saying, "They should just make a whole new program for Black people," or "darkies." They were all along the lines of

getting rid of the Black students in the school of music. Telling the Black students to go home, basically. (Taylor, Interview 2, March 22, 2021)

Taylor recalled that the racial slurs were brought to the attention of the faculty and school leadership who addressed the situation through a school-wide email. While Taylor appreciated that the leadership of the school addressed the incident, he would have preferred a deeper, more honest conversation regarding race and racism in the school. He explained:

So, it was like, you did something, but you didn't really do anything. That was one of those kinds of things where you kind of bounced the ball and attempted a shot. I need you to play the full game. (Taylor, Interview 2, March 22, 2021)

Despite feeling as though more should have been done, Taylor, along with the few other Black students in his school, felt the need to tread lightly regarding expressing their dissatisfaction with the response. He explained:

As students of color, we have to almost bite the bullet just a little bit. And then we have to be [pauses] professional about how we confront these people who are White, are handling our grades, and have our degrees in their hands. And we have to [pauses] walk, or tread lightly [pauses] in the way we approach things. (Taylor, Interview 2, March 22, 2021)

Taylor was forced to walk a fine line between expressing dissatisfaction with the response to overt racism and facing the potential consequences of offending the sensibilities of the White faculty members in whose hands his academic fate rested. For Taylor, this was emblematic of the power dynamic with which Black students in Taylor's school of music contend.

Most Taylor's pre-college musical experiences were rooted in gospel, R&B, and contemporary music. However, he has not had the opportunity to study and perform music from

those genres while in college. He was discouraged by the homogeny of the music curriculum and felt that the omission of music outside of the Western canon devalued the musical contributions of other cultures. He often felt the need to “wear a mask” (Taylor, Interview 1, February 18, 2021) to fit in with White students he believed were more well-versed in the music of the European tradition. He believed that White students have been afforded a tremendous privilege because they have been exposed to the only music that possesses any value in the musical academy. He explained:

I shouldn't have to wear a mask every time I step foot into the music building. I shouldn't feel like I have to be the quiet one in the room because I'm not into operas. But, you know, we have these White students that are like, “I love the Opera House.” I've never been to the opera a day in my life. But I shouldn't have to make myself feel lesser than you, like the quiet little church mouse when I know my musicianship and musical knowledge is either the same as yours or [pauses] if you had to fill a jar up with my musical knowledge, it's either the same as White students, or it might be just a little bit more because they're only listening to classical and opera, while I listen to classical, opera, R&B, jazz, blues, even a little bit of folk, and bluegrass here and there. (Taylor, Interview 2, March 22, 2021)

Taylor learned that his musical knowledge, which spans many genres, was not as valuable as that of his White peers. This tension of possessing a musical knowledge and having an appreciation for music that was not regarded as valuable contributed to Taylor's feeling that there was no space for him in the school of music.

Taylor's description of wearing a metaphorical mask to survive in his school of music extended beyond navigating the curriculum and repertoire. He learned early in his college

experience that he would need to present himself in such a way as to make his White peers and professors comfortable with him. The need to make White people comfortable manifested in the way in which he dressed, spoke, and acted daily. He eventually had what he described as a “come-to-Jesus moment” with a Black faculty member of the university and several Black friends, after which he resolved to be himself and no longer operate within the confines of White fragility and comfort (Taylor, Interview 2, March 22, 2021). He described this “come-to-Jesus moment” as an eye-opening experience, from which he found some semblance of comfort in being himself. He has since committed to include a variety of musical styles in his own teaching, to demonstrate to students from historically marginalized populations that music from their cultures indeed has value.

Taylor equated his experience in his school of music to crossing the “burning sands” (Taylor, Interview 3, March 26, 2021), – a term commonly used amongst members of fraternal organizations to denote completing a grueling initiation process. To cope with his environment, Taylor found alternative outlets for Black self-expression. While he did join a music fraternity in college, he frequented the chapter of that fraternity that was located on the campus of the nearby HBCU. He also joined several campus organizations which were centered around Black culture, including the gospel choir, which is had no association with the school of music.

Taylor’s experiences have influenced his thoughts regarding teaching music. Having experienced the feelings of not belonging that are associated with being underrepresented in the school of music, he dedicated himself to ensuring that none of his students experience the same. He adopted a disposition of cultural responsiveness that he believes will remain with him throughout his teaching career.

Doreen's Experience

*"I guess the mentality I have now is, I'm just here to
get my piece of paper and I'm out of here."*

– Doreen (Interview 2, April 16, 2021)

Doreen felt the anxiety building up as she peered through the peephole of her dormitory door. Doing so had become a necessary part of her daily experience since arriving at her school of music as she had become anxious at the very thought of interacting with her White peers. When she stepped foot on campus, she was only one of five Black students in her entire school of music. She had not considered race when she chose her school of music, but quickly realized that she had made a mistake. She remarked that "when I first got there, I definitely felt like I didn't belong there. It felt like there was no space for me. I feel like there's like no space for us" (Doreen, Interview 2, February 27, 2021).

Doreen's experiences have been plagued by racial insensitivity on the part of White students and professors and experiences of being reduced to her race. Her experiences have left her feeling that there was no place for her in her school of music and in the field of music. She ultimately chose to leave the school at the conclusion of her first year.

Doreen cited the prevalence of and comfort with which White students and professors made racist jokes as some of the many reasons that she chose to leave her school. She recalled:

Even the professors would make comments, but it would be about any minority. They'd say stuff like, "This time play it like Asians!" Somebody said something about Native American people and someone else said, "Didn't we kill all of them?" And it was just all White people in the room, and it just it was just laughed off. I was just like [pauses] Oh, this is gross. (Doreen, Interview 2, February 27, 2021).

Doreen explained that no one expressed disapproval of the comments, which for her, reinforced the idea that this climate of racial insensitivity was normal and accepted in her school of music.

In addition to a culture of racial insensitivity, Doreen experienced being reduced to her race on many occasions. Doreen quickly learned that to White people in her school of music, her most defining feature was her Blackness. She recalled one such occasion:

There was another girl, and she was White. Her name was Doreen, as well. And we played the same instrument. And someone asked, “So how are we going to tell them apart?” And she said, “Well, we could just call her Black Doreen.” So, every time she passed me the in hallway, she would said, “What’s up Black Doreen?” or “Hey, Black Doreen.” But then I just kind of [pauses] I would just like keep walking or I would just smile at her or whatever. (Doreen, Interview 2, February 27, 2021)

The experience of being referred to as “Black Doreen” for an entire school year was so traumatic for her that when she saw “White Doreen” at a professional conference years later, Doreen deliberately avoided her, in hopes of not reliving it.

Doreen’s experiences have had a substantial impact on her mental health. She withdrew from interacting with peers and faculty, and resigned herself to her dorm room, often missing class. Doreen made the leadership of the school of music aware of the effect that the prevalence of racist jokes and racial and cultural insensitivity were having on her. However, her concerns were left unanswered. She explained:

Oh, yeah, we talked to her. We talked to the dean, we talked to the President, and they were writing all these notes down, but it didn't get very far at all. I remember hearing a

little vague speech and just being like, “What is he talking about?” I thought, well, that's just as good as it's going to get. (Doreen, Interview 2, February 27, 2021)

The dean of her school made excuses for the offending students and attempted to convince Doreen that she was being paranoid. The dean's blatant disregard for Black students' comfort and emotional well-being ultimately strengthened Doreen's distrust of White people and contributed to her decision to leave the school.

Years later, the dean who had dismissed Doreen's concerns contacted her, offered her scholarship support, and asked her to reenroll in the school. Doreen explained that the dean has not acknowledged the reasons that Doreen left the school. She felt that she was asked to reenroll in order for the school to meet a diversity quota or receive a tax break.

Since returning, Doreen withdrew from the school of music community. She viewed her experience in the school of music as a necessary evil, or means to one simple end, obtaining a degree. She remarked:

For me, at this point, I'm just trying to finish my degree. I guess the mentality I have now is like, I'm just here to get my piece of paper and I'm out of here. I'm just there to get my work in and get out. (Doreen, Interview 2, February 27, 2021)

Like many of her Black colleagues, Doreen made a conscious decision to endure her negative experiences to obtain a degree from a reputable school of music.

Jesse's Experience

"I dress plain to make them feel comfortable. I talk White to make feel comfortable. I straighten my hair to make them feel comfortable."

– Jesse (Interview 2, March 29, 2021)

Jesse chose her university because of its reputation and commitment to diversity and inclusion. However, the school of music was substantially less diverse, which negatively affected her experiences. Despite having learned to resist the urge to conform to White standards and expectations during high school, she found herself having to make White people comfortable in her school of music. She had to contend with White standards of professionalism throughout her four years there. She explained:

I feel like professionalism has always been seen as one image and they [White students] fit that image. Professionalism has always been seen as some White person with a briefcase and nice, calm hair. And you know, straight hair combed back into like a either a ponytail or something. First of all, straight hair, so I'm already losing. They have the face, they have the skin color, they have the hair, they have the White speech. Even me speaking properly is considered me speaking White. So, the fact that I am speaking proper English is seen as me speaking White. So, they [White students] have the proper English, they have the proper look, they have the proper hair, and then [they] go to school and see all these people in leadership positions who look like them and who also fit that proper picture. (Jesse, Interview 2, March 29, 2021)

Despite the difficulty of fitting into this archetype of professionalism, Jesse, with her curly hair and brown skin, continued to try. She explained:

So, I dress plain to make them feel comfortable. I talk “White” to make feel comfortable.

I straighten my hair to make them feel comfortable. I've gotten so much, “Oh, my gosh,

Jesse, you should wear your hair straight more. You look so pretty.” My hair is pretty.

They don't even realize the power of those words. (Jesse, Interview 2, March 29, 2021)

For Jesse, such comments indicated that she must alter her natural appearance to fit an image of professionalism that was valued by her White peers and professors thus reinforcing the belief that she did not belong.

Jesse likened the concept of making White people comfortable to wearing a mask each time that she walked into the music building. She continued:

I feel like [pauses] like the mask is smiles. I smile a lot. But it's like you're putting on like a different persona. You're putting on a different face. It's like how people put on makeup. I'm putting on makeup to fit into whatever I need to fit into. And then when I come home, I take the makeup off. And then I can finally relax. (Jesse, Interview 2, March 29, 2021)

She described the act of wearing a mask to make White people comfortable as a way to survive her predominantly White environment. She also expressed her frustration with the amount of energy that she expended to deal with this added pressure. She said, “I just sometimes [pauses] really just want to give up. It’s frustrating because there's nobody else out there who looks like you and wants the same goal as you, pushing you. It's up to you” (Jesse, Interview 2, March 29, 2021).

In addition to the pressure that she felt to fit in with her White peers, Jesse experienced racially insensitive jokes. She recounted:

Whenever we would talk about different cultures, like one time in class, there was a map of Africa, and somebody was asking where a country was on the map? And a student called out, “Jesse, where is it?” And I thought to myself, “I don't know. Why? Because I'm Black I'm supposed to know where every country in Africa is? And it was just like [pauses] little jokes like that reminded me that I was the Black student in class. Like, I wasn't like any of the other students. (Jesse, Interview 2, March 29, 2021)

Jesse stated that incidents like this were common and left her feeling singled out and as though she were first and foremost Black, and a student second. She continued:

I tried to take it as a joke. I tried to be like, “Haha, he was just being funny.” Because we're not allowed to get mad. There's the angry Black woman narrative. If I had the audacity to respond to disrespect, I'd suddenly be just an angry Black woman. But that was rude. That was just rude. I didn't deserve that joke. But whatever. Everybody laughed and I'm just like, “Haha, it's funny. Let's just move on with class.” Because I don't want to cause a scene. Because, if I would have reacted, someone would have said, “Okay, let's calm down. You're making a scene,” instead of having my back. Instead of saying,

“Yeah, that was actually very wrong.” (Jesse, Interview 2, March 29, 2021)

Jesse had to weigh the consequences of defending herself against racist jokes and perpetuating negative stereotypes of Black women. In addition to the added pressure of navigating stereotypes, Jesse felt defenseless, isolated, and “like an outlier” in her school of music (Jesse, Interview 2, March 29, 2021). As a result, she has been forced to find comfort and understanding beyond the walls of the music building.

Jesse expressed that she is cautious around White peers and does not trust many of her White professors.

I trust some of them [White professors] because they don't try too hard. I hate when professors try too hard to get my trust. Because that just makes me feel like you're wishy washy. What are you trying to gain from this? What are you trying to gain from earning my trust? Are you trying to gain points? But people who just treat me like a human being, those are the professors that I trust because they're just treating me like any other student. And I feel like that's genuinely what Black students want – to be treated like any other student, to not be treated differently. (Jesse, Interview 2, March 29, 2021)

Jesse felt that many professors' attempts to gain her trust were disingenuous, and solely a result of the most recent push for social justice in American society. Such attempts included singling out Black students to speak about Black composers and Black music and overtly highlighting their attempts to advance equity and inclusion in the field. For Jesse, these disingenuous attempts further reinforced that in her school of music she was Black first and a student second.

Marian's Experience

"I think because I'm trying to protect myself and guard myself ... I do act a certain way so that no one can make me feel bad or not make me feel like myself."

– Marian (Interview 2, March 19, 2021)

Marian chose her school of music because she wanted to attend the same school as her high school director who had played such an integral role in her musical development. She was excited to attend a school with an established reputation for producing highly sought-after music education professionals. She said that while she had been pleased with her academic experiences,

she struggled with the lack of diversity in the school of music and wished that she would have chosen a more inclusive environment. She explained:

I started thinking maybe I should have looked up more schools. And I always think about going to an HBCU because I didn't really look those up when I was in high school, which I do regret because I could have gone to a school that was more diverse than where I am now. (Marian, Interview 2, March 19, 2021)

While issues of race, diversity, and inclusiveness were not on the forefront of Marian's mind when she considered the school of music, she questioned if she made the right choice or not.

As one of six Black undergraduate students in the school, Marian often struggled to fit in with her White peers. While she believed that White students do not actively refrain from interacting with Black students, she felt that they were more likely to socialize with a group of students with whom they were comfortable, a group which very rarely included Black students. She explained:

I know a lot of them come from areas where there's not a lot of Black students. So, I think that they don't take the step to get to know us more, or even get to know us outside of what we look like. And I've tried to talk to some people and tried to be friendly with them. (Marian, Interview 2, March 19, 2021)

Despite her continued attempts at making friends, she stated that she is often excluded from social events and study sessions. As result, she continued to feel like an outsider in her school community.

Marian believed that White professors are more comfortable interacting with White students and held implicit biases and preconceived notions of Black students, including the belief that Black women are “angry” or “aggressive” (Marian, Interview 2, March 19, 2021). She felt

that such preconceived notions led to misunderstandings between Black students and professors.

Marian explained:

Depending on which professor you're talking to you, I think they have easier relationships with the non-Black students. One student was talking to a professor and the professor took it as a student being aggressive when the student wasn't. The student was just trying to get their point across. So, then the professor got disrespectful with that student. (Marian, Interview 2, March 19, 2021)

As a result, she took precautions to combat preconceived notions of Black students to maintain positive relationships. She explained:

I'm trying to, I guess, protect myself and guard myself so I'm not thought of as a certain way. So, I do act a certain way so that no one can make me feel bad or not make me feel like myself. (Marian, Interview 2, March 19, 2021)

Marian also expressed that she tended to withdraw from interacting with White peers and professors outside of class, as a way of protecting herself from their perceptions of Black students.

Marian offered the following advice for Black students who may be interested in attending her school:

I will tell them that the education here is like nowhere else, which is good. But the inclusivity is not great. And I would be upfront with them about it. But I would also say that there are other students there that will have the same experiences. And don't be afraid to talk with them or get to know them. Because then you'll build the bond and you'll be strong. (Marian, Interview 3, March 28, 2021)

Marian often relied on the bond established with the five other Black students in her school to cope with her environment. She explained that while she did not feel comfortable talking with White faculty, she often confided in and shared her concerns and experiences with other Black students.

When asked to reflect on what it would mean to graduate from her school, Marian responded:

Perseverance. I've made it through this. It'll kind of just get me ready for the real world.

Because I know it's not just in college that this type of thing is going to happen. It would just be knowing that I persevered through this. (Marian, Interview 3, March 28, 2021)

Marian interpreted her experience as a Black student in a PWSOM as preparation for the “real world” (Marian, Interview, 3, March 28, 2021), a world in which she expected to deal with racial discomfort and racial insensitivity.

Dinah's Experience

“It's telling me, ‘You don't really have a voice because you're the minority.’ Sometimes it just, it makes me think to myself, should I even try?”

– Dinah (Interview 2, February 22, 2021)

At the time of this writing Dinah was one of ten Black students in her entire school of music. She was discouraged by the underrepresentation of Black students. However, she explained that she viewed it as an improvement over her high school years during which time she was the only Black student.

Dinah was most discouraged by what she believed were the preconceived notions that White peers and professors hold about Black students. She explained that “it's the little things like the shock on someone's face when they learn that [she] could afford private lessons” (Dinah,

Interview 2, February 22, 2021). She said that a lot of her energy is spent on being “cautious” around White peers and professors, often “holding [her] tongue and trying not to be controversial” (Dinah, Interview 2, February 22, 2021).

Dinah’s peers have made their preconceived notions known through racially insensitive jokes and comments. She recounted:

We were playing a piece and at the beginning of the song there’s a basic count singing. It’s kind of like scatting. One of my peers made the comment, “Maybe Dinah should do it. And I looked at her and asked, “Why?” She said, “It’s kind of similar to beatboxing, isn’t it? You should know how to beatbox.” I asked her, “Why?” And she says, “You know, because you hear a lot of beatboxing in rap music.” And I think to myself, “Do you think I listen to rap music [pauses] because I’m Black? And like, I didn’t want to say it because I didn’t want to make it awkward for her. (Dinah, Interview 2, February 22, 2021)

While Dinah was offended by the implication that all Black people listen to rap music, she also acknowledged her hesitancy to respond. She explained why it was important that she not make the White student feel awkward:

Because, if you’re not cautious and if you do you find yourself getting too angry, next thing you know, you don’t know what’s going to happen. Because it’s [pauses] we tend to be punished harder because of our skin color. (Dinah, Interview 2, February 22, 2021)

Dinah found that she must “hold her tongue” (Dinah, Interview 2, February 22, 2021) when confronted with racially insensitive comments and jokes. She acknowledged that in this way she sacrificed her comfort for that of White peers. Dinah offered the following to White students and professors in her school of music:

First of all, have you ever experienced the cameraperson chasing you down at the school, because they need that one picture of the Black person to show that [institution] is diverse. As a White professor slash student, you don't have to deal with anything like that. White people don't have to go through that because they are the majority, we are the minority. And so, if you are a White student, the thing I would say is be open. (Dinah, Interview 2, February 22, 2021)

Dinah encouraged White peers and professors to be aware of the effects of their words, to be sensitive to the needs of Black students, and to be accepting of people who do not look like them.

Summary: Participant Experiences

Participants recounted a range of experiences that were useful in developing an understanding of the phenomenon of being a Black undergraduate music education student in a predominantly White school of music. In the next chapter, I detail the dominant emergent themes and provide analyses of their experiences in relation to the interpretative frameworks introduced in chapter one.

CHAPTER VI: FINDINGS

Introduction

In chapter six, I introduce and describe the emergent themes and provide examples of how each theme related to the participants' experiences. Next, I provide a general narrative of participants' experiences, followed by a general description of the phenomenon of being a Black undergraduate music education major in a PWSOM. Finally, I provide an analysis of the findings in relation to hermeneutic phenomenological philosophy, critical race theory, and double consciousness.

Emergent Themes

I analyzed and coded the data in coordination with the procedures for data analysis outlined in chapter three. This process yielded nine emergent themes, including: (a) Navigating the negative perceptions of White people, (b) Making White people comfortable, (c) Working harder to prove myself, (d) "Do I belong here?", (e) A climate of racial and cultural insensitivity, (f) Distrust of White faculty, (g) I'm just a quota-filler, (h) You can't escape being Black in a PWSOM, and (i) Sacrifice. See Table 1 for the occurrence of emergent themes in corresponding participants' experiences.

Table 1. Emergent Themes

	Participant Name								
Dominant Emergent Theme	Kimberly	Bryson	Sally	Angel	Taylor	Doreen	Jesse	Dinah	Marian
Navigating the negative perceptions of White people	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Making White people comfortable	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Working Harder to Prove Myself	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Do I belong here?	X	X	X		X	X	X		X
Climate of racial and cultural insensitivity			X		X	X	X	X	
You can't escape being Black in a PWSOM	X	X	X			X	X		
Distrust of White professors	X	X	X			X	X		
I'm just a quota-filler	X	X	X	X		X			
Sacrifice	X		X			X			

Note. An X represents the occurrence of an emergent theme in the corresponding participant's experiences.

Navigating the Negative Perceptions of White People

All participants were painfully aware of White students' and professors' negative perceptions of Black students and took actions daily to combat them. Negative perceptions included but were not limited to the following: (a) Black students do not belong in prestigious music schools, (b) Black students do not take private lessons, (c) Black students are not proficient in the performance of Classical music, and (d) Black students are angry or aggressive. All participants admitted that they expended a substantial amount of energy navigating White people's negative perceptions.

Numerous aspects of the participants' experiences were influenced by the need to navigate the negative stereotypes and perceptions held by White peers and professors. Angel, Taylor, and Bryson stated that they worked harder to combat the expectation that Black students would not complete the degree program. Kimberly felt that a successful jury performance would be based on her jury panelists' perceptions of Black musicians' abilities. She considered not choosing a Black accompanist because doing so might have influenced her perceived level of commitment. She also said that she would never ask a White student for help because she felt that it would reinforce the negative stereotype that Black students are not capable of succeeding in prestigious schools of music. Sally explained that she considered White peers' and professors' negative perceptions when deciding whether to wear a Black Lives Matter t-shirt to class. Marian stated that she tended to "be by [her]self" (Marian, Interview 2, March 19, 2021) to guard against the perceptions of White student and professors.

All the female participants acknowledged that they encountered negative perceptions of Black women. Both Kimberly and Jesse said that they smile to combat the negative stereotype of Black women as angry or aggressive. Similarly, Doreen and Dinah each recounted their reactions

to being on the receiving end of racist jokes. Doreen described how she smiled in response to a White student calling her “Black Doreen” (Doreen, Interview 2, February 27, 2021) for a year. Dinah recounted being told that she should perform the scatting part of a song because she “should know how to beatbox” (Dinah, Interview 2, February 22, 2021). Each explained that they responded with smiles and forced, nervous laughter because defending themselves against racial insensitivity would result in them being viewed as an angry Black woman.

The requirement to manage and mediate the stereotypes and perceptions of White people created an internal struggle that greatly impacted participants’ sense of self. Each participant agreed that to succeed, they were forced to be an inauthentic version of themselves to be accepted by White people.

Making White People Comfortable

All participants explained that a substantial amount of their energy was devoted to making White people comfortable. Many believed that there existed an “acceptable” type of Black person (Angel, Interview 2), one in whom White students and faculty found comfort. Marian explained that White students in her school of music are more likely to include non-White students in social events and study sessions whom they consider to be funny and amusing. Dinah stated that Black students in her school of music who perform well academically were less likely to experience negative interactions with White faculty and peers. Angel explained that White students and faculty in his school were more accepting of Black students who are reserved in the expression of their culture, as opposed to Black students who openly expressed their Blackness. Sally admitted that she actively tried to blend in and present herself as a “safe” (Sally, Interview 3, February 15, 2021) Black person. Kimberly stated that she hid her true feelings because she did not want to be the Black person who made White people uncomfortable. Doreen

explained that she consciously made her speech and body language comfortable for the White people around her.

Bryson, Taylor, and Jesse likened making White people comfortable to wearing a metaphorical mask. For Jesse, the mask represented an entirely different persona that she puts on when she enters the music building. She explained that it is not until she leaves the music building and arrives home that she can take the mask off and finally relax. Taylor felt forced to wear a mask to navigate the homogenous nature of the music curriculum and repertoire, thus hiding his love of contemporary music and pretending to be interested in the music of the Western European canon. For Bryson, wearing a mask created an internal conflict. While he recognized the need to wear a mask to survive his environment, he admonished himself for changing to be accepted by White people.

Working Harder to Prove Myself

In response to negative perceptions of Black students, most participants felt an intense need to work harder to prove that they belonged in their schools of music. Kimberly felt that as a Black student she was forced to work harder to prove that she was worthy enough to attend her school. Bryson admitted that he worked harder because he needed to show that Black people can be successful in music. Sally and Doreen stated that they felt the need to work harder than White peers. For Angel, the need to prove himself was directly related to the negative perception that Black students would not complete their degree programs. Taylor experienced being held to a higher standard than White students and having to work harder to meet it. Jesse explained that she worked harder to fit into a model of professionalism that valued White bodies over Black. The need to work harder to prove themselves led to high levels of stress and anxiety amongst the participants.

“Do I Belong Here?”

Most participants expressed that they have questioned whether they belong in their respective PWSOM. Kimberly explained that while no one explicitly told her that she did not belong, the message has been implied. Her doubt that she belonged was reinforced by the shocked looks on White people’s faces when she answered questions correctly. Additionally, the underrepresentation of Black faculty in her school of music led her to question if she could succeed there. Bryson stated that the constant need to prove himself reinforced the idea that he indeed did not belong. For Sally and Doreen, the prevalence of overt racism and a climate of racial and cultural insensitivity reinforced that they did not belong in their respective schools. Taylor’s feelings of not belonging were rooted in the inherent invalidation of Black music in the music curriculum. Jesse experienced being singled out by White professors to speak about what they perceived as Black topics. Being singled out and reduced to race reinforced that being Black in her school was not the norm, and that she did not belong. Marian experienced being excluded by White students from social events and study sessions, further illustrating that she did not belong.

A Climate of Racial and Cultural Insensitivity

When discussing their experiences, most participants described a climate of racial and cultural insensitivity. Many experienced being on the receiving end of racist jokes, racially insensitive comments, and witnessing overt racism in their respective schools. Doreen recounted being referred to as Black Doreen for the entirety of her first year in her school of music. She also experienced sitting in a class while White students and the professor laughed about the genocide of Native Americans. Dinah was told by another student that she should perform the scatting portion of a piece because scatting was like rap. Jesse recalled being singled out by a

White student to locate an African country on a map in class. Taylor remembered seeing racial slurs carved into the bathroom stalls in his school of music building. Sally experienced having the complexion of her skin compared to flute tarnish.

For these participants, the prevalence of racial and cultural insensitivity and inadequate responses from faculty reinforced that such incidents were not aberrant, but normal in their schools of music. Each stated that school leadership and professors failed to adequately address their concerns of racism and racial insensitivity. Doreen and Sally were accused of being paranoid by leaders in their respective schools when they expressed concerns about racial insensitivity. Inadequate responses led participants to distrust White professors and administrators.

Distrust of White Faculty

Most of the participants expressed that they do not trust their White professors. While many admitted that their distrust of White people existed before attending a PWSOM, their distrust was intensified by their interactions with White faculty in their schools. Kimberly revealed that she hoped to pursue her graduate studies at her current institution. She said that while she does not trust White faculty, she needs them to feel like she does to ensure that she has a good experience in the future. Sally and Doreen explained that they do not trust their White professors because of their roles in fostering climates of racial and cultural insensitivity. Their distrust intensified after their concerns were ignored by school administrators, which ultimately contributed to their decisions to leave their respective schools. Jesse believed that many White professors made disingenuous attempts to gain her trust, which in turn led her to distrust them more. She stated that she trusted White professors who treated her like a human being and refrained from highlighting the fact that she was a Black student. While Bryson did not state that

he distrusted his White professors, he acknowledged that he naturally trusted Black professors more.

Additionally, Kimberly, Bryson, and Sally stated that they would not have participated in this research study if I, as the researcher, were White. Sally believed that a White researcher would discount her experiences. Bryson believed that a White researcher would be unable to conduct the research study without bias. Sally did not trust that a White researcher would be able to identify with, understand, and interpret her experiences responsibly.

I'm Just a Quota Filler

Most participants expressed that they wondered if they were accepted into their schools of music to fulfill a diversity quota. Kimberly stated that the notion of being a quota was always on her mind. She explained that she battled between knowing that she earned her place in her school of music and feeling that she had to prove that she belonged. Reflecting on his audition, Bryson asked aloud, "Why am I here?" He stated that the thought that he might be a quota-filler was scary to him. Angel believed that some White studio professors need Black students as quota-fillers. Both Doreen and Sally were asked to come back to their respective schools of music after leaving at the end of their first years. Both received scholarship support but believed that the school benefitted financially from their being enrolled.

You Can't Escape Being Black in a PWSOM

Most participants felt that they were first and foremost Black students in their schools of music. For Kimberly and Jesse, this sentiment was reinforced by being singled out by White professors and students for their Blackness. Bryson felt that he could escape being Black in his school of music. He believed that the first thing that anyone saw was the color of his skin. Sally received questions about how she was accepted to her school of music and felt reduced to race

by the president of her school of music. Doreen was called Black Doreen for the entirety of her freshmen year. Each participant explained that such examples illustrated that the defining feature of their existence as students in their school of music was the color of their skin.

Sacrifice

Many participants discussed the importance of comfort as it related to their experiences. Like any student, participants desired a certain degree of comfort and safety in their academic environments. However, many were surprised by the underrepresentation of Black students and faculty, the prevalence of overt racism, and overall climate of racial and cultural insensitivity found in their schools of music. Having listened to countless examples of Black jokes and racist behavior, I asked the participants how they were able to reconcile staying, or in the cases of Doreen and Sally, returning to their schools of music. Most stated that their decision to stay or return to their PWSOM was an act of sacrifice.

Three participants characterized their experiences as a sacrifice for obtaining degrees from reputable institutions. Doreen and Angel stated that they are only concerned with surviving their environments, graduating from a good school, and moving on. Taylor equated the experience of being Black in a PWSOM to crossing the “burning sands” (Taylor, Interview 3) – a term commonly used amongst members of fraternal organizations to denote completing an initiation process. Marian viewed her experience as preparation for the “real world” (Marian, Interview, 3, March 28, 2021), a world in which she would be expected to deal with racial discomfort and racial insensitivity on a daily basis. Kimberly, Jesse, and Dinah resigned to endure the discomforts of their schools of music so that they could one day serve as examples of Black music teachers for Black students. Sally explained that she had no intention of returning to her school of music after her first departure. She added that she is motivated by her commitment

to making a place for Black women in music education. She viewed her experience in her school of music as a necessary evil or means to one simple end – obtaining a degree. Kimberly and Doreen, who have both struggled with anxiety and stress because of their experiences, admitted that they have sacrificed their mental health to obtain their degrees.

General Narrative

All participants were adversely affected by the underrepresentation of Black students and faculty in their schools of music. Underrepresentation led participants to question their belonging and led them to feel as if they had no voice. The underrepresentation of Black faculty led some participants to doubt their ability to succeed as Black music teachers or obtain terminal degrees in music education. Additionally, every participant was motivated to pursue music education in college by the underrepresentation of Black music teachers.

All participants contended with negative stereotypes and preconceived beliefs about Black people in general, as well as about Black musicianship. The constant pressure to navigate these stereotypes and preconceived beliefs caused participants to attempt to make themselves more appealing to White students and faculty. Many expressed that while constantly making White people comfortable was exhausting, it was a necessary evil of the Black student experience in PWSOM. Most participants felt the need to work harder because of negative stereotypes. All female participants contended with stereotypes and negative perceptions that were specific to Black women, including the belief Black women were angry and aggressive.

Participants described an overall climate of racial and cultural insensitivity. They encountered racist jokes and racially insensitive comments from both students and faculty. Participants were keenly aware of the power differential between White faculty and Black students. Therefore, they rarely expressed concerns about their experiences to faculty members

or administrators. On the rare occasion that participants did communicate their concerns to faculty and administrators, their concerns were left unanswered. In some cases, students were told that they were being paranoid. While some participants entered their schools of music with a certain degree of distrust towards White people, the inadequate response from faculty or administrators intensified this distrust.

The combination of underrepresentation, the need to make White people comfortable, the prevalence of negative stereotypes, and the prevalence of racial insensitivity caused many participants to question if they belonged in their schools of music. Some wondered if they were accepted into their schools to meet a diversity quota. Participants came to the realization that for White students and faculty, their most defining feature was the color of their skin.

Participants viewed their experiences in their schools of music as a means to an end and something to survive. Most expressed that they sacrificed their comfort and mental health to obtain a degree from a reputable music institution. Like their motivations for pursuing degrees in music education, participants resolved to completing their degree programs so that they could be examples for future Black music students.

General Description

Black undergraduate music education students in PWSOM face a particular set of issues that negatively affect their experiences in these settings. They do not see themselves represented in their student bodies, amongst the faculty, or in the curriculum. They contend with negative stereotypes of Black students and Black musicianship daily. To avoid negative stereotypes, they devote a large amount of their energy to presenting themselves in ways that will make their White peers and professors comfortable. The constant need to mediate the perceptions of White people and change themselves to fit into this White-dominated field leads to high levels of stress

and anxiety. They question their musical abilities, their belonging in their schools, and if they deserve to be there. They find themselves in the midst of two internal battles. The first, between two identities – being Black and being students in predominantly White spaces. Secondly, between believing that they deserve to attend their schools and feeling that they must prove themselves daily. While many students in schools of music may feel the need to prove themselves, Black students attribute that feeling to being Black in a PWSOM.

Black undergraduate music education students contend with racist jokes and racial insensitivity that further reinforce their feelings of not belonging. Racial incidents are rarely adequately addressed by White faculty, leaving them feeling unheard and distrustful of White students, faculty, and administrators. Having no one in whom to confide, they commonly withdraw from social interaction with White students and faculty, search for alternative outlets of Black expression and culture, and internalize their feelings.

Black undergraduate music education students view their negative experiences in PWSOM as necessary to obtaining their degrees. They sacrifice their mental health and comfort for the distinction of having graduated from schools of music with reputable programs. They are motivated to continue by their desires to see more Black professionals in the field of music education.

Analysis in Relation to Hermeneutic Phenomenological Philosophy

According to Peoples (2021), hermeneutic phenomenological analysis must include three important Heideggerian concepts, including: (a) *dasein*, (b) *fore-conception*, and (c) the hermeneutic circle. In this section, I provide an analysis of my findings as related to Heidegger's (1962) hermeneutic phenomenological philosophy.

Dasein

Heidegger (1962) used the term *dasein* to refer to human experience or existence and proposed that the actualization of one's *dasein* was the function of their being at a certain time and in a particular context. At the heart of this research study was the question: What does it mean to exist as a Black undergraduate music education student in a PWSOM? I drew on the experiences of nine participants who had experienced the phenomenon of being a Black undergraduate music education major in a PWSOM to answer this fundamental question. Through the interaction with peers and professors, the reconstruction of their experiences, and the interpretation of their stories, participants actualized their existence in the context of their PWSOM.

Fore-Conception

While Heidegger (1962) believed that subjectivities and biases could not be suspended, as Husserl suggested, he proposed that they could be accounted for by examining one's fore-conceptions of the phenomenon in question. Many participants entered their schools of music with the fore-conception that they would not see many students or faculty members who represented their racial identities. However, they were unprepared for the ways in which being underrepresented would affect their experiences in their schools of music.

The Hermeneutic Circle

Heidegger (1962) proposed that an understanding of existence was the product of reflection on and revision of one's fore-conceptions. He used the term hermeneutic circle to refer to the process of revisiting one's fore-conceptions to arrive at an understanding of one's existence. When participants first faced the phenomenon of being Black undergraduate music education students in PWSOM, they were unaware of the ways in which the underrepresentation

of Black students and faculty would affect their experiences. While they expected to encounter some of the racial insecurity that accompanied being a minority, they were surprised by the prevalence of racist jokes and racially insensitive comments. As participants reconstructed their experiences, they became aware of their subconscious efforts to manage White students' and professors' perceptions of Black students, and by extension, their efforts to make them comfortable.

Analysis in Relation to Critical Race Theory

Critical race theorists and scholars have agreed on four central tenets of critical race theory, including: (a) the ordinariness of racism, (b) interest convergence, (c) the social construction thesis, and (d) counter-storytelling. In this section, I present my findings in relation to these central tenets of critical race theory.

The Ordinariness of Racism

As discussed in chapter one, critical race theorists adopted the position that racism is difficult to cure because it is not acknowledged as a daily occurrence in the lives of those affected. Racism has been defined as the systemic oppression of a racial group that is based on the belief that race is a central determinant of human traits and capacities (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Participants recounted being ostracized because of their status as racial minorities, encountering racial slurs, and contending with peers' and professors' beliefs of decreased ability and capacity based solely on their race. Additionally, participants described a system and curriculum in which European ideals, standards, and music were valued over those of their cultures. Participants described a climate of racist behavior that pervaded their daily experiences, illustrating that racism in PWSOM is not aberrant, but manifests in their daily lives.

Interest Convergence

Bell (1989) proposed that efforts to challenge systemic oppression are only successful when the interests of the oppressed are aligned with the interests of the oppressor. When asked to describe their experiences, participants believed that efforts to positively affect the experiences of Black students in their schools of music would only be successful if White professors could benefit from them. This concept was illustrated in some of the participants' belief that they were only admitted to their schools of music to fulfill a diversity quota. Sally and Doreen believed that they were invited to re-enroll in their respective schools so that the institution would receive diversity-related tax benefits.

Social Construction Thesis

Critical race theorists adopted the concept that race is socially constructed and formulated to maintain the dominance of one group over another. Participants contended with negative perceptions of Black musicianship and ability based solely on their race. All participants believed that their race was a fundamental determinant of their status, value, and position in their PWSOM. Of particular interest was the concept of professionalism as being socially constructed for the benefit of White students.

Counter-Storytelling

Critical race theorists and scholars have proposed that the act of counter-storytelling provides oppressed persons the opportunity to name their realities (Delgado, 1989; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso et al., 2004). Through reconstructing their experiences, participants were empowered to interpret them as perceived through their recollections, free from the narratives often espoused by White peers and professors. The act of counter-storytelling served as an integral component of this research study. Participants' counter-stories served as the primary

means of data to be analyzed and interpreted. Many participants had never considered the influence of race on their experiences before participating. Kimberly explained that she had been aware of the underrepresentation of Black faculty and students. However, it was not until she reconstructed and interpreted her story that she understood how that underrepresentation had affected her experience.

Analysis in Relation to Double Consciousness Theory

According to Du Bois, Black people's concept of self may be substantially affected by the way in which members of the dominant population view them. Du Bois asserted that this awareness of the dominant population's beliefs and projections could lead to an internal battle between two warring ideals – being Black and being Black in a White society. Du Bois (1903) also stated that double consciousness could serve as a useful tool for navigating White spaces.

From a perspective of double consciousness, participants were keenly aware of White peers' and professors' perceptions of Black students. All participants contended with negative perceptions and stereotypes of Black students' abilities and Black musicianship daily. Some participants acknowledged the existence of an internal struggle, citing decreased self-concept of their academic and musical abilities as a result. They described an internal battle between believing that they deserved to be in their respective schools of music and having to prove their worth as Black students in predominantly White environments. Other participants acknowledged that they had experienced similar crises of identity but learned to use their second sight as a tool for surviving in their PWSOM.

Summary: Findings

It was important for participants in this inquiry into the lived experiences of Black undergraduate music education students in PWSOM to name their own realities. By reconstructing their own experiences participants were able to produce a narrative that was separate and counter to that of White peers and professors. These counter-stories provided the basis for an in-depth hermeneutic phenomenological analysis of their lived experiences. Through the process of reflecting on their experiences, participants drew conclusions about what it meant for them to exist as Black undergraduate music education students in PWSOM. As a result of revisiting their fore-conceptions, participants became aware of the many ways in which their self-concept was challenged by the perceptions that White peers and professors have of them, and the ways in which their double consciousness manifested.

CHAPTER VII: DISCUSSION

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the findings in relation to the research questions. Next, I present a dialogue with the literature reviewed in chapter two, in which themes drawn from this study are compared with findings from other studies to create a deeper understanding of the Black undergraduate music education student in a PWSOM. Then, I present recommendations for practice and research. Finally, I conclude with recommendations for how faculty and administrators in PWSOM may work to improve the experiences of Black undergraduate music education students.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experiences of Black undergraduate music education students in PWSOM. This study was guided by the following research questions:

- 1) How does race impact the daily experiences of Black music education students in PWSOM?
- 2) How, if at all, do Black music education students in PWSOM experience the concept of double consciousness?
- 3) How, if at all, do PWSOM perpetuate Black students' feelings of double consciousness?
- 4) What coping strategies do Black undergraduate music education students in PWSOM employ?

Research Question One

Using hermeneutic phenomenological reflection, participants in this study reconstructed their daily experiences in their schools of music. Through interpreting participants' reconstructions, I found that their daily experiences were impacted in two important areas: cultural adjustment and daily experiences with racial insensitivity. One central tenet of critical race theory is the ordinariness of racism in the daily lives of those who experience it (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2014). According to Ladson-Billings (2014), issues of race and racism are not relegated to high-profile, newsworthy events, but manifest in the daily lives of those who experience them.

Participants felt pressured to portray themselves in ways that would be considered acceptable to their White counterparts and professors, consistent with the findings of Feagin and Sikes (1994). The pressure to navigate the cultural bridge between themselves and the prevailing White culture was observed in the ways in which participants dressed, spoke, and acted while in the company of White students and professors. Many participants reported feeling as though they must dress more professionally than their White counterparts to be taken seriously. All the participants admitted to code-switching when speaking with White students and professors so that they would be accepted. They shared a common belief that any deviation from the Eurocentric model of professionalism would be interpreted more negatively if made by a Black student than by a White student. These findings were consistent with those of Harper et. al (2009), Mustaffa (2017), and Prelow et. al (2006). Participants felt that because they were forced to change themselves to be successful in their schools of music, they did not truly belong.

Participants felt that they had no voice in their schools of music because of their status as racial minorities. Due to the underrepresentation of Black students and professors, they doubted

their musical abilities and questioned if they deserved to be in their schools of music. Sedlacek (1970) stated that a lack of cultural diversity in perspectives hindered Black students' academic progress. While I did not collect any data to suggest that this was true of the participants in this study, I did find that many experienced decreased academic self-concept, which they attributed to the increased difficulty of adapting to their predominantly White environments. Many participants described feelings of anxiousness and stress that were directly related to their minority status. These findings were indicative of racial inferiority anxiety as described by Steele and Aronson (1995).

By interpreting participants' reconstructions, I developed an understanding of how the adherence to the traditional curriculum in schools of music affected their experiences. Bradley (2012) contended that musical traditions that stray from the practices of Western Classical music are often relegated to the margins or devalued through omission. Participants reported only learning about music from the Classical canon. Many heard professors state that other music was not sophisticated and was unworthy of serious study. Consistent with Bradley's (2012) assertion, participants were offended by the presupposed superiority of European music over that of their cultures. Their daily interactions with the curriculum further reinforced that collegiate musical study was not for people who looked like them.

Participants in this research study experienced racist jokes, negative stereotypes, and an overall climate of racial insensitivity daily. Feagin and Sikes (1994) found that Black students in predominantly White institutions reported daily occurrences of racist joking and negative stereotyping by White students and professors. Feagin and Sikes further asserted that it was through enduring racist jokes and stereotypes on campus that students became aware of "what it meant to be Black in the United States" (Feagin & Sikes, 1994, p. 98). Similarly, participants

came to understand what it meant for them to exist as Black student in PWSOM as they dealt with racist jokes and stereotypes on their campuses.

Consistent with Allen's (1988) findings, participants in this study experienced three distinct types of issues, including (a) issues of cultural adjustment, (b) academic issues, and (c) racism. Participants had trouble bridging the gap between their culture and that of the prevailing White culture of their schools of music. Most participants felt that they did not belong in their schools of music, a feeling that was reinforced by their interactions with White peers, faculty, and the unchallenged adoption of Eurocentric norms, values, traditions, and ways of knowing. The feeling of not belonging contributed to high levels of stress and anxiety as participants felt pressured to wear a mask each day that they walked into their schools of music.

Research Question Two

Participants' double consciousness manifested through processing negative perceptions. They were keenly aware of the projections of White peers and professors, which manifested in the form of negative stereotypes and perceptions. These negative stereotypes and perceptions were often made explicit through social interaction with White peers and professors. As a result, participants expended a tremendous amount of their energy attempting to counteract Whites' negative perceptions of Black students to present themselves as "acceptable" (Angel, Interview 2, March 8, 2021; Jesse, Interview 1, March 24, 2021) Black people. Du Bois's theory of double consciousness was based on the premise that Black people's concept of self may be substantially influenced by the way in which members of the dominant population view them (Du Bois, 1903). One important element of Du Bois's theory was the veil, which represented a color-line that divided the Black population from the White population in America. According to Itzigsohn and Brown (2015), the veil represented a one-way mirror upon which Whites projected their

negative perceptions of Blacks. Itzigsohn and Brown (2015) further asserted that the Whites' projections served as realities that Black people processed in their formations of self-identity. The participants in this study were very aware of Whites' negative projections of Black students and showed evidence of processing those negative projections in the formations of their identities as music students. Angel recounted that "part of myself ... died down because I was ... like do I look good for them? Am I speaking right for them? Am I singing right for them?" (Angel, Interview 2, March 8, 2021). Kimberly questioned if she should "get a White piano player, so they think maybe [she] paid more money, think that that [she] committed more to what [she] was doing?" (Kimberly, Interview 3, February 17, 2021).

Participants experienced what Du Bois (1903) described as a "two-ness", or internal battle, between their concepts of self and the perceptions ascribed to them by White people in their schools of music. This two-ness manifested in participants' compensatory efforts to combat negative racial perceptions and stereotypes. Participants expended energy navigating these negative perceptions to present themselves as the type of Black people with whom Whites could feel comfortable. Many participants, consciously and subconsciously, altered their speech and physical appearance to present themselves as safe to White peers and professors. Jesse recounted: "I dress plain to make them feel comfortable. I talk White to make feel comfortable. I straighten my hair to make them feel comfortable." (Jesse, Interview 2, March 29, 2021). Kimberly stated that she "put on the biggest smile possible" to communicate with people that they were "safe" (Kimberly, Interview 2, February 12, 2021).

Participants in this study recognized the importance of identifying and understanding White peers' and professors' perceptions of Black students and used the knowledge of such preconceived notions to help them better survive in these predominantly White environments.

While Du Bois (1903) wrote of the negative impacts that double consciousness may have on Black people's formation of self, they also asserted that it could lead to what was described as second sight. Du Bois (1903) believed that by identifying White people's perceptions of them, Black people were better enabled to rise above the veil and navigate in a White world.

Participants seemed to have gained second sight as evidenced by their reliance on compensatory actions to prove that they were safe and acceptable by White standards. Dinah, who had only attended school in predominantly White settings, was aware of Whites' negative perceptions of Black students and felt that that awareness enabled her to better survive in her PWSOM.

Participants experienced an internal battle between being Black and being a member of the PWSOM community because of the presumed superiority of Eurocentric values and norms, and the underrepresentation of Black students and faculty in their schools. Most questioned whether they belonged and doubted their abilities to succeed in their schools of music as Black students.

Research Question Three

All participants entered their schools of music having previously been made aware of White people's negative perceptions of Black people. However, there were several ways in which their experiences in PWSOM perpetuated feelings of double consciousness. Participants' minority status perpetuated feelings of double consciousness. Not seeing themselves represented amongst the students and faculty of their schools of music, participants questioned their ability to succeed in those settings, which further contributed to feelings of two-ness (Allen, 1988; Feagin & Sikes, 1994; Fleming, 1984; Nettles, 1988). Participants began to view themselves as Black students attempting to survive in a separate White world in which they were not welcome.

Participants' interactions with the music curriculum also perpetuated feelings of double consciousness (Caldwell & Stewart, 2001). They did not see themselves or their cultures represented in the curriculum of their schools of music. Additionally, many were told that music outside of the European tradition lacked sophistication and was unworthy of serious study. Therefore, to be successful, the participants attempted to adopt these values and function within this view of European music as superior, thus contributing to a bifurcated sense of self. These findings were consistent with those of Smedley et. al (1993) and Caldwell and Stewart (2001) who proposed that the forced adoption of and adherence to White cultural norms, values, practices, and traditions could result in crises of self-identity.

Interactions with White peers and professors perpetuated feelings of double consciousness (Allen, 1992; Feagin & Sikes, 1994; Fleming, 1984; Nettles, 1988). Participants were singled out for their race, reduced to race, endured racist jokes, endured negative perceptions and stereotypes, and had their concerns dismissed. In addition to experiencing high levels of stress and anxiety, this climate of racial insensitivity led them to feel that they did not belong. Participants' negative social interactions with White peers and professors reinforced the idea that they were Black students attempting to fit into an environment where they were unwelcome.

Research Question Four

Throughout their experience in PWSOM, participants displayed characteristics of each mode of adaptation outlined by Gibbs (1974): (a) withdrawal, (b) separation, (c) assimilation, and (d) affirmation. They described attempts to assimilate to their environments to better fit in with White peer' and professors' expectations. They experienced social anxiety when they were outnumbered by White peers, felt pressured to conform to White standards of professionalism,

and worked harder to counteract White perceptions of Black musical and academic ability. Additionally, participants experienced a heightened awareness and sensitivity to ethnic and cultural references.

Having realized that despite their efforts to assimilate, they would not be fully accepted in their schools of music, participants began to display characteristics of withdrawal and separation. Many avoided potential conflicts with White peers and professors by isolating themselves in their dorm rooms or in student lounges and withdrawing from social interaction, choosing instead to interact only with other Black students. Many sought and found alternative outlets of Black culture and self-expression at local HBCUs and Black-oriented campus groups. With the feelings of withdrawal came feelings of isolation and, for many, hopelessness.

Gibbs (1974) described affirmation as the most positive mode of adaptation, characterized by positive racial identity and self-actualizing behavior. As with Gibbs's (1974) findings, affirmation was the least prevalent mode of adaptation displayed amongst the participants in this study. Dinah was the only participant who displayed characteristics of affirmation throughout their matriculation. This was most likely due to having only attended predominantly White schools and living in predominantly White spaces her entire life. She experienced the least amount of difficulty adjusting to the culture of her school of music and was very optimistic about her chances of success.

Most participants admitted they had no one in whom to confide about their experiences, leaving them to internalize their feelings. For many participants, discussing and reflecting on their experiences for the purposes of this research study provided them their first opportunity to discuss their experiences in what they deemed as a safe environment.

Recommendations for Practice

While many researchers and scholars have written about the potential for Black undergraduate students to have negative experiences in predominantly White collegiate musical settings, few have provided an outlet for members of this group to recount and interpret their experiences and name their realities. In this section, I provide my recommendations for improving the experiences of Black undergraduate music education students in PWSOM.

Taylor's desire for the director of his school of music to "play the full game" (Taylor, Interview 2, March 22, 2021) was a direct result of what Taylor viewed as the director's inadequate response to a racial incident which occurred in the school of music. To play the full game, those in positions of power in PWSOM must look beyond responding to racial incidents after they have occurred and address the environmental circumstances and systems which lead to their occurrence.

One contributing factor to the participants' feelings of double consciousness was the underrepresentation of Black students and faculty in their school of music. A thoughtful reflection on the systemic issues that contribute to Black students' negative experiences in PWSOM should begin with the underrepresentation of Black students and faculty members. While the public-school student population has continued to become more diverse, the population of pre- and in-service music teachers has remained substantially White (Elpus, 2015). Faculty and administrators in PWSOM must examine their current recruitment practices in search of ways to diversify their student bodies.

Many participants stated that representatives from their PWSOM did not visit or recruit students from local Black high schools (Doreen, Interview 2; Sally, Interview 3; Marian, Interview 1). I recommend that faculty in PWSOM actively engage with schools in their

communities with higher concentrations of Black students. This engagement could come in the form of summer music camps, workshops, or recruitment visits.

Participants were also negatively affected by the underrepresentation of Black faculty in their schools of music (Kimberly, Interview 2, February 12, 2021; Jesse, Interview 2, March 29, 2021). For Kimberly, whose ultimate goal was to become a professor of music education, not seeing Black professors led her to question if she could attain her goal. I propose that if Black undergraduate music education students have more positive experiences in PWSOM, they will be more likely to pursue careers in higher education. Additionally, administrators in PWSOM should recognize the negative impact of the underrepresentation of Black faculty on Black students and actively work to recruit Black faculty members. These efforts should include recruiting Black graduates from their programs, recruiting Black music educators who are involved with state music associations, and fostering relationships with music programs at local HBCUs to widen the pool of potential applicants for faculty positions.

Participants were offended by and felt marginalized by the presupposed superiority of the Western Classical tradition over the traditions of their cultures. Faculty in PWSOM should reflect upon and acknowledge the ways in which a strict adherence to the European musical tradition further marginalizes Black students, then work to include musical knowledge from cultures beyond that of the European tradition. Including musical knowledge from cultures beyond the European tradition should involve more than performing music from other cultures, but should extend to reconceptualizing what qualifies as musical knowledge that is worthy of study.

The current curricula of music theory and history are presented in such a way as to presuppose a hierarchy, with the harmonic and historical practices of 18th-century, European

males decidedly at the top. According to Bradley (2012) and Hess (2015), the convergence of this strict, unchallenged adherence to Eurocentric values and the marginalization of other music and cultures served as a means of colonization in music education. By presenting the contributions of Black composers and Black culture as valid and worthy of serious study and not curricular add-ons, faculty can help to combat the feelings of marginalization and racial insecurity that accompany being a Black student in a PWSOM. Additionally, audition standards should be informed by this reconceptualization of what qualifies as music that is worthy of serious study. While I do not suggest that the requirement to audition for acceptance in schools of music be eliminated, I do recommend that students be allowed to prepare audition materials that are not considered part of the traditional Western Classical canon.

Consistent with the findings of Allen (1988), Feagin and Sikes (1994), Fleming (1984), and Nettles (1984), participants actualized their existence as Black students in PWSOM in part through social interactions with White peers and professors. When participants encountered racism, they very rarely felt safe enough to express concerns to White faculty and administrators. On the rare occurrence that they did make their concerns known, their concerns were ignored or inadequately addressed. These responses heightened participants' distrust of White faculty and administrators. Faculty in PWSOM must make every effort possible to ensure that they are not contributing to the normalization of racial and cultural insensitivity and overt racism in their schools of music.

While many participants recounted attending mandated diversity panels and workshops in the wake of the most recent call for social justice, many found it frustrating to be on the receiving end of such discussion from the professors who had in their minds been the most frequent offenders (Kimberly, Journal entry, February 26, 2021; Sally, Interview 2, February 13,

2021). All participants expended energy navigating White peers' and professors' negative perceptions of Black students. I recommend that leaders in schools of music mandate yearly diversity, equity, and inclusion trainings for faculty members. I also recommend that faculty members participate in trainings centered around implicit bias and microaggressions to examine their own preconceived notions of Black students and Black musicianship. Additionally, I recommend that faculty and administrators engage in self-studies aimed at understanding the experiences of current and past Black students.

When asked what she would say to White professors if given the opportunity, Sally replied:

My biggest thing would be to try to get them to understand that they can control whether or not students have the same experiences that I have. And just by simply representing and advocating for their students that have different experiences than them, they can create a more positive experience for students and their classes. (Sally, Interview 3, February 15, 2021)

Faculty members in PWSOM must acknowledge that any meaningful improvement in the experiences of Black students in PWSOM begins with them. As facilitators of the learning experience, faculty must seek to understand and empathize with Black students' experiences, examine the ways in which they themselves may contribute to those negative experiences, and "play the full game" (Taylor, Interview 2, March 22, 2021).

Recommendations for Future Research

While it was not the aim of this inquiry to examine the impostor phenomenon in Black students in PWSOM, some participants described feelings that were characteristic of the phenomenon. These included (a) feeling like a fraud, (b) feelings of inadequacy, (c) self-doubt

and decreased musical self-concept, and (d) perceived feelings of competition (1988). It would be beneficial to pursue inquiry into the occurrence of impostor syndrome in Black undergraduate music students in PWSOM.

Though all participants described negative experiences in their respective schools of music, one participant who attended predominantly White schools and lived in what she described as White neighborhoods her entire life, experienced less adapting to her PWSOM. Examining the influence that a student's previous educational experiences may have on their lived experiences in a PWSOM would be valuable.

Participants who identified as female experienced a particular set of issues related to their identities as Black females. It would be beneficial to examine the intersectionality of race and gender in the experiences of students in PWSOM. While the aim of this study was to formulate an understanding of the lived experiences of Black undergraduate music education students in PWSOM, additional explorations of the experiences of students of different racial identities are also warranted.

Conclusion

I have provided a detailed analysis of the lived experiences Black undergraduate music education students in PWSOM. Participants' lived experiences may best be understood when viewed through the lenses of double consciousness and critical race theory.

Participants' feelings of double consciousness were the product of their minority statuses; the strict adherence to Eurocentric traditions, values, and norms; and their interactions with White peers and professors. Participants adopted a range of compensatory actions, including altering their speech, appearance, and behavior to present themselves to White peers and professors as safe and acceptable. In doing so, participants found themselves in the midst of an

internal battle between being Black and being a Black person who was viewed favorably by White students and faculty in their schools of music. Inherent in participants' beliefs that they must change themselves to be accepted was the idea that by being themselves they would not be accepted in their schools of music.

Using the critical race technique of counter-storytelling, participants reconstructed and interpreted their experiences in PWSOM, thereby naming their realities. Interpreting these counter-stories allowed the participants and myself to formulate an understanding of their experiences. Participants' lived experiences as Black undergraduate music education majors in PWSOM were the sum of their daily experiences in their schools of music. The findings of this study are consistent with critical race theorists' belief that issues of race and racism are not aberrant but are ordinary in the daily lives of those who experiences them.

Participants actualized their existence as Black undergraduate music education students through their daily interactions with White peers, professors, and the systemic, exclusionary paradigms of collegiate musical study. Consistent with the literature related to the adaptation strategies of Black students in PWIs, participants in this study commonly withdrew from social interaction and isolated themselves as a means of coping with their environments.

I made several recommendations for ways in which faculty and administrators in PWSOM could work towards improving Black students' experiences in PWSOM. These recommendations included: (a) reevaluating recruitment practices, (b) reconceptualizing music curriculum, (c) self-reflection on the part of faculty, and (d) mandatory professional development trainings centered on implicit bias and microaggressions. It is my hope that faculty, students, and administrators in PWSOM find this study useful for self-reflection and for improving the experiences of members of this population.

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APPENDIX A: INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

Project Title: The Lived Experiences of African American Music Education Students' Lived Experiences in Predominantly White Schools of Music.

Principal Investigator: Quinton D. Parker

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Tami Draves

What is this all about?

I am asking you to participate in this research study because I am interested in learning about your experiences as a Black music education major at a predominantly White school of music. This research project will take about 3 hours of your time and will involve you participating in three individual interviews and maintaining a journal. I will also ask you to review the initial analysis of data and provide feedback. Your participation in this research project is voluntary.

Will this negatively affect me?

No, other than the time you spend on this project there are no known or foreseeable risks involved with this study.

What do I get out of this research project?

There are no direct benefits to you. You might benefit from reflecting on your experiences and having a platform to share those experiences.

Will I get paid for participating?

You will not be paid for participating.

What about my confidentiality?

I will do everything possible to make sure that your information is kept confidential. All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law. You will be identified by pseudonym in the study; your music discipline will not be identified. Identifying information will not be stored with the data. Data will be stored on a password protected computer and in Box. Audio of all interviews will be stored on a password-protected computer. Consent forms will also be stored in a secured cabinet in a locked office, but not with data. All data, including audio recordings and transcriptions, will be stored for 6 years following completion of the study and then destroyed. All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law.

Interviews may be conducted using an online platform. Absolute confidentiality of data provided through the Internet cannot be guaranteed due to the limited protections of internet access.

Audio/video recording will be taken during the interviews; please indicate your response below regarding the recordings. If you do not give permission for the audio/video recording to be obtained, you cannot participate in this study. Because your voice will be potentially identifiable by anyone who hears the recording, your confidentiality for things you say on the recording

cannot be guaranteed although the researcher will limit access to the recordings as described below.

_____ Yes, I give my permission for audio and video to be made of me during my participation in this research study.

_____ No, I do not give my permission for audio and video to be made of me during my participation in this research study.

What if I do not want to be in this research study?

You do not have to be part of this project. This project is voluntary, and it is up to you to decide to participate in this research project. If you agree to participate at any time in this project, you may stop participating without penalty.

What if I have questions?

You can ask Quinton D. Parker (qdparker2@uncg.edu, 919-819-0639) and Dr. Tami Draves (tjdraves@uncg.edu, 336- 298-2098) anything about the study. If you have concerns about how you have been treated in this study call the UNCG Office of Research Integrity Director at 1-855-251-2351.

Participant's Name (Print): _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview #1:

1. How would you describe your upbringing?
2. What was your experience with music before you started studying it in college?
 - a. Do you think your past experiences with music shaped your current experiences?
3. How did you first know that you wanted to study music in college?
 - a. Who or what was influential in your decision to study music in college?
4. How, if at all, was race discussed in your household when you were growing up?
 - a. What lessons did you learn?
 - b. What were those discussions like?
5. How did you end up being a music education major?
 - a. Were there any other experiences or people who were influential in your decision to become a music education major?
 - b. How, if at all, did race play a factor in your choice to study music education?
6. What did you consider when making your choice about where to go to college?
 - a. At any point, did you ever consider attending a Historically Black College or University (HBCU)?
 - b. Was there anything in particular that led you to not choose an HBCU?
 - c. Did race play a role in your decision to study at your current school?

Interview #2:

1. How many students in your school of music identify as Black?
 - a. How has this affected your experience?
2. What have been your experiences as a Black student in a predominantly White school of music?
3. What challenges, if any, do you face as a Black student that your White counterparts do not have to face?
4. How many music faculty members identify as Black?
 - a. What impact, if any, does that have on you and other students who identify as Black?
 - b. How important is it for you to have professors who identify as Black?
5. Do you feel a sense of community in your school of music?
 - a. If yes, do you feel a part of that community?
 - b. Do you ever experience feelings of isolation or powerlessness?
6. As a Black student, what do you think are White faculty and students' perceptions of you?
 - a. Do their perceptions affect you or influence your behavior?
 - i. Do their perceptions affect how you speak around White students and faculty?
 - ii. Do their perceptions affect how you present yourself to White students and faculty?

7. Please tell me about a time that your race played a negative role in your experience?
8. Please tell me about a time that your race played a positive role in your experience?
9. Do you feel like you can be yourself around your White counterparts and professors?
10. Many researchers have suggested that being a Black in a field that adheres to European principles may create a sense of “twoness” – a battle between being Black and being a part of this other world. How would you respond to that?

Interview #3:

1. Please tell me a story that summarizes what it means to you to be a Black music student in a predominantly White school of music.
2. What would you tell your White counterparts and professors about your experiences as a Black in a predominantly White school of music?
3. Given your comments about challenges that you have faced as a Black in a predominately White school of music, what advice would you give another Black student who is looking to study music at your school?
 - a. Why would it be important for them to hear that from you?
4. What has your experience as a Black student in a predominately White school of music taught you?

APPENDIX C: IRB NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

To: Quinton Parker
School of Music
From: UNCG IRB

Date: 1/27/2021

RE: Notice of IRB Exemption

Exemption Category: 2.Survey, interview, public observation

Study #: 21-0230

Study Title: An examination of the lived experiences of Black music education students in predominantly White schools of music.

This submission has been reviewed by the IRB and was determined to be exempt from further review according to the regulatory category cited above under 45 CFR 46.101(b).

Study Description:

The purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of Black music education majors' who are currently enrolled in predominantly White schools of music in the United States.

Investigator's Responsibilities

Please be aware that any changes to your protocol must be reviewed by the IRB prior to being implemented. **Please utilize the consent form/information sheet with the most recent version date when enrolling participants.** The IRB will maintain records for this study for three years from the date of the original determination of exempt status.

Please be aware that valid human subjects training and signed statements of confidentiality for all members of research team need to be kept on file with the lead investigator. Please note that you will also need to remain in compliance with the university "Access To and Retention of Research Data" Policy which can be found at http://policy.uncg.edu/university_policies/research_data/.