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Participation in Winter Guard International as Experienced by Ten Stakeholders: A Phenomenological Study

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Participation in Winter Guard International as Experienced by Ten
Stakeholders: A Phenomenological Study

by

Jeremy Paul Morgan

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School,
the College of Arts and Sciences
and the School of Music
at The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the essence of Winter Guard International (WGI) as lived by ten stakeholders, invested individuals currently serving in leadership roles within the percussion and winds divisions of the WGI organization.

Through the lens of a social constructivist theoretical framework, and the use of individual interviews to obtain data, this study considered what participants have experienced and the contexts in which these experiences have taken place. Grounded theory concepts were used initially to clarify the perspective and scope of the study.

Analysis of the data involved the identification of significant statements from participant interviews. These statements were grouped into four main themes that appeared to be common to all participants. The four themes were: 1) the Development of Character and Identity: Non-Musical Outcomes, 2) Achievement and Excellence, 3) WGI as Educational Entity, and 4) Competition. Additional subthemes were identified for two of the four main themes. Findings indicate that though participants in this study approached WGI from varying backgrounds and distinct personal contexts, their reported experiences with WGI are remarkably similar. Findings further indicate that these experiences resulted in an enthusiastic view of the organization's positive and life-changing influence on students as musicians, performers, and citizens. The implications for WGI's contribution to instrumental music education, and school band programs specifically, are discussed. Topics for future research are suggested.

Keywords: Winter guard, education reform, non-traditional music curriculum

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from educators who genuinely wanted to see me succeed, and inspired me to be better at all things musical.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Jamie,
and our children, Reese and Briley.

Jamie, this degree is as much yours as it is mine. Thank you
for understanding why I needed to do this.

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CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

While enrolled in a qualitative research course in the fall of 2014, I wrote a paper entitled “Exploring High School Band Director Attitudes Toward Indoor Marching Ensembles as a Non-traditional Approach to Instrumental Music Education”. My interest in the potential use of indoor marching activities in school music programs had developed over the course of the previous year as a result of a new teaching position I had accepted at a private Christian university. To enhance the music education curriculum at the university, an indoor marching band had been added prior to my hire. This course allowed students to receive a collegiate marching band experience, since there was not a football program. The position I accepted with the university required that I co-direct the indoor marching band, as well as design and teach all of the visual aspects of the ensemble’s performances. I had limited experience with the indoor marching activity during my prior years as a public school band director. My desire to improve my skills continually feeds my curiosity for seeking best practice in all areas of teaching; that curiosity now extends to the indoor marching arts, a non-traditional music education curriculum.

Reflecting the continual efforts of the music education community to address reform with regards to increasing the percentage of school students we serve, the use of traditional versus non-traditional ensembles, and retention, I began to seek out related studies and materials that would inform my teaching, including that of our indoor ensemble. Efforts to identify studies pertaining to indoor marching performance revealed little to no specific research had been done, though related literature suggested that due to

current and past music education reform efforts, such a study may benefit the field. The intersection of my professional responsibilities and research interest has, in large part, resulted in this study.

Background

Winter Guard International Overview

Often referred to as “Sport of the Arts”, WGI lists the following as its values:

WGI-

1) exists for the participants, their leaders, and supporters, 2) inspires our participants to achieve the highest artistic and creative standards, 3) views competition as a means to encourage the highest standard of excellence, 4) treats every participant as a unique individual with inherent dignity regardless of race, gender, creed, sexual orientation, origin, or cultural background, and 5) believes that every program and style starts with an equal opportunity for success.

Winter Guard International (WGI) was formed in 1977 to establish a national organization to oversee the competitive indoor color guard activity previously associated with contests sponsored by Drum Corps International (DCI), the American Legion, and Veterans of Foreign Wars (“What is WGI”, 2018). The indoor color guard activity, having existed for some time in many parts of the United States, had evolved from the military honor guard tradition (presenting the US flag at ceremonies and public events) into something that in some ways resembled marching band, but with flags and rifles choreographed to prerecorded music. Prior to the formation of WGI, various regions of the United States stressed different performance elements of the activity, such as equipment spinning skills (flags, sabres, rifles), dance, or drill. Each region also utilized

different evaluation tools and procedures for competitions. These factors made it difficult for judges to appropriately compare performing groups in nationally competitive settings. The formation of WGI provided a unifying vision for the color guard activity that placed control in the hands of the color guard units themselves (competing units now had voting rights for policies, procedures, and adjudication), and gave consideration to the desires of all regions of the United States when determining the structure of the organization, as well as how various performance elements were to be evaluated.

WGI as Part of Music Education Reform

The appearance of WGI in the late 1970s is interesting and timely due to the climate of music education at that time. In the 1960s, education in the United States was aggressively responding to a new technological age signaled by the launch of Sputnik by the Soviet Union in 1957 (Abeles et al., 1995). The spearhead of this response was a new focus on math and science that placed arts education in a position of being viewed as an afterthought (Mark, 1996). In response, the music education community was compelled to consider what would be necessary to demonstrate the importance of music in a comprehensive education for all students. Stakeholders of music education promotion, through organizational efforts and multiple reform-based symposia, established the need for a broader selection of music performance and learning opportunities as well as more varied music ensembles that would better serve the needs and interests of more students (Mark, 1996). Though perhaps not intentional, the newly established WGI was providing opportunities regarding areas of reforms (e.g., multiple arts collaborations, an emphasis on creativity, wider variety of musical styles and genres, and increased opportunities for performance) being proposed for music education.

WGI has experienced tremendous growth since its formation (1977). In 1992, a new division for percussion-based performing units was added, and in 2015 another division was added for groups featuring wind instruments. WGI provides opportunities to incorporate any type of musical instrument, which results in ensembles that allow non-traditional band students to become involved in school-based music education programs. Electric guitars, bass guitars, synthesizers, etc. may be utilized alongside the most modern music technologies to provide performance opportunities tailored to the musical tastes of students.

To put the growth of WGI in perspective, the first WGI World Championship in 1977, then referred to as WGI Olympics, was held in Chicago, IL, and featured 29 color guard units in competition. The 2018 WGI World Championship in Dayton, OH, will feature approximately 350 color guard units, 250 percussion units, and 40 WGI Winds units from around the world (“The First Scoring System”, 2018). The 2018 WGI World Championship will involve over 12,000 young performers and over 135 trained adjudicators that represent many of our nation’s finest collegiate and professional music performers, pedagogues, and program designers (“WGI Today”, 2018). The growth and success of WGI suggests the organizational and philosophical models employed have in part encouraged music educators to add non-traditional ensembles as part of their curricula, resulting in an increase of student participation and performance achievement excellence (“What is WGI”, 2018).

Over the course of its development, WGI has evolved into a creative outlet that blends together music, dance, staging, costuming, and visual art—allowing students to “tell stories,” and communicate ideas and meanings in the unique way only the arts can

do. This rich form of multiple-arts expression may provide opportunity to address a wide variety of social and cultural contexts that hold significance and meaning for the performers. Perhaps these characteristics of WGI make it a valuable model for exploring ways to expand and enhance the musical experiences and offerings available to music students, and to reach a wider portion of school populations by appealing to cultural, emotional, social, and creative needs of today's student, Generation Z.

Music Education Reform

It could be argued that music education has been constantly evolving curriculum in the United States since its early days of the 20th century. As influenced by military bands and the touring bands of John Phillip Sousa, Patrick Gilmore, Giuseppe Createore, and others, school bands functioned largely as civic support groups promoting social activities based on culture, religion, and patriotism (Jones, 2008; Mark, 1996). Following WWI, music educators became more interested in music becoming a permanent part of the US school system, partly motivated by a shift of philosophy away from the civic function of school of bands to one where the needs of the music student were considered the focus (Abeles et al., 1995). The return of WWII veterans and the passing of the G.I. Bill (1944) bolstered the music education work force by placing military trained musicians in the schools (Jones, 2008; Mark, 1996). Music programs grew as the population of the United States grew under the auspices of being seen as the most powerful country in the world, and a place where all children were given access to a well-rounded public education (Jones, 2008; Keene, 2010; Mark, 1996).

The Soviet Union's launch of Sputnik in 1957 lead to America's renewed interest in the sciences and a desire to increase academic rigor in schools (Abeles et al., 1995;

Tellstrom, 1971; Werner, 2009). This new school focus created concern that arts education would take a secondary role to all other areas of study (Abeles et al., 1995; Mark, 1996). Music educators responded in part by organizing symposia such as the Yale Seminar on Music Education (1963) and the Tanglewood Symposium (1967) where the stakeholders would determine the desired outcomes of music education in the schools and how best to create curricula that would lead to these outcomes. Though these and many subsequent efforts for addressing reform have garnered attention, it can be stated that music education still looks extremely similar to the way it did in the 1950s. National education reform efforts such as A Nation At Risk (1983), No Child Left Behind (2002), GOALS 2000, Every Student Succeeds Act (2015), and other state- and national-level education actions have in part motivated music educators' increased and diversified efforts to secure music's role in school education. Reflective of the ever-changing social and educational landscape in the United States, and an expanded view of curricula as reflective of other cultures and global interactions, The National Standards for Music Education (1994) have been replaced with The National Core Arts Standards (NCAS, 2014). These new standards reflect earlier reform efforts in the United States and additionally consider standards for music education in countries across the world. These standards suggest a global philosophy that music is a valuable and integral part of all cultures, worthy of study in our schools

Philosophical Positions

The belief that music holds value has existed for centuries. Plato wrote about the importance of music and its ability to affect morality (Stamou, 2002). This idea of music as a means of moral education continues today in the philosophical writings of John

Dewey (Abeles et al., 1995). Plato's student, Aristotle, agreed that moral education was a function of music, but he also considered it something to pursue as a leisure activity, a form of relaxation, and as a civic utility (Stamou, 2002). In this regard, Aristotle's views reflect much of the way music is enjoyed and used today.

Some, including leading 20th-century music philosopher Bennett Reimer would say that music is worth studying on its own merit and should not require justification through extra-musical benefits (Reimer, 1970). Reimer demonstrates the expressionists' view that the intrinsic aesthetic meaning in music leads to the listener experiencing real emotions, and therefore, music is necessary to help individuals learn how to feel. In Reimer's view, music is seen as an object with intrinsic value. According to Walker (2001), Reimer's *A Philosophy of Music Education* (1970) was influenced greatly by the previous writings of John Dewey, Susan Langer, Harry Broudy, and Leonhard Meyer. For each of these writers, the value of music was said to exist within the works of music themselves, and this view was exemplified in the literature of the large orchestras found in the Western European music tradition. In contrast, David Elliot would later argue that the act of making music, not the musical object itself, contains music's truest value (Elliot, 1995). To some degree, this perspective removed the need to specify what kind of music is considered valuable for study and placed the focus on why people make music.

For those who see musical performance as a way of expressing meaning, performance will always remain a significant goal of music education. Elliot Eisner (1998) describes how every individual possesses a unique combination of ways through which to represent themselves and their ideas to the world, with one of these "forms of

representation” being music. Although this can be done through other aspects of musical expression, such as composition, performance is certainly a significant way to communicate. One of the difficulties in modern music education is the prominence of technology that circumvents the need to produce music for one’s self (Reimer, 1994). The availability to access most any type of music at any time through technological advances has perhaps aided the lack of a need for individuals to learn to play instruments, or even sing. Additionally, those who have a desire to create music in today’s culture may accomplish that without having any formal training due in part to advancements in music recording and notation technology. As a result, Reimer (1994) expressed a concern that participation numbers would fall in school music programs, although there seems to be little to no research exploring this concern. Reimer was supported, to some degree, by Williams’ (2007) findings that although interest in social music participation increased in students between the ages of nine and seventeen, participation in applied lessons decreased significantly.

It is probably reasonable to assume that applied lessons are considered a type of formal music instruction generally associated with the western classical/art music tradition. A decrease in applied lesson interest may be explained by the greater interest in popular music styles, often learned by rote or in informal settings, exhibited by adolescents (Gembris, 2002; Hargreaves, Marshall & North, 2003; Kellett, 2016; Snead, 2010). The same “pop” phenomenon could also explain lessening interests in formal music training within school ensembles (Green, 2008). As student interest in popular styles increases, so does interest in the instruments associated with these styles (Campbell, Connell, & Beegle, 2007). When these instruments and styles are not taught

within the school music program, students may seek out opportunities to learn them outside the school setting. These pursuits can lead music educators to have concerns over the quality and depth of the informal music instruction occurring outside the school (Campbell, Connell, & Beegle, 2007; Snead, 2010). Perhaps the expansion of instructional offerings within the school band program could address student interests while also providing them with the quality education desired by music teachers.

Current Band Curricula

For decades, marching band and concert band have been staples of the high school instrumental music experience across the United States (Mantie, 2012). Since their establishment in the early twentieth century, school band programs have remained essentially static in their structure and administration. A common perception of school bands is that they exist under a philosophy of music education where the purpose of the activity is director-centered (Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Howell, 2010; Mantie, 2012; Robinson, 2010). In both marching and concert band settings, it is typically the director who makes the decisions regarding literature and the manner in which that literature will be taught and performed. It is the responsibility of the students to effectively fulfill the director's wishes to the best of their ability.

Although the structure and administration of school bands has remained constant, the focus of the activity with regard to repertoire has changed. In the mid-twentieth century the focus of school concert bands seemed to shift from one of a civic nature to one of an artistic nature (Allsup & Benedict, 2008). Rather than using music as a means of celebrating American living, the music itself appeared to become the most important goal. Allsup and Benedict (2008) suggest this was an expression of the need for band to

justify itself as an independent entity that could, and should, function without attachment to other, seemingly more significant, activities. This concern of wind band repertoire being a legitimate artistic endeavor is seen as, perhaps, the primary reason for the current persistence of the concert performance approach to band curriculum in schools. Though students are indeed musicking (Elliott, 1995), the philosophy behind the curriculum and the pedagogy does not seem to be student-centric.

The traditional model of school band continues to lead to concerns over the way music education is defined (Mantie, 2012). If a limited amount of instructional material and repertoire is being covered, then is band a comprehensive expression of music education? When a director makes all the decisions regarding what will be played and how it will be played, students will miss the opportunity to explore many of the creative avenues possible in their study of music (McPherson & Hendricks, 2010).

The idea of a literature- and director-centered approach has been established as the traditional model of music education in all three major ensemble types (traditional ensembles): band, choir, orchestra. Some traditional ensemble directors make a conscious decision to take this approach, while others perhaps simply follow suit because it was the model under which they learned. The danger of this philosophy is that it encourages a disregard for the musical lives of students beyond the school and prevents the educator from considering all the factors that will influence how students will make meaning of the musical concepts being taught in school ensembles (Kellett, 2016; Snead, 2010). Those who choose to make literature the primary focus of the band program are perhaps declaring that the literature is the curriculum. Battisti (1989) suggested that only through high-quality literature do students develop listening skills, musical knowledge,

and sensitivity in performance. This concept promotes the idea of a “core repertoire” that provides the musical works considered most appropriate for music education, based on their artistic qualities. This line of thinking flows directly out of the aesthetic education philosophy encouraged by Reimer (1970).

In contrast, those who approach music education from the standpoint of music-making as the central focus represent David Elliot’s (1995) praxial model. This philosophy may lend itself more to the broader way of conceiving instrumental music education as a way of merging what students view as relevant music in their personal lives with the formal instruction of music typical of school bands. In a broader curriculum with a more comprehensive approach, the type of ensemble and the literature being studied would become secondary to the processes associated with expressing ideas through musical performance (Allsup, 2012; Grant & Lerer, 2011; Jones, 2008; Mantie, 2012).

Band Program Performance Venues Today

It seems performance venues for school band programs have remained largely unchanged throughout most of the twentieth century, and to the present. It is common for concert bands and jazz bands to give two or three public performances in the school each year, with occasional performances at community events (Nicolucci, 2010; Russell, 2006). Although competitions are held for concert bands and jazz bands, these ensembles seem to be found more often at festivals where ratings are awarded rather than ranked placements. Marching bands are most associated with performing at football games, in various types of parades, and for marching competitions and festivals.

Concert and marching band festivals are common in the United States and are

frequently administered at the district and state level, but also occur at the national level. This is true for jazz band as well, though probably not to the degree of the other common school band ensembles. Festivals are generally not competitive, but rather serve as an opportunity for ensembles to be scored and rated according to a specific rubric by a panel of experienced band directors/judges. Ratings are determined by the level of achievement demonstrated by each band in a variety of predetermined performance categories. In contrast, competitions use rubrics to score participating ensembles and then rank them to determine a winner. Competitions have been associated with band programs since the early twentieth century and continue to be a significant aspect of many school band programs from local to national levels (Rohrer, 2002). An example of band competition on an individual level is found in All-State, All-County, All-District honor bands where individuals compete for the highest placement in an ensemble.

Additional performance opportunities are often provided in many states through solo and ensemble festivals. These events provide opportunity for individuals and small groups to be evaluated by one or more judges. Once again, a rubric is used to evaluate each performance, and a rating, not a ranking, is usually given.

Meeting the Musical Needs of Students

If music education is to continue progressing in its effort to enrich the musical lives of students, it would seem that a “balance” must be reached between the praxial and aesthetic beliefs about music education. Students seem to be drawn to music for a variety of reasons, and the ability of band programs to attract and retain students may depend upon the ability to address many different student motivations. Allsup (2012) clarified his position from his article “Moral Ends of Band” with Benedict (2008) when he stated

that the exclusion of the large instrumental ensemble in school band programs was not what he was advocating, but instead, the inclusion of alternate, or non-traditional ensembles as supplements to the large ensemble structure. Research has demonstrated that even though many students report positive attitudes toward the school band experience, they also report a distinction between the roles of music in school and out of school (Campbell, Connell, & Beegle, 2007; Corenblum & Marshall, 1998; Howell, 2010; Kellett, 2016; Snead, 2010). As Leonhard (1999) and Shuler (2011) expressed, the performance program in school bands must remain strong, but must expand to address performance opportunities for a wider and more diverse student population in new types of ensembles and genres.

Perhaps the musical preferences students bring from outside the school classroom could serve as a starting point for in-school music education in some instances (Gembris, 2002). According to Kellett (2016), a music curriculum that incorporates styles of music reflective of student preferences could potentially lead to an increase in student participation in school music programs. Music education could also become more meaningful to students when the musical material being explored is more closely associated with the social contexts most recognized by students (Green, 2008). Furthermore, acknowledging the influence of age, and the emotional and social development associated with it, must be taken into account when determining what musical offerings will draw students into school music programs (Hargreaves et al, 2003).

Generation Z

Although exact dates vary, the term Generation Z generally refers to individuals

born just prior to, or just after the year 2000. Daukseviciute (as cited in Cilliers, 2017) indicates that Generation Z members were the first generation of people to be born into a world globally connected by the internet and are often referred to now as Digital Natives. Seemiller and Grace (as cited in Mohr & Mohr, 2017) consider Gen-Zers, as they refer to them, as being the most diverse generation the world has known. They also suggest that Gen-Zers, unlike their self-oriented Generation X predecessors, tend to be more community, or “we” oriented. According to Cilliers (2017), Generation Z students expect teaching environments that mimic the interactive virtual worlds in which they live.

Twenge (2013) contends that grade inflation in schools has led Gen-Zers to have an inflated sense of their abilities, and when faced with the need for sustained achievement they often fall short. Twenge also states that today’s students are, in fact, different from previous generations. He suggests that educators should learn from these students and adapt to the changing culture. Twenge believes this can be accomplished without compromising educational standards. Perhaps in the world of music education WGI could serve as a curricular device that meets the highly interactive expectations of Gen-Zers while also teaching them how to be successful through sustained effort and achievement.

Research Problem Statement

Citing the work of LeBlanc (1991) and Hargreaves (2003), Kellett (2016) discussed how people go through phases of musical tastes when their willingness to accept or consider new or different musical styles and genres may fluctuate. If this is true, it is possible that an adolescent who is currently in a phase of development with a narrow palette of musical preferences may reject participation in a music curriculum

addressing only traditional musical forms. To promote more participation in school music programs it may be necessary to offer a wider selection of opportunities to better serve students regardless of their stage of musical development or consumption (Campbell et al, 2007; Snead, 2010). The disconnect between school music programs and students' musical lives outside school is an issue that must be addressed if music education is going to continue to be relevant (Durrant, 2001; Jones, 2008; Snead, 2010). If school music programs are going to attract new students at a greater rate than what we are currently seeing, and retain those students, attempts to reach out to students and meet them where they are in their musical lives must be made (Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Jones, 2008; Kellett, 2016; Mantie, 2012; Snead, 2010).

Over its forty-year history, WGI has experienced tremendous growth in terms of both member participation and performance level. At a time when school band participation seems to be waning on a national scale, WGI continues to grow. There appears to be something about the WGI activity that draws young people in and encourages them not only to participate, but to strive to excel. Perhaps a better understanding of the WGI experience could provide insights that may improve the recruiting and retention strategies utilized in our communities, including our school band programs.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the essence of WGI as experienced by ten music and performance education advocates who are invested in various aspects of the organization, each currently serving in a leadership role within the activity, and to discover their similar/dissimilar experiences and views of WGI.

Additionally, the study aimed to ascertain the potential for WGI to provide opportunity for more meaningful music experiences for students that may resemble those prescribed by music education reformists. Through the lens of a social constructivist theoretical framework and the use of individual interviews to obtain data, this study will consider what participants have experienced, and in what contexts these experiences have taken place. Perhaps a greater understanding of the WGI experience could encourage instrumental music educators to reevaluate what our ultimate goals and purposes are when it comes to our current and potential future music students and their experiences.

Research Questions

The central question:

1. What are the experiences and views of ten individuals from diverse musical and educational backgrounds who play a leadership role in WGI?

Sub-questions:

1. Is the WGI experience distinct from those experienced through traditional band music curricula (concert band and marching band)?
2. Does the phenomenon of Winter Guard International participation have potential to positively influence the curriculum, and subsequently, the teaching practices in high school band programs?

Definitions

Achievement: For the purpose of this study, refers to the acquisition and understanding of skills needed to fulfill performance responsibilities, including those in a WGI show.

Excellence: The quality of being excellent, or an excellent or valuable

quality.

Drum Corps:

An outdoors marching activity that utilizes brass, percussion, and color guard performers. They greatly resemble marching bands. Since the 1970s, drum corps have typically been competitive ensembles that tour nationally each summer.

Drum Corps International:

An organization that governs the competitive drum corps activity.

Marching Arts:

A term describing a collection of musical performance activities that typically incorporates the playing of wind and percussion instruments with coordinated group movements referred to as drill. Examples of marching arts activities include, but are not limited to: high school or college marching band, drum corps, indoor color guard, indoor percussion, indoor marching band, parade band, or pep band.

Traditional Music Programs:

Refers to school music ensembles that are considered to be modeled after Western European large ensembles. Band, choir, and orchestra typically have this designation.

Non-Traditional Music Programs:

Refers to any school performance ensemble that is not band, choir, or orchestra.

Overview of Research Design

Ten individuals representing leadership roles within the WGI activity were interviewed during this phenomenological study. The leadership roles represented by the participants included those of WGI performance ensemble director, judge, or administrator. Participants came from a variety of educational backgrounds and represented both musical and non-musical professions. One interview was conducted with each participant. Each interview was transcribed, coded, and analyzed to identify any emergent themes.

Theoretical Framework

The social constructivist perspective is a combination of constructivism and social constructionism (Freeman & Mathison, 2009). Crotty (as cited by Freeman & Mathison, 2009) suggests that constructivism acknowledges the unique experience of the individual, while the social constructionist focuses on the idea that our culture determines our experiences. In other words, constructivists suggest that everyone makes sense of the world in his or her own way, and that all the realities created by that process are equally valid. Social constructionists would argue that everyone is shaped by the culture around them, and as a result, our view of the world is, to some extent, determined for us. Social constructivists merge these two philosophies by assuming “that individuals are always interacting with a socially constituted environment and that these interactions form the basis of their experiences” (Freeman & Mathison, 2009). Considering that this study is exploring the experiences of individuals within an environment where multiple role players are engaging with one another simultaneously, the social constructivist perspective seems well suited to the task.

CHAPTER II – REVIEW OF LITERATURE

To better understand the data in this study, specifically the experiences of leaders in WGI, it is necessary to review concepts and studies that address aspects of music education pertinent to the WGI activity. Some of the topics to be reviewed are broadly applicable to the music education field, while others are more specific to instrumental music education. Additional topics relate very specifically to the structure of WGI's organizational philosophy and how that philosophy is implemented in performance opportunities for students.

Philosophy of Music Education

Isaiah Berlin (1996) wrote, "The goal of philosophy is always the same, to assist men to understand themselves and thus operate in the open, and not wildly, in the dark." Application of Berlin's statement to music educators is that we must think about why we do the things we do and apply a framework to assist us in organizing our thoughts, beliefs, and subsequent actions that should ultimately lead to student achievement in the music education classroom. This framework, or philosophy, establishes our contexts for evaluating our actions and motivations that guide every detail of instruction and assessment of student work as well as the self-reflections of instructors that seek teaching expertise. Reimer (2003) supported this view when he suggested that it is a stated philosophy that provides guidance when making decisions about what we believe to be valuable and worthy of pursuit.

In music education, there have been, essentially, two competing philosophical positions since the middle of the twentieth century (Mark, 1999; Reimer, 2003). The first of these, aesthetic-based music education, appeared around 1960 after music educators

were prompted by the publication of *Basic Concepts in Music Education* (1958) to leave behind the utilitarian rationales for music education in search of new intellectual foundations (Mark, 1999). The aesthetic movement was furthered spurred on by Leonhard and House's book *Foundations Principles of Music Education* (1959), which specifically discussed the philosophical underpinnings of music education (Mark, 1999).

The efforts of music educators to take up the challenge of identifying a new philosophy of music education culminated in the publication of Bennett Reimer's landmark work *A Philosophy of Music Education* (1970). In his book, Reimer promoted the idea that music education should be aesthetic education. He contended that music holds intrinsic value that is manifested in our emotional response to its form. This assertion implies that music education is the education of feelings (Reimer, 1970). Susanne Langer (1942) had promoted this same thought when she stated, "Just as words can describe events we have not witnessed, places and things we have not seen, so music can present emotions and moods we have not felt, passions we did not know before." Harry Broudy (1990) references the influence music has on our feelings when he explains that the "aesthetic impulse may well be an innate need for variety or, negatively, the inability to tolerate unvaried patterns of stimulation" which encourage artistic expression. Broudy's observation would support the need for curricula that promotes the development of aesthetic understanding as a means of better understanding how we feel.

Musicians and music educators who promote repertoire as curriculum would reflect Reimer's view. This approach assumes that the performing of what is considered high-quality literature, or core repertoire, will lead to the understanding of how expression is achieved through music (Battisti, 1989). In the band world, this core

repertoire can be identified by analyzing recommended music performance lists as created by expert conductors and educators in the field of instrumental music (Waymire, 2011). The core repertoire view of instrumental music education is typically associated with the director-centered, traditional school band where the student is told what they will perform and how it will be prepared (Allsup & Benedict, 2008).

The perpetuation of the director-centered model of band is not necessarily driven by a need or desire to have control on the part of the conductor. Waymire (2011) argued that teaching musicianship should be one of the primary goals of instrumental music education. In his study, Waymire found that directors of high-performing school bands associated the development of their own musicianship with musical experiences they had in college ensembles where the highest quality music was emphasized. Waymire goes on to suggest that a director's personal level of musicianship—established, practiced, and developed to a high level with quality art music—is positively influential on each director's ability to produce students that display high levels of musical achievement. These findings suggest that the directors are working on behalf of the students to help them in-turn discover how to achieve high levels of self-expression through quality literature performance.

In contrast to Reimer's aesthetic philosophy of music education is the praxial philosophy associated with the work of David Elliot, one of Reimer's former students (Elliot, 1995). As explained by Goble (2003), the word "praxis" comes from the Greek verb "prasso," which means "to do" or "to act purposefully". Elliot believes that the value of music lies in the processes associated with making it and listening to it (Silverman et al., 2014). Rather than seeing music as an object, the praxial view sees it

as the result of actions being taken by an individual or a group of individuals, which leads to the creation of music (Cunha & Lorenzino, 2012). Instead of the value being intrinsic, it is extrinsic (Elliot, 1995). Regelski (2002) explains the praxial view by pointing out that our reality is a social one and is not appointed to us as an object from the physical world. He maintains that anything of value holds that value only as a result of our human “purposes, intentions, and needs”. This praxial view eliminates the need to study only a specific repertoire. Instead, it opens the door for a much broader sample of music to be introduced into the educational environment because different types of music originate from different processes and serve different purposes. This is a notion that is gaining popularity as a means to draw more students into the music education classroom and to meet their needs as consumers of music (Allsup, 2008; Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Byrd, 2008; Elpus & Abril, 2011; Howell, 2010; Jones, 2008; Leonhard, 1999; Mantie, 2012; Parker, 2008; Robinson, 2010; Shuler, 2011). Such an approach would be considered a non-traditional way to provide an instrumental music education. It would allow for the possibility that students could encounter music in the classroom that is relevant to their lives outside the classroom (Mantie, 2012). It would also make it acceptable to expand the types of instrumental ensembles utilized within the school to create connections between students’ interests and creative outlets that can help expand their musical tastes (Jones, 2008).

Another way the praxial philosophy fits modern school bands is in regards to marching band. Most schools do not perform core wind repertoire (music established as the best compositions written for wind band) with a marching ensemble. Rather, they often perform pop, rock, movie music, etc. (Battisti, 1989), and classical or even original

music written for the marching band idiom. Though not core repertoire, marching band literature may allow programs to meet established curricular goals centered on specific student learning outcomes supported by the tenets of praxial/experiential philosophy, and those similarly expressed by the NCAS (National Core Arts Standards). Aesthetic philosophy would reject most marching band literature because it does not utilize core repertoire. Yet, most high school band directors, regardless of philosophical approach, field a marching band. The reason for this can be traced back to the origins of the traditional school band and its civic function. Communities expect to see marching bands, and they expect to be entertained, leading administrators to place both community and competitive expectations on directors (Rogers, 1985). These expectations for marching band, along with the repertoire-centered concert band, have resulted in what we see as the traditional school band program.

Although many band programs look the same in terms of structure and the types of performance opportunities offered, the desired outcomes are not necessarily driven by a common philosophy (Brenner, 2010; Mantie, 2012; Weidner, 2015). Gonzales (2001) found a variety of philosophical positions represented in the teaching practices of several music educators ranging from elementary music teachers to professional conductors. In his study, Gonzales found some directors placed emphasis on making learning enjoyable, some focused on exposure to different styles and cultures, and others stressed the development of emotional expression through music. Similar studies support Gonzales' findings and recommendations for future research (Brown, 2008; Jenkins, 2011; Sindberg, 2009).

Regardless of the philosophy one subscribes to, either aesthetic or praxial, or a combination of both, Jorgensen (2014) conveys the need to avoid settling for criticism of the status quo, and focus on moving forward by establishing plans to improve the state of music education. She emphasizes the need to focus on how music will continue to be passed on to generations to come, whether as an object of culture or through musical practices. The status quo for band programs is largely represented by its traditional focus on two curricular foci, the marching band and the concert band. These two large traditional ensembles, though still largely utilized by every band program in the United States, may not meet the musical needs of all students.

The Traditional Large Ensemble

Research has indicated that problems with the traditional approach to school bands exist due to the emphasis placed on director-centered, rather than student-centered, instruction (Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Allsup, 2012; Byrd, 2008; Grant & Lerer, 2011; Howell, 2010; Jones, 2008; Leonhard, 1999; Mantie, 2012; Parker, 2008; Robinson, 2010). This approach could alienate students who have musical preferences outside the school band, and therefore reduce the number of students who will choose to participate in school-based music education programs (Elpus & Abril, 2011; Kellett, 2016; Shuler, 2011; Snead, 2010). Gibson (2016) suggests that students who express an interest in music in high school are given few options, with large performing ensembles such as band and choir typically being the only choices. According to Williams (2007), lack of choices for music participation has also led to decreased numbers for many music programs. Allsup and Benedict (2008) argue that music educators must stop trying to legitimize the traditional approach to band and embrace student preferences when

developing music education curricula, rather than dictating what music should be considered important.

The idea of legitimizing the traditional approach to band may stem from the longstanding association of wind bands with public education (Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Jones, 2008). Mantie (2012) and Holz (1923) describe how the school band emerged from the popular civic and touring band tradition around the turn of the twentieth-century, but over the decades ultimately sought legitimization as an accepted musical art form. By the midpoint of the twentieth century, it seems a new emphasis on music itself, rather than its perceived function, had begun to dominate the school band. The balancing act between civic functionality and performance art led Mantie (2012) to describe the wind band as “a schizophrenic creature that suffers a continual crisis of identity, struggling to be simultaneously common and special.” In response to Mantie (2012), Kanellopoulos (2012) states that Mantie’s application of Michel Foucault’s concepts to school bands was incorrectly utilized to state, concretely, that the music-centered development within the school-band world, and the resulting director-centered approach, was wrong. Kanellopoulos (2012) suggests that instead of negatively labeling the various aspects of the traditional wind band, we should consider it as one of many types of unique musical entities and seek to understand the dynamics of how it works in contrast to others. The traditional (large music ensembles) experiences that exist in today’s band programs may address the musical needs of some portion of the school population while non-traditional ensembles may meet the needs of others. Additionally, it should be considered that the social environments in which these ensembles rehearse and perform may aid in providing students, possibly most band students, with experiences they need

in order to have a more meaningful high school experience. The value of these non-music outcomes of band participation should be considered.

Non-Musical Outcomes of Music Education

Gibson (2016) states that the non-musical benefits used to promote participation in school bands in the early twentieth century are still being used today. Studies have found non-musical benefits to be viewed as positive outcomes of school-based, as well as community-oriented music activities (Aspin, 2000; Bridges, 1996; Chiodo, 1997; Coffman & Adamek, 2001; Darrough, 1990; Hosler, 1992; Mills, 1988; Rothlisberger, 1995; Young, 2001). In his study of Drum Corps International (DCI) alumni, Zdzinski (2004) found that self-discipline, self-confidence, personal responsibility, mental health, and physical health were benefits of marching arts (including high school and college marching bands, as well as related indoor performance ensembles) according to participants.

Often, the non-musical benefits of music education cited by researchers, instructors, and supporters relate to the social development of the individual. Zdzinski (2004) found social skills to be a reported benefit of participation in DCI, as did Young (2001), Putnam (as cited in Zdzinski, 2004), and Coffman & Adamek (1999). Campbell et al. (2007) acknowledged that participation in musical ensembles could extend beyond musical fulfillment to an even more meaningful social interaction. Hargreaves and Marshall (2003) offer that music making can result in a cultural awareness that informs a student's understanding of themselves, as well as an understanding of others involved in the music making.

According to Sixsmith & Gibson (2007), participating in music can lead to enhanced social cohesion, enjoyment, personal development, and empowerment. Sutherland (2015) found that social and cultural factors “contributed to the participants’ positive experiences of musical experience in secondary school” (p. 170). He stated, “The importance of friendship and community was indicated as being critical in the formation of a collective identity” (p. 170). Adderley, Kennedy, & Berz (2003) found that students in their study placed a great deal of importance on the social aspects of their performance ensemble experiences. Adderley et al. (2003) concluded that performance ensemble participation provided opportunities to meet people and establish relationships outside the home that assisted students in navigating their difficult high school years.

Broh (2002) found that students participating in musical activities tended to be more engaged with their parents, and that participants’ parents spoke more frequently with the parents of the student’s friends. Broh believed that these social outcomes would likely result in a higher level of self-esteem for the student, which would lead to an increase in motivation and self-efficacy. Eerola & Eerola (2014) investigated the impact of extended music education on the quality of school life for students. The study revealed that students felt generally satisfied with the school experience, as well as feeling a sense of achievement and opportunity. Additional analysis revealed that these findings were not duplicated with students in sports activities or visual arts classes. Dagaz (2012) stated that students reported finding acceptance in their high school marching band, and that they had developed self-confidence through the experience. Hewitt and Allan (2013) and Gouzouasis and Henderson (2012) found that positive experiences within a mutual social context are key factors for increased motivation. The

findings of Harland et al. (2000) indicate that personal and social development were the most frequently found influences resulting from involvement in the arts. Hallam (2010) suggests that an increase in self-esteem and personal confidence may lead to an increase in motivation in relation to other academic pursuits.

These non-musical outcomes may be greatly enhanced with stimuli garnered through recognition by peers, family, community, and others in the arts. Such stimuli may be represented by applause, cheers, or kind words offered at concerts or parades, half time or pep rallies. Though these positive receptions in non-competitive settings may add to self-esteem and personal confidence, a music participation outcome as suggested by Hallam (2010), competitions attended by band enthusiasts, including other school bands, and trained and respected adjudicators may provide greater stimuli and, in some if not many cases, motivation for continued participation and increased rehearsal effort.

Competition

The idea of competition permeates an American culture that places great value on its perceived benefits (Opsal, 2013). The very basis of the American free-market economic system is competition, and from sports to the job market to funding for school systems, competition seems to always be present. According to Opsal (2013), “American culture values competition, so kids grow up around it and often associate it with positive things such as sports.” Howard (1994) found that many students considered performance within a competitive setting to be exciting. Kohn (1986, 1993) argues that competition is counter-productive because it only rewards the winner and provides the loser with the equivalent of a punishment. Saferstein (as cited in Rohrer, 2002) concluded that

competition negatively impacts students by creating a stressful environment obsessed with perfection. In contrast, Cote and Thomas (2007) contend that competition in youth sports promotes physical wellbeing, psychosocial development, and motor skill learning. Similar debates over the benefits and drawbacks of contests and competitions have long existed in the music education field as well.

The school-band contest model has existed since the early twentieth-century and has remained a steady presence ever since (Rohrer, 2002). The organization of a school band competition by professional music educators first occurred in 1923 when a committee from the National Conference of Music Supervisors (NCMS) held the National Band Tournament in Chicago, IL (Abeles et al., 1995; Holz, 1923; Larue, 1986). Prior to this event, band competitions had served a variety of functions not specifically oriented toward educational goals. Interschool rivalry was often the motivation for competitions that included musical ensembles, athletics, or public speaking (Neil, 1944 as cited in Rohrer, 2002). Competitions sponsored and organized by instrument manufacturers served as promotional events to increase sales to a society that was placing greater emphasis on music participation due to the influence of military and touring bands (Rohrer, 2002).

In 1924, the same NCMS committee that established the National Band Tournament a year prior sought to develop a standardized national contest that would eliminate the discrepancies found among privately organized competitions. These discrepancies included: specified repertoire vs. freedom of choice, the awarding of trophies vs. cash awards or scholarships, and judging guidelines and structure. The NCMS committee formed the National School Band Association (NSBA) to oversee the

newly revised National Band Contest, and the first event was held in 1926 (Neil, 1944 as cited in Rohrer, 2002). The National Band Contest and efforts of the NSBA seem to have greatly influenced the establishment of state organizations to oversee band contests at the state, district, and local levels modeled after the standardized approach of the National Band Contest.

From the beginning, band competitions had utilized a ranking system based on score to determine placement of participating ensembles. By the 1930s, a concern over too much emphasis being placed on winning led to the promotion of a rating system to be combined with rankings in order to reduce the competitive nature of contests (Abeles et al., 1995). This new “competition-festival” format was not welcomed by all. Some music educators argued that a lack of competition would lead to weaker performance standards. That being said, participation in competition-festivals continued to grow.

With the onset of World War II, travel for band contests waned (Hurst, 1994). As a result, greater responsibility fell on state and local organizations to administer contests. As was the case prior to the establishment of the National Band Contest, concerns over lack of standardization still existed, along with debates over philosophies related to contest vs. festival, and concerns over the expenses associated with participation in such events. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, contest and festival formats continued to vary from state to state, though the influence of the National Band Contest remained visible.

In 1976, Marching Bands of America (MBA), a private, not-for-profit organization, introduced a national competition for high school marching bands. In 1984, the organization adopted its current name, Bands of America (BOA). In 2006, BOA merged with the Music for All Foundation (MFA) (“Bands of America”, 2010), which

promotes and produces events and activities that lead to “. . . positive experiences for band and choir students” (“Bands of America”, 2010). BOA is perhaps considered the pinnacle of competitive marching band in the United States.

BOA’s annual season consists of one-day regional competitions and two-day large regional competitions, culminates in the BOA Grand Nationals held in Indianapolis, IN, over a three-day period in the late fall, and results in the crowning of a national champion high school marching band (“Bands of America”, 2010). BOA super regional events welcome up to eighty bands (“Super Regionals”, 2010), while Grand Nationals accepts one hundred bands (“Grand National Championships”, 2010). In both cases, the events are first come first serve; many bands are not allowed entry due to the large number of bands that apply to compete. All BOA competitions are multi-round events with fewer bands advancing to subsequent rounds based on score (“Grand National Championships”, 2010; “Super Regionals”, 2010). It seems BOA has had a greater impact on marching band student achievement and adjudicator training than any other marching band organization to date.

Competition as a component of the modern school band is often blamed for much of the perceived shortcomings in contemporary instrumental music education (Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Allsup, 2008; Byrd, 2008; Howell, 2010; Jones, 2008; Leonhard, 1999; Mantie, 2012; Parker, 2008; Robinson, 2010; Schouten et. al, 1983; Snead, 2010). Such external evaluation has, for many years, led to a concern over the “one show concept,” where focus is on the perfecting of one marching band show for an entire season (typically late summer through late fall) leading to a lack of exposure to more varied literature, reduced musical and technical development, extra rehearsal time outside

school, an increase in adherence to administrative and community whims, and increased expense (Rockefeller, 1982; Schouten et. al, 1983). In short, such an approach would seemingly be lacking in educational value for the students (Battisti, 1989; Rockefeller, 1982). For decades, the defense of band competitions has been situated in the extra-musical benefits imparted by the activity. Reimer (1970) warned that such justifications would no longer suffice, and stressed the importance of demonstrated contributions to the quality of children's lives. It can be argued, however, that the extra-musical benefits often used to justify competition as part of the school-band experience do contribute to the quality of students' lives (Campbell et al., 2007; Zdzinski, 2004).

The growth in popularity of drum corps during the 1970s has been attributed with promoting an increased emphasis on school marching band and the continued push toward competitive programs (Rickels, 2012). Schouten et al. (1983) and Zdzinski (2004) demonstrate that there are those who identify positive personal outcomes with the drum corps experience. Some benefits identified by Zdzinski (2004) were "personal development, mental and physical health benefits, and social and musical development." Additionally, Zdzinski (2004) found competition and achievement to be among the important factors former corps members provided as reasons they chose to participate. Interestingly, the same study found that community involvement (often touted as a benefit of marching band) was found to be the lowest rated among life skill benefits.

The reasons often given in support of competition in instrumental music education seem largely based on anecdotal evidence suggesting that competition improves motivation and teaches life skills applicable beyond the music program (Mason et. al, 1985; Payne, 1997; Reimer, 1994; Schouten et. al, 1983). The participants in

Zdzinski's (2004) study corroborate this to some extent, but it is difficult to determine if any previous musical experiences contributed to these outcomes, or if these individuals' personalities and personal desires led them to choose the activity because it met a need that could not be met elsewhere, including the school band experience. In a study of students' expressions of what music meant to them, Campbell, Connell, & Beegle (2007) reported "The respondents highlighted confidence, responsibility, compassion, pride, patience, and respect as aspects of their character they feel they owed, at least in part, to music." Given that this study investigated attitudes toward music both inside and outside the school setting, it is not possible to know what role competition did or did not play in the development of these attributes. However, if continued experiences in music are a desire of music education, it appears that participation in drum corps encourages musical experiences (Zdzinski, 2004). Perhaps the same can be said for marching band and WGI where students have opportunities to experience music and music performance with non-traditional repertoire in a variety of non-traditional performance venues. These venues include competitive environments where ensemble performances are rated against a standard (music festivals), as well as those venues where not only are performances measured against a rubric, but scoring ultimately results in performance ensembles being ranked. The validity of any subjective measure of performance of course relies on the reliability of the judging system and those that use it (judges).

Reliability of Adjudication

Another concern over competition in instrumental music education is interjudge reliability as it may have influence on the performer experiences of school music students, certainly when performances are adjudicated (Bergee, 2003; Brakel, 2006;

Fiske, 1979; Fiske, 1977; Hash, 2013; King & Burnsed, 2009; Payne, 1997). Payne (1997) reports often-cited concerns over a lack of consistency among judges, as well as use of unqualified judges. Payne goes as far as to suggest that achieving strong reliability among judges may not be possible. Hash (2013), Garman et al. (1991), and Brakel (2006) suggests that the type of ensemble experience a judge has may not transfer into adequate expertise for the evaluation of different ensemble types. However, Bergee (2003) reported strong reliability between judges and found that prior experience had no significant effect on judging reliability. Brakel (2006) also found strong reliability among judges, but acknowledged that larger judging panels did produce higher reliability, a finding that reflected Fiske's (1977) study. In the area of marching band, King & Burnsed (2009) found that ratings were not significantly affected when a five-judge panel was used, but then the highest and lowest scores were eliminated, which in essence reduced the panel to three judges. According to Hash (2013), some research has indicated that judge training prior to the competition seemed to improve reliability (Brakel, 2006; Hunter & Ross, 1996; Winter, 1993). However, Hash (2013) also reported other studies that have suggested judge training may not improve reliability (Fiske, 1979). Norris & Borst (2007) (as cited in Hash, 2013) found that interrater reliability was stronger when the evaluation rubric utilized descriptors of specific performance elements to be considered, rather than broad, general captions alone.

It has been suggested that interrater reliability could be improved by using category descriptions that are more clearly defined and could be more consistently interpreted by adjudicators (Garman et al., 1991). Criteria-specific rating scales have also been recommended by King & Burnsed (2009) as a means for improving reliability.

Hash (2013) reported that criteria-specific rating scales have been found by multiple researchers to improve internal consistency and interrater reliability.

Music Education Reform

Leading up to World War I there was an increase in the amount of public school music education being offered throughout the United States, including significant progress in the inclusion of instrumental music education. After the conclusion of the war, school bands began to experience incredible growth and popularity (Humphreys, 1989). The earliest school bands were modeled after the touring civic and military bands of turn-of-the-century America. These groups performed programs that celebrated and promoted the American experience (Jones, 2008). The purpose of these bands was not largely artistic, but rather social (Abeles et al., 1995). The music they played was the popular music of the day. This, combined with a large supply of unemployed military band musicians after WWI, made instrumental music an attractive elective for an education system seeking to connect formal education with students' lives beyond the school building (Jones, 2008).

Upon initial consideration, it would seem that the social service nature of the early school band was in conflict with the progressive, child-centered philosophy dominating educational reform at that time. In fact, the school band was seen as complimentary to this approach because it connected in-school experiences with out-of-school experiences. In 1919, at the Music Supervisor's National Conference meeting in St. Louis, MO, Osbourne McConathy proclaimed, "Every child should be educated in music according to his natural capacities, at public expense, and his studies should function in the musical life of the community" (Abeles et al., 1995, p. 30). McConathy's statement takes into

account that not everyone possesses the same musical aptitude, but it implies that having some level of formal knowledge of music would improve one's ability to contribute to society. This idea of societal contribution is clear in the origins of the school band (Abeles et al., 1995; Jones, 2008).

In the years that followed, the influence of the performance-oriented instrumental music teachers that had come from military, and touring band backgrounds became increasingly apparent as the performance level of the students continued to rise (Abeles et al., 1995). Also, the increasing student population, due in part to immigration and child labor laws, was leading to teacher shortfalls (Jones, 2008). This often resulted in schools turning to professional musicians to fill music educator vacancies, and, of course, these individuals were very performance-oriented. At the same time, touring and town bands were beginning to decline due to the influence of technological progress that offered different forms of entertainment such as talking movies (Holz, 1962). The music industry recognized the opportunity that school bands provided in terms of securing long-term stability, and they began producing instructional materials for school bands (Holz, 1962). The music industry also took advantage of the large number of school band programs and newfound administrative support for instrumental music education and began promoting the development of school band contests (Rohrer, 2002).

School bands continued to thrive as contests brought notoriety and attention to the activity. This popularity was also influenced by the way school bands were replacing the amateur and professional bands that had begun to fade away (Holz, 1962). Perhaps it is due to these factors that bands were able to maintain momentum in the school curriculum throughout the Great Depression, and later, World War II, while school orchestras and

string programs declined. Of course, throughout this time, school bands were continuing to focus on elevating performance quality above all else in order to compete well and meet community and school expectations (Mark, 1996).

Following WWI, music educators were beginning to consider new justifications for the permanent inclusion of their subject matter in school curriculum. Previously, music education in the United States served highly social functions with the development of culture, religion, and nationalism being central goals (Jones, 2008). However, music educators were beginning to consider that music could be taught for the enjoyment and fulfillment it may bring to students' lives (Abeles et al., 1995). This new perspective coincided with the child-centered movement associated with educational philosophers such as John Dewey and Maria Montessori that encouraged inclusion of the arts in education (Abeles et al., 1995; Mark, 1996). Public support for this new vision of music education was bolstered by the influence of American and European touring music ensembles that had become increasingly popular as a source of entertainment (Abeles et al., 1995).

By 1960 a new critical examination of the education system in the United States was underway due to the 1957 launch of Sputnik, the first space satellite, by the Soviet Union (Abeles et al., 1995; Tellstrom, 1971; Werner, 2009). This accomplishment resulted in a fear that the United States had lost its edge in the area of technological advancement and that weak education was to blame. This reaction led to a new emphasis being placed on the sciences and similar subjects, and the rejection of what were considered trivial pursuits in the classroom (Abeles et al., 1995; Mark, 1996). As a nation, the need for culture seemed to wane. For music and the other arts, performances

became more of a luxury than a necessary and worthwhile endeavor (Mark, 1996). Although school music programs were not necessarily eliminated, they certainly began to lose some of their significance in the eyes of educational leaders. As a result, music educators were forced to look at why their programs should continue to be valued as part of the public school curriculum (Reimer, 1959). Over the course of the next decade a number of meetings and initiatives were undertaken for the purpose of evaluating the state of music education in the United States, and clarifying through a philosophical approach what should be considered the goals of music education. Although there were numerous events addressing these issues, the Yale Seminar on Music Education (1963) and the Tanglewood Symposium (1967) seem to stand out as the two having the greatest impact on music education in the United States up to the present (Abeles et al., 1995; Hoffer, 1979; John, 1979; Mark, 2000; Mark, 1996; Reimer, 1979; Steele, 1992; Werner, 2009).

The Yale Seminar, or *Music in Our Schools: A Search for Improvement*, as it was officially named, took place at Yale University from June 17-28, 1963 (Mark, 1996). It was one of the first federally funded conferences focused specifically on the examination and improvement of arts education in the United States (Abeles et al., 1995; Mark, 1996; Tellstrom, 1971). The thirty-one participants in the seminar included musicians, as well as scholars and teachers from outside the field of music education. The inclusion of individuals with varied professional experiences was intended to bring fresh insight into the challenges facing the field of music education at the time. In fact, the federal grant used to fund the Yale Seminar was the direct result of a recommendation made by a similarly structured conference evaluating science curriculum in the late 1950s (Mark,

1996). That conference had determined that a curriculum too heavy in science would negatively impact students, even in science, by preventing them from learning to understand the “human experience as seen through the arts” (Mark, 1996, p.34). It seems that perhaps this finding may have been viewed as unexpected, yet enlightening, and motivated those leading the Yale Seminar to put together a varied panel in the hopes that similarly insightful ideas would emerge. Unfortunately, it was the diverse makeup of this panel that led many music educators to dismiss the seminar and its proposals as naïve and unrealistic (John, 1979; Leonhard, 1979; Werner, 2009).

According to Leonhard (1979), the thirty-one Yale Seminar participants included 11 theorists and composers, 4 conductors, 3 musicologists, a public school administrator, an educationist, a music critic, 2 performers, 3 college music education administrators, and 5 public and private school music teachers. The apparent exclusion of elementary and secondary music teachers on a panel that was going to evaluate the state of elementary and secondary music education in America led to the initial rejection of the legitimacy of the seminar by many music teachers. The geographic representation of the panel gave rise to additional criticism. Twenty-five of the thirty-one participants were from the northeast, while two were from the Midwest, and three were from the west coast. This lack of balance led many music educators from around the country to view the seminar as an out-of-touch, Ivy League event that had little to do with the inner-workings of public school education in general (Leonhard, 1979).

According to those who have written about the event, the seminar is considered, even with its faults, to be significant in the history of music education in the United

States because it prompted reflection and consideration of the field even for those who were critical of the seminar's structure (Reimer, 1979; Steele, 1992; Werner, 2009).

In 1979, *The Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* published a special edition dedicated to looking back on the influence of the Yale Seminar ("Front Matter", 1979). Reading the individual articles of the authors included in this special edition, we find what seems to be some consensus that the Yale Seminar succeeded in declaring that the cultivation of musicality among students should be the goal of music education. Additionally, advocating for an expanded and improved repertory for school music programs is well supported. Reimer (1979) claims that the call for emphasis on musicality and repertoire resulted from the composition of the seminar panel, and the fact that the panel was composed of individuals well-suited to make an appropriate assessment of these topics. In contrast, some of the seminar findings included harsh wording that implied weakness within the ranks of music teachers across the country, as well as proposals that made assumptions about students that were clearly examples of their lack of understanding the educational process at the public school level (Hoffer, 1979).

Although the seminar resulted in specific aims, and curricular options in many cases, music educators noticed a lack of implementation strategies (Reimer, 1979). Furthermore, the seminar resulted in suggestions that failed to address funding issues, while also belittling the music education profession by not recognizing the importance of non-music specific training that existed in the field of education (Leonhard, 1979; Reimer, 1979). The unrealistic solutions put forth by the symposium, and the resulting failure to immediately affect systemic change has led some to declare the Yale Seminar

unsuccessful on the surface (John, 1979). However, in terms of raising legitimate questions, and illuminating the problems facing music education at the time, the seminar was very successful (Hoffer, 1979; John, 1979; Leonhard, 1979; Reimer, 1979; Steele, 1992; Werner, 2009; Werner, 1979). In his book, *Intelligent Music Teaching*, Robert Duke (2005) discusses the difficulty in moving from broad statements to specific actions, such as those put forth by the Yale Seminar. As he points out, it is much easier to achieve a consensus on a broadly framed idea than on a specific approach for addressing that idea (p. 19). This observation seems to accurately characterize the Yale Seminar. Despite the turmoil between the seminar participants and the music education community, at least music was the subject of a highly visible event that brought attention and credibility to the activity. As Hoffer (1979) stated, “There is something worse than being criticized: being ignored or forgotten.”

Although the Yale Seminar’s criticisms frustrated many music teachers across the United States, it did bring to light many issues that needed to be addressed if music education were going to move forward and better serve students. Recognizing such, the music education community sought to organize an event that it believed would more appropriately consider the relevant issues associated with day-to-day life in the classroom. The result of this effort was the Tanglewood Symposium held from July 23-August 2, 1967 in Tanglewood, MA, at the summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra (Mark, 1996).

The acknowledgement that society was changing, and will continue to change, is perhaps the most significant outcome of the Tanglewood Symposium because it has encouraged MENC, now known as The National Association of Music Education

(NAfME), and the music education field collectively to continue exploring how the importance of music can be re-affirmed as our nation evolves. Programs and initiatives such as the Seminar on Comprehensive Musicianship (1965), Manhattanville Music Curriculum Project (1966), Goals and Objectives (GO) Project of 1969, Vision: 2020 and The Housewright Symposium, both in 1999, have attempted to implement and, later, remind us of aspects of the Tanglewood Symposium that are still relevant regarding music education reform, as well as areas that need adjustment for the twenty-first century due to an ever-changing society.

One of the early steps taken by MENC to further establish music as a necessary educational pursuit was the publication of *The School Music Program: Description and Standards* in 1974. This document fulfilled a recommendation from Tanglewood that a leadership role should be established in developing and clarifying what a high-level music program should look like in our schools (Mark, 1996). A second edition was released in 1986 that provided updated guidance and suggestions for goals to be accomplished by 1990. In 1994, MENC and its partner the American Council for the Arts successfully lobbied for the inclusion of the arts in the core curriculum via the Goals 2000: Educate America Act (Mark, 2000). That same year, as a result of federal funding obtained by a consortium of arts educators, and in response to the mandate from Goals 2000, the National Standards for Arts Education was established. Although the creation of these standards was mandated by Goals 2000, as were standards for all core subjects, they were intended to guide local curriculum development rather than serve as a required curriculum in and of themselves (“NCCAS Conceptual Framework”, 2014).

Today, a new set of standards has appeared that, once again, builds on previous work, yet strives to meet the needs of students and communities now well-established in a new century. The National Core Arts Standards (NCAS), as they are known, not only draw inspiration from earlier standards efforts in the United States, they consider what standards exist in other nations across the globe. According to National Core Arts Standards: A Conceptual Framework for Arts Learning, international arts standards, though different in the language used to define categories, have much in common with U.S. standards. Collectively, international standards can be grouped into the three following broad areas: 1) Generating/Problem Solving, which corresponds to our “Creating” standard; 2) Expressing/Realizing, which corresponds to our “Performing” standard; and 3) Responding/Appreciating, which corresponds to our “Responding” standard. The existence of arts standards across the globe supports the view that arts should be considered an essential part of a complete education.

The establishment of the NCAS is a logical next step from the National Standards for Arts Education (NSAE) of 1994 because that document stated that the standards should be a living document that changes as its recommended standards are attained, and as technology, cultural trends, and educational advances dictate (“NCCAS Conceptual Framework”, 2014). Recognizing that the nature of the arts essentially remains constant while the world they exist in is constantly changing, and in the effort to maintain their relevance and influence, many states have made revisions in their respective arts curricula since the NSAE were established.

Although not associated with Common Core State Standards (CCSS), the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards (NCCAS) did consider the concepts of CCSS

in order to develop a program that would provide the most seamless implementation of the NCAS within school systems already utilizing the Common Core program. However, great care was taken by the NCCAS to differentiate between the various arts areas (visual art, music, etc.) with regard to content and presentation in an effort to preserve their unique natures and practices.

The NCAS focus on developing students who will be musically literate and will be equipped to make music a source of enjoyment into adulthood and throughout their lives (NCAS Framework, 2014). The NCAS include bold aims that reflect the many roles music education has played since its earliest days and additionally reflect goals established by the Yale Seminar and Tanglewood Symposium, as well as other related symposia. The aims include the arts as communication; the arts as creative personal realization; the arts as culture, history, and connectors; the arts as means to wellbeing; and the arts as community engagement (“NCCAS Conceptual Framework”, 2014). It is important to note what the goals set forth by the NCAS do not do is specify what types of ensembles must be used to accomplish the established goals. It is left up to the educator to utilize the standards in a way that best serves all students in the widely diverse educational settings found in the United States.

Beginning with the Tanglewood Symposium and then similar subsequent initiatives, the music education community seems to be continually affirming the need to develop new performance opportunities and venues as student interests and experiences evolve. The structure and process-oriented nature of the newly implemented NCAS support a progressive approach to music performance by supporting traditional ensemble models while promoting new and emerging ensembles such as those provided through

WGI. The growth of WGI, in regard to both participation and event attendance, represents an activity that has evolved with its audience and practitioners and continues to meet their changing needs and desires of students and the communities in which they live. The flexibility of the WGI philosophy allows ensembles to recognize the value of traditional musical forms and literature while encouraging the exploration of new forms and styles reflective of our constantly evolving world.

The same education reforms suggested initially in the 1960s are still being researched and promoted today (Abeles et al, 1995; Hoffer, 1979; John, 1979; Leonhard, 1979; Mark, 2000; Mark, 1996; Reimer, 1979; Steele, 1992; Werner, 2009; Werner, 1979). This reformist vision also encourages the inclusion of all types of music, in both form and culture, and the intentional connection of music to the other fine arts. As educators consider the needs of Generation Z we must consider how music curriculum, traditional and non-traditional, can engage students where they are in their musical lives and appeal to their multi-faceted interests.

Summary

Existing literature suggests that as long as new types of performance ensembles appear, debate over aesthetic vs. praxial philosophies will likely exist (Elliot, 1995; Mantie, 2012; Reimer, 1970). However, Jorgensen (2014) encourages music educators to avoid becoming paralyzed by philosophical arguments and look for ways to move forward as a music education community to meet student needs. Kanellopoulos (2012) supported the idea of finding the value in multiple viewpoints by refuting Mantie's (2012) criticism of the traditional large ensemble. Kanellopoulos argued that rather than dismissing the large ensemble as outdated, it should be seen as a beneficial component of

a comprehensive approach to music education.

Research reveals that non-musical outcomes are often associated with participation in marching arts activities (Aspin, 2000; Bridges, 1996; Chiodo, 1997; Coffman & Adamek, 2001). Social factors seem to be the most widely reported non-musical outcomes of the marching arts, and band in general (Sixsmith & Gibson, 2007; Sutherland, 2015). Broh (2002) reported an increase in personal motivation and self-efficacy among band participants. Mason et al. (1985), Payne (1997), Reimer (1994), and Schouten et al. (1983) all observed that non-musical outcomes were often used as justification for band competitions, and considered this to be a disservice to music education. However, Zdzinski (2004) and Campbell et al. (2007) found that these non-musical justifications for competition may actually improve students' quality of life. Similarly, Campbell et al. (2007) found that students themselves reported non-musical elements as positive outcomes of their band experiences.

Reliability of adjudication for band festivals and competitions was found to be an area of concern regarding the defining of quality performances, and negative attitudes and experiences among students and directors in competitive venues (Bergee, 2003; Brakel, 2006; Fiske, 1979; Fiske, 1977; Hash, 2013; King, 2009; Payne, 1997). Benefits of judge training immediately prior to an event were found to be inconclusive (Brakel, 2006; Hash, 2013), while the use of larger judging panels seem to improve reliability between adjudicators (Brakel, 2006; Fiske, 1977). The use of specific criteria on adjudication rubrics was found to lead to better reliability among judges than the use of broad categories (Garman et al., 1991; Hash, 2013; King & Burnsed, 2009).

There are many influences on current music education curricula, reform, and best practice. An analysis of these factors and the studies that reveal much about their influence on today's state of music education seem to suggest that more needs to be done to insure that music educators are meeting the needs of schools and communities, and most importantly, our students. Educating twenty-first century students, Gen-Zers, requires the acquisition and application of new tools and strategies that engage students and meet them where they are in their musical and social lives. Non-traditional venues and ensembles should not be viewed as replacements of existing teaching methods and structures, but should be considered extensions and enhancements that will connect students to a broader musical and social experience.

CHAPTER III - METHODOLOGY

This study seeks to achieve a greater understanding of the music education experiences associated with WGI and the exponential growth in its popularity. The experiential nature of the study implies an emphasis on the individual and demands a method of inquiry free of restrictive parameters that would discourage complete openness from study participants. For this reason, the study occurred in the participants' natural setting rather than a controlled, experimental environment (Creswell, 2013; Creswell, 2009; Johnson & Christensen, 2008). A qualitative research approach was most appropriate.

According to Creswell (2013) and Lane (2011), the term "Qualitative Research" is used to describe a broad investigative approach that utilizes one or more specific interpretative methodologies to explore a given problem by attempting to understand the meanings individuals assign to it. This approach allows the researcher to consider not only the participant's words, but their behaviors, interactions, and mannerisms as well. The nature of the approach results in the discovery of new contexts and perspectives that lead to new questions and refinement of the research focus as the study progresses (Patten, 2014). Specifically, the qualitative method known as phenomenological research was utilized for the present study.

Phenomenological Inquiry

Phenomenological research considers the experiences of individuals as they pertain to a specific phenomenon and then attempts to describe the commonalities between those experiences (Creswell, 2013; Johnson & Christensen, 2008). The foundations of phenomenological inquiry can be traced back to the writings of Edmund

Husserl (Creswell, 2013). Husserl's concept of *lebenswelt*, or life-world, refers to an individual's world of consciousness and experience under a specific circumstance (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). The circumstance being experienced by an individual forms the phenomenon in a phenomenological study.

In this study the specific phenomenon being considered is participation in the WGI indoor activity. According to Stewart and Mickunas (1990, as cited in Creswell, 2013), phenomenological research looks back to the Greek concept of philosophy that was oriented toward the search for wisdom, as opposed to scientific discovery. It can seek to interpret the meaning of experiences (hermeneutical phenomenology) or describe them (transcendental or psychological phenomenology). Typically, there are a relatively small number of participants, and they are usually asked only a few very general questions that will promote a broad explanation of their experiences. The researcher takes these responses and looks for statements and themes that can be combined into a single description of what it is like to "live" the phenomenon.

According to McNeil (2015), although Husserl's ideas were viewed as abstract in his lifetime, and although philosophies of phenomenology were expanded by others such as Heidegger, Satre, and Merleau-Ponty (Creswell, 2013) since his death in 1938, the basic philosophical principles of phenomenological inquiry have remained consistent. These principles include: 1) it is the study of lived experiences (Creswell, 2013), 2) the experiences being shared are conscious experiences (van Manen, 1990), and 3) the end result of the research is the generation of descriptions of the experiences rather than the explanations and analyses found in quantitative research (Moustakas, 1994). Stewart and Mickunas (1990, as cited in Creswell, 2013) consider phenomenology at a broader level

with their four philosophical perspectives on the method. These perspectives include 1) a return to the traditional tasks of philosophy, which suggests the search for wisdom associated with the ancient Greeks; 2) a philosophy without presuppositions, also called “epoche” by Husserl, and known as “bracketing” in the work of Clark Moustakas (1994); 3) the intentionality of consciousness, or the idea that consciousness is always directed toward an object or phenomenon; and 4) rejection of the subject-object dichotomy, meaning that reality of an object or phenomenon requires the context provided by the subject’s or individual’s experience. The object cannot exist independently of the subject.

The present study is more concerned with describing the individual experiences of the participants rather than interpreting them. Therefore, this study is best described as an example of transcendental or psychological phenomenology, as opposed to the interpretive approach of hermeneutical phenomenology. The study also exists within a social constructivist philosophical framework. According to Gergen, (1999, as cited in Freeman & Mathison, 2009), the social constructivist viewpoint proposes “. . . that individuals mentally construct the world, but they do so largely with categories supplied by social relationships.”

Identification of the Study Topic

In April of 2016, the researcher attended the WGI World Championships in Dayton, OH. As a music educator aware of growing participation in the indoor activity, and having never attended a WGI event, curiosity about this seemingly non-traditional form of music education led to a desire to witness the activity in person. Attending World Championships resulted in the researcher developing a better understanding of the

types of experiences, practices, and philosophies associated with WGI. The researcher felt the environment in the warm-up area, staging area, and performance space at World Championships was unique when compared to all previous music experiences. There was a palpable feeling of this particular event being special. As a result of the various experiences had at World Championships, the researcher used his new understandings to later make informed decisions regarding how the present study would be designed.

The initial decision to focus on the WGI activity was due to a desire to investigate a type of performing ensemble that could be considered non-traditional. In addition to meeting the non-traditional criteria, WGI was a particularly attractive activity to investigate due to the dramatic increase in participation it has experienced over its forty-year history. Additionally, the virtual non-existence of any literature on the present topic further supported the need for a study directed at this seemingly unique activity. Having identified a specific ensemble type and reflecting on the experience of attending a WGI event that provided a better general understanding of the experiences and contexts associated with WGI, the next step was determining the scope of the study.

Selection of Participants

Observation of the many stakeholders involved in the WGI experience suggested that a variety of possible participants for this study existed. Consideration was given to the inclusion of parents, students, directors, and judges. However, given the qualitative nature of the study, there was a concern that restricting the number of participants to a manageable size would also result in an inadequate representation of any one group's perspective. Therefore, it seemed prudent to focus the study on the experiences of one set of stakeholders, which would allow for both a manageable volume of data and an

adequate representation of participant experiences. The researcher chose to include those individuals who are, in part, responsible for determining the factors that will impact the WGI experience. Therefore, the decision was made to interview people who currently serve in some type of leadership role within WGI, each a stakeholder in the organization's philosophy and subsequent activities, to describe their experiences within the activity. Understanding the experiences of these individuals would provide insight into the uniqueness of the WGI experience and its attraction to all stakeholders, including its participants.

Prior to identifying potential participants for the study, approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of Southern Mississippi to conduct human subjects research.

Participants in this study include individuals who have experience in one or more of the following roles: WGI unit director, WGI judge, or WGI administrator. Permission from the WGI administration was obtained to contact any individuals affiliated with the activity who met the specified criteria for participation. According to Creswell (2013), Polkinghorne (1989) suggests the inclusion of five to twenty-five participants in a phenomenological inquiry. The researcher determined that ten participants would provide an adequate, yet manageable amount of data. Eighteen individuals with known and varied experiences with WGI were identified, and contacted by email to request participation (Appendix E). Ten participants agreed to participate in all ways required that ensured data collection was informed, consistent, and representative of diversity of roles within the organization. For the purpose of anonymity, pseudonyms were chosen for each participant.

Introduction of Study Participants

In addition to the experiences the participants in this study have had with Winter Guard International, each one has also experienced great success as performing musicians, directors, or both outside the marching arts idiom. It is important to consider how these additional musical experiences have shaped their involvement and perception of the indoor activity. Throughout this section reference will be made to the participants' involvement in a variety of marching arts organizations. These organizations include Drum Corps International (DCI), Bands of America (BOA), and Winter Guard International (WGI).

Participant #1: Robert is a 57-year-old man and a professional educator, though not in the field of music. This participant holds an undergraduate degree in marketing, a master's degree in education, and a National Board Certification in Exceptional Needs Students. He has twenty-eight years of teaching experience in the areas of business, marketing, and special education. He is now retired. In terms of musical background, this participant played a brass instrument and was a band member throughout high school and for one year in college. Through associations with band directors, Robert was presented with multiple opportunities to serve with a number of band programs where he contributed as an instructor, designer, and writer at various times. These connections and opportunities led to invitations to begin judging at the local circuit level for indoor color guard competitions, local marching band contests, and eventually, state sponsored marching competitions and festivals.

When WGI added the percussion division in 1992, they were intentionally looking for judges who could bring different perspectives to the activity. Having a

background in marketing, Robert was accustomed to looking at a product from the standpoint of cohesive presentations that clearly convey an idea to the intended audience. This provided a marketing viewpoint that was considered valuable in the areas of drill and design and how they impacted the general effect of the material being presented. After ten years of judging percussion for local circuits, he was invited to judge for WGI at the international level. Robert has now been judging with WGI for sixteen years.

Participant #2: Nathan is a 37-year-old man and teaches math as well as music in a public school setting. This participant's music experience began in high school. As a percussionist, he had the opportunity to perform as a member of an indoor marching ensemble. In the years after high school, Nathan taught as a percussion clinician, show designer, and director for a number of scholastic (competition ensembles associated with schools) and independent ensembles (competition ensembles not associated with schools). During this period he also had opportunity to serve on a number of committees within the WGI activity. Currently, this participant holds an administrative position with WGI and also maintains a leadership role within a large regional indoor music and visual performance competition circuit (referred to within the WGI activity as a local circuit).

Participant #3: Steven is a 67-year-old man and currently holds a position in upper-administration at one of the world's premier music training institutions. His education includes bachelor's, master's, and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in music. He has significant teaching experience in higher education and has had great success as a composer, arranger, and producer on an international scale. Steven's involvement with the marching arts spans more than 30 years. This history includes associations with high school marching band, Drum Corps International, and indoor percussion. His

performance experience with the marching arts consisted of performing as a percussionist in high school and college.

Participant #4: Conner is a 37-year-old man and currently a university music studio professor. He holds bachelor's, master's, and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees in music. In addition to his teaching responsibilities, he also performs and records professionally as a solo and chamber music artist. This participant's involvement in the marching arts began as a high school performer in marching band, WGI indoor percussion, and Drum Corps International (DCI). After high school, his involvement with DCI continued as a performer, and, ultimately, as an instructor, arranger, and consultant with a number of groups. The participant has also worked as an arranger for several high school programs across the United States, and as a clinician in the U.S., Europe, and Asia. He has served as a WGI adjudicator since 2011.

Participant #5: Adam is 60-year-old man and is retired from public education where he served as a band director and as an administrator at the school and district levels. His performance experience in the marching arts includes high school, college, and in drum corps. As a band director, his programs received many accolades at the local, regional, and national level. Additionally, he has extensive experience in DCI as a program coordinator, design consultant, instructor, and administrator. As a judge, he is affiliated with DCI, BOA, and WGI, and also serves in an advisory role for BOA.

Participant #6: Sarah is a 57-year-old woman and currently serves as a professional music educator within an elementary school setting. Sarah holds a Bachelor of Music degree in woodwind performance and a Master of Music degree with emphases in conducting, education, and performance. She has extensive public school teaching

experience in the areas of band and general music, in addition to maintaining a private studio. Throughout her teaching career, Sarah has continued to perform with operas, orchestras, wind bands, and musical pit orchestras.

Sarah's experience with the marching arts includes her personal involvement as a high school band member, her work as a marching band consultant, and her role as a brass instructor with multiple drum corps ensembles. In addition to these experiences, Sarah's involvement with the marching arts has also extended into an adjudication role. She has judged marching band performances for a variety of organizations across the United States. She has also judged for DCI, BOA, and for the past three years, WGI.

Participant #7: Edward is 47-year-old man and does not work as a professional music educator. He is primarily engaged in freelance work in various types of print media, as well as arranging and composition in a variety of musical styles. He holds bachelor's degrees in music education and music composition, and a master's degree in music technology. His experience with the marching arts began as a high school band member and continued through college band. He also performed as a member of a drum corps. At the conclusion of his performance experience with DCI, Edward became a DCI instructor. After serving for a number of years as an instructor, Edward began judging marching bands and eventually began judging for WGI. Currently, Edward holds a position as a WGI administrator and works closely with adjudicators.

Participant #8: Bill is 42-year-old man and is not a professional music educator. He did attend college, but does not hold a degree. Bill is a freelance arranger, show-designer, and clinician for various marching arts idioms. Bill's involvement with the marching arts includes being a high school marching band member, a college marching

band member, and a member of a WGI indoor ensemble. Beyond the performance role, Bill has served as both an instructor and designer with DCI ensembles, WGI ensembles, and various high school marching programs. Within WGI specifically, Bill was a charter member of a WGI performing unit and has remained associated with the same ensemble for over twenty years in a variety of instructional, design, and administrative capacities.

Participant #9: Luke is a 52-year-old man, and a professional music educator teaching middle school band. Luke holds bachelor's and master's of music education degrees and has over twenty-five years of experience teaching at the high school and middle school levels. Throughout his teaching career, Luke's programs have received numerous awards and recognitions at local, regional, and national events. Luke's marching arts involvement began as a high school band member. He continued his marching band experience as part of a college band program. Luke also participated as a performer with several DCI ensembles. After completing his performance opportunities in DCI, he continued his involvement with the organization as an instructor with several groups. Luke also has extensive experience writing, arranging, and designing for numerous drum corps, as well as many marching bands across the United States. As an adjudicator, Luke has been affiliated with DCI and BOA at the national level and has judged for a number of state organizations in both invitational events and state sponsored championships. In terms of WGI, Luke has served as a judge and currently serves in an administrative role within the activity.

Participant #10: Kevin is 42-year-old man and is not a professional music educator. He has worked for the past twenty years as a full-time freelance designer and

writer in the marching arts. He has designed and written for DCI, BOA, WGI, and numerous high school marching band programs across the United States.

Kevin's marching arts experience began as a high school band member. He participated in only one semester of college marching band, but performed for a number of years in DCI before taking on other responsibilities within that activity. In addition to designing and drill writing, Kevin currently judges for a number of indoor color guard and percussion circuits throughout the United States.

Data Collection

Interviews were conducted in August and September of 2018. Six interviews were conducted via internet using Zoom Video Conferencing (ZVC). Three of these interviews were video interviews, while three were audio only. Four interviews were conducted via internet using FaceTime. Two of these interviews were video interviews, while the other two were audio only. Audio interviews were the result of the limited availability of several participants at the time of the interview; the audio option allowed for the process to be as "stress free" as possible for the participants. The six internet interviews using ZVC, whether video or audio, were recorded using the built-in recording function of the ZVC software. The four interviews using FaceTime were recorded using the QuickTime application built into the researcher's MacBook Pro (MBP). All interview recordings were saved and stored under password protection on the researcher's personal computer.

The researcher developed a script (Appendix F) that was used to conduct each interview. In each interview, the participant was thanked for their participation, was read a description of what would occur during the interview, was read a description of the

study and the confidentiality information, was asked a series of questions to verify their understanding of their involvement, was asked to give verbal consent to participate, and was asked a series of five open-ended questions.

Pilot Interview Description

A face-to-face pilot interview was conducted with an individual possessing extensive experience with WGI as a director, designer, and instructor. The pilot interview informed the researcher of the expected pace of an interview, as well as the wording of questions for the subsequent formal interviews as to elicit the highest quality responses. Based on feedback from the pilot interview, questions were not altered and were used verbatim during data collection.

Phenomenological Questioning

The purpose of the phenomenological research approach is to obtain descriptions of “what” participants have experienced in terms of the phenomenon being studied and “how” these experiences have occurred (Moustakas, 1994). Moustakas suggests that participants in phenomenological research should be asked two broad questions: 1) What have you experienced in terms of the phenomenon? and 2) What contexts or situations have typically influenced or affected your experiences of the phenomenon? According to Creswell (2013), asking additional open-ended questions is acceptable.

The participants in this study were asked the following questions in their interview:

- Can you please describe your background in the marching arts and WGI?
- What have you experienced in terms of WGI?
- What are your core beliefs about WGI that guide you in your current role

within the activity?

- What are the outcomes you desire for participants in the WGI activity, and how have these evolved over time?
- Is there anything else you would like to add?

Follow-up questions were asked, as necessary, to help clarify or expand on participant responses.

Method for Data Analysis

The Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen approach to data analysis in phenomenological studies was presented in a modified form by Moustakas (1994). This modified approach was simplified by Creswell (2013), and has been chosen as the analytical model for the present study. The structured steps of the analytical model are as follows:

- Describe personal experiences with the phenomenon.
- Develop a list of significant statements from interview transcripts.
- Group significant statements into “meaning units” or “themes”.
- Write a description of what the participants experienced (textural description).
- Write a description of how the experience happened (structural description).
- Write a composite description of the phenomenon that combines both the textural and structural descriptions (essence).

Upon completion of all interviews, verbatim transcripts (Appendix C) of each interview were generated by hand and coded manually. Each interview was considered individually, and significant statements were identified that provided insight into what

each participant had experienced, and revealed within what contexts their experiences had occurred. Following individual analysis, all significant statements were placed into a single Excel file, analyzed again, and any repetitive or overlapping statements were removed. All remaining significant statements were considered to be of equal worth. Next, the remaining significant statements were grouped into larger units, or themes, indicating their relation to some broader idea or concept.

Once themes were established, composite textural and structural descriptions of the participants' experience with WGI were written. Analysis of the data concludes with a rich narrative description of the aggregate experience, or essence, of WGI.

Validity and Reliability

Two persons with advanced degrees in music education confirmed the accuracy of the interview transcripts and the presence of the four emergent themes.

Reliability is supported by the richness of participant responses, as well as the use of participants' own words as frequently as possible.

Delimitations and Limitations

The results of this study cannot be generalized beyond the ten participants who were interviewed. There were no minorities represented in the study, and only one woman was included. In both cases, this seems to be indicative of the general demographics of the WGI activity in terms of those in leadership positions. The dominance of male judges in the WGI activity is reflective of the current percentage of male percussionists and band directors in the United States (Sears, 2010). Although this is an unfortunate characteristic of the activity currently, perhaps more minorities and

women will become involved in WGI leadership in the years to come as the activity continues to grow. It is possible that the experiences of minority leaders in WGI may look different from those reported in this study. Likewise, a higher degree of female experiences would perhaps have influenced the thematic focus of the study results, though such is not assumed to be any different than as reported in this study.

Additionally, the only perspective described in the present study was that of those in leadership positions in WGI. It is possible that the experiences of performers in both scholastic (school affiliated) and independent ensembles, as well as the parents of performers, could vary from those described in this study.

CHAPTER IV – FINDINGS

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to describe the essence of WGI participation as lived by ten individuals regarded as stakeholders within the activity. Although the participants shared the common factor of a leadership role within WGI, their backgrounds and previous experiences differed distinctly from one another. Individual interviews with the study participants provided insight into what was experienced and in what contexts these experiences had taken place. The participant interviews revealed a high degree of congruence with regard to personal experiences with participation in the WGI activity.

Textural Description: What Participants Have Experienced with the WGI Phenomenon

According to Moustakas (1994), the first stage in reporting the findings of a phenomenological inquiry is the development of “textural descriptions”. A textural description describes “what” has been experienced by study participants in terms of a given phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). The textural description is derived from the significant statements identified during coding and analysis of interview data.

The participants, through their experiences with WGI, have witnessed the growth of individual performers on the social, emotional, and physical levels. They have observed the development of skills and characteristics that extend into the lives of participants after they leave the activity. Participants have additionally observed a rapid increase in the level of achievement among performers both technically and artistically, as well as a dramatic increase in the design and production levels of WGI shows. They have also seen and heard the tremendous growth with the inclusion of technology in WGI

performances and adjudication methods. Each individual's experiences as judge, administrator, and director has revealed the motivating nature of competition and its impact on the evolution and elevation of WGI performances over the last few decades. In their own unique ways, and to varying degrees, each participant found the competitive aspect of WGI to be oriented more toward competition with self in order to achieve group goals rather than a pursuit of trophies or prestige. Study participants have experienced an organization in WGI that emphasizes an educational philosophy that is student-centered and seeks to encourage growth and achievement while supporting, rather than replacing, the school music program. They each expressed that WGI limits its control of creative freedoms in an effort to provide the broadest opportunity for performing units to express their ideas in a way that best fits their program, while maintaining an atmosphere for all involved: performers, designers, judges, administration, family, friends, fans, etc.

Structural Description: How Participants Have Experienced the WGI Phenomenon

Whereas textural descriptions focus on "what" participants experienced in terms of a phenomenon, structural descriptions focus on "how" participants had these experiences (Moustakas, 1994). A composite structural description will assist in synthesizing the contexts of participant experiences in an effort to describe the essence of WGI. The participants in this study have experienced WGI from a variety of perspectives, and in some cases multiple perspectives.

Eight of the ten participants in this study have experienced WGI from the perspective of an adjudicator. The two participants with no WGI judging experience have, however, judged indoor marching arts activities at the local circuit level, as have the other participants. The experiences of every study participant have been influenced

by their involvement in other marching arts. The participants have been involved as instructors, designers, arrangers, and coordinators with a variety of marching arts organizations, including DCI, BOA, WGI, and numerous high school and college marching bands. They have also served with state and local adjudication organizations across the United States. Some of the participants in this study have experienced WGI with the perspective of a professional musician, performing and composing in a variety of musical styles and idioms. Within the WGI activity specifically, study participants currently hold, and have held, administrative, instructional, and adjudication roles. The extensive association of the study participants with the marching arts as a whole, in addition to their educational, artistic, and performance histories, seems to have heavily influenced how they experienced WGI. As band directors in school systems, collegiate and secondary administrators, applied lesson teachers, creative artists, and consumers of the arts, most all participants' lives, professionally and personally, evolve around the arts. How each experiences WGI is influenced by their life choices, bringing together a wide array of tastes, perspectives, insights, skills, and goals that add to and in part explain the WGI participation phenomenon.

Emergent Themes

Identification and grouping of significant statements made by participants during their interviews led to the emergence of four themes from the experiences described. Two of the four themes contained no subthemes, one theme contained three subthemes, and one theme contained two subthemes. The emergent themes and subthemes are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 *WGI Experiences: Emergent Themes and Subthemes*

Theme	Subthemes
Developing Character and Identity: Non-Musical Outcomes	None
Performance Achievement and Excellence	Increasing Level of Achievement and Excellence Among Performers This is an Innovative and Progressive Activity
WGI as Educational Entity	A Unique Judging Experience An Educational Philosophy Administrative Consistency
Competition	None

Each of the four main themes that emerged from the data were distinctly and explicitly represented in the interviews of each participant. Though not evidenced necessarily in the findings reported in this chapter or in the interview transcriptions, participants' responses were most often presented immediately after questions were asked, as if these emergent themes/components were integral to each participants' ongoing/ever present thoughts and expressions of their experiences with the WGI phenomenon. Data that revealed each of the four themes is presented here.

Theme 1: Developing Character and Identity: Non-Musical Outcomes

Table 2 reveals examples of significant statements related to the theme "Developing Character and Identity: Non-Musical Outcomes".

Table 2 *Significant Statements: Developing Character and Identity: Non Musical*

Outcomes

Theme	Significant Statements
Developing Character and Identity: Non-Musical Outcomes	<p>“I think this activity changes people. I know I, I think I’m a testimonial of that.”</p> <p>“They [student performers] walk out of it knowing that it takes work- but, it takes smart work, and it takes work ethic and teamwork.”</p> <p>“People are here because they’re making friends and making music.”</p> <p>“It really is a widely diverse activity where all sorts of students from all sorts of backgrounds, all sorts of faith backgrounds, belief systems, and all of that, they all come together in this activity and are contributing towards a common goal . . .”</p> <p>“One hundred percent of my friends, and all of my best friends, are in the activity, no doubt”.</p> <p>“By and large, they don’t care whether they win or lose. They just want to be part of this presentation that is watching the audience get excited.”</p>

Every participant in this study described experiences containing both musical and non-musical characteristics. The non-musical aspects mentioned by those interviewed included factors related to student identity and the development of skills that would

transfer beyond and outside the boundaries of musical performance. The participants described WGI as an activity that has the power to change lives through its inclusive nature, its ability to help students discover their potential, and the development of a sense of what it takes to be successful at something. In this study, the musical and non-musical outcomes seem to be equally valued.

Regarding non-musical outcomes he has experienced in WGI, Nathan said, I have seen this activity teach them a great deal about themselves, a great deal about teamwork, a great deal about self-sacrifice and cooperation and collaboration. I think the vast majority of those that participated in it would say that it has been core and crucial in helping them in their formative years become who they aspire to be as they grow up.

Conner expressed that “They [student performers] walk out of it knowing that it takes work- but, it takes smart work, and it takes work ethic and teamwork.” Bill pointed out, essentially, the same characteristic when describing individuals who he performed with in the past, saying, “. . . they’re all in like executive positions in tech places and some places around Nashville and stuff like that. Every one of them, they just carryover the same work ethic.”

Edward acknowledged that some of the non-musical benefits of the WGI experience are shared among all the marching and pageantry arts. Addressing the outcomes he has experienced in WGI, he said,

This would parallel a lot of other marching arts and pageantry arts. Committing to a process, making sacrifices, to having a focus, having dedication, and seeing it paying off when it comes to a reciprocal relationship with an audience when

you're actually out there performing.

In addition to non-musical outcomes that are centered on skill development, participants also discussed non-musical outcomes that are related to the emotional and social development of WGI performers. Nathan described his experience with WGI as one that has been life-changing, stating, "I think the main thing that I've experienced is that this activity really changes people. I think I'm a testament to that fact . . .". He considers WGI to have been a critical factor in his development as a person and as an educator. Early in the interview he referenced the inclusive nature of the activity as a significant reason for the life changing influence of WGI. He revealed,

Our activity, with WGI and Indoor Percussion in general, I think, provides a really broad, amazing activity for them to be involved in because we take all kinds. We take all kinds of socioeconomic backgrounds, we take all shapes and sizes of students, we take the students that are tremendous, natural, gifted musicians and also those who have very little musical talent and are wandering into this for the first time.

Robert also acknowledged how inclusive WGI is by involving so many types of performers and how this characteristic provides opportunity to a wider array of students to express themselves creatively. He indicated that he has seen students from different regions, countries, races, socioeconomic backgrounds, and school types and sizes interacting and bonding with one another due to their mutual experience with WGI. He said,

Even on our local level, our state circuit, I see kids that have made friends with kids from other schools that they would have never come in contact with.

Whether those kids are more talented, the kids are black, white, Asian, older, younger. Just meeting other instructors and seeing the talent level of other kids, learning techniques from other kids. Again, because of what we have with technology, these kids FaceTime each other. Watch what I'm playing now, and then they send it back. It's like an ongoing lesson between these kids.

Kevin conveyed his experience with WGI providing opportunities and accessibility to students from lower socioeconomic levels. He stated,

I do a school [in Texas] and I think the last two times they went up [to WGI World Championships] they were seventh in world class, and I want to say the school is 99% free and reduced lunch and they serve all free meals for the whole district. I don't think they would be able to do as well with a larger ensemble situation. But because it's a smaller ensemble and because you're comparing 20 and 30 kids to each other they can then be more competitive. I don't know if they would be able to do that with marching band because when you have more kids you have to have more money and that gets to a much bigger challenge. But those kids were very successful.

Kevin further explained that in his opinion it is now virtually impossible for a high school marching band from a low socioeconomic environment to experience competitive success because of the inclusion of technology and visual components that make it financially prohibitive. No other participant expressed this opinion.

Nathan shared that in his experience the diversity within WGI ensembles is represented to a greater degree than diversity within other clubs and activities on school campuses. He believes that, generally speaking, WGI ensembles are composed of a

wider range of personality types, body types, and ethnicities than many other school-based activities. Nathan believes that the inclusivity of WGI is directly related to student identity in that WGI ensembles provide a place of belonging and self-expression for a greater number of students representing a wider array of previous personal experiences.

He explains this by stating,

It really is a widely diverse activity where all sorts of students from all sorts of backgrounds, all sorts of faith backgrounds, belief systems, and all of that, they all come together in this activity and are contributing towards a common goal and a common desire to perform, to share what they've been working on with the world.

He additionally stated,

The activity gives people the opportunity to express themselves through non-written means. I think that's really important, especially formative years when we're talking about the youth that are involved in this activity. We spend so much time in formal, scholastic settings, talking to students about communicating through writing or through speaking and don't spend quite as much time working on communicating through other means; through an artistic endeavor, either a performance art or production art, physical art. So I think giving students this outlet is a core, amazing part of this activity that really carries students through quite a bit.

Nathan described the fulfillment he experiences when watching students "come out of their shell and come to life as they start to bring a show to life". He describes the joy on the faces of students when they feel they have performed well and receive immediate

feedback from the audience. Nathan further explained the uniqueness of this audience interaction in the WGI activity by describing the intimacy of the performance space. He said,

I think where WGI is really special is the venues that we perform in. There is an intimacy that makes it really special. When you're performing, you're not on an elevated stage performing above the audience. You're down on a floor and the audience is in like a high school gym or arena and they are in stadium style seating looking down on you for the performance. And you're not clad in a uniform and a shako like you would be in marching band where all the performers are fairly anonymous, that's the purpose of the uniform. Instead you're in a costume without the hat, without the head dress, very close to the audience, in this close knit, visceral, right in front of your face exchange of information. So it gives you the sense of intimacy and closeness with the audience that is very intimidating at first as a performer and then very empowering as we see performers and students grow into that role and grow into those experiences.

Bill referenced the social aspect of WGI by mentioning friendships as a significant part of his WGI experience. He expressed,

One hundred percent of my friends, and all of my best friends, are in the activity, no doubt. Because when you're being creative with things, and you're having to have hands on experience with a lot with [*sic*] things, it's better to have personal relationships with people that you feel can either finish your sentence for you, or you finish it for them.

He also stated,

I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing now if there wasn't that social aspect of it . . . for me personally . . . my involvement with the organization . . . was energizing, and it was an outlet for me to be creative when I wasn't really able. I just wasn't getting that from college.

As a percussionist, Bill expressed his belief that the act of drumming creates unity among those involved and considers that to be a significant benefit of the WGI experience. He considers the act of drumming to be tribal and natural. When asked if there is something about the group drumming experience that draws people in, he responded with the following:

One hundred percent; it's tribal. It's in your nature. It's like the first language spoken was beating rock on another rock and creating rhythm and, you know what I'm saying, as a way of communication. So like the Civil War, they're calling out commands on drums because they can feel it, they can hear it from a distance. Rhythms, we recognize rhythms every day in our speech tone and things just around, you recognize space, like the normal layman is what I'm talking about. So, drums I think is something that brings people together rhythmically, and kind of gives them [a] more synergistic connection with people. Because the margin of error when you're playing on a snare drum and quads and full front ensemble with like 40 people is like nonexistent. So, to have that many people dialed in on such a zero margin of error is like, I don't think there's a much bigger high than that.

To further illustrate his point, Bill shared the following story:

I was in a bucket drumming group, we did it for like 10 years or something like that and we traveled around . . . We did Mardi Gras several years in a row . . . we had like this 45 minute set that was choreographed, and about 40% of it was like technical, but the moment we hit one of the big open cheesy beats that we can play in our sleep or whatever everybody started shucking and jiving and got into it. But the moment you went into some technical type stuff it was just like their head stopped moving, and they were kind of like waiting, and then all of a sudden....boom, they're in. So that right there just made me realize back then when I started writing a lot, what connects people to music? Is it a bunch of busy stuff or is it something that's open, that's readable, that's digestible, that has some space to it that just a common layman can kind of gravitate towards? So, I think there's something behind all that.

Edward spoke of seeing with his own eyes students experiencing the reward of their efforts, and the satisfaction and joy they receive. He expressed,

My favorite part of world championships is during retreat when you see the groups line up, and the kids are crying when they receive even just a medal. That type of reward because we all know the sacrifices, how many times those kids got up at 3 o'clock in the morning to do what they have to do, to get where they have to be to raise the money. It's putting a lot of their energy, a lot of their dedication, a lot of their sacrifices behind the opportunity, the hopes and opportunity to perform in front of an audience. I'm responsible for something that's so detached from that, but to see that relationship is a function of who I am and how I am. I think that's the most that I get out of it. We always say it's for

the kids, but I don't take that lightly. Seeing the genuine excitement of the kids is where the path is for me.

Edward also discussed his opportunities to travel internationally on behalf of WGI and the similarities he has experienced between American students and international students in relation to WGI involvement. He shared, "The kids are all the same. They all have the same excitement. They all have the same enthusiasm." He added, "They just love the experience. By and large, they don't care whether they win or lose. They just want to be part of this presentation that is watching the audience get excited."

Theme 2: Performance Achievement and Excellence

Discussion of achievement and excellence in the WGI activity requires a basic understanding of the three-tiered adjudication system utilized for evaluating performing ensembles. Ensembles are designated as either scholastic (middle/high school students) or independent (beyond high school). Within each of these designations there are three classifications: "A" refers to beginner level ensembles who are new to the activity, "Open" refers to intermediate ensembles, and "World" refers to the most advanced ensembles. The role of the adjudicator changes, depending upon the classification being judged. In "A" class the adjudicator is seen as a "teacher", in "Open" class the adjudicator is the "counselor", and in "World" class the adjudicator is the "critic. This structure allows the judging panel to tailor its feedback to the individual needs of each ensemble.

Table 3 provides examples of significant statements related to the theme "Performance Achievement and Excellence".

Table 3 *Significant Statements: Performance Achievement and Excellence*

Theme	Significant Statement
Performance Achievement and Excellence	<p>“The creative products have gotten much more sophisticated, much more technically proficient.”</p> <p>“They’re doing their homework, they’re working their tails off, and motivating kids to want to play better and teachers to teach better and designers to design better . . .”</p> <p>“So, it’s very impressive to be that close and see what they’re doing compared to the other activities.”</p> <p>“I think, in my experience, that people have been able to produce at a level that they see things being produced around them in their normal lives. A car commercial; music you hear on the radio. The production value over the last twenty years in our everyday lives has risen to these synthetic values, and I think that really pushed people on the design level to kind of adhere to that.”</p>

Study participants expressed that the level of achievement in WGI has risen, and continues to rise at a remarkable rate. Achievement has not only risen in terms of the individual performer, but also in the design of WGI shows. In addition to achieving new skills and design elements, WGI has also experienced an increase in quality, or in WGI terms, excellence. The elevation of achievement and excellence is also attributed to the innovative and progressive nature of the indoor activity. WGI is considered by study participants to be the most progressive of all the marching arts. WGI is also credited as the catalyst for innovation in the marching arts.

Steven expressed that in his experience,

The creative products have gotten much more sophisticated, much more technically proficient. Some of these performers are just quite amazing, what they can do and put forth. Some of that you can see in drum corps, but you're much more up close and personal most of the time with these percussion ensembles. So, it's very impressive to be that close and see what they're doing compared to the other activities.

He also said, "I think overall there is a more progressive approach to being open to design changes; just being more flexible; integration of different kinds of instruments that have, in the other activities, not been allowed." Adam stated that he has witnessed exponential improvement in terms of performer achievement, as well as show design in the WGI activity. He states that as more groups get involved in the activity the evolution of the performances continues. From his perspective, even the youngest, most basic groups are still very strong from a performance standpoint. Robert concurred when he stated, "The material has gotten much more difficult. Things that you would see upperclassmen, you'd see college kids doing years ago in some of the independent groups. You see certain performers now doing that on the A level." Adam said,

I mean honestly, education is great and the comments are great, but the volume of groups that want to compete at that level . . . there's such a vested interest.

They're doing their homework, they're working their tails off, and motivating kids to want to play better and teachers to teach better and designers to design better . . .

Sarah explained that for the groups involved since the establishment of the WGI

Winds division performances and performance level have evolved tremendously. She suggested that overall understanding of show design has drastically improved, as have incorporation of percussion and electronic components. She acknowledges that units are embracing the opportunity to make this activity something other than just an indoor marching band by exploring new combinations of instruments and design elements.

Speaking as a designer, Bill posited that the innovation he has experienced throughout his career with WGI is a reflection of the elevation in multimedia production seen in daily life. He explained this belief by saying,

I think, in my experience, that people have been able to produce at a level that they see things being produced around them in their normal environment. A car commercial, music you hear on the radio. The production value over the last 20 years in our everyday lives has risen to these synthetic values, and I think that really pushed people on the design level to kind of adhere to that.

According to Luke, although he was never a color guard performer, his interest and enjoyment of the color guard portion of the marching arts led him to attend a WGI color guard event in the nineteen-eighties. He talked of the cutting edge design elements he observed, and the high achievement level of the performers. He voiced that he is still amazed by the artistry and skill that is demonstrated in the performances.

Theme 3: WGI as Educational Entity

Table 4 contains examples of significant statements related to the theme “WGI as Educational Entity”.

Table 4 Significant Statements: WGI as Educational Entity

Theme	Significant Statement
WGI as Educational Entity	<p>“So, I’ve loved and I’ve embraced and I’ve trumpeted the three-tier process because it allows basic students to compete against other basic students and it allows intermediate students to compete against other intermediate students.”</p> <p>“I think that the basic structure of the way I teach music education and the way WGI believes, that’s the ground level for what we do [and it] is very strong. We talk all about music comes first and how we teach and how the rest of it goes along with that.”</p> <p>“I think it is the perfect marriage of careful educational curriculum and guidance yet also having the creative motivation to bring forth that which has never been done.”</p> <p>“Professionalism; a strong sense of education.”</p> <p>“I really believe that because everything that we do just from providing the platform to the evaluation of every group and performer, it is the educational aspects and the rubrics, they’re all designed to make sure their experience is not only a great experience, an educational experience, but also give them the criteria to go to the next level of their performance.”</p>

The participants in this study addressed three elements pertaining to the educational emphasis of WGI: a unique judging experience, an educational philosophy, and administrative consistency. Much attention was given to the judging experience

within WGI, with the greatest emphases being on judge training and the three-tiered classification system utilized by WGI. Participants also discussed the relationships established and the comradery developed among the WGI adjudicators. The educational philosophy was discussed from the perspectives of the performers/directors and the judges. Administrative consistency was addressed in terms of adherence of the organization to its stated philosophy, as well as its ethical approach to policy for all stakeholders in the activity.

Participants discussed the comradery that exists among the judges, as well as the opportunity to learn from one another. Robert said, “The biggest take away from it is just the people you’ll meet with their various backgrounds. You can learn something from everybody. Rather it’s the way that they teach, or their perspective on things.” According to Steven,

There’s a great comradery aspect to the judging, particularly the judging side. I enjoy working with the different people on the judging panels. They bring a lot of expertise in a variety of ways. So, it’s always great to get with them and to judge with them and compare our thoughts at some point after that.

Steven attributes this characteristic of WGI to the smaller structure of WGI judging panels. He acknowledges that comradery exists to some extent within the judges’ ranks in larger organizations, but suggests that the smaller, more cohesive judging teams in WGI lend themselves to the development of closer personal and professional relationships. According to the participants, WGI places a great deal of trust in the abilities and qualifications of those it invites into its judging pool, and then they treat those judges in a very professional manner. When asked what she had experienced in

terms of WGI, Sarah's immediate response was "professionalism," and she spoke of how well the organization treats its judges. She revealed, "if something doesn't take place, like an event, a show, a training, we're remunerated for that. We're treated very professionally in that arena." She went on to discuss the uniqueness of WGI judge training. She explained,

We are trained yearly in a remote location . . . I know WGI puts all of their color guard people together to train, and then they put their winds and brass people together . . . So that's a little bit different than a lot of other groupings. A lot of other companies will put everybody together at the same place, same time. And I think because WGI knows not only sheer volume, the guard size versus the [percussion] and wind size, as well as the wanting to make sure things are done very professionally, they pull us into two separate weekends....which is a huge financial undertaking for them; however, they do that. That's huge. We have a new handbook every year with updates according to the WGI rules. The conversations are very open and professional. We're able to share with one another without feeling that something we may say may be disagreed with and immediately shut down. It's a very warm and inviting group of people to work with and to be trained with.

She also explained that at the annual meetings the judges are included in conversations about how well the philosophy put forth by WGI is being supported from the perspective of the judges. According to Sarah,

That's not normal. Normally, the philosophy is established for you. Here I don't think WGI is afraid to let the door open, and they are very selective about who

they bring into the process. Our team of people that is adjudicating right now is very small, for the winds. It's not a large group of people. They've hand-selected people that they feel very comfortable with, that are going to carry on the WGI philosophy. But, again, also be a part of what they believe is going to help promote it and develop it in years to come.

When describing his judging experience with WGI, Adam focused on the training aspect. He explained,

You get yearly training with objectives, both with phone calls or webinars or whatever. On site professional development, outreach, and additional calls during the season are voluntary, but most people participate just to discuss and share their thoughts and ideas, to pick each other's brains. Also the education that WGI does for the designers and teachers, it's a separate track but it's made available to the judges, and seeing all of that kind of stuff it became very obvious why indoor percussion is where it is.

Edward expressed that he believed WGI's emphasis on training and developing judges together in one location annually was a unique and special characteristic. However, he acknowledged that WGI is uniquely positioned to accomplish this type of training due to a smaller pool of judges than those found with larger adjudication organizations. In Edward's opinion, attempting to provide transportation for all the judges associated with larger organizations would be virtually impossible from a financial standpoint. Edward believes WGI participants benefit from the ability to bring judges into one space to train and discuss the evaluation process. He said, ". . . but we're still only dealing with fifty-four or so people that would need to be flown to a meeting to

have the room where everybody can sit there and have those fluid, organic, bounce ideas conversations”. He further stated, “I think nothing compares to having those fifty-four people in the same room talking. What you learn from each other, what you learn from the dynamic.” Edward concluded his comments about the judge training experience by saying, “That hands-on weekend is not only motivational, but just the information shared by being in the same room with those bright minds; you just can’t replace it.”

Referencing how his judging experience in WGI related to his judging experience in other national organizations, Edward expressed that philosophically there is a great deal of consistency among the organizations with which he has been associated. He did acknowledge the three-tiered classification system utilized by WGI as a unique and significant characteristic that sets WGI apart in their evaluation of performing ensembles. Edward described how the three-tiered system differs from the classification methods employed by other organizations for marching band evaluations held during the fall each year. He explained,

So, there are three tiers: A, Open, and World, which is different certainly than anything in the fall [when other marching arts activities usually occur]. I guess some of the local circuits will perhaps go by band size, etc., but BOA, which is the largest of the binding national linear perspectives, it’s all on the same sheet. So, you’re comparing the parochial band that has five wind players to the heavy-hitter bands that have 300, and then you define their way on that scale. So, I’ve loved and I’ve embraced and I’ve trumpeted the three-tier process because it allows basic students to compete against other basic students and it allows intermediate students to compete against other intermediate students.

Nathan expressed his fondness of the three-tiered system by stating,

the way we have it set up with three different paradigms, you know a grouping for advanced performers, and then intermediate performers, then beginning performers. No matter what your ability level is, no matter how seasoned you are there is a place for you to be able to compete and feel very successful and be recognized and rewarded as such.

Luke explained the role of the judge in the three-tiered system. He said,

We believe every judge is a teacher for the beginning, novice groups and members, and that for that intermediate level, the open level, the judges are a counselor for those groups and members, and that requires the greatest patience and strongest concern and greatest amount of effort for adjudication, and for those top-tier world class groups . . . you are a critic as you would be in art.

Edward conceded that the classification process is not perfect, and that it is always being evaluated to ensure that every step is taken to provide the best possible performance and educational environment for WGI participants. In his estimation, Edward believes that the WGI classification system appropriately assigns groups ninety-seven percent of the time.

Speaking to the overall educational orientation of WGI, Sarah said, “They also want to make sure the groups are doing what’s best for music education and I think that’s huge, that’s a big piece of the puzzle as far as what we’re trying to bring forward.” As a result, Sarah stated that when she is adjudicating she is encouraged to talk about the same types of concepts she would discuss with her own students. She explained,

I can talk techniques, and breathing, and dynamics, and overall musicality, and that is what they want. It's not more of a design picture; it's more of the basic this is how do we begin the process, and this is what's most important.

She added,

I think that the basic structure of the way I teach music education and the way WGI believes, that's the ground level for what we do [and it] is very strong. We talk all about music comes first and how we teach and how the rest of it goes along with that. I know that we said the cool part of WGI is the growth that we've seen and this past year in Atlanta when we went through training we talked about not only making sure that we are not only helping programs grow, but we are growing as musicians.

When asked about his core beliefs about WGI based on his experience, Edward shared, "I think it is the perfect marriage of careful educational curriculum and guidance yet also having the creative motivation to bring forth that which has never been done."

Speaking of the WGI judge's educational responsibilities, Edward expressed,

We're responsible for bringing young staffs and young students that far along the learning curve. . . they are in the very most basic stages, just barely experiencing and discovering, but then turn around and immediately be trusted to provide input, but also make competitive scoring decisions at the very highest level of the activity that is truly creating art.

He clarified his point this way:

We are, as judges, sometimes responsible to be the teacher role because there are still students and designers that are just barely experiencing and discovering not

only playing an instrument and putting it together into a program [*sic*] to the very other end of the spectrum where it rivals professional productions.

Luke also mentioned the teacher role of the judge as it relates to the A class, saying,

At the teacher level, the great teacher learns from their students, the great judge continues to learn from the instructors and performers and we encourage all of our judges to judge with their head, with their heart in a very positive and nurturing and challenging manner as they contribute to the growth and develop to this still newer and unique activity and its performers.

Edward, as a percussion administrator for WGI, feels strongly that WGI has had a tremendous impact on the preparedness of percussion students entering college percussion studios. In his experience, having additional exposure to percussion instruments for more hours each week has translated into better players. The growth of WGI has led to the acquisition of more instruments for many programs, according to Edward, and this has given students a broader education where percussion performance is concerned. He stated,

If you have an indoor percussion ensemble, whether they move or not, and those kids get to stand behind that marimba for another 8 hours a week that they wouldn't have otherwise, how is that not good? How do those kids not get better? And, out of those 8 keyboard players, even if only 3 of them get super-motivated to stick with it even beyond high school, those kids really embrace it, and that student that enters college into a studio compared to a student twenty years ago where their high school didn't even have a marimba, and their coming from a

high school that had six, and one 5-octave, and one bass-only marimba that doesn't even get used except for, like, concerts. The proliferation is staggering.

Edward explained that concern was expressed by some band directors when WGI Winds was first introduced because of the fear that the activity would undermine the development of good fundamental playing. Edward argued that the results of the percussion division of WGI suggest that the concern over playing fundamentals was not valid. He expressed that it should not be assumed that moving and playing simultaneously is automatically a negative thing. Edward asked,

Why wouldn't that model work with winds as well? Why wouldn't you want Jimmy or Sallie to have another 4 hours a week playing their clarinet? Why is that a bad thing? The concern was that it's going to mess up their embouchure. It's going to mess up how they approach their instrument. It never did with percussion. They actually got better.

Speaking of what he has experienced as a WGI judge and administrator, Luke said,

I enjoy WGI's commitment to its philosophy. And, that philosophy is clearly, clearly established in it's handbook, rulebook and handbook. And they practice what they preach. They really believe in everything that they are looking for in the spirit of performance and adjudication of those performances.

Sarah discussed the consistency with which WGI monitors the feedback provided to performing groups in an effort to maintain its commitment to an educational mindset. She voiced how WGI is different in this regard compared to other organizations with which she has been associated. She explained,

. . . we were able to sit around the table and watch videos of groups from the past two years and as a group we were given a list of questions and we went around and answered. I ran one of the sessions where we went around asked people there thoughts about it: good, bad, or ugly? What did you see from an ensemble standpoint? What did you see from an effects standpoint? What can we help them grow with? And we were able to talk to one another like we would in a situation on a recorder to a group of students and their designer. In a lot of cases, that doesn't happen in a lot of places, that kind of training does not go on. In a lot of states and their individual federations, that piece of it as well is really paramount for WGI and how they do education and the direction they're going in.

Robert supported Sarah's thought by sharing,

Everything is so student-centered. Before every contest, whether it's a regional, whether it's championships and your judging independent world, they come through and talk to every judge one last time and remind you always that it's for the kids. That's the very last thing that they tell you before any competition; this is for the kids.

Luke stated,

I really believe that because everything that we do just from providing the platform to the evaluation of every group and performer, it is the educational aspects and the rubrics, they're all designed to make sure their experience is not only a great experience, an educational experience, but also give them the criteria to go to the next level of their performance.

Luke reinforced his personal experience with WGI by expressing,

We're about ready to start our fifth year of WGI Winds and I am thrilled to see this activity grow and prosper even more, and we are very student-centered, first and foremost on their success. And success not always has to do with competition, it has to do with expression and artistry and education. I'm proud and the new Winds division, their philosophy is quite great, and they want every kid to feel like a super star and I think in many cases that really does happen, in most cases.

He added,

Ultimately, the experience is created by the individuals and their groups, and WGI, in reflections, tries to give them a platform to allow them to be the very best selves they can be. And, I believe overall that WGI is very successful in that endeavor.

Theme 4: Competition

Table 5 shows significant statements related to the theme "Competition".

Table 5 *Significant Statements: Competition*

Theme	Significant Statement
Competition	<p>“. . . we get the chance to define success for ourselves.”</p> <p>“The competition needs to be put into a healthy approach, and can't be win at all costs. From what I can gather, I don't think that, from the people I talk to, I don't get a sense from the ensemble instructors that it's a win at all costs approach.”</p> <p>“I came up in a very competitive program</p>

Table 5 continued

.”	in high school, and I thought that was sort of the way, and I wanted to compete a lot, and I’ve sort of been turned through my collegiate career and my professional career to value that less. But, I still look back at it and think, would I be where I am if I wasn’t given that competitive spark as a young kid? Would I have had the interest in music?”
	“Don’t get me wrong. It’s all very friendly competition with all our peeps and what not. There’s no animosity. It’s fun. Everybody applauds each other . . .”
	“I think that the competition is secondary to the educational experience and the display of pageantry. I think the competition is the venue, but it doesn’t define the venue.”

Interviews revealed that the participants in this study, generally, see competition as a motivator for success rather than a definer of success. The argument is made that WGI uses a competitive structure to encourage achievement and excellence, and to provide an exciting environment for performers. However, WGI does not promote the idea that competitive success is the ultimate determining factor in ensemble success. Rather, according to study participants, WGI seeks to provide an activity where each individual unit can decide the gauge by which they determine their success. Participants also discussed the role they believe competition plays in student development, both socially and educationally.

Nathan expressed his feeling that the world is an inherently competitive place,

and he believes in the importance of preparing students for that reality by giving them experiences that promote drive and determination. In his opinion, WGI is a wonderful place to experience competition because each unit has some level of control over how they will define their competitive efforts. He stated,

Most of us that are educators in this activity know this, it's been a part of this for a long time, and because of the way it's set up we are able to communicate with the students and the parents of the students and communicate with the administration or your staff that support these activities that we get the chance to define success for ourselves.

Nathan also explained that he taught his students to compete against themselves rather than another ensemble. He said,

We're not going to define it just as we have to be the singular champion at this. Instead, we can go do you know what we've never placed within the top five - that's our goal this year. We've never placed within the top 10 - that's our goal. We've never been to finals - that's our goal. Or, you can strip away the us versus them thing and go you know what - we've never broken a 75 at this competition before, that's our goal right now.

Steven also expressed the belief that groups compete against their own previous performance instead of other units. He explained,

Well, I think the competition certainly gives it an energy that you're not gonna receive otherwise. Certainly a lot of people have their own perspective about the quality of a performance, and then they see how that lines up with the judging panel. The competition needs to be put into a healthy approach, and can't be win

at all costs. From what I can gather, I don't think that, from the people I talk to, I don't get a sense from the ensemble instructors that it's a win at all costs approach. They certainly want to do well. They want to succeed, and a lot of them define success in different ways. Some of them, it's just do the best performance you can every time out. But, I've never seen it get out of control where competition is the driving motivation for the groups. The competition seems to be taken and approached in a very healthy manner from what I can gather and through my experience.

Sarah claimed that in her experience most WGI directors are more interested in how the activity supports and promotes their program as a whole than they are in winning. She said,

I think there are a lot of directors that are involved that look at it only from the educational perspective. I don't think in this case it's driven quite as much as some of the other activities as the competitive, yes the competitive is there, but again I think people are looking at this a little bit more as the driving force in educating their kids and so they look at that.

She further explained how her WGI experience has influenced her view of competition in the activity, and that she believes others involved in WGI share her view, by saying,

For me, again, it's what they take back. I'm a very competitive person, I'm used to competing in all of those different arenas, but now that I've been involved in WGI for the past several years, I look at things from a very different perspective. How are we going to make the programs grow first and then whatever ends up happening from there, great. That's the end result. I think we need to continue to

allow that to, you know we say it's great to go home with a gold medal, but what have your kids really learned along the way, and I think that...Have you strengthened your program? Has your staff strengthened themselves and are working together as a well oiled machine and how does that impact your program? So, I think that's really what we're looking at across the board.

When asked how he would respond to those who view WGI as only a competitive activity, Bill responded by saying,

I would say they're partly right. I mean you know they're not wrong, but they're also missing out on the part that drives that, which is ingenuity. You know, the part behind the scenes that pushes somebody to outdo somebody else.

He likened it to competition in the world of business, stating,

So, I don't know, competition, even in business, competition drives products, right? It's going to make the Apple phone that you probably have, or Droid, or whatever . . . because there was an evolution of phones that drove it to that point. It was like, you know, it's got to be better. But if everybody had the same old push button phone, you know, somewhere that would suck.

Bill's barometer for success is competitive success. In his view, placement reveals how effectively the goals of his ensemble have been met. Bill has long been associated with an independent percussion unit that has experienced great competitive success in WGI.

Bill is quick to point out that despite the intensity of competition among the world class ensembles, there is a great comradery among the staffs. He explained,

Don't get me wrong. It's all very friendly competition with all our peeps and what not. There's no animosity. It's fun. Everybody applauds each other for

like, damn that's pretty witty, that's good. You know there's no heat like that on the back end.

Luke suggested the competitive aspect of WGI may often be more for the audience than the performers. He acknowledges the value of the experience and the ambience for the performers, but believes most groups are primarily interested in becoming better musicians and artists. He shared,

I think that the competition is secondary to the educational experience and the display of pageantry. I think the competition is the venue, but it doesn't define the venue. If you are 1st place or you are 114th, and that does exist. We can't equate the value of the person or the experience of whether they want to call it fun or whether it's just a great way of expression. The competition is just an evaluation model of assessment. It doesn't define who they are or their level of investment in the product they are performing. But, I do believe that while there is a competition aspect, I believe that to be secondary to the education and pageantry of WGI.

Conner discussed competition from a different perspective than other study participants. Conner revealed how he experienced a highly competitive indoor ensemble as a high school band member, and he stated that he enjoyed the competition and thought that was the proper perspective for engaging in music making. As he pursued music in college, and ultimately became a professional music educator at the collegiate level, he stated that his emphasis on competition began to fade. He described the experience this way:

I came up in a very competitive program in high school, and I thought that

was sort of the way, and I wanted to compete a lot, and I've sort of been turned through my collegiate career and my professional career to value that less.

Despite the change he experienced regarding the importance of competition in his life, Conner wonders if he would have pursued music as a career if competition had not motivated him to excel as a performer. He expressed.

I still look back at it and think: would I be where I am if I wasn't given that competitive spark as a young kid? Would I have had the interest in music? Because it was WGI, it was the drum corps activity and all those things that made me look up who Shostakovich was, and, the [sic] made me look up who Pat Matheny was. It made me look up all these artist, and created this interest in music for me. Yeah, competition spawned it, but I think I was able to take into a much more artistic level over the years.

Essence: A Description of the WGI Participation Phenomenon

The culmination of a phenomenological study is a narrative description of the essence of the phenomenon itself. The essence is a composite description that incorporates both the textural and structural descriptions of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013; Given, 2008).

According to the ten individuals who participated in this study, the WGI experience is one that is life changing. The WGI experience is inclusive; it provides opportunities to anyone interested in participation regardless of socioeconomic status, race, gender, gender identity, ethnicity, or musical background. From their positions as directors, administrators, and judges, the participants have in part aided, encouraged, and supported student musicians to develop skills that translate to everyday life and careers beyond the activity. The participants have also witnessed the ability of the activity to positively influence the development of students' identities within their peer groups,

while encouraging them to push the limits of what the students believed themselves to be capable of accomplishing in a wide variety of musical, social, and creative ways. Those experiencing WGI are compelled by its innovative nature to strive for, and value, increased levels of creativity that may not be similarly encouraged by traditional music education paradigms.

WGI performances occur within a unique space that often produces high-energy performances, allowing young people to more closely interact with their audience than in traditional venues where performers are on stage or a football field. The close proximity of the performers to the audience encourages students to learn how to be expressive and communicate through non-verbal means in a unique way matched by few other school performance activities. The WGI experience involves innovation in both student responsibilities and design elements that appeal to both performer and audience, sometimes at a level that may rival that of any art form. The innovative and progressive approach of WGI promotes increased achievement on the individual and group level, while also promoting excellence within that achievement. The WGI experience emerges out of an organizational philosophy that is student-centered, education-oriented, musically-driven, creatively-compelling, and audience-friendly. Participants experience a highly professional organization that is reliable, trusted, systematic, open-minded, motivational, overtly supportive of arts education, and consistent in application of its stated philosophy. The WGI experience takes place within a competitive structure that serves as a motivator for performers to strive for personal excellence, and the ability to communicate their passion for their art in live performances; competition itself is most often not the prime motivator. According to study participants, the vast majority of WGI

ensembles experience competition as competition with self rather than competition with others.

CHAPTER V – DISCUSSION

This phenomenological study was designed to describe the essence of WGI participation as experienced by ten organization stakeholders who serve in leadership roles within the percussion and winds divisions of the activity. Individual interviews with the study participants provided insight into what they have experienced, and in what contexts these experiences had taken place. The central question that focused this study was: What are the experiences and views of ten individuals from diverse musical and educational backgrounds who play a leadership role in WGI? Two additional sub-questions also emerged: 1) Is the WGI experience unique from those experienced through traditional band music curricula (concert band and marching band)?, and 2) Does the phenomenon of Winter Guard International participation have potential to positively influence the curriculum, and subsequently, the teaching practices in high school band programs?

Analysis of participant interviews revealed a number of significant statements, which were then grouped into broader meaning units, or themes. Four broad themes emerged from the data that led to a narrative description of the WGI experience. The four themes are: 1) Developing Character and Identity: Non-Musical Outcomes, 2) Performance Achievement and Excellence, 3) WGI as Educational Entity, and 4) Competition. The data that support these overt themes, presented in Chapter 4, will be discussed here in an effort to formulate informed conclusions, insights, and possible application of the themes to the music education field.

Developing Character and Identity: Non-Musical Outcomes

The participants in this study indicated that WGI promotes the development of skills that are not exclusively musical or performance-oriented, but additional skills that may be applied to life and careers beyond WGI involvement. Some of the skills mentioned include learning to deal with adversity, showing commitment, displaying excitement derived from effort, giving attention to detail, developing drive and determination, and valuing teamwork. Non-musical outcomes such as these have been cited as benefits of student participation in school instrumental music ensembles for virtually the entire history of the school band. It is possible to consider non-musical outcomes as being congruent with a praxial philosophy of music education if these non-musical outcomes are viewed in part as a justification for music-making. However, perhaps motivated in part by Bennett Reimer's (1970) justification of music education based on music's inherent value alone (aesthetic philosophy), the music education community in the United States often seems to make an overt effort to deemphasize the role of non-musical outcomes of band participation. This effort may be somewhat justified by the concern that if lesser expensive school activities may teach similar non-music life skills, there may be plausible reason to discontinue in-school music programs, and particularly band, because it is one of the most expensive student curricula to maintain. Though there is not a way to accurately measure any degree of consensus within the music education community for strictly aesthetic- or paraxial-based support for music in the schools, one can assume that music educators vary from one another in regards to how they justify music education as a necessary part of school curricula. Philosophies may be strictly based on the aesthetic or praxial view, a combination of both, or neither. Music

educators' philosophies may include a belief system that perhaps places non-musical outcomes of participation as being more important than musical ones.

While music educators might agree unanimously that music is worth studying based on the inherent value it possesses and contributes to humanity, close analysis of one's philosophy of music education in effort to defend music education strictly for music's sake may cause one to lose sight of the fact that not everyone shares the trained music educator's perspective. It is reasonable to expect professional musicians and music educators to find joy through their understanding of the formal aspects of music. It is also reasonable to conclude that the more diverse music instruction a student receives, the more likely the student is to find greater appreciation for a broader range of musical experiences. However, in our zeal to promote strictly music-centric experiences as the most important aim of music education, have we intentionally or unintentionally worked to explicitly downplay the acquisition of non-music skills gained from band participation? Positive life skills gained from membership in any school endeavor would normally be hailed as positive outcomes of that experience. Participation in a band program may provide multiple settings where various types of non-musical skills are gained.

Within competitive settings, it could be stated that the primary goal is to win an event or at least be recognized as a potential winner, a challenger for top honors. There are specific skills that must be developed to achieve such competitive goals, skills specific to performance. Some skills gained in the preparation process may be seen as ancillary or secondary to those specific talents needed for winning or placing at the top of

a competitive group. Many of those secondary outcomes are common among many student activities, both curricular and extracurricular. Nathan said,

You get all the same benefits of a team sport and a physical athletic activity all kind of rolled up into one. So when we talk a lot about kids need to be involved in some sort of a team activity, that's where they learn team work, that's where they learn dedication, that's where they learn self-sacrifice and we know that these are things that students will carry with them for the rest of their lives and will help them be amazing professionals someday.

Referencing WGI's contribution to students' lives beyond the activity, Bill stated,

. . . things where it's just every day decision making, and WGI is "I've got to be able to manage my schoolwork while I'm trying to learn this music because we've got a show coming up." And, I think there's like that level of pressure and responsibility that they get put on them and I think stress man, to be honest with you. I think stress, if you don't experience stress enough that when you do experience it, it's more impactful to you. So, I think the more that people experience stress, whether it's in rehearsal situations or in performance, just, in general, just anxiety of that, and just the pressure of making sure your executing right. I think all of that pertains over to like group team effort stuff, whether you work at Taco Bell or some tech company or something.

Edward acknowledged that non-musical outcomes exist within all the marching arts. He associated those non-musical outcomes with an end result when he said, "Committing to a process, making sacrifices, to having a focus, having dedication, and seeing it paying

off when it comes to a reciprocal relationship with an audience when you're actually out there performing [is worth the effort].”

Though music study may not be the most important subject or activity to all students, music can be an avenue by which they grow as an individual, and perhaps in a way that no other school activity can measurably duplicate. Conner shared a quote he hears frequently from a colleague: “More kids making music is never a bad thing.”

If it can be agreed that the types of non-musical outcomes mentioned by the participants in this study can be seen as positive contributors to student development, perhaps the non-musical outcomes gained by participation in WGI are valuable enough for their addition into existing band programs where non-musical outcomes may already exist, but perhaps not those that are uniquely developed by the indoor performance activity.

Participants discussed student identity development, both emotionally and socially, as an important non-musical skill positively enhanced by WGI participation. These skills were stated to be developed in part by the environment in which WGI events occur. The performance space within which WGI events take place is one of the most unique characteristics of the activity. Whereas other marching arts typically perform in outdoor venues, WGI performances are held inside gymnasiums, or indoor athletic arenas. As a result, WGI performers are in close proximity to their audience, which is unlike the virtual anonymity created by physical distance in other marching arts venues. Conner shared,

There's an intimacy there for both the performer and the audience that's different – it's just different. You can hear the, you can feel the performers in a different

way as an audience member. You can certainly as a performer, you can feel the crowd differently. Every noise you make is heard. Sometimes on the field you can shout, “Don’t forget this set!” Can’t do that in WGI because they’ll hear it. So, it’s just the intimacy factor I think, and how that difference between DCI and WGI isn’t good or bad, they’re just different experiences.

Conner also said, “The analogy I use a lot is that Drum Corps is the Symphony and WGI is the Chamber Ensembles - the String Quartet. They are two different things – they are equally valid, they are two different things that are legitimate in their own right – not that one is better than the other, there’s just different musical experiences.”

Nathan described it this way:

It’s a very intimate venue, and when you look at a large marching band most of those performers are fairly anonymous, that’s what we try to do a lot of times with uniforms and shakos and things of that nature, and in indoor percussion it’s the exact opposite. You see everybody. You can see their facial expressions. You as an audience member have this close connection to the performers on the floor, and in turn the performers can have that close connection with the audience when you’re making eye contact with the people that are performing for you. So, it’s the intimacy and the communal experience is one of the things that I’ve always loved so much about it.

Kevin discussed how the venue serves an educative role by helping students discover their own potential through observing more experienced peers perform. He said,

What I think is great for performers is the first time those kids get to go to WGI. Because when you watch it on the video there's such a disconnect. It's like this amazing person that is old and much better than me, but when you get the kids to sit in that arena and they see the kids the same age as me; that kid is awesome. If that kid is 16 and I'm 16, I can do that. Because you see their faces and specifically the percussion part of it, just because I am more familiar with that, it's more physical and they can look at them and go I can do that. I've had ensembles where earlier in their careers I got to go to WGI, and then there was a huge leap the next year because they were just able to have that look in the mirror moment like oh, I can do that too.

WGI performers seek to create a visceral relationship between themselves and the audience members. As a result, the performer engages in a form of non-verbal, non-written communication that when demonstrated at a high level of success, the experience for both performer and audience can be transcendent. Nathan expressed,

I believe very strongly that the act of learning to play an instrument, and being able to communicate in a nonverbal capacity is core to the human experience and I think it just transforms people as a human being the moment you put an instrument in your hands and either through striking an instrument, or blowing air through it, or vibrating a string, or whatever the mechanic is; once you start to communicate to other humans not by saying something, not by writing something down, but by making music, I think that transforms somebody.

While the opportunity to develop and display self-identity through expression exists in other marching arts, as well as other art forms such as dance, visual art, or instrumental

music in a concert setting, WGI productions combine music, dance, drama, and visual art into a cohesive experience that exists in an intimate environment making it unique and perhaps able to promote certain specific skills that other areas of arts performance cannot.

Edward shared this thought,

Just the way the 21st century, and the access to technology and such, WGI is on the cutting edge of all that is being implemented in all forms of art. The groups are pushing that forward, still motivated by the basic nature of creating music, but the programs they are putting together could be influenced by so many other areas of the arts, and so easily. So, what I love about WGI is that it's that full spectrum.

This merging of art forms seems to address the call for a more collaborative arts experience put forth by music education reformists as far back as the 1960s, and reaffirmed by the National Core Arts Standards (2014). It is possible that the WGI experience has grown to fit a need of modern day students to find enjoyment through experiences that reflect the many innovations and widely-varied types of stimuli that our society currently provides. As society has changed and opportunity to interact with a more diverse population has arisen, confidence in self-identity and self-expression seems a necessity of sorts that may enhance one's life experiences.

Socially, students benefit from WGI by learning to value individuals from different backgrounds. As indicated by the data in this study, the WGI activity promotes social relationships both within each unit, as well as across the activity. WGI participants frequently interact with members of other units at local, regional, national, and international events. The participants at the WGI World Championships represent many regions of the United States, as well as other countries, and their respective sub-cultures.

Performers' interactions may help reduce social and cultural biases, providing the opportunity for students to better learn how to engage others who are different from themselves in an informed, practiced way. Robert expressed,

You see a lot of kids that come from all over the country, at a regional and especially at World Championships. A lot of those kids have never been outside of their state, and then all of a sudden they're thrown into this melting pot with musicians from all over the country, a lot of times groups from around the world, and this is their first experience with that.

He also shared,

That usually is the kids' favorite part; the social aspect. Especially if you're a new kid on campus, and all of a sudden you find yourself in one of the competing organizations where you're spending all of these hours after school with these people, so friendships of course, develop . . . that gives you an identity. It's a place where the kid can be comfortable. He's with other people who are trying to achieve the same goals as him, and have similar interests.

For some students, many aspects of the WGI activity may be a new experience in which they choose to be involved because it gives them a place to belong. Perhaps a student loves music, but has no previous training or experience with traditional band programs. Although, the ultimate desire of the music educator may be to involve the student in the concert band program, a WGI ensemble may provide a more comfortable introduction to ensemble music performance. Participant interviews in this study indicated that WGI ensembles have frequently been credited with gaining the attention of

students having no previous musical training and leading them to become part of a band or other performing arts programs.

Most students' experiences with instrumental music occurs during their formative high school years at a time when they are establishing their social identity and determining in part what they are going to do with their lives. Belonging to an organization that is going to encourage self-expression, provide a sense of family, provide a creative outlet, and push students to achieve beyond what they thought they could may help provide an enhanced transition into adulthood. Nathan explained,

I think the activity is crucial for student identity because it is a place where all belong and all are welcome. I know my experience as a public school teacher teaching students from wildly different walks of life, many of them specifically in a middle and high school setting, are searching for something to belong in, something to be a fabric of who they are, and what they want to belong and become a part.

He also shared,

I think for something that speaks that broadly and is that welcoming to that diverse across a section of students on your campus, that's something that can be a real game changer for a lot of students and become that thing that they go, I'm not real sure what I'm going to be in my life yet, but I know right now I'm highly invested in this and this is kind of my tribe that I've fallen in with.

Speaking of the way WGI experiences can prepare students for life beyond the activity,

Nathan expressed,

I think the idea of learning to play an instrument, communicating in a very vulnerable setting, and then being intimate with the audience changes you in a way that carries you through the rest of your life. It makes you that much more confident at being able to stand in front of people and do public speaking. It makes you that much more confident in trying to carefully listen to what other people are saying to try to get the hidden messages that are between the lines because your ears are a little tuned to listening to those small details in a performance ensemble.

The WGI activity is inclusive, not only in terms of who can participate, but in terms of equal contribution from all performing members to the success of the ensemble. Because the show designers have full control of both the visual and musical aspects of their productions, not only can the overall difficulty level of the show be chosen as to what best fits the group's talents and areas for potential growth, each individual's role can be tailored to fit each student's musical talents and musical needs. These individual considerations are addressed under the auspices that performing members will interact positively despite personal and musical differences. According to Nathan,

Our activity is so different in that every single performer is equally valuable and crucial and necessary for this performance to happen. So, the uber talented senior member of the ensemble that has a ton of experience is crucial to the success, but so is the brand new, just getting your feet wet, figuring out the ins and outs. All of them take the stage at the same time and when the ensemble starts performing all of them are going to be invested in that performance. So it's something that really levels out that playing field and it comes this sense of once you get

involved, all of you are crucial, everybody's a cog to this machine, and everybody's contributions are needed and crucial. I think that's an important part of the activity.

It seems that any musical ensemble that provides life-enhancing benefits should be viewed positively, even if that ensemble does not fit the traditional school band model. While it can be argued that any number of activities, arts-centric or otherwise, can help with the development of a positive self-concept, it should be recognized that activities structured to allow participation for all levels of talent and skill, while rewarding high achievement and performance excellence at all levels of competition, are viable, legitimate, and possibly exemplary venues for music performance.

Performance Achievement and Excellence

The theme "Performance Achievement and Excellence" contained two subthemes: 1) Increasing Level of Performance Achievement and Excellence Among Performers and 2) WGI as an Innovative and Progressive Activity. The two subthemes reflect participant interview data that suggests that the WGI activity has demonstrated a consistent trend of increased student musical skill and performance achievement over several decades. The interviews further implied that from design and artistic perspectives WGI has been, and continues to be, the most innovative and progressive of all the marching arts. Participants suggest that WGI has led the way in terms of pushing the limits of possibility in the area of marching arts performances. These highest levels of achievement and excellence demonstrated by the most accomplished performing ensembles can be fairly compared with those found in many well-established and highly-acclaimed performance and display arts arenas including painting, drawing, sculpture, art

music, theater, musicals, film production, dance, and composition. All study participants have an affinity for and knowledge of all of these areas of performance; many participants have worked and continue to work in various combinations of these performance arenas. As mentioned in the participant descriptions (p. 63), those interviewed for this study represent art consumers and art producers that represent a unique and well-lived arts perspective.

Increasing Level of Performance Achievement and Excellence Among Performers

As music educators, we all most likely share a desire to see our students move from basic to intermediate to advance performance skills, or put another way, see them demonstrate increasing achievement levels across time. This includes seeing our students demonstrate their achievements with increasing excellence, with achievement representing the attainment of a specific result, and excellence representing the highest quality demonstration of that result. Adam expressed how his experiences as a performer in DCI, and now as an adjudicator in WGI, have allowed him to witness a dramatic increase in the performance expectations and abilities of WGI performers; as the activity has evolved and show demands have increased, performers have risen to the challenge. Adam also said,

I was a rudimental drummer way back when, and you had all these basic rudiments: ratamacues, flamtaps, things like that. Now they have some of these permutations of these rudiments that you sort of have to keep up with that. So it's pushed me that way.

Steven said, “. . . the level of student achievement has increased and become more impressive in the short time I've been doing it.” He added, “I've had a great experience

witnessing incredible performances by the students of a variety of levels and ensembles.”

When asked what he has experienced in terms of WGI, Steven shared,

Great performances by very talented students at a variety of levels that includes high school, some groups that are younger than that; some middle school groups, some junior high groups, as well as independent groups, which are mixed ages and typically come from mixed locations. All of those performances have been greatly rewarding.

Robert explained how material that was once encountered only by college-aged performers in independent performance units is now often seen in the shows of Scholastic A units (school ensembles) who are just beginning to explore the activity. Edward supported Robert’s observation by saying, “There are high school groups doing now what college ensembles twenty years ago, there might have been one or two, weren’t doing.” Edward connected the elevated achievement and excellence of WGI performers with music study at the collegiate level by stating,

It’s absolutely undeniable that there is a direct correlation between the influence of WGI and all those students that are involved to then being [sic] headed off to better professors at better colleges and those ensembles flourishing. I challenge anybody one-on-one with that.

In the realm of instrumental music education, what constitutes the expectation of student achievement? If increasing technical skill on an instrument and elevating artistic performance fall under the umbrella of achievement, then according to the participants in this study, WGI is an educational venue in which these skills can be learned.

This is an Innovative and Progressive Activity

The second subtheme to emerge from “Performance Achievement and Excellence” was “This is an Innovative and Progressive Activity”. According to the study participants, the design concepts and strategies utilized to create WGI shows have undergone a dramatic transformation over the activity’s history. This transformation has been heavily influenced by the inclusion of technology, as well as the changes in production value experienced as part of daily life in our increasingly media-driven culture. WGI show designers have taken the creative and technological influences impacting our culture and used them to push the boundaries of possibility for performers in WGI ensembles.

When discussing the evolution of WGI during his involvement, Steven stated, “There’s also been a quick growth in the incorporation of technology in the programs, both in a design and performance perspective.” Steven also said,

I think it’s probably the most progressive of the marching arts. I think they’re open to trying new things more readily. Not only within the design and the creative process, but within the technical aspects that we use to facilitate the judging, just the use of technology. They’ve always been leading that part and the other marching arts adopt those.

The use of technology in the adjudication of WGI performances involves the utilization of a web-based program called CompetitionSuite (CS). This free resource allows WGI participating units to create an account where judge’s comments can be uploaded within a matter of minutes following a unit’s performance. This allows directors to have virtually immediate access to performance feedback. The information available through

CompetitionSuite is archived and remains available to account holders indefinitely. As a result, directors can regularly look back and compare performance feedback to better evaluate how effectively an ensemble is reaching performance goals.

Adam described how the innovation in WGI is not relegated to only the world-class ensembles (top performance-level groups). He said,

I've been pleased since my first year, and I am primarily a designer. It's just the median group in terms of the prowess they have, ways to generate affect and communicate. It's amazing just in the five years, six years that I've been doing it.

Adam further explained how the evolution of technology in WGI is pushing the adjudicators themselves to expand their knowledge and grow in their understanding of how technology is being utilized in order to more appropriately and accurately evaluate performances. He shared,

. . . as a judge it's pushing me to learn more. I have to know more and more about sound reproduction and sound systems. I have to know more about technology and samples and triggers and all the integration of sounds and quality of sounds. Groups now even on a cursory level have to have professional soundmen involved. So it pushes me year after year in a technical aspect . . .

The innovative and progressive nature of WGI is perhaps one of the primary reasons for the popularity and growth of the activity. Students in the twenty-first century are accustomed to rapid change and are highly engaged with the world around them through countless multimedia platforms. WGI show designs reflect the technological world in which today's students have grown. Audio equipment, special effects, voiceovers, synthesized sounds, and high definition video displays are common

components of WGI productions. These represent the world in which young people are comfortable. The popular music being consumed by students today is strongly connected to video imagery and highly produced live concert performances. MTV (Music Television) first aired in 1981 (“MTV”, 2018), fusing music and video together so successfully that the influence continues to the present; interestingly, WGI held its first World Championship only three years prior to the introduction of MTV. It seems as though WGI and the music industry have run a parallel course in terms of innovation over approximately the past forty years.

In his interview, Bill referenced how commercial production values in the United States have risen to extraordinary levels over the last twenty-three years he has been involved in WGI, and he believes this has influenced the production values in WGI show design.

Based on the experiences of the participants in this study, WGI has prioritized innovation as a necessary and valuable tool for promoting student achievement and performance excellence as well as creative arts exploration and audience engagement. It seems WGI recognizes the importance of meeting students where they are in terms of providing a musically artistic and challenging experience that, at least in part, emulates the world in which they live outside the activity. Perhaps students more readily connect with WGI show designs emotionally, physically, and socially than they can with traditional school band experiences. If this is the case, it could help explain why WGI has experienced, and continues to experience, such dramatic growth in participation.

In terms of achievement and excellence, performers are benefitting from the WGI experience, according to those interviewed in this study, though this idea may not be

shared by the entire music education community. As Conner shared, some educators outside the activity are concerned about the idea of spending so much time on one show. The concern is that students could be experiencing more literature during the time devoted to learning and perfecting a single production. Such an argument seems to imply that the only ensemble experience that student participants are having is via WGI. Some WGI independent groups contain members that are not currently part of any collegiate or professional music ensemble, though many are college students majoring in music or participating in university-level music making as non-majors. The vast majority of WGI scholastic performers (largely high school aged-students) are involved in some type of comprehensive instrumental music program. This usually means that WGI participants are also members of their school orchestra, band, choir, etc. As part of WGI, some students may be participating on a secondary instrument, expanding their musical skill sets and possibly increasing exposure to various genres, styles of music from what they experience in marching band, concert band, jazz band, etc. According to Conner, WGI provides the opportunity for students to learn how to be excellent at something. The prolonged exposure to the material when learning only one show a season allows performers to discover the performance quality they are capable of when they apply effort to a task over an extended period of time. By definition, that is achievement and excellence.

Study participants that teach, compose, perform, and design art with university- and professional-level musicians and artists are exposed to high levels of music making and performance prowess, and it is these levels that inform and guide the WGI adjudication system. The participants' life experiences and personal investment in

educational and performance opportunities for young musicians help define specific words used in evaluation that promote the development of musicians (musicianship, expression, artistry, sound production, clarity, accuracy, uniformity) and specific words that encourage the intended result of live performances on audiences (communication, engagement, variety, effect, excellence, presence, role). The performance expectations defined by the adjudication system as guided by leaders in WGI are not lowered, adjusted, or redefined as different from those same expectations that exist for university and professional levels. The performance groups that compete in the “novice” class (Class A) perform less challenging productions than those groups performing the most challenging productions (World Class), but each class aims to reach the same levels of excellence as one another where the musical and visual demands being asked of each performer are fully achieved and convincingly communicated to an audience.

WGI as Educational Entity

The third theme to emerge from the participant interviews in this study was “WGI as Educational Entity.” Within the theme, three subthemes were also identified: 1) A Unique Judging Experience 2) An Educational Philosophy and 3) Administrative Consistency. Study participants indicated that the WGI organization conducts business in a professional manner, and strives to maintain consistency in the application of their philosophy and organizational guidelines. WGI judges shared that they experienced a level of training and trust that is too often uncommon in other marching arts organizations, as well as school systems and academia. Participants also suggested that WGI operates under an education-oriented philosophy that seeks to support, rather than replace, school band programs, perhaps acting as an auxiliary educational institution

where judges can be seen as teachers, administrators as supporters and guiders, and designers as curriculum builders.

A Unique Judging Experience

Participants offered a collective view of judge training within the WGI organization as being extremely efficient, inclusive, respectful, and effective. Because most participants judge for organizations, states, and local circuits outside of the WGI organization, comparisons to the WGI judging experience are readily made. Many organizations have little to no judge training. Some have limited training and some use parts if not all of the WGI system. Most participants stated that compared with other training systems, the WGI process was their preferred experience. Some pointed out that there are various aspects of other pageantry and performing arts judge training that are limited for various reasons: budget, location, philosophical difference, etc. Most participants shared that they felt empowered when judging to make rating and ranking decisions that if informed by the WGI training and justified through well-scrutinized reasoning, the judge's numbers (judging decisions) would not be criticized as wrong; each judge is hired for their individual skill sets and experiences and then trained to use the WGI judging system in order to create as much judge inter-reliability as possible, while respecting each individual judge's personal perspectives. Regular conference calls between administrators and judges, weekly emails, meetings prior to each competition, and a carefully-crafted and thoroughly-written judge's handbook all contribute to the tenacity shown by WGI to keep judges included, informed, and empowered. Judges have ongoing access to administrators for input on the educational aspects of the activity, including the judge's role as teacher where performance components of music and visual

fundamentals as well as design choices and execution are an integral part of the judging system.

Sarah discussed how education factors into her role as an adjudicator/teacher. She explained that music educators often build student achievement levels by developing music fundamentals as a priority, followed by selecting appropriate repertoire for said levels—the elements that contribute to the development of overall show design. She explains it in the following way:

I can talk techniques and breathing and dynamics and overall musicality, and that is what they want. It's not more of a design picture; it's more of the basic, this is how do [sic] we begin the process. . .

Luke addressed the educative role of the adjudicator by discussing the three-tiered classification system utilized by WGI. He explained,

We believe every judge is a teacher for the beginning, novice groups and members, and that for that intermediate level, the open level, the judges are a counselor for those groups and members, and that requires the greatest patience and strongest concern and greatest amount of effort for adjudication, and for those top-tier world class groups the judging experience as we relate it to the judges and therefore that is related to the groups themselves is that you are a critic as you would be in art.

He added,

A critic for the advanced groups and their members and we must challenge and encourage them to set even higher goals. And at any given time, we are sometimes moved back and forth between these roles. At the teacher level, the

great teacher learns from their students, the great judge continues to learn from the instructors and performers and we encourage all of our judges to judge with their head, with their heart in a very positive and nurturing and challenging manner as they contribute to the growth and develop to this still newer and unique activity and its performers.

Based on Luke's description of the adjudicator's role in WGI, it seems a great deal of thought has gone into addressing the needs of each level of performer both technically and artistically, with WGI placing a great deal of importance on training judges to understand these specific varied-level needs. The WGI three-tiered system is extremely unique in the adjudication paradigm when compared to school or non-school affiliated band competitions or festivals where performances may be rated or ranked, or both. Most competitions and festivals enter bands into various levels of competition/classifications based on school size. WGI allows instructors to enter the competitive class they think is most appropriate for their students based on a number of factors including students' musical skills, student's musical needs, available rehearsal time, available rehearsal space, access to design experts, etc. Though one may assume that groups would take advantage of such a system by entering the novice level classes in order to be more competitive with less challenging music and visual design, in WGI, the administrative component, supported and advised by judges, assess performances throughout the competitive season. Groups identified as demonstrating skills on a higher level than as specifically described by WGI for each of the three tiers of competition are moved up into the next higher tier. This process is well-monitored, multi-dimensional, and highly scrutinized as to remain as fair to all related parties as possible. This system

reflects WGI's commitment to the educational growth of the individual based on the expertise of music educators and their desires for students to grow as performers, moving most appropriately and carefully from novice level fundamentals to advanced levels of skill; each competitive class promotes and rewards excellence based on extremely high levels of performance standards as represented at the university and professional levels of performance quality.

In some judging organizations, while there may be differing classifications of competitive groups, a singular approach to adjudication is used for each classification. In these systems, judge dialogue is assumed to change as quality of performance and design levels increase, though such is often not a part of judge training. This scenario may lead to multiple interpretations of what judges say as well as whether or not their comments were fully justified or accurate. The three-tiered system seems to allow for the WGI judges who participated in this study to feel more at ease with the types of things that they offer on their adjudication recordings. As pointed out by Luke, instructors and designers are extremely educated about the judging system and the type of role judges are to take with each of the three levels. An instructor hearing a judge talk about fundamentals of hand position or tuning is a normal part of the adjudication of students that are in Class A, a class defined by WGI as students being asked to achieve "basic skills." Groups performing in the World Class who are expected to achieve the most "advanced skills" want and expect to hear judge commentary that is both complementary and critical when called for, based on design and execution of the design. Comments for the most advanced class rarely if ever focus on basic skills, since those are assumed to already be acquired, allowing for advance requirements to be placed on the performers.

The WGI system also assumes that any flaw of basic skills that do appear in a performance of the World Class units are extremely rare, displayed only briefly, and quickly corrected; a judge does not need to “teach” instructors of this level of competition about fundamental music or movement concepts. Judge input, given as recorded commentary and in critiques that occur after performances, are designed to aid a group’s performance achievement over the course of the season, which most often culminates in a large circuit or state championship. The majority of the world’s groups do not attend the WGI World Championships for various reasons including finances, scheduling, and distance. Some attend bi-annually or less frequently. Regardless, the unique opportunity to get input from many well-trained, like-minded, highly experienced and educationally-minded judges (perhaps as many as 60+ a season) can be extremely valuable to the music and performance education of instructors, designers, and students.

Adam, as a retired public school administrator, brought a unique perspective to the role of the adjudicator as teacher/educator concept. Speaking of the judging structure in terms of formative and summative assessment, he referred to local indoor circuit events and WGI regional events as examples of formative assessments where units receive a “snapshot” evaluation of the current performance level being displayed. Each “snapshot” should enable groups to improve as the competitive season progresses. Adam then referred to circuit/state/regional championships or WGI World Championships as summative assessments where units discover how effectively they met their performance goals for the year.

An Educational Philosophy

The second subtheme within “WGI as Educational Entity” was “An Educational Philosophy.” The WGI organization makes their philosophy quite clear as demonstrated by its purpose, mission, and value statements. An educational philosophy is made evident in one of its four mission statements: WGI provides leadership through education to constantly improve the quality of ensembles. The WGI model allows individual unit directors to determine how the activity will best serve their program. Some programs may use the WGI activity as a way to provide movement and marching training to future members of a competitive marching band. Comprehensive band programs may offer WGI ensemble participation as an optional group for those students who are looking for a more intense, competitive experience than what the other aspects of the program can offer. Some band programs may use the activity to recruit new members by providing them with a place to participate on a non-traditional instrument, or as a place to start learning to read music and play at an entry level, all the while contributing to the entire team of musicians as an integral member of the performance ensemble.

One of the unique possibilities for music education through WGI participation is the opportunity for a young, or developing, school band program to receive a positive evaluation experience that can promote a sense of accomplishment and pride, while also offering practical suggestions that will benefit the program’s forward growth. Unlike most state band evaluation systems, the WGI system allows band programs without a standard band instrumentation, without access to private lessons, no cohesive K–12 music curriculum, or strong financial support to tailor their arrangements to fit the instruments and talents they do have; WGI does not have any required instrumentation

that is necessary for musical, performance, or competitive success. State concert and marching band evaluation rubrics are structured in a way that make it difficult for a band without a full instrumentation or balanced numbers of students on traditional wind instruments to have a reasonable opportunity for musical or competitive success. The WGI model allows the director to utilize his students, their abilities, and resources in a way that maximizes the ensemble's strengths. Additionally, the absence of a prescribed music list from which competitive units must perform (common to many states' band evaluation systems) allows the director to choose literature that suits the talents, personality, and financial means of the ensemble; the educator is responsible for making the decision that is in the best interest of the students. Though prescribed music lists and long-established concert and marching band evaluation rubrics have a place in instrumental music education, in some cases, the utilization of these tools fails to meet the needs of some band programs, and often those that are disadvantaged in ways that are unavoidable by directors, administrators, communities, and parents. The inequality created in such circumstances could perhaps, in part, be rectified by the WGI activity. The music education community should be interested in making sure students are associating their music education with positive experiences that embrace excellence as a goal, where student achievement outcomes lead to better retention in our music programs and life-long enjoyment through music and the arts. The field of music education should consider the value of any activity that encourages students to engage in music-making, while learning to do so with technical skill and artistry, demonstrating excellence that is measured and ultimately rewarded by experienced, trained evaluators whose standards are based on the highest quality that exists in the arts. Additionally, these educational

experiences are seen by the study participants as functioning within a global perspective and informed philosophy that values awareness and appreciation for variety of music genres, styles, and approaches that reflect our modern-day access to cultures outside of our own.

Conner shared in his interview that he credits his experience in a competitive indoor drumline, as well as his DCI experience, with introducing him to a wide variety of musical influences. He believes WGI provided him with the training ground that prepared him and led him to his current career as a professional musician and music educator. He stated,

Speaking as young me, as a performer, this activity was my gateway to becoming a professional musician. I would not have known who Bartok was, or Shostakovich, or any of these composers had it not been for this activity. Some people might sneer at that but for me that's what got my foot in the door to pursue music as a profession and to focus on my efforts on music as a career. And, the activity is different for a lot of people but for me as a young musician, this activity was my way in to that. To eventually be a career musician, not just a pageantry person, but teaching at the college level, going through all the degrees, being a performer, all of these things, a scholar, I owe a lot of that to this activity, from my performing days.

Conner's experience supports the notion that WGI serves an educational function apart from its competitive aspects. Based on Conner's experience, WGI may encourage appreciation for a variety of musical styles, while also, through development of musical skills, artistry, and an appreciation for musical achievement at a high level, create within

performers the thought of a possible career in music or music education. Philosophy-driven actions within the WGI organization produce an ongoing connection between what happens pedagogically in most private studios, quality band programs, universities, and professional training areas to those encouraged and rewarded by the WGI adjudication process.

Sarah also explained that she sees her own philosophy as a professional music educator reflected within the WGI values and goals. She shared, “I think the basic structure of the way I teach music education, the way WGI believes, that’s the ground level. The music comes first and how we teach it, and then the rest of that goes along with it.”

According to Sarah, WGI provides a unique educational benefit to the teachers by creating opportunities that encourage them and their students to adapt positively and confidently to new performance spaces. She explained that many school band programs do not have concert halls or auditoriums in which they can perform. Often times, bands must perform in gymnasiums, cafeterias, or outdoors. In WGI, performances typically occur in gymnasiums, but the specific venues change with each event. As a result, teachers or directors must learn to adjust to new spaces, and they must teach their students to adjust by being confident, taking on a certain level of performance maturity that adapts well to the unfamiliar. Additionally, new or unique performance spaces may encourage educators to make better literature choices based on how the environment will influence instrumentation, balance, intonation, dynamics, etc. According to Sarah, what is learned through WGI performances can improve concert literature programming as well as the performances themselves. She said,

I think those beliefs, whatever they learn those eight minutes in that gymnasium are taken back to their auditoriums and their concert halls. And I think that's another piece of it again, we have to remind ourselves that in some cases, we are just the tip of that music program, we are just a little bit of the learning catalyst that allows to strengthen what they're doing in their program and so we need to remind ourselves of that. The understanding that the better literature to utilize and the better program to try and program so they are getting the best for their program. I don't have a band room, I have a cafeteria so in order for me to make that work I transfer them back and forth from different venues to allow them to understand what playing is like in a cafeteria versus an auditorium so again it's that placement and we want to make sure we educate our kiddo's ears as well.

Though the opportunity to perform in renown venues such as Carnegie Hall may not ever be available to most band programs, the chance to perform in spaces unlike those students and directors experience at home may provide an added visceral component to the performance, certainly if the audience is made up of a wide variety of fans, supporters of students, and fans of the WGI activity.

Referencing the initial introduction of WGI Winds as a performance category in 2015, Edward shared that some instrumental educators expressed concern over the potential for a negative impact on the fundamental approach performers take toward their instrument, a possible negative affect of music education. Edward responded to that concern by pointing out the exact opposite occurred when the percussion division was introduced (a division introduced to WGI 23 years after the color guard division). According to him, the percussionists became better players, rather than weaker as some

predicted. Edward believes it is a mistake to declare that wind players moving and playing simultaneously is inherently bad. His argument is that a student who is motivated to practice by their involvement in any musical activity, whether a traditional concert band or otherwise, should be encouraged, because a student playing more hours per week should not be viewed as a negative thing, certainly if excellence in performance is the ultimate goal. Perhaps the student may vary somewhat from a prescribed routine when practicing at home, or ignore some correct fundamentals, but the student is engaged and perhaps even excited about making music outside the band room. As Edward stated, bad teaching exists in many classrooms. How does a student working on music for a WGI performance carry more negative potential than bad teaching? Edward explained his thoughts this way:

There are people on the podium that shouldn't be on the podium. So, that's happening. So, why should you immediately assume that just because a student is responsible for any physical or visual activities that it's going to make them a worse clarinet player? I would still say playing long tones on Wednesday night for 20 minutes and having F in their ear, and then taking that out on the floor, that's going to be better than if they went home and played video games.

Edward concluded his interview by saying, "Don't we want those kids excited about music?"

The data collected in this study suggests that WGI is guided by "a strong sense of education" as stated by Sarah. The three-tiered classification system for placing like-skilled ensembles in the same competitive classes within the WGI structure not only serves a competitive purpose by grouping ensembles in a more comparable way than

many other national competitive organizations, it also provides a structure that allows judges to tailor their evaluation to the needs of each unit. Sarah summed her views of WGI this way,

If you have the means to be able to do what WGI and the indoor marching activity does, and it doesn't negatively affect anything else you're doing, and it doesn't take away from your daytime program, and it supports your kids, I'd strongly urge you to be involved in the activity, I think that it has the impetus to be the most supportive part of your day program along with what you do on a regular basis in your own educational field.

Administrative Consistency

“Administrative Consistency” was the third subtheme within the broader theme of “WGI as Educational Entity.” Study participants indicated that a unified, clear, and well-defined philosophy is a constant focus of the WGI administration during judge training sessions, contests, and organizational meetings. Interviews also suggested that the WGI administration seeks to maintain a strong sense of ethics in the way they conduct business and in the expectations they place on adjudicators and members of the WGI staff.

Robert described how the WGI administration frequently reminds adjudicators that the activity is student-centered and education-oriented. He stated,

Before every contest, whether it's a regional, whether it's championships and your judging independent world, they come through and talk to every judge one last time and remind you always that it's for the kids. That's the very last thing that they tell you before any competition; this is for the kids.

Sarah explained that the WGI administration is very selective about those who are invited to adjudicate the activity. Their selectiveness stems from a desire to not only include individuals who understand and support the established philosophy of WGI, but will also “promote it and develop it in years to come.” Sarah also explained how the WGI administration reinforces the philosophy of the organization through adjudicator evaluations. She said,

After every show that I adjudicate, someone gets back with me within a week with an evaluation of my recording. That happens in no other arena. That speaks, to me, volumes over what the people at the top, and the philosophy of true education is all about. They want to make sure those kids are getting good feedback.

Sarah expressed that in her experience WGI seeks out adjudicators who share the same beliefs as the organization in regard to the purpose of the WGI activity. If this is true, then Sarah’s view of the relationship between WGI scholastic ensembles and school band programs reflects the basic philosophy of WGI and its role in the instrumental music education community. Sarah shared,

There are some schools that are very tiny. I ran into two this past year in southern Texas, almost to the Mexico border, and they choose to use it as a building ground for their program. They have a very, very small program and they’re trying to build interest not only in the marching, but in the concert arena, and felt this was a good way to explore and experiment with the activities. They felt that the educational background that they got was tremendous so they decided to continue with it for their program.

Like Sarah, Luke expressed that his personal beliefs regarding instrumental music education are closely aligned with those of WGI. Luke further stated that he admires the administrative leadership of WGI. He acknowledged that any organization has “hiccups,” but in his experience, the WGI administration has remained very consistent in its practices. He shared,

There’s gonna be hiccups, there’s gonna be potholes, there’s gonna be unexpected surprises, there’s gonna be things where you just have to make a scientific guess about how to make things right for a group, or an individual, or an activity. And, I find that whatever they do, the decisions they make are very much what’s best for the greater good, what’s best for the whole. Even if it’s not always best for an individual, what is best for the entire whole.

In an effort to articulate the ethical consistency of WGI’s administration, Luke shared, for the sake of anonymity, vague details of a situation involving a small number of judges who were no longer involved with the activity due to actions that did not reflect the policies and philosophy of WGI. Luke explained that there did not appear to be anything questionable involved in terms of influencing competitive outcomes or illegal actions. However, the potential for the appearance of impropriety, and the possibility of the trust between WGI and its member units being negatively affected, led the organization to sever ties with the adjudicators involved. Luke reiterated that WGI’s commitment to ethical practices and to the units they exist to serve is evidence of the consistency with which they carry out their stated goals and objectives. Luke said, “They practice what they preach, and they practice what’s in writing.” Addressing the student-centered and ethical philosophy of WGI, Luke stated,

Whether it's professionally in the handbook or personally in meetings, when we're in meetings talking about the upcoming season, how much they stress about the enjoyment, the enjoyable experience of the students and the members on the court. They really care about that a lot, and so I find them to be very kid-centered. Very student-member-centered, and I think their ethics and their morals as an organization are wonderful, that truly go past their own personal mission statement. I figure if I did not want to be involved with WGI, they would live without me and I would live without them. But I am honored to be a part of that organization in a small way, and I really believe in the organization, which is just a big thumbs-up in my book.

Interviews with participants from extremely varied backgrounds revealed a shared value of the music education environment where teachers and administrators interact positively as guided by a shared philosophy of musical excellence and high levels of student achievement that promote self and art, skills gained for the individual, and skills shared with an audience. These values seem to have been important core beliefs of the participants prior to their tenure with WGI. Though it could be assumed that such professional dispositions compelled WGI to seek out these individuals as judges and administrators, the researcher concludes that it is the very nature of WGI, seeing itself as an informed and ever-evolving supporter of music and related arts education, that has kept the participants involved—some drawn to the activity for over 30 years.

Competition

The fourth theme to emerge from the data in this study is “Competition.” WGI is an overtly competitive activity. Participating ensembles are assigned a numerical score

by a panel of judges and are given a final ranking based upon the assigned score.

According to the WGI website, WGI “views competition as a means to encourage the highest standard of excellence” (“WGI’s Values”, 2018). The website also states,

WGI uses a competition-based approach for organizing events in order to showcase youth activities in pursuit of high standards of achievement. Events include approximately sixty Regionals and Power Regionals, which lead to the three-day World Championships that evaluate more than three hundred fifty guards, two hundred fifty percussion ensembles, and forty winds groups.

The participants in this study viewed the competitive aspect of WGI as a motivating factor that promotes achievement and excellence for the individual, ensembles, and the overall level of creativity and performances achievement in all the pageantry arts and related activities. Among those interviewed, the consensus was that the majority of WGI ensembles view competition as competition with self rather than competition with others. Nathan expressed, “what I love about this activity is it’s not a zero sum game.” He discussed how he never hesitates to talk with his students about the role of competition and how it can be used as personal motivation to push them to be better as an ensemble and as individuals. However, he stresses that he always redefines competition as competition with self.

Nathan makes an interesting comparison between WGI ensembles and other sports teams. He explained that though various aspects of team play can get better or worse from one sporting event to the next, the competition changes from week to week, is against only one opponent, and teams may face each other only a few times a season if not only once. However, in WGI you are most always competing against multiple groups

at one event, and perhaps against many of the same groups many times throughout a season. He further points out that in WGI competitions there is no defense. In other words, there is nothing one unit can do to diminish the performance of another unit in the performance space. Each unit is entirely responsible for its own outcome in terms of performance. Nathan stated,

So then you truly strip away all groups that you are competing against. If 20 of us are phenomenal this weekend and all break an 80, we can all be successful because we can define what those are going to be. So I think the savvy instructors and savvy groups recognize that competition is a great motivator. It encourages all groups to strive to be their best but that it is our opportunity to frame what is going to be successful for our ensemble and what metric we want to use to help define that.

As Nathan points out, there are a variety of ways to determine success. Perhaps the goal for an ensemble is the attainment of a specific score, such as a seventy-five. If the ensemble meets or exceeds the goal of seventy-five points scored, then they have been successful in certain terms. This implies that multiple groups could also score a seventy-five or higher, and it would have no bearing on the success of the first group because they met their goal. For future shows in future years, the score goal can be raised. Perhaps a goal is to advance from semi-finals to finals of the World Championships with a group that has previously never qualified for finals. Nathan said, “One of the things that is crucial as educators is to frame competition in the right light for students. This activity gives us a great opportunity to do that.”

Steven concurred with Nathan, stating, “To me it’s about the groups, each group competing with itself to make sure that they can do [*sic*], give a better performance than the time before.” He added, “. . . competition is seen as a, more of a motivating factor for each group individually to do the best that they can do, and be less concerned about beating the other groups. . .” Steven expressed that he hoped WGI was not viewed negatively because of the competitive aspect of the activity because he believes competition can be positive if utilized in a healthy way.

Sarah described how her past with DCI led her to bring a more competition-driven attitude into her WGI experience, but then acknowledged that her attitude toward the role of competition in WGI has changed. In her opinion, WGI has helped lead to a reversal of her mindset. She said,

I grew up in the competitive world. My dad is a DCI hall of famer, and that’s what I knew getting into this as an educator. So, like I said, I’ve changed my views and my thought just being involved with WGI because I’ve seen it from a different perspective. If WGI continues to evolve, I feel very confident that there’s going to be a continuation of that core thought of the direction of this is first educational and then competitive along the way.

Bill addressed the role of competition in WGI from the perspective of encouraging innovation and achievement. He contends that those who have a desire to perform within a competitive activity are motivated by the challenge of “pushing the envelope.” From year to year, they are consistently trying to improve upon their last effort. Bill is affiliated with an independent WGI ensemble that specifically seeks competitive success. However, Bill articulates that the competitive success is not

possible without a high level of achievement and excellence. According to Bill, mistakes in design choices can lead to less than desirable competitive results, but it is the taking of that result and using it as a learning device to make better choices next time that is important. Even when the result is not what was hoped for, learning and achievement can increase.

Researcher's Reaction to Study Findings

An important revelation of this study is the degree of congruence represented in the experiences of ten individuals who come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Though they do share an affinity for diverse forms of art and have been associated with the marching arts for many years in various capacities, some participants are professional music educators, others are professional educators in other subjects, and some participants have careers that exist outside the field of education. The participants are from all major areas of the United States. The education level of the participants ranged from doctoral degrees in music, to degrees in non-music related fields, to no degree at all. Several participants have experienced the marching arts as performers at various levels and in multiple contexts. Others have experienced a less varied involvement with the marching arts as performers, though they have numerous experiences as designers and consultants. Non-performance marching arts experiences for the participants include instructing, arranging, designing, consulting, and administrating. Whereas some of the study participants have experienced all of the roles mentioned, others may have experienced only one or two. All participants have had high levels of student achievement success in public school and higher education settings.

The large degree of agreement among the participants in this study lends credibility to the themes identified in the data and suggests that the WGI experience is unique and consistent even when the personal context of the individual experiencing WGI is widely varied. Perhaps the uniqueness of the WGI experience draws people to it because it values the contribution of unique individuals—a sense of connection and belonging is felt. It seems ironic to talk of uniqueness and individuality in the same sentence with connection and belonging. WGI, as an organization, promotes the involvement of people possessing a wide range of skills and interests and places equal value on the contribution those individuals bring to the activity. This can be said for performer or instructor, judge or administrator.

Phenomenological research is designed to either describe or interpret the experiences of individuals with a specific activity or event. Upon numerous, careful readings of the interviews conducted in this study I have reached the conclusion that WGI is focused earnestly on providing a venue for individuals discovering and fulfilling their potential as artists and social beings through opportunities that lead to a myriad of new experiences. Scholastic and independent performers alike are encouraged to “step outside” their comfort zones and discover new experiences that combine multiple art forms to provide an emotional and meaningful experience for an audience and for the performers.

The informed and compassionate music educator most likely promotes an environment where students can develop an understanding of the power of music, and the arts in general, to communicate and express ideas. If this is true, then WGI, as evidenced by the ten participants of the study, should be considered a valuable resource for not only

teaching music and performance skills, but the development of each member as an important individual who lives in a digital age where students' needs are different than they were just a decade ago. Generation Z does not and possibly cannot view the world and its resources as the generation before them.

In the act of being globally-minded, culturally aware, and sensitive to the needs of all students, it is important that music educators understand and accept not all of our students are going to value their music education experience for the same reasons as each other, nor as their teachers. Music educators may choose a career in music, perhaps because of an innate love and affinity for the art form, and the way it affects them on both intellectual and emotional levels. As educators, we may wish all students' musical experiences could mimic our own. We may wish they could feel what we feel and intimately appreciate the accomplishment represented by a well-crafted composition or finely-tuned performance. But, despite the desire for these types of experiences for our diverse and ever-changing students, music educators must acknowledge that not every student will experience music in that way.

Gen-Zers have lived their entire lives in a highly produced, often commercially-driven, interactive world that provides multilayered experiences "on demand." Music educators may be hard-pressed to catch and hold the attention of these twenty-first century students with traditional large-ensemble repertoire that appears to be unrelated to the music today's students consume outside school. Although not all students find great interest in the formal aspects of music associated with traditional band literature, young people, generally, value music and the way it makes them feel. Music educators should acknowledge and accept that there exists a variety of motivations for engaging in music

making, and these motivations may change over time. Knowing that instructors' and students' musical tastes are different can promote healthy curricular development and pedagogical practices that connect students' current musical experiences with related, yet new, experiences such as those provided by WGI.

Perhaps the instrumental music education community has been too prescriptive with the types of musical ensemble experiences we provide. We advocate for music as part of a well-rounded curriculum, and many argue that every student should be involved in music. Is this precisely what we mean, or do we possess biases that lead us to think students should be involved in the performance ensembles we prefer? It seems that to be sensitive to the musical needs of all students based on "where they are" when we meet them should guide our curricular decisions and that those decisions may direct us toward non-traditional experiences for some, many, or even all of our students. Perhaps we should embrace the notion that different types of ensembles address different types of students' needs. Some ensembles may provide a more aesthetic experience while some are distinctly praxial in their approach. To the extent that we are able to provide students with a positive experience related to music, we should consider what types of musical performance activities students may relate to, and from that foundation we may be able to expand their musical and artistic vocabulary.

Implications for Supporting and Enhancing School Band Programs

Based on the data in this study, WGI appears to provide a model for education, performance, and competition that holds great promise for engaging young people, and encouraging music making as a meaningful and worthwhile endeavor. The data also suggest that WGI is education-minded and seeks to support school band programs rather

than replace them. As such, WGI provides a viable option for young, developing, or rebuilding programs that may struggle to meet the expectations and demands of strict and perhaps inconsiderate concert or marching band evaluation rubrics, rubrics often designed in a way that punishes inadequacies rather than rewarding those aspects of a performance that may indeed represent a high level of artistic, musical excellence. The WGI adjudication model classifies ensembles based on student skill sets and resources, providing comments and competitive scoring that focus on recognition of achievement and excellence levels, and providing teacher-oriented suggestions for improvement. One of WGI's guiding principles is that every ensemble starts with an equal chance of success. The director of a struggling band can tailor a show to the instrumentation and talents of the ensemble and choose literature that best fits the musical interests and needs of students.

WGI encourages collaboration between all art forms in order to create a more diverse experience for performers, while also expanding the experience of each individual through an increase in the types of performance responsibilities required, such as acting or body movement. It is possible that offering an ensemble experience that provides opportunities for students not associated with traditional school band roles may increase the influence and impact of the band program on the school overall. As a result, the significance of the band's contribution to school culture could provide further advocacy regarding support of the school band, as well as bolstering recruiting and retention.

Over the course of a WGI season, performers may learn they are capable of reaching a much higher level of excellence than they previously thought possible due to

extended and focused contact with the material of a single production. As a result, they may begin learning and understanding the processes involved with becoming excellent at something, resulting in a positive influence on the individual's future pursuits, both musical and non-musical. If students are motivated and excited about their involvement in any ensemble, and that excitement translates into more time spent practicing or playing their instrument each week, then that ensemble should be viewed as valuable to the music education effort, and should be considered for inclusion in the school band program.

The WGI adjudication model provides strong evidence of the need to properly train judges to support, through their evaluations of performing ensembles, the stated goals and beliefs of the organization they are serving. The emphasis on judge training in WGI is part of an organizational philosophy that emphasizes providing the best possible experience for students by providing positive feedback that addresses both educational practices and performance excellence. Although it may not be financially or logistically feasible to apply the complete WGI judge-training model to every state or local adjudication panel, it does seem that the spirit of the approach could be used to guide local or state music education organizations toward a more consistent and focused philosophy where evaluation of student performance ensembles is concerned.

It seems clear that consistency and clarification of purpose have contributed in large part to the success of the WGI organization. If students are going to have positive experiences on a consistent basis, it is crucial that all stakeholders involved with providing those experiences have a common vision of the desired outcomes and processes associated with achieving those goals. Many band and other school arts programs participate in adjudicated events. Research shows that participating directors,

students, communities, and administrators have varying, and at times opposing views on the value of competition. Those with negative views may have had negative experiences where show coordinators, those in charge of competitions, do not value or know to value the time and resources that should be in place to educate judges not only on the act of judging but on how to use the adjudication system that is being utilized at each contest. Ultimately, attempts should be made to put into written form a set of guiding beliefs that can be shared with adjudicators, and perhaps discussed with adjudicators by a festival coordinator well before the events take place. This may give the adjudicators the opportunity to become familiar with the goals of the association sponsoring the event and to prepare to evaluate in a manner that supports those outcomes. Adjudicators should be treated with respect, and they should be free to assign the rating or number they believe best represents the performance they witness on the day of the event. However, they should also strive to make sure their evaluation approach matches the philosophical view of the association for which they are working. It is better to recognize differences in belief and choose to not work together than to create a situation where students' experiences may ultimately suffer due to inconsistencies in philosophies, judge training, and educational application of competition feedback. The inclusive and educationally-centric WGI philosophy and how it is made evidence by the three-tiered competitive class identification, the judging system, the selection and training of judges, the promotion of student achievement and excellence based on professional level models, all designed and executed to meet the needs of Generation Z seem to serve as strong evidence for WGI's value for supporting and enhancing music education programs. Data from this study may also suggest that the WGI experience is perhaps superior to what is

happening in various music education programs where the curriculum, execution of curriculum, assessment of student achievement, meeting the needs of students, and performance excellence is less than adequate by any measure.

Conclusion

The findings of this study include evidence that the lives of the participants, inside and outside of the phenomenon of WGI activity participation, personally and professionally, have been positively and uniquely affected by WGI. The participants of this study were characterized as stakeholders, individuals who are invested in the WGI organization beyond merely providing a service. Each participant spoke with great enthusiasm for contributing to the success of the organization and the complete and consistent fulfillment of its philosophy for affecting positive, specific, tangible, and measurable differences in the artistic and personal success of the students, instructors, designers, communities, and school arts programs it serves. According to the participants in this study, WGI addresses the personal, social, and artistic needs of modern-day students through an inclusive, encouraging, and culturally responsive experience that also promotes musical and visual achievement excellence through a variety of styles and forms. These experiences, embracing technology and multiple-arts collaborations, reflect much of the digital, media-driven environment in which our current-day students experience the world. Study findings suggest that the aims of the Yale Seminar (1963), Tanglewood Symposium (1967), and the continuing subsequent efforts to reform music education in the United States is being and has been addressed in a comprehensive way through the WGI activity. This recognition of WGI's contribution to music education reform does not mean to suggest that similar reforms are not to be found in part, or in

whole, in other organizations or in some school band rooms. However, the exponential growth of WGI and the experiences of the participants in this study seem to suggest that there is a distinct combination of beliefs and strategies being used to create meaningful musical experiences for WGI performers that is unique to WGI. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some members of the arts, and specifically music education community, are skeptical of the intentions and outcomes of WGI. However, the findings of this study suggest that WGI strongly desires to partner with school arts programs to foster increased participation and elevated student achievement. WGI may serve as a leading model for music education reform, or simply as an additional, auxiliary tool for band programs in their efforts to encourage students to become active music makers for life. To use a quote from an unidentified WGI administrator, “More kids making music is never a bad thing”.

Suggested Future Research

Given that the present study focused on the experiences of individuals serving in leadership roles within WGI, perhaps future research could consider the WGI experience from the perspective of student performers or parents of student performers. It may be interesting to see how much, if any, congruence exists between how leaders experience WGI and how students or parents experience WGI. Research into how students characterize their respective experiences with traditional band ensembles and WGI ensembles could potentially expose what elements of ensemble participation are most critical to student attraction and retention. This could provide insight into how Generation Z could be best served in and through their instrumental music education and

prompt educators to reflect and reevaluate curricular choices based on what experiences will be most meaningful to students.

The participants in this study expressed that the WGI activity promoted achievement and excellence. Perhaps a longitudinal study comparing the collegiate and professional success of former WGI performers to similarly aged individuals who had no experience with WGI could reveal whether the WGI experience does or does not promote a higher level of achievement and excellence than the traditional band model. Additional research could be conducted to investigate whether the most successful WGI ensembles utilize teaching or rehearsal strategies that differ from the instructional practices most often found in traditional band rehearsals.

In this study, competition was seen as a motivator for achievement rather than an end goal for the majority of WGI performing units. Perhaps research that compared the numerical scores of groups who prioritized winning with groups who emphasize achievement and excellence would reveal whether a significant relationship existed between either approach and competitive success. Research into students' self-reported attitudes toward competition in WGI as compared to similar research conducted in traditional band programs may shed light upon whether individual personalities affect the choice to participate in overtly competitive musical activities.

Postlude

I began this research from the vantage point of someone with very little direct experience with WGI. I had never been involved with the activity beyond the local circuit level, and the two groups I had worked with had little WGI performance experience. As a result, my view of the activity was somewhat ambivalent. I enjoyed watching videos of

WGI performances, but I never made an effort to attend a WGI event as a spectator until the 2016 WGI World Championships. Despite my awareness of the innovation of WGI and its apparent growth, I still regarded the activity with a degree of skepticism in terms of WGI's role as a component of music education. I think I saw WGI as a trophy-driven endeavor that perhaps improved the performance skills of those students who were specifically motivated by competitive success, but was not necessarily beneficial beyond that context.

As I worked through the data collection process, I was somewhat shocked at the inaccuracy of my view. I had expected to hear a great deal about the competitiveness of WGI and pride associated with winning. Instead, I saw and heard a strong emphasis on artistry, personal and group excellence, responsibility, and great experiences. These observations were not isolated moments. These ideas were heard and seen consistently from group to group and among all types of participants. From students to directors to judges to parents, participating in WGI seemed to be about learning how to create meaningful moments for the performers and the audience. In short, it was about using music in conjunction with other arts to communicate ideas.

As I reflected on what I had seen, heard, and even felt as I watched performances, I began to ask myself what was it I, as a music educator, wanted my students to ultimately take away from their music education experience. I became aware that I wanted them to develop an appreciation for the power of music to communicate, to connect people, to generate both intellectual and emotional responses that are not possible through other means. Although my personal area of interest is music, in varying

ways I believe all the arts hold these unique abilities, and through WGI students can discover the influence the arts as individual and collaborative entities.

This research process changed me in some ways. It led me to contemplate my ultimate goal as a music educator. It also made me reconsider what forms music education can take. I acknowledge that up to this point I have viewed my field through a narrow window that prevented me from seeing what was possible. As a result, I have started a WGI Winds ensemble at the university where I teach. At our first audition over 60 students showed up to compete for 31 spots. During the 2018 season, this ensemble competed at the local, regional, and world championship levels. It was one of the most rewarding experiences of my professional life to see them grow over the course of 4 months as musicians, as performers, and as people. I saw these young people move beyond notes and rhythms, dots and forms, and into a world of expression and commitment to something greater than themselves. As I watched them experience WGI World Championships, I was moved by the pure joy and enthusiasm they exhibited over not only their performances but the efforts and accomplishments of others. I saw in them the very outcome that I now realize I have always desired for my students through music education. They are already eagerly anticipating what next year will hold. So am I.

APPENDIX A – RESEARCH INTERVIEW REQUEST

Participant's name,

My name is Jeremy Morgan. I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Southern Mississippi working under the supervision of Dr. Mark Waymire. I am beginning the data collection process for my dissertation entitled “Winter Guard International: A Phenomenological Study”, and I am seeking participants who are, or have served as, unit directors, judges, or WGI administrators. Given your background, I am interested in interviewing you regarding your experiences with WGI. The process would involve either a face-to-face interview or a web interview of approximately 40 minutes in length using Skype, or some other online conferencing program dependent upon your preferences and access. Your identity would not be revealed in the research document. You would be referred to only as a participant, and a description of your WGI involvement would be provided.

If you are willing to participate in the study, please respond with days and times of the week that would typically be most available for you. Once I receive a response, I will contact you regarding a specific interview time and mode of communication.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jeremy Morgan

APPENDIX B INTERVIEW SCRIPT

Morgan Dissertation Interview Script

1. **Introductions / Thank You**
2. **Brief description of what will occur during the interview**

- *The first portion of the interview will seem very clinical. This is just the nature of the legal aspects of the process.*
- *This interview will be documented as a live audio/video recording.*
- *I will read a description of the study, information regarding confidentiality, risks associated with participation, and the steps that will be taken to protect DATA collected*
- *I will ask for verbal consent to participate in the study*
- *I will ask you to give a brief description of your background in the marching arts and WGI*
- *I will ask a series of 4 questions with additional follow-up questions included where necessary*

3. **Read Study Description and Confidentiality Information**

The purpose of this study is to capture, in narrative form, the essence of the WGI experience by determining what educational, philosophical, and artistic goals and principles guide the direction of WGI. This is to be accomplished by interviewing a number of participants who currently serve in some type of leadership capacity within WGI. These participants may include unit directors, judges, or members of the WGI administration. After establishing a description of the activity, the researcher may compare the WGI activity to the common school band to determine if the application of WGI's guiding principles could contribute to increased student participation and improved administration of school band programs.

The identities of study participants will not be revealed. However, a brief description of each participant's involvement with WGI, and the marching arts as a whole, will be provided. Additionally, it will be revealed whether each participant is a professional music educator or not.

All Data collected for this study, including: audio and video recordings, transcriptions, notes, and analyzed data will be stored on a password-protected, privately-owned computer, and a backup copy will be maintained on thumbdrive and kept in a privately-owned locked safe. There are no known risks or inconveniences associated with participation in this study.

- * *Do you understand the information I've just provided?*
- * *Do you have any questions?*
- * *Do you acknowledge that you have been appropriately advised of your role as a participant in this study?*
- * *Do you give your consent to participate in this study?*

Thank you. Let's begin.

Marching Arts Experience?:

Can you please briefly describe your background in the marching arts and WGI?

(Follow-up if necessary: *Are you a professional music educator?*)

Question #1:

What have you experienced in terms of WGI?

Question #2:

What are your core beliefs about WGI that guide you in your current role within the activity?

Question #3:

What are the outcomes you desire for those who are performing participants in the WGI activity, and how have these evolved over time?

Question #4:

Is there anything else you would like to add?

APPENDIX C INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

“Robert”

September 5, 2018

I: Please tell me your age.

P: 57

I: Could you please briefly describe your background with WGI and the marching arts?

P: I have been a judge for over 25 years. That’s marching band, indoor percussion, indoor color guard, indoor winds. This will be my 15th year with WGI percussion. I was a mellophone player in high school, and I did one year of college marching band.

I: Are you currently employed as a professional music educator?

P: No.

I: But, you are employed as a professional educator?

P: Retired.

I: What have you experienced in terms of WGI?

P: The willingness to change as the landscape of music changes. The addition of different kinds of instruments, different types of electronics, staging, all kinds of effects. Whether it be lighting. Just the entire nature of the product has changed. Especially over the last five or ten years. You see the same thing happening in drum corps right now. A lot of things that happen in indoor find their way onto the field the next season.

I: In your experience with the judging in WGI, what have you experienced with that?

P: In terms of judging, they prepare you very well before you ever pick up a microphone to critique any type of group. Critiques between you as the judge and the administration are ongoing. Anytime there's a rule change, a regulation change that's brought about by the members of the voting body, there's an advisory board and we're educated on the rule changes. Every week now we have a conference call as judges not only by your classification, but by your caption. You go over any problems, any way to troubleshoot any problems that may arise. That's every week. The biggest take away from it is just the people you'll meet with their various backgrounds. You can learn something from everybody. Rather it's the way that they teach, or their perspective on things.

I: Why do you think they spend so much time preparing the judges? What is their goal in doing that?

P: Everything is so student-centered. Before every contest, whether it's a regional, whether it's championships and your judging independent world, they come through and

talk to every judge one last time and remind you always that it's for the kids. That's the very last thing that they tell you before any competition; this is for the kids.

I: What have you experienced in terms of you observing the participants as they participate?

P: They broaden their whole scope. They broaden their horizons. This is an activity that they're exposed to so much more. They're exposed not only to performers their own age, but performers that are a few years older that give them something to aspire to. It gives them sort of a sliding scale to compare themselves to and to what they could be. The material has gotten much more difficult. Things that you would see upperclassmen, you'd see college kids doing years ago in some of the independent groups. You see certain performers now doing that on the A level.

I: Do you think there is anything particularly unique about the WGI experienced compared to other marching arts?

P: Just the fact that we are constantly under scrutiny because everything in the digital age, the instructors, our commentary is available to them immediately. And, while most instructors would never release out for public consumption, it has happened before, so you have to always be aware that other people can hear your commentary, and so they're strict with us on professionalism, being true to the boxes, being true to the guidelines, being true to the students, and then I think the fact that we have conference calls every

week and go over new data and any kind of problem that arises during the season, that kind of keeps us up to date. You don't have that same luxury with marching band. You're in a different place every week, a different state. You're not governed by the single agency.

I: What are your core beliefs about WGI that guide you in your current role within the activity?

P: Again, number one would be that it is absolutely student-slash-performer-centered. That's who you're accountable to first. When you've been a classroom teacher for as long as I was, that's the same thing. It's basically the same goal. You want the kids to achieve at the highest level possible.

I: What are the outcomes that you desire for those who are performing participants in WGI, and how has that evolved over time?

P: The evolution of it is just that it goes across so many disciplines now. It's not just music anymore. It's music being combined with theater, it's being combined with athleticism, it's combined with technology. The inclusion of technology in indoor, and outdoor as well, is insane, and the kids who are very proficient in those things are the ones who are going to be the most competitive. Not only do you have to be a great musician, you have to be a great athlete. You have to be a great actor.

I: What is your view of the role of competition as part of the WGI experience?

P: Well, everything in life is competition, you know. And, I can certainly understand where somebody would see that it is a trophy chase. I definitely can see that side of it as well, but it goes so much further than that. Everything in life is a competition. Whether you're competing for a job, or for a promotion. You're competing for customers if you have your own business. Not only does it teach you that competition is healthy, but it also teaches you that the best competitors also work as a team. They learn from their competitors.

I: Based on your experience, is education a driving force for the people making decisions about the direction of WGI?

P: Oh yes. Absolutely. I would say 100% of the people who are making these decisions are educators or have been educators as some point in their life.

I: In your experience, can you just talk about what you've observed in terms of student identity, social aspects of the activity as it pertains to student experiences from your standpoint?

P: Well, first and foremost, opportunity. You see a lot of kids that come from all over the country, at a regional and especially at World Championships. A lot of those kids have never been outside of their state, and then all of a sudden they're thrown into this melting

pot with musicians from all over the country, a lot of times groups from around the world, and this is their first experience with that. That usually is the kids' favorite part; the social aspect. Especially if you're a new kid on campus, and all of a sudden you find yourself in one of the competing organizations where you're spending all of these hours after school with these people, so friendships of course, develop. Anytime that gives you an identity. It gives you a safe place where you know that you can go and express yourself. I hate to use the word safe space because that's not really what I'm talking about. It's a place where the kid can be comfortable. He's with other people who are trying to achieve the same goals as him, and have similar interests.

I: In your experience, outside the competition, outside the shows themselves, do you think there is a benefit to the students of being able to participate at these different levels and encounter different groups?

P: Oh, absolutely. Even on our local level, our state circuit, I see kids that have made friends with kids from other schools that they would have never come in contact with. Whether those kids are more talented, the kids are black, white, Asian, older, younger. Just meeting other instructors and seeing the talent level of other kids, learning techniques from other kids. Again, because of what we have with technology, these kids FaceTime each other. Watch what I'm playing now, and then they send it back. It's like an ongoing lesson between these kids.

I: Outside the judging experience and the training you've received as a judge, is it your perception that there has been a consistency with WGI in how they apply their philosophy and their beliefs over the course of the time you've been involved with them?

P: I'm only speaking for the percussion side. Absolutely. That's one of the reasons that it's grown exponentially; is because of the consistency. People return year after year. The activity grows year after year because they know what to expect. There's not going to be some huge surprise when you get there.

I: Is there anything else you would like to add?

P: Most of the judges in WGI percussion have been probably judging about the same amount of time that I have. Now there are some that have surely been judging longer than me. They bring on a few new ones every year, for one because the activity grows, and then other judges go I'm gonna take a year off. I need to step back from this, and WGI is also very supportive of that. If you need to take a year off, or if you're going to work on your PhD, you can't judge that year. They're, yes, we support education. We'll see you next January at the meeting.

I: In your experience, have you seen a broad range of perspectives represented in the judging panels?

P: Absolutely. I'm not a drummer. I was a mellophone player in high school and college, and then my degree, well I have a degree in education, but my undergraduate degree is in marketing, and they've asked me to present how does marketing tie into it in terms of effect, visual. You're selling a product regardless. You've got artists, you've got musicians, business people. You have drill writers. You know, people that are on the mathematical end of it because you have to be a mathematical genius to write drill. That's my take on it. I could never do it. I'm in awe of people who can.

“Nathan”

August 22, 2018

I: Could you tell me your age?

P: I am 37 years old.

I: Are you currently employed as a professional music educator?

P: I am not. I am a professional educator, but not a music educator.

I: Alright, the first question is what have you experienced in terms of WGI?

P: I think the main thing that I've experienced is that this activity really changes people. I think I'm a testament to that fact, I know the activity in general has had a huge impact on me and my life. I don't know that I would be who I am today without this activity playing that role in my life. So, for any of us that have gotten involved in it and stayed with it beyond our formative years and have done it in a professional capacity as an adult; either as an administrator, or as a judge, or as an instructor, or as a designer; the activity has played a central role in all of our lives. I also know and have viewed first hand that it changes the lives of participants, the performers, that are in it. I have seen students come out of their shell and blossom because of their involvement in this activity. I have seen this activity teach them a great deal about themselves, a great deal about teamwork, a

great deal about self-sacrifice and cooperation and collaboration. I think the vast majority of those that participated in it would say that it has been core and crucial in helping them in their formative years become who they aspire to be as they grow up.

I: Ok, good. Do you think, based on what you just said and how it changes people, could you maybe speak, too from a social stand point what you may have experienced as part of WGI, I guess I'm thinking in terms of student identity.

P: Yeah, I think the activity is crucial for student identity because it is a place where all belong and all are welcome. I know my experience as a public school teacher teaching students from wildly different walks of life, many of them specifically in a middle and high school setting, are searching for something to belong in, something to be a fabric of who they are, and what they want to belong and become a part of. And our activity with WGI and Indoor Percussion in general, I think, provides a really broad, amazing activity for them to be involved in because we take all kinds. We take all kinds of socioeconomic backgrounds, we take all shapes and sizes of students, we take the students that are tremendous, natural, gifted musicians and also those who have very little musical talent and are wandering into this for the first time saying, "Hey, I'd like to play an instrument." We bring them into the fold and allow them to participate in this activity and I know that for many that get into this, it becomes almost like a way of life for them. It becomes their family, it becomes their club and their activity and their close knit group of friends, especially in a scholastic setting, in a way that I think that few – not no other – but few other clubs and activities on a campus really work to work on that kind of a level for a lot

of students. The other thing that it really does, you know there are a lot of students that will join a club or will join a sports team or something like that and for a lot of those sports teams in general are looking for a certain ability, a certain capacity to play that sport; it's a certain set of physical tools and skills. What I love about the indoor percussion activity is we've got a role that virtually any kind of kid can play. Rather you have a ton of musical talent or you've never played before, there's something you can do in the ensemble. So I think for something that speaks that broadly and is that welcoming to that diverse across a section of students on your campus, that's something that can be a real gamechanger for a lot of students and become that thing that they go, I'm not real sure what I'm going to be in my life yet, but I know right now I'm highly invested in this and this is kind of my tribe that I've fallen in with.

I: Thinking about it in terms of identity like that and how it influences students' lives, do you think this is an activity that has benefits beyond the activity and as students move from participation in this into later parts of life into careers and such, do you think this is an activity that will affect them in any positive way?

P: I think so and I don't know that it is fully separate from any other musical ensemble that you can be in, let me start with that. I believe very strongly that the act of learning to play an instrument, and being able to communicate in a nonverbal capacity is core to the human experience and I think it just transforms people as a human being the moment you put an instrument in your hands and either through striking an instrument, or blowing air through it, or vibrating a string, or whatever the mechanic is; once you start to

communicate to other humans not by saying something, not by writing something down, but by making music, I think that transforms somebody. I know it certainly has for me to the point now that I can't walk down the street or walk through a theme park or something like that and hear live music and not be attracted to it and wanna go like "who's playing?" "what's happening over here?" And I don't know you get that same experience without having that sense of I have performed with an instrument in front of other people in public before; I think that changes who people are. So, I don't know that our activity is fundamentally different from a stage band, a chamber ensemble, a marching band or something like that. All of those are here, here's an instrument; communicate something, sing something to somebody and strip away the verbal language that you're very comfortable with and communicate through other means. I think that's profound. I think where WGI is really special is the venues that we perform in. There is an intimacy that makes it really special. When you're performing, you're not on an elevated stage performing above the audience. You're down on a floor and the audience is in like a high school gym or arena and they are in stadium style seating looking down on you for the performance. And you're not clad in a uniform and a shako like you would be in marching band where all the performers are fairly unanimous, that's the purpose of the uniform. Instead you're in a costume without the hat, without the head dress, very close to the audience, in this close knit, visceral, right in front of your face exchange of information. So it gives you the sense of intimacy and closeness with the audience that is very intimidating at first as a performer and then very empowering as we see performers and students grow into that role and grow into those experiences. So, I think the idea of learning to play an instrument, communicating in a very vulnerable setting, and then

being intimate with the audience changes you in a way that carries you through the rest of your life. It makes you that much more confident at being able to stand in front of people and do public speaking. It makes you that much more confident in trying to carefully listen to what other people are saying to try to get the hidden messages that are between the lines because your ears are a little tuned to listening to those small details in a performance ensemble. I think it does all those things and then since we have such a physical activity, since this is not sitting in a chair on a stage, you get all the same benefits of a team sport and a physical athletic activity all kind of rolled up into one. So when we talk a lot about kids need to be involved in some sort of a team activity, that's where they learn team work, that's where they learn dedication, that's where they learn self-sacrifice and we know that these are things that students will carry with them for the rest of their lives and will help them be amazing professionals someday. We're honing all of those athletic gifts and all of those performing ensemble gifts all at once inside this activity and that's why I think it's really, really powerful for years and years and years for students.

I: What are your core beliefs about WGI that guide you in your current role in the activity?

P: I think my core belief, and I just touched on this, but the activity gives people the opportunity to express themselves through nonverbal and nonwritten means. I think that's really important, especially formative years when we're talking about the youth that are involved in this activity. We spend so much time in formal, scholastic settings, talking to

students about communicating through writing or through speaking and don't spend quite as much time working on communicating through other means; through an artistic endeavor, either a performance art or production art, physical art. So I think giving students this outlet is a core, amazing part of this activity that really carries students through quite a bit. One of the other core beliefs I have and we talked about this before is the inclusivity of our activity. It really is a widely diverse activity where all sorts of students from all sorts of backgrounds, all sorts of faith backgrounds, belief systems, and all of that, they all come together in this activity and are contributing towards a common goal and a common desire to perform, to share what they've been working on with the world and then to see what peers – you know if we're talking about WGI and we're talking about getting together at the World Championship or we're talking about getting together at the Regional Championship - not only am I sharing what I've been working on with my ensemble but now I'm seeing what other ensembles around the region and around the country and around the world have also been working on and I get a chance to experience what they want to share as well.

I: What are the outcomes you desire for the participants in the WGI activity and how have those evolved over time if they have?

P: I would like students to get out of it a couple of different things. First of all, to learn to play an instrument. I think it's incredibly valuable, there's a lot of ways to do it. I think this activity is uniquely appealing to a lot of students that maybe haven't picked up an instrument before. They see WGI for the first time. They see this mix of sports and arts

together. They see percussionists running around on the floor playing instruments in a very dynamic way and all of a sudden that looks very different than the saxophone exhibition that they saw in 4th grade and so it kind of tweaks their interest and sort of pulls them in. So, I would want students that maybe haven't found that love of picking up an instrument yet and performing for other people becoming a musician. I would love to pull them into the fold and get them to be able to play an instrument. I would love for students to be able to get a sense of belonging out of this activity. And again there's lots of different ways to do it. I have found that this activity for some, in some ways, brings some students into the fold that haven't yet found their niche, their tribe, their set of people and so they're pulled into this and so they're walking away from it with this sense of identity and I have a purpose and I have like-minded friends that I've done some great work with – I think is a fantastic thing. And then walking away from this activity with a new-found sense of confidence because you have spent all of this time honing your skills and your abilities with all of these other students, especially in the scholastic setting, you might live in the same neighborhood – maybe you've grown up together; you've spent all these years working towards this common goal and now once you're finally very successful in this there's this new sense of confidence that these students can ride into the future say and say, I've done something remarkable and it happened through hard-work and dedication and sacrifice. Now that I've had that experience, I'm a better, stronger person that can take that knowledge that comes with what happens after you dedicate and after you sacrifice and after you invest yourself in something. And I can take that and apply it to whatever I'm going to be pursuing next.

I: Is there anything you would like to add?

P: I think one of the things that I haven't touched on but is really important to me and so I want to make sure that I mention it is the idea that in this activity everybody contributes. If you are in the ensemble and performing, everybody is performing – every part is important – every part is essential. And there are some other activities that one can participate in – a sports team – I played baseball when I was growing up. You're either the starting catcher or the back-up catcher. The starting catcher is the one that is going to be IN the game and barring an unforeseen circumstance that backup catcher is there as insurance and may not get into the game, may not contribute very much besides a team culture, but does not contribute to the actual game very much. Our activity is so different in that every single performer is equally valuable and crucial and necessary for this performance to happen. So, the uber talented senior member of the ensemble that has a ton of experience is crucial to the success, but so is the brand new, just getting your feet wet, figuring out the ins and outs – all of them take the stage at the same time and when the ensemble starts performing – all of them are going to be invested in that performance. So it's something that really levels out that playing field and it comes this sense of once you get involved, all of you are crucial, everybody's a cog to this machine, and everybody's contributions are needed and crucial. I think that's an important part of the activity.

I: A follow up – so much of what you shared is it's geared towards the students – the kids that are involved in this – in your experience, do you feel through the structure and

operation of the WGI organization, that they support that same set of beliefs in terms of being very education-oriented?

P: Absolutely, I think if you were to talk to anybody on the leadership of the organization they would say that the activity is fundamentally grounded in education whether someone is participating in the scholastic side of the independent side of things, education is a forefront of the activity and a crucial pillar that it's built upon. There are certainly other aspects to this – the competitive aspects – there are a lot of people who have through their work in this activity – they have built a career out of designing shows and writing shows, teaching and instructing groups and I think all of that is crucial, it's all a very important part of the ecosystem, but I think to a person going back to the fundamental purpose of this – it's education. It's educating people in artform – let's learn how to do this artform really well, but it's also educating the people that are involved in it – let's use this artform to educate the participants that are in it and turn them into great people that are having amazing experiences.

I: Last question, what are your thoughts on the competitive portion of WGI? From the inside, what's your take on the competitive aspect?

P: I think the competitive aspect is very valuable in that we know that life is a competitive activity whether you are pursuing a job or buying a house or anything like that. Those are all competitive pursuits and so one of the things that is crucial as educators is to frame competition in the right light For students. This activity gives us a

great opportunity to do that. Yes this is competitive, and the competition is going to drive us to do our best. It's going to encourage us to meet whatever benchmark or threshold we want to meet for ourselves. But what I love about this activity is it's not a zero sum game. It's not like a football tournament where two teams are going to play and one is going to win and one is going to lose and in the end it's just drilled down to what was your win-loss record? After this game you can have one victory and one loss. You go to these competitions and these tournaments there are let's say 20 ensemble's that are competing in your class. If we define success as the one that ends up with the highest score as the winner and then there are 19 losers. That makes for a very unfulfilling activity because that's just a numbers game. The vast majority of us are going to be losers of this activity. So, most of us that are educators in this activity know this, it's been a part of this for a long time and because of the way it's set up we are able to communicate with the students and the parents of the students and communicate with the administration or your staff that support these activities that we get the chance to define success for ourselves. We're not going to define it just as we have to be the singular champion at this. Instead, we can go do you know what we've never placed within the top five - that's our goal this year. We've never placed within the top 10 - that's our goal. We've never been to finals - that's our goal. Or, you can strip away the us versus them thing and go you know what - we've never broken a 75 at this competition before, that's our goal right now is to try to meet this scoring threshold as deemed by the criteria in the judging system we have set up. The way we have it set up with three different paradigms, you know a grouping for advanced performers, and then intermediate performers, then beginning performers. No matter what your ability level is, no matter how seasoned you are there is a place for you

to be able to compete and feel very successful and be recognized and rewarded as such. And so then you truly strip away all groups that you are competing against. If 20 of us are phenomenal this weekend and all break an 80, we can all be successful because we can define what those are going to be so I think the savvy instructors and savvy groups recognize that competition is a great motivator. It encourages all groups to strive to be their best but that it is our opportunity to frame what is going to be successful for our ensemble and what metric we want to use to help define that. It's tough. I struggle. I've taken a lot of groups and sometimes had the competitive success I was looking for and sometimes we were disappointed because we were two points below what I wanted to be or three places lower than I was hoping to place and I think sometimes through that disappointment is a great conversation starter with our students and with ourselves as professional educators that are striving to be the best version of ourselves about competition's proper place in all of this and how we have the power to define what it's going to signify for our ensemble for our program. And I will share as somebody that taught and worked in this activity for a long time, while I tried to never let the competition define the entire experience for me and for my ensemble, it certainly was a powerful tool to keep me from resting on my laurels and morning to constantly strive to be better and better and better. Because I knew everybody else is doing the same thing and I think because of that it has accelerated the growth and the development and improvement in the activity and in that regard it's been a highly successful thing for the evolution of this which has only brought more people into wanting to participate and want to get this experience and so I think it's tremendous in that way.

“Steven”

September 8, 2018

I: Tell me your age, please.

P: 67

I: Could you briefly describe your background with the marching arts and WGI?

P: I've judged for many years starting with drum corps in the late 70s. I did that for many years and then got into marching bands, and I've been doing that for probably 25 years, and then WGI is the most recent, which is probably going on 8 or 9 years.

I: Did you march in high school and college?

P: I did, in both.

I: And, what was your primary instrument?

P: I played snare drum mostly. I was a drummer.

I: What have you experienced in terms of WGI?

P: Great performances by very talented students at a variety of levels that includes high school, some groups that are younger than that; some middle school groups, some junior high groups, as well as independent groups, which are mixed ages and typically come from mixed locations. All of those performances have been greatly rewarding. The kids are certainly energized and committed, and though the quality and the level of technical expertise, and maturity of the groups in terms of their performance quality, and although those vary, there's certainly a commitment on all of those to do the best they want to do to try to entertain the audience and to bring forward a musical performance, and visual performance in certain cases, that provides that energy, and hopefully they're having fun, too.

I: What has your experience been in terms of how you perceive your judging experience with WGI?

P: WGI to me, in terms of judging, WGI to me is the most fun I will say just because of the quality of the performances, and the shows are not that long so you get to see many more groups than you typically would with drum corps or marching band. I enjoy working with the different people on the judging panels. There's a great comradery aspect to the judging, particularly the judging side. They bring a lot of expertise in a variety of ways. So, it's always great to get with them and to judge with them and compare our thoughts at some point after that. I see a lot of those people through marching band and drum corps too in different capacities, but it's certainly rewarding to be with them. It's also very interesting because some of them, the people who judge

WGI, are designers or instructors for drum corps and marching band, so you're evaluating their groups during drum corps and marching band, but then you're judging with them during the winter with them with percussion (WGI).

I: In your experience, having judged in a variety of the marching arts areas, is there anything particularly unique about the way judging is addressed and handled in WGI versus other organizations?

P: I think they're more open to changes in technology that help support the judges. That's more of a mechanical aspect, but it certainly makes it easier for the judge to do what we're expected to do. I think overall there is a more progressive approach to being open to design changes; just being more flexible; integration of different kinds of instruments that have, in the other activities, not been allowed. WGI is just I think a more open approach to evaluating and creating the products that are put out there.

I: In the time that you've been associated with WGI, have you observed evolution? Whether it be in just the overall operation of the organization, or whether it be in performances, student achievement? Have things evolved while you've been involved with it?

P: Absolutely. They've probably evolved because WGI percussion has been around for a shorter amount of time I think the evolution has been greater in that shorter amount of time. They've certainly benefited I think from what drum corps and marching bands have

gone through, but as I mentioned earlier there's an openness to try different things to help advance the activity in a more open way, and certainly just from the approach to judging, that's evolved. There's also been a quick growth in the incorporation of technology in the programs, both in a design and performance perspective. I think it's probably the most progressive of the marching arts. I think they're open to trying new things more readily. Not only within the design and the creative process, but within the technical aspects that we use to facilitate the judging, just the use of technology. They've always been leading that part and the other marching arts adopt those. The creative products have gotten much more sophisticated, much more technically proficient. Some of these performers are just quite amazing, what they can do and put forth. Some of that you can see in drum corps, but you're much more up close and personal most of the time with these percussion ensembles. So, it's very impressive to be that close and see what they're doing compared to the other activities.

I: What are your core beliefs about WGI that guide you in your current role within the activity?

P: Every group starts with an equal chance for success. In terms of judging, you can be open to all styles, all manners of presentations and productions. In terms of the commentary we provide, it's trying to acknowledge what they're doing in both in terms of design and the achievement level, the performance level. We try to encourage the groups, to reward creativity and innovation, and the performance aspects that they're bringing forth. To be, in a lot of ways an educator and teacher, and trying to identify the

areas that are deficient or could improve, and help them understand how they could go about taking steps to improve that. Sometimes it's more prescribed, and sometimes it's more general. But, you try to help them all get better at whatever level they're proficient at.

I: In your opinion, in your experience, do you see WGI as being an education-oriented organization?

P: Absolutely. They provide a lot of tools, training, videos for judges, and designers, and instructors. So, we can all benefit from those no matter what role you take in the activity. So, they're all educationally minded. Certainly the leaders in the activity are very much educationally minded. They've come up through the different activities. All of them have certainly been teachers in different respects. So, education is a big part of WGI and what they bring to the marching arts activity.

I: In your experience, do you feel that WGI has had a consistency in terms of their philosophy of how the organization should operate and what they should be accomplishing?

P: Yes, I do. They have been very consistent.

I: What are the outcomes you desire for those who are performing participants in the WGI activity, and how have those evolved over time, if they have?

P: Well, I hope the performers in every group have a wonderful experience from an educational perspective, a creative perspective, a teamwork perspective. I hope they have fun. You hope that they learn something and grow musically as artists through the experiences, that they learn to work collaboratively to achieve the unified goal. You know, that they know that they should be putting their best out there every performance, and trying to do their best, and understand though that it's a team approach and everybody has to be on the same page in terms of how you're interpreting the music and what your doing so that it comes off as a unified approach instead of different approaches. It's not about a single person focusing only on what that person can do better, but its how can that be integrated into the overall ensemble to make the overall ensemble better.

I: What is your view of the role of competition within WGI?

P: Well, I think the competition certainly gives it an energy that you're not gonna receive otherwise. I think certainly from an audience perspective there's always that unknown about how a group is performing. Certainly a lot of people have their own perspective about the quality of a performance, and then they see how that lines up with the judging panel. To me it's about the groups, each group competing with itself to make sure that they can do, give a better performance than the time before". Competition is seen as a, more of a motivating factor for each group individually to do the best that they can do, and be less concerned about beating the other groups. The competition needs to be put

into a healthy approach, and can't be win at all costs. From what I can gather, I don't think that, from the people I talk to, I don't get a sense from the ensemble instructors that it's a win at all costs approach. They certainly want to do well. They want to succeed, and a lot of them define success in different ways. Some of them, it's just do the best performance you can every time out. For some of them it's a little bit more competitive and they want to finish in a certain place, be it first or elsewhere. But, I've never seen it get out of control where competition is the driving motivation for the groups, whereas, drum corps is a little different that way, and to some extent marching band. Marching band is a little closer to WGI than it is drum corps. But, the competition seems to be taken and approached in a very healthy manner from what I can gather and through my experience.

I: Is there anything else you would like to add?

P: WGI now has taken a more broadly educational role in light of all the changes in society, with all the Harvey Weinstein situations, the Catholic priests. They now require that every judge, and I assume every staff member, whether you work at the WGI organization or whether you're with a group, that you commit to upholding those views and be diligent in maintaining those values of appropriate behavior and respectful treatment of everyone. I applaud them for doing that. That certainly trickles into the judge arena too. So, I think that's a really healthy approach they've taken. It's more active and involved than the other, although DCI has been pretty active this way, I haven't had to sign anything as I have with WGI. I appreciate that they are trying to be educational, but

they're also trying to be good citizens in the world and the treatment of people. The activity is the most fun I have because you're more up close and personal with the units. We work with a great group of judges who are committed and talented in terms of evaluation, and it's fun to talk to them and learn what their evaluation is of a group and as a personal judge see what I can glean from them to improve and enhance my judging approach. It's great to work with instructors or designers in other activities, to work alongside them as judges. They bring a great perspective to that. I think they also quickly realize that judging is not necessarily as easy as people think it is. So, it helps everybody understand what the other side is doing. In the end I think it brings a greater overall product that we can bring as judges through our input to those units that are performing.

“Conner”

September 11, 2018

I: Could you tell me your age?

P: I am 37 years old.

I: Give me a brief description of your background and the marching arts as a whole.

P: Yeah, sure. So, you've got my name. I have been a WGI adjudicator since about 2015, maybe a little earlier than that. From that point to the present I've been judging in the percussion area every WGI season, that includes judging in the WGI Regionals, Championships and the local circuit shows across the country. Before that I also wrote for a couple of groups, one of them being Infinity Percussion. I wrote for them their first two years out, I believe, that would be 2007-2008. I've also written for other ensembles, University High School out of Orlando, Florida and Imperial Percussion out of Houston which no longer exists, and a collection of other small groups that have competed either locally or at the WGI level.

I: Okay, and can you just tell me briefly at what point did you get in marching arts initially? Was that at the high school level?

P: Uh, yes. Do you mean Indoor specifically?

I: Well, indoor marching arts combined, I assume you did marching band then as well?

I: Yes, so I started high school marching band my freshman year of high school and then we jumped into Indoor Drumline my sophomore year of high school and have basically been in it, at one point or another, not continuously but since then you know I've been involved in one way or another.

P: And I assume you went ahead and marched in college?

I: I did not march Indoor, but I marched in Drum Corps, yep.

P: Can you tell me what you currently do professionally?

I: I am the Associate Professor of Percussion at Furman University and on the side I am also a freelance arranger for groups across the pageantry spectrum, Drum Corps and high schools.

P: Can you tell me what you have experienced with WGI?

I: So, I've had the good fortune of being involved in the activity in a lot of different sides: I've written, I've performed and now I judge full time. So, I have the spectrum of all three sides of that, as well as a number of years, so I guess I'm pushing twenty-something

years in the indoor activity. So, what I've experienced in WGI across the time period – we're still talking the 1990's to now – is a tremendous growth both in terms of numbers of ensembles, numbers of students, a growth in the legitimacy of the activity. I would say that it's become pervasive across all age groups, across all types of majors in college, all careers, all societal backgrounds. And so, it's reached – I think it's passed now sort of a critical level – of saturation in our world if you will – so it's very pervasive. And I think also a large increase in artistry, you know, I think as you're getting three generations of students now, you're getting 30 or so years of people marching, aging out, and coming back, giving back and it becomes this self-reinforcing loop where you see these people who grew up with the activity now have become professionals, musicians or otherwise come back and give back to the activity and help push it forward. And so, the level of artistry has really grown. And because it's competitive I think there's a certain level to one-up everyone every year. That in and of itself can create a sense of growth, but even just the culture is one of forward thinking-ness, innovation, and education. I think a lot of groups really do a great job of making sure their students get a great experience out of it and make it worth their time, cause it is a lot of time that they put into these things...and money. So, the first word that comes to mind for me is growth, both in terms of musicianship and just the sheer size of the activity and the excellence in the activity..

I: Because you have that unique perspective of having been a performer, being involved on the writing side, the design aspect and now as a judge. Can you talk a little about your experience of moving from being a performer to where you are now, how did the activity influence or affect you?

P: Well, this applies to a lot of pageantry but indoor in particular for me. Speaking as young me, as a performer, this activity was my gateway to becoming a professional musician. I would not have known who Bartok was, or Shostakovich, or any of these composers had it not been for this activity. Some people might sneer at that but for me that's what got my foot in the door to pursue music as a profession and to focus on my efforts on music as a career. And the activity is different for a lot of people but for me as a young musician, this activity was my way in to that. To eventually be a career musician, not just a pageantry person, but teaching at the college level, going through all the degrees, being a performer, all of these things, a scholar, I owe a lot of that to this activity, from my performing days. And then on the writing and judging side, those things really helped me establish a certain versatility as a career musician, being able to be a performer, a teacher, and a composer. You know, I have those skills because of this activity, I am able to sit down and write music. You know, I think, I could quit my job right now and pursue a full-time job as a composer or arranger and be okay because of this activity, because I've done it so much. And I wouldn't have those skills if I had just gone straight through college to do my degrees and focused on my performing career. And this activity was also my avenue to teach, you know, to give back to my Alma Mater high school first, and then to eventually branch out and teach elsewhere. I got my teaching chops wet through this activity. I got to have a really nice lab environment – I was a tenor tech first – I was teaching the tenors and the drumline first and that was my sort of lab environment to make all of my mistakes with the three kids I had, you know for what – eight or nine hours a week and I got all of that before I even graduated from college –

before I even got to my student teaching. So, the activity has provided a lot of opportunities for me across the whole spectrum – teaching, performing, and composing.

I: So, I'm curious, just because of how it's affected you and mentioning being exposed to composers, can you tell me what it was about the activity that kind of hooked you? Was it those elements or was it something else that kind of got you excited about it and then you discovered those things as a result of that?

P: It was definitely the latter. I came up in a very competitive program in high school, and I thought that was sort of the way, and I wanted to compete a lot, and I've sort of been turned through my collegiate career and my professional career to value that less. But, I still look back at it and think, would I be where I am if I wasn't given that competitive spark as a young kid? Would I have had the interest in music? Because it was WGI, it was the drum corps activity and all those things that made me look up who Shostakovich was. And, the made me look up who Pat Matheny was. It made me look up all these artist, and created this interest in music for me. Yeah, competition spawned it, but I think I was able to take into a much more artistic level over the years. But, early on it was definitely, like, drums are cool, I'm going to go do this. And then you get really passionate about it and you start digging deeper and you learn. You know I was a tenor player in high school so it's like you learn – you know you go to watch the tenor lines but as you're watching the tenor lines you hear this cool music and you go oh what's that and you go back and figure what it was and you think oh I need to listen to more of that. And for someone who's really curious, where else can you go to hear such a wide variety of

music in one day? And so that is – I definitely didn't join because of the musicianship first – I just wanted to be a drummer doing cool things.

I: The reason I ask a lot of follow-ups is because you have experienced it from a performers standpoint. Can you talk about having been a performer, the uniqueness of the performance environment?

P: It's interesting, as a performer, you're focus is so much on a microscale that I don't even know if you notice the venue. I don't remember noticing a venue other than the size of it – you're like oh I've never performed for this many people or this big of a room. So, my memories of performing are not of the environment in terms of the room. There is the environment in terms of it being only percussion instruments, being a very singular kind of timbre coming out. That is in and of itself a challenge I think, you know because percussion instruments are not lyrical naturally. And so that's an aspect of music that we have to work at and sometimes fake to be honest. You know, we can't sustain so we have to fake it somehow or we have to come up with other ways around it much like a guitar or a piano. So, there's that side of it, there's the technical side, you know from a performer and that's what you're really into and the environment of only percussion instruments allows that to flourish. Now as a judge and as a writer, we're constantly fighting the environment, that's the hard part about the activity and all of pageantry the environment changes every performance. And we have 2.5 minutes to sound check and 2.5 minutes to get off the field or the floor and set up 5 digits worth of gear in terms of dollar amount and you know, those challenges are unique to the activity very much so

than people who do similar things like having to put on a stage show at the NFL show – they have all day to set up, they get the sound just right and they get to leave it for the show that night. Or they have a crew of however much a budget that’s 10 times what we have so on the adult side or the judge side or the designer side, I feel like we’re constantly adapting to the environment – fighting wasn’t a fun word maybe cause we’re allowed instruments in a smaller space.

I: So, since you performed in DC as well, what’s your take on the difference in venue? For the people – performers, audience? How do you view that different dynamic and what the experience is as a result of proximity?

P: My – the analogy I use a lot is that Drum Corps is the Symphony and WGI is the Chamber Ensembles - the String Quartet. They are two different things – they are equally valid, they are two different things that are legitimate in their own right – not that one is better than the other, there’s just different musical experiences. You go to the symphony, you go to this grand concert hall, you hear this massive twenty minute long works that are very deep. You know, you go to hear Mahler or Bruckner or Beethoven and there’s this grandeur of this event because of the amount of the people there, the conductor – I don’t know the chandelier – the dress – I don’t know – there’s a certain grandeur to it. And I think DCI is sort of the pageantry equivalent of that. You know – in the summer especially – you’re at Mile High Stadium or Patriots – Foxboro – and there’s 40,000 people watching and they’re all here to see 154 people whereas in WGI it’s much more nimble and intimate. You hear a lot now about – what’s the term – about Indi-Classical

groups – you know you think like Eighth Blackbird or some other groups – you know they put on concerts – yeah in great concert halls but they also put on concerts in book stores and the Tiny Desk Concerts are a good example of that on NPR. There’s an intimacy there for both the performer and the audience that’s different – it’s just different. You can hear the, you can feel the performers in a different way as an audience member. You can certainly as a performer, you can feel the crowd differently. Every noise you make is heard. Sometimes on the field you can shout, “Don’t forget this set!” Can’t do that in WGI because they’ll hear it, so it’s just the intimacy factor I think, and how that difference between DCI and WGI isn’t good or bad, they’re just different experiences.

I: What are your core beliefs about WGI that guide you within your current role within the activity?

P: As a judge....my core beliefs are that this is a youth activity – a youth educational activity I should say and one that focuses on musicianship and artistry first, that creates musicians and artists through this pageantry art form. That’s a lot of words, but it’s a youth-centric activity definitely that trains musicians in performance. I know there’s a visual aspect to what we do but the thing I always like to say is nobody comes into this activity as a marcher first, right? We didn’t learn how to march before we learned how to play. So, this is still to me and I know the activity keeps evolving, but it’s still an activity that is tied very tightly to music education, colleges, high schools, middle schools in some respect. And so yes, we’re competing, yes, we’re creating art, yes as designers we’re trying to create works of art, but at the core of all of that we’re still teaching youth

as well. So, the intersection of that and even the divergence of those two things is something really interesting of the activity. When I see a group that puts the art before the teaching or the teaching before the art, you know, how does that, how do you weight those two things – neither one of those two things are better or worse but how do you judge a group that’s playing something very artistically – competitively speaking and then rank or variate them with a group that’s taught so incredibly well but maybe isn’t as artistic. And you know our judging sheets allow for that, you know, we have sort of the performers side of the sheet and then the competition/design side of the sheet. So, that’s the thing that’s fascinating to me and when I judge, I try to never forget that I’m not only talking to the designer, I’m also talking to the student. It’s five minutes that even though they never see my face, it’s five minutes where I can possible teach something and help a student grow, help a designer grow or not. You know, I don’t know, depends on how they think I guess. I think it’s neat that the activity allows that with the live running commentary and that accountability that we’re held to to make sure that our numbers, what we say happens competitively matches what we say on the tape.

I: Your views definitely convey an educational bent, but you also stated that in your opinion, the activity itself is education centered. In your experience, do you think that the WGI organization sees itself that way? Education centered and student centered?

P: Yeah, I think so, especially on the percussion side. I can’t speak too much to the Guard side, but definitely on the percussion side and ummmm I think the Winds side. But I know on the percussion side we still have an age out. Once you turn 21 you can’t do it

anymore – or 22. So on the guard side, they got rid of that because I think they – you know the spirit is still there, but I think they view it as their needle turns a little bit more towards the art of it. You know, it is possible for a guard to exist outside of an educational institution, I think. It's possible for a percussion – that's why have our independent groups – but I'd almost say to the man and to the woman – you know the members that staff those independent groups come from school programs. They graduate high school and you know, they keep going and do it. So, I do think that the spirit of what WGI does, especially on the percussion side, that these are youth that we need to take care of, that we need to treat well, and that we need to make sure that they're getting something out of it and that they're not [inaudible] a machine of someone else's design, just trying to put on art. They're not just performers doing a job – they also have to learn and grow. And that's a scene in the judging philosophy – you know the tiered – “A, Open, World” as the group grows, the rubric that they're graded by changes because they're at a different level. I think if they always saw this as art, everyone would always be on the same judging scale. Everything would be judged all the same, but we have this tiered system that allows a young scholastic group that may be sitting in A or even locally at a lower class like regional A or something. It allows the judging criteria – it evolves to the state of the student and that's something I really like.

I: Is that something that from your experience is fairly unique by WGI?

P: It's not unique but it's definitely, I know in our judge training, it's very emphasized. You know, I know our judge coordinators.....names....they have gone through great

lengths to very openly state what an A group is, what an Open group is and what a World group is. And our sheets are very clear, and the verbiage is very clear for us and I think the activity for the most part understands it as well. I think just maybe it's not as emphasized in other places.

I: In your experience, is the WGI judging experience, from the training standpoint, from the tiered system and so on and so forth, is it a fairly unique judging experience as compared to other organizations in the pageantry arts?

P: I think so, I mean my only other judging experience really is with marching band circuits so I'm not a BOA or a DCI judge. I do know that the sheets, I write for a Drum Corps, I've been involved in DCI on the writing side a lot, so I know those, but I've never had to judge from the sheets. Now DCI is interesting because there's no tiered system, right? There's Open class and then there's World class and that's really determined by size of the group and financial stability less than ability. But that's definitely unique. Marching bands in the fall I think is the same, there's not really a class system. If it is it's by school size, you know. So, I guess that part of it, the tiered system, is definitely unique, but I think you know we all kind of look at sort of the same things. What the students are doing and how they do it, you know the spirit of that kind of permeates across all the pageantry arts.

I: What are the outcome you desire for performing participants in the WGI activity?

P: I think that for me - I'm trying to recall the WGI philosophy right now, but I can't - but you know the outcomes are definitely one of proficiency through performing arts, whatever that is. You're gaining proficiency through performing arts. You know I want again - specifically because I'm a music judge - I'm going to emphasize the music side of it, you know the students, unfortunately not every performer is playing some visual performance now on the floor these days. But overwhelmingly on the musicians, their job, their outcome is intense musical training through a sport-like art - you know not to pun WGI's surname - the sport of the arts - but I think that intense musical lab environment where they learn to perform a six, seven, eight minute show and I would almost call it an inter-disciplinary show because it's not just music, it's the performing, it's the theatrical nature of it, that cross disciplinary, interdisciplinary aspect of it is definitely part of the outcomes of it these days I definitely would say. Much more so than when I was in it as a performer.

I: Do you think in terms of outcomes, aside from the performance part, do you think that there's, rather it's a social component or things that wouldn't be overtly musical, do you think there are outcomes for the students just having the experience?

P: Yeah, I mean there's definitely the teamwork, the intense rehearsal environment, the professionalism experience; especially for the independent groups because they rehearse around the weekends. You know rehearsal starts Friday, you got to be there and then you're in this intense theater-like sitzprobe environment, you know where it's like it's a dress rehearsal weekend and everyone's there for like a lotta, lotta hours. You know? So

yeah there's definitely a professionalism and learning to be an adult in a work environment kind of aspect especially on the independent side I'd say. You know and in the scholastic side as well. They walk out of it knowing that it takes work- but, it takes smart work, and it takes work ethic and teamwork. But, I think for a lot of people too, especially the ones that don't major in music, this is their artistic avenue to perform. You know if there are med-school majors or philosophy majors or whatever, so there's that kind of social aspect of it where it's a collection of diverse groups of people who aren't just music majors. This isn't your college wind ensemble, your high school band, these are - especially for the independent groups - these are 21-year-olds that have jobs and maybe kids. You know? I mean seriously. They love performing and there's that aspect of it, we're training musicians and we're also training lovers of the arts. And I think that's unique for pageantry in general: WGI, DCI, BOA. It's that some of those kids may become doctors and give back and fund an independent group, I don't know. I think that's an important part of it is that there are non-musicians in the group that have to perform at this very professional level.

I: What would you hope, when it's time for them to walk away from it, what would you want for them to take away from it when it's all said and done?

P: Oh yeah, definitely. You know for people like me, that takeaway is that you can make a career in music and you can make a career in pageantry, a lot of people do now, and the other side of it is it's also for everyone. You know like I said the medical major, or the biology major has an artistic output that gives them an interdisciplinary playing

experience but then afterwards hopefully teaches them to be lovers of the art, not just WGI, but all of them and to give back in some way. And to give back in the arts I think it's going to be important in the coming years.

I: What is your view or opinion and experience of the role of competition as part of WGI? How do you view that?

P: Yeah this is a tough one because there are days when I'm on that side of the fence too, right? Like why is competition the primary driver for people to be excellent when it should just be excellence in general, you know? But I think the thing that is great about WGI and I don't know what it is, I like to think it's the culture that... Names... have work to create – it's that after every show you see all the staffs of the different groups and all the members always hanging out. There's a certain camaraderie through this competition and a certain culture there that I think is unique when compared to BOA and DCI. You know I don't know in DCI if the stakes are higher or we're just out in the sun all day and were really hot and angry. There's a very collegial environment in WGI where it's again, we recognize the competition, it's-we recognize that one day you'll lose, one day you won't but the growth through a competitive environment, the want and need to grow because of competition supersedes the actual numbers and placements themselves. And I think it really does truly exist in WGI Everywhere I go, every circuit I see - you rarely get people really miffed about a number or a placement. I'm sure it happens. But the spirit of it, I think WGI does a really good job of capturing it - that the relationship that exists between the judges and the members or the judges and the staff is

very strong and because of it there's a trust level through all of the levels of people involved: performers, staff's, judges that it just feels really different than some of the other activities.

I: Do you think the competition has been successful in elevating not only the performer level of excellence, they're elevating achievement, the design aspects and all that; but do you think the competition has helped promote that acceleration in all those performing areas?

P: Yeah, I mean for whatever that's worth the competition does, but it's like, what competition does, like I teach a percussion ensemble, I teach chamber ensemble here at Furman and the group grows and it has grown for 11 years, I hope it has, you know that's my job. But I think there's a certain thing about the competitive aspect that makes a group or WGI ensemble, it makes the art of that, it makes it iterate much faster right because once you've done a show you know you can't do the same thing again because it'd be kind of stale the next year. So, iteration, artistically and the growth is much quicker than in a non-competitive environment. You know, and that's not a good thing or a bad thing, it's just different. You know, if I wanted to, not that I would, I could program the same piece seven times in a row with my ensemble and no one would know. I mean people would care but I wouldn't lose my job over it. I would suffer at WGI to do the same show twice even. There's that aspect, the iteration. And this year the competition.

I: Is there anything else you would like to add?

P: Yeah, I think it applies to WGI but also to pageantry in general. I think, I can't think of a better way to support art, live art, than to attend a pageantry show because you can go see your friend's garage band at a bar, but the ticket price and your presence only really helps the bar, right? You might buy a CD, you might do all these things, you might get the word out, all these things are great but when you go to a pageantry performance, you go to a marching band show, particularly a WGI show-because there's just so many of them-your ticket prices are helping the performers, they're helping the school that's hosting it, you're supporting students that will grow and become artists and musicians or supporters of the arts. They will turn around and do the exact same thing you were doing as a ticket purchaser. So, you turn around and go see a show. The neat thing about WGI is it hits on all those levels. It's educational, it's a school, it's an education-centered performance, right, for the most part. It's art, there's the creation of art going on. But there's also the performance aspect going on, there are tickets bought and it's an event. And so, it's kind of professional and it's kind of not, it's kind of everything and that's what's really great about when I see crowds really getting into the show you know, any particular show or any particular performance, these are more than just band parents, and this is more than just Sally Joe's mom and dad, these are people that like supporting the arts. And I think that what's really nice is the live aspect of it, the live performance aspect of it and supporting of it.

I: So, what would your response be to people that may ask you why would you spend three months working on one show?

P: Yeah, I mean I've asked myself that. I mean you know if I'm going to go at it from the professional angle, because I'm a professional musician and if I'm playing with an orchestra you know we may play two different concerts in two different weeks, that's very different then performing the same show for three months like you said, working to perfect it. I think the benefit of that is the level of excellence you learn to achieve, right? The level of tenacity to achieve something. To learn that the best of the best, what separates the best of the best from the second best of the best is often 1/10 of a percent. Where the vast majority of the public wouldn't even know there was a difference, but those little tiny minute differences are what wins jobs, or what wins job interviews. That attention to detail, that attention to excellence over time is really important. And that will get you the skills to be able to play three shows in the week because you have the ability to work hard at your craft before you're called to do that job. There's no such thing as magic in the world, nothing happens overnight. I'm just coming to realize this now as I enter my second decade teaching at the university level. It's like, work is really choosing to commit to 10 years to something just to see it succeed. So yeah, three months is nothing compared to 10 years. And nothing happens overnight even though it may appear it, even though like when somebody comes out with a breakout hit on the radio I'm sure they were slogging it through the bar scene and in the bookstore scene for years before that you know working on their craft before they made it. There's no such thing as overnight success and this activity helps sort of put some pillars under that idea that you really do need to spend 10,000 hours on something to be great at it.

I: Do you think there's something to these kids that participate in WGI, they compete on the local level, they compete at the regional level, now they go to Dayton and compete at that level; do you think there's just something to be said in terms of the experience of those kids just simply being there? Going through that process, arriving at World Championships and just being in that space for those days, being a part of that? Is there something you think is special about that?

P: Yeah, I mean just yesterday I, I'm gonna talk about an equivalent that I see, as professionals- as you and I- we have jobs and we go to conferences, right? So, we go, and we have three days of like- you put the world aside, whatever crappy stuff happened yesterday- and you get to spend like three days of really intense environment around all people that are similarly minded and you're all at the same time exhausted and exhilarated from that experience. This is an environment like that for the kids you know. They get to go away, get on a bus, and it's no small miracle that they make it there and make it back, let's be straight. That's a logistical miracle in and of itself. Then the act of going in there and seeing hundreds, thousands of other students who are doing the exact same thing you are and seeing that it's OK and seeing that it's great to be a band nerd or whatever, good to be a drum nerd. And not only that but it's cool. And it's a place that you can be you, and you're supported, if nothing else for three days or a day. That experience is definitely super important, you know, and see that the world is definitely bigger than just your small town. Especially when you get to Dayton. I love watching A class shows in particular because you'll get groups that it's their first time there and they're from you know some thousand-person county in North Dakota and they've never

seen anything this big and they only know like the 15 kids in their own ensemble and they go, and they see what kids exactly their age you're doing, you know? It's pretty exhilarating I think in that regard. And whether they win or lose I think students come away with a huge passion for performing in that regard. So, the social aspect to it I guess is hugely important.

I: And your view has WGI as an organization, do you see them as having been consistent over time in administering their philosophy of what they're trying to do as an organization?

P: Ever since I've been judging I would say yes and I would say not only consistent but tenacious and adaptive and evolving in making the system better. There's a percussion advisory board which staff members get to be on to say what their thoughts are about the state of the activity, there's the judge training we have every year and it's overwhelming every time I go to that judge training in January I come away from it being like wow the activity is like changed in a year or even for me because the season ends in April so nine months like things changed and we didn't have any shows. Because there's an open-mindedness and a willingness to continue refining and evolving the philosophy. You know the core tenants are still there you know the tiered systems.....

I: But it sounds like they just make the changes and the tweaks necessary to continue to make sure they're addressing what they need to address in the best way possible.....

P: Yep and you know how do you do that when there's designers saying they want this and there's staff saying they want this and judges saying they want this? I mean it's a hard thing to do, don't get me wrong, there's still plenty of passion going on in those discussions, but it's definitely nice to see the evolving of that. And in a lot of regards the teamwork and the collegial environment that is there even in those passionate discussions. It's nice to see that.

“Adam”

September 11, 2018

I: What is your age?

P: I am 60 years old.

I: Please briefly describe your background in the marching arts and WGI.

P: I marched in Drum Corps, competitive marching band and I started teaching as a technician and became a band director relatively early in competitive marching band. I started judging locally for Drum Corps International and I started doing some band judging and things like that all the while my marching band was competing more and I was designing more. Then I started designing for lots of bands and ultimately Drum Corps, particularly two drum Corps, the Cavaliers for 18 years and then Santa Clara Vanguard for the last three. And I was a school administrator for the last 15 years of my career.

I: What have you experienced in terms of WGI?

P: I've experienced a culture of growth and excellence and camaraderie that I didn't know existed that I thought was only competitive. And although the groups are competing against each other it is a competition that is very nurturing, try to get as good

as you can-each group gets as good as they can by themselves without a lot of focus on the other groups. So, the environment-culture is the top thing that was evident to me when I first started and continues to be evident.

I: Could you speak in terms of your experience as it pertains specifically to the judging aspect, what have you observed with that?

P: You get yearly training with objectives, both with phone calls or webinars or whatever, on site professional development, outreach and additional calls during the season that are voluntary but most people participate just to discuss and share their thoughts and ideas, to pick each other's brains, also the education that WGI does for the designers and teachers, it's a separate track but it's made available to the judges and seeing all of that kind of stuff it became very obvious why indoor percussion is where it is.

I: So, talking about the training and all that it sounds like WGI has a system in place- in your experience do they seem to be consistent in their processes as it pertains to all that?

P: Yes they do, I mean obviously when you're judging at that level you're recruiting the best possible judges or judges that have a lot of experience and have the tools and have the background and have the genetic make-up or experience or personality. But then you're also giving them both broad and specific goals, updating the many changes or any feedback that was learned from the past participants, or designers, or teachers, or adults.

And there's yearly focus, rather it be on systems change in the way it's done or an interpretation change or verbiage change or just a broad type of focus.

I: Having been around marching arts for that length of time that you have, do you think there's anything unique or particularly special about the evaluation model that WGI uses that their judges apply and how they evaluate ensembles?

P: Anything unique about it, I can't say it's as unique as it is flushed out and consistent because it's been the same team of leaders for maybe a decade or two, over a decade... Probably a decade and a half to 2 decades with similar people. So, I think there's more support, there's more resources and there's obviously more communication between the WGI leadership which is, you know, separate from the judge leadership for percussion and they are more communicative, tighter in terms of goals and focus within themselves, so-so I guess it's tradition. There's a system in place based on familiarity and the leader. So that makes it more viable I think then just a system.

I: What are your core beliefs about WGI that guide you in your current role within the activity?

P: In terms of guiding me, you have the assigned caption to judge, meaning the general music or percussion or whatever it is; there's a criteria and a rubric for that. There are parameters and guiding words, but they're not the only words. And that's very clear and consistent. Within that rubric and the interpretation of the rubric is extremely clear and

consistent. The rubric for good, fair, excellent, superior. Words that are used and then the training and the comfort in knowing what type of performance it takes to be at each of those. That's the first core value. The second core is the tiered system of A class, Open, and World class; and how easy it is to judge that. What even more so fits into my beliefs is depending on resources, age, time, money, all the variables there; somebody could still be superior. What it takes for somebody who graduates 50 in a class that has a district budget for music of \$1000 versus.....you know. What I like about that is it's similar to just adjudication for concert band, orchestra, and choir and small ensembles, which is you have a graded level of music and then you're performing for ratings, you're not performing against each other. So even though there is a ranking in WGI, I like the paradigms and the rubric itself was very easy to follow. And very easy to implement.

I: So, in your experiences have you seen an evolution from a performance standpoint in terms of achievement in excellence or have you seen groups progress and grow?

P: Yes, absolutely. And I've been doing it since 2012. I didn't judge much last year but I did a little, but yes I have seen it in the promotion you know within WGI. Obviously, but the promotion from class to class or that paradigm. When you see the amount of groups that are now competing at one if not even two levels above from in A class to a World-class let's say. Yeah I've seen that. I mean honestly education is great and the comments are great but the volume of groups that want to compete at that level that do that there's such a vested interest, they're doing their homework, They're working their tails off and motivating kids to want to play better and teachers to teach better and designers to design

better and learn how to do that. As a judge it's pushing me to learn more. I have to know more and more about sound reproductions and sound systems. I have to know more about technology and samples and triggers and all the integration of sounds and quality of sounds. Groups now even on a cursory level have to have professional soundmen involved. So it pushes me year after year in a technical aspect, even though I was a rudimental drummer way back when and you had all these basic rudiments: ratamacues, flamtaps, things like that. Now they have some of these permutations of these rudiments that you sort of have to keep up with that. So it's pushed me that way.

I: That growth and achievement and excellence, not only in performers, but is that something that you're seeing accelerating from a design standpoint as well?

P: Yeah absolutely. That's what I've been pleased with since my first year and I am primarily a designer. It's just the median group in terms of the prowess they have, ways to generate affect and communicate, it's amazing just in the five years uh six years that I've been doing it.

I: What are the outcomes you desire for the performing participants and WGI? What is it that you hope that kids out there on the floor are getting out of this experience?

P: Well, discipline, dedication to excellence, understanding that hard work does pay off, teamwork, all the typical you know ensemble team building all those types of things. That's what I'm hoping I am seeing. From a teacher and instructor, the same things, just

growth in terms of trying to teach better, be more effective and design more effectively. That's what I would hope. I guess I would also hope that there would be less and less rote teaching, less and less of just teaching without purpose, by that I mean if you take the curriculums, big ideas, essential questions - in other words when we're playing the music, we're playing "Balero" - there are composer's intent and there are devices and there are things like that that are inherent and it's not just to recognize "Balero," it's the things that we learned about the devices, the communication and hopefully those things are being communicated to the members via the teachers too so that twenty years from now they can go, "boy this has the same pacing as "Balero." You know that would be the stretch point. Lifelong learning and application.

I: I listen to you talk about that and knowing your background as an educator, my next question would be - in your experience do you think that the WG I model, their philosophy, is one that is education centered?

P: Yes, because they're hiring and monitoring and developing and educating and all of that stuff, involved at the national level and even regional level I should say. And in terms of monitoring and nurturing adjudicators to improve and grow themselves in terms of their listening and hearing skills and their ability to verbalize things in a positive, nurturing, inspiring way that makes people want to work with them. So, from that standpoint, yes. Also, there's formative and summative assessment involved in all of this right? If you do a show on January 30th, that's early in the year, it's still summative cause at the end of their 2 minutes or whatever they're out there, they're putting a number

down. But along the way, throughout, you're judging through time, you're giving them a snapshot on January 30th, their championships are in the middle of April – that's the true summative assessment so it's formative along the way.

I: So, you feel like in doing all of those things, they're doing that so that they can provide the best possible experience and opportunities for the student performers?

P:, Yes and some of that has to do with venue and competition, you know and to be able to see groups working every bit as hard as them and doing the same things. It's not that it's a tradition, it's no different then BOA models, there are groups that know that if you want to be the best you have to compete against the best. And if you want not only the best input but you want all the experience that comes with it you're going to take them to places where they're going to be scrutinized and go against. So yeah from that standpoint yes absolutely.

I: What are your thoughts on the role of competition and WGI?

P: Well, that's what it is, it is a competition, you know and that's the second part on the prong of that answer which is yes it's educationally based and things like that but it's a forum for competition and people like a competition. It's a feel-good thing and there's a lot of egos being stroked including kids and developing and making them stand taller. So they're giving a forum for that, they're making sure that it's run professionally, you know that the groups are treated....the information...it's a positive experience from the

communication to the venue to every aspect that comes with doing that in that arena versus let's say a little local contest in a local gym in the middle of nowhere on a Saturday night. You know what I mean? The tradition and the reputation of that provides that. In terms of what...inaudible....Everybody has to decide what's right for their kids and program. The reason I like WGI Percussion, and truth be told it wasn't all that important to me, I'm thinking you know we have something like that it's called percussion ensemble and concert band. Well there has been nothing.....inaudible..... but indoor percussion growth in terms of performance skills, vocabulary, communication, and nuances, musicality, diversity, more than this indoor percussion thing. It's so different than what the Winter guard scene has done for Color guards. You know what I mean? Because your school can play in concert band and - you're a band director you understand that if you have 30 percussionists and then one..... inaudible.....not everything is going to play. Also it's giving the kids a chance to do it that might not be able to do it in the fall or whatever, so in terms of the skill set the most basic classic group is using now is stronger than the skill set I had when I was in high school playing on what would've been considered a national level or when I did drum Corps right after high school with a group that was top 12. And it provided the venue and the tradition and the mystique and all those things that people, you know every teacher a band director or instructor or booster - you know everybody is sacrificing and growing and learning and pushing and is making these decisions and getting that information there but WGI is supporting that your professional development and monitoring their judges to make sure that they are nurturing and professional and yada yada. So, I guess I'm answering your question you know everybody has to make that. But I do like is these groups that have 30

or 35 kids are achieving playing double vertical or double lateral type things and would not get that opportunity to develop that much if the concert band was playing Grade 4 literature or they were in a percussion ensemble, not all kidsevery piece.

I: Is there anything else you would like to add?

P: The standard of which they set and the way they monitor and ensure that people rise to that standard and the way they are redirected -I don't mean, not necessarily punitively - but the way they are redirected when they don't perform at that standard is, from DCI to bands of America to anything even local circuits- I'm old so I've done a lot, it's extremely high and it comes down to you know somebody once said that great teaching is teachers which is true. You know administrating, leading is administrators and in this case you know the level of expertise and confidence, background, skill set, the administrators when I think of them without naming them, you know as diverse and such a high level that it's not paralleled right now in other venues. So that's what makes indoor percussion unique is the administration. The people they seek out to judge for them, the tools they give them to prepare them and nurture them and redirect them, and without -again not punitively -but how quickly they are reassigned, redirected or off the roster if in fact they failed to meet the standard. And there's various subtle things you know what I mean and there's gradations of why somebody would do that. That's important, you got to be at the top of your game, you want to get better and they have the vehicle and the support to do that. Lastly, is what makes them – it's easy to say that one organization even if it's just- like I judge a local university contest-big tradition-and we

had one extra guy that was a seasoned judge that just walked around after every group and looked over everybody's shoulders and subtly he made comments you know-too high, too low, you sure you want to do that, you really felt that way? I will never judge there again and WGI gives you everything to do but when they give you the recorder and the clipboard they're going to let you do it and not interfere. They will redirect you after. They give you complete confidence to make the decision that you have based on your background and the tools given to you.

“Sarah”

August 18, 2018

I: Tell me your age.

P: I am 57 years old.

I: Briefly describe your background with the marching arts and WGI.

P: I am a music educator going into my 34th year, certified in the state of New York. I have been adjudicating drum and bugle corps and marching bands since 1981, DCI since 1994, and WGI since 200, I wanna say 16, yep, 2016. I judged OCIA or OICA, the Ohio group two years prior before I took on the role and responsibility of adjudicating at WCI.

I: Okay, thank you. Alright, the first question is very broad and I just want your gut reaction to this statement...or question. What have you experienced in terms of WGI?

P: Professionalism and a strong sense of education, a sense of loyalty to the team and to their adjudicators, a semblance of wanting to make sure things are done the right way the first time, no fear of making changes and moving forward, if something doesn't take place like an event, a show, a training...we're remunerated for that, we're treated very professionally in that arena. The training is superior. After every show that I adjudicate, someone gets back with me within a week with an evaluation of my recording. That

happens in no other arena. That speaks, to me, volumes over what the people at the top, and the philosophy of true education is all about. They want to make sure those kids are getting good feedback. We are trained yearly in a remote location with all of us intact, I should say. I know WGI puts all of their color guard people together to train and then they put their winds and brass people together the same weekend to train. So that's a little bit different than a lot of other groupings. A lot of other companies will put everybody together at the same place, same time. And I think because WGI knows not only sheer volume, the guard size of the world versus the guard and wind size, as well as the wanting to make sure things are done very professionally, they pull us into two separate weekends....which is a huge financial undertaking for them; however, they do that. That's huge. We have a new handbook every year with updates according to the WGI rules. The conversations are very open and professional. We're able to share with one another without feeling that something we may say may be disagreed with and immediately shut down. It's a very warm and inviting group of people to work with and to be trained with. Everybody's ideas are champions versus it's one way or the highway which sometimes happens in other arenas. It's not a large group of people, the winds group is very small. As a matter of fact, I know, we're really limited at this point the people that they do bring in because until a group the size of WGI grows, we're kind of at a stalemate as to bringing more people in. But they are very fussy about the quality of the people that they bring in. All of us have some semblance of national adjudication behind us and have years of experience, there's very few people judging, really no people judging for WGI at this point that have less than probably a fifteen-year window of adjudication under their belt. So it's just a very professional organization with very

professionally run philosophies and people. We are very much a part of also helping to create that, which I think is pretty cool. That's not normal. Normally, the philosophy is established for you. Here I don't think WGI is afraid to let the door open, and they are very selective about who they bring into the process. Our team of people that is adjudicating right now is very small, for the winds. It's not a large group of people. They've hand selected people that they feel very comfortable with, that are going to carry on the WGI philosophy. But, again, also be a part of what they believe is going to help promote it and develop it in years to come. We are treated very professionally which makes all of us feel confident when we go out and train, as a matter of fact, we already have our availability for next year which is unheard of that they would do something this early. So, they are just really on top of things which makes me feel, and it's just great communications, constantly, not only between our direct administrators but also the WGI Board and their head people, their President and CEO and so forth. So, it's like I said, it's just a very open group of people where we constantly feel that we are learning, growing, and that we are able to work with one another in the most collegial way.

I: So, since you've only been judging WGI for the last two or three years, even in that short amount of time, I know you referenced you're judging winds, and you referenced it's the newest competitive division, even in that short amount of time, what have you noticed? Have things already begun to change with the participants, with the performance elements? What's been your observation there?

P: Well, the number of participants within the individual divisions has grown tremendously, I believe the first year that they had finals there was something in the magnitude of maybe twenty or so, maybe over that, and the next year that jumped exponentially and we were at almost fifty groups this year, and that dropped just a smidge because of some financial issues. So it has grown tremendously as far as not only the size of the groups but also the amount of people that are just interested and involved across the country with the activity. The interest is huge which is lovely as well as I think they even feel and sense the professionalism that's taking place.

I: What's been your observation with the types of programs, school band programs, music education programs vary greatly – do you have any thoughts on their participation with WGI, how the activity is used for different types of programs?

P: Well, I think it's used in different programs for various and sundry reasons. For example, Avon High School in Avon, Indiana uses it on an every other year basis and it's not always necessarily their regular kids in marching program, sometimes it becomes a training ground for others in their individual program which I think is lovely. And again they use it as a back up to doing something like that with other things involved. So for example, they used it last year and then this year they did something completely different and didn't involve themselves and next year they are planning on coming back to WGI. There are some schools that are very tiny, I ran into two this past year in southern Texas, almost to the Mexico border and they choose to use it as a building ground for their program They have a very, very small program and they're trying to build interest not

only in the marching but in the concert arena and felt this was a good way to explore and experiment with the activities. They felt that the educational background that they got was tremendous so they decided to continue with it for their program. So I think that it varies dependent on the size of the program and as you said, the socioeconomic. I think it's all things for all people, I think it can be utilized for training or it can be utilized to help build a program or it can be utilized to support a part of a program that may no longer be in existence. One program is using it now in place of their marching program because of finances and the cost and the size of what the program used to be versus what it can be indoors. So, they used it as a separate option. So, I think it can be whatever anybody wishes it to be.

I: So, from a pure performance stand point, in your short time with the activity, what have you observed in those terms?

P: The level of design has increased tremendously. Different uses of different instrumentation and different compositional opportunities. A lot of the groups when we first started did not use a lot of percussion and now we have a lot of percussion being utilized. Some groups don't use any color guard whatsoever and now we have some groups using that as well. We have some groups talking about going in a different direction and utilizing not just necessarily regular marching instrumentation but a brass group or a winds group so I think that there's been a huge direction of development design wise, instrumentation wise, and what the true ensemble will look like. And I think that was the initial intent of WGI that it didn't have to look like an indoor marching band,

that it could be anything it wanted to be based on the individual district and the designer and the directors based on what they thought best for their individual program. There's been a huge just from last year to this year with the individual participants and all of the levels and who ended up winning in the year, just a huge development in level of achievement, and it's been gratifying because it all points back to how this whole thing has gone and where it's gone so it's been wonderful but yeah, it's been a huge growth across the board.

I: What are your core beliefs about WGI that guide you in your current role within the activity?

P: Part of it is my own philosophy, what I brought, I brought from years of experience in my educational background as well as my adjudication in the marching arts and the pageantry world along with what WGI asks us to do at this time. You walk into one door and another opens as far as size, so we have to be really cautious, we have to go in the direction they tell us from what they lay down from a philosophy standpoint, but the bottom line is simple: It's education first and making sure, their common comment is "teacher, counselor, critic" and that's their role in what they say every time we meet and every time we start to adjudicate. So those are the first things and I believe that whole heartedly, I believe it's changed me to some extent as well from being very quick to pick out what's wrong versus making sure I remind myself of what's right first and what they're doing correctly. They also want to make sure the groups are doing what's best for music education and I think that's huge, that's a big piece of the puzzle as far as what

we're trying to bring forward. I think I also can talk the technical and the musical ramifications of what they do and what they bring to the table. I can talk techniques, and breathing, and dynamics, and overall musicality, and that is what they want. It's not more of a design picture; its more of the basic this is how do we begin the process, and this is what's most important. As well as, I've not judged the overall effect sheet for WGI, I have for other groups, I've primarily done the music analysis sheet or music ensemble sheets so I've kind of been in that little world of that end of it, so I can talk to the designers and I can talk to the musicians as WGI asks us to do about what we see. I think that the basic structure of the way I teach music education and the way WGI believes that's the ground level for what we do is very strong. We talk all about music comes first and how we teach and how the rest of it goes along with that. I know that we said the cool part of WGI is the growth that we've seen and this past year in Atlanta when we went through training we talked about not only making sure that we are not only helping programs grow, but we are growing as musicians. So, for the first time ever we were able to sit around the table and watch videos of groups from the past two years and as a group we were given a list of questions and we went around and answered and I ran one of the sessions where we went around asked people there thoughts about it: good, bad, or ugly? What did you see from an ensemble standpoint? What did you see from an effects standpoint? What can we help them grow with? And we were able to talk to one another like we would in a situation on a recorder to a group of students and their designer. In a lot of cases, that doesn't happen in a lot of places, that kind of training does not go on. In a lot of states and their individual federations, that piece of it as well is really paramount for WGI and how they do education and the direction they're going in. I

know when they were looking at going to Disney and moving the whole activity down there for finals and one of the big situations that we were concerned about is that we didn't feel that would be able to accurately and educationally support all of those groups, rather it be from a color guard stand point or percussion or winds stand point. And I think that's huge for the powers that be to be able to stand back knowing I'm sure that Disney would have loved to have us down there and been more than supportive financially, but WGI looked at it as we need to make sure we are educationally supporting our programs and our kiddos. So I think that's huge.

I: What are the outcomes you desire in the WGI activity and how have those evolved over time if they have?

P: Obviously, we want our kiddos to get better, we want the programs to build in design, the want the level of musicians to get better and we want the programs to continue to grow and evolve. As I stated earlier, this doesn't have to be just an indoor marching arena, what we're looking for is things to change, it can be a flute choir, brass choir, whatever is in the best interest of the program and I think that's huge. I think the other thing that people are finding out more and more is how to treat the indoor environment; how to treat the indoor stage as a listening and performance environment much more so than in the past and in the time that I've been with WGI it has definitely changed. People are starting to understand that and how it grows. I think better musicians and better programs, the outcome of those, like you said, who may not have the demographic or full

financial support, as they need to, that's the other direction. We wanted to make sure we were able to touch everyone who wanted to be touched by this. I think those beliefs, whatever they learn those eight minutes in that gymnasium are taken back to their auditoriums and their concert halls. And I think that's another piece of it again, we have to remind ourselves that in some cases, we are just the tip of that music program, we are just a little bit of the learning catalyst that allows to strengthen what they're doing in their program and so we need to remind ourselves of that. The understanding that the better literature to utilize and the better program to try and program so they are getting the best for their program. I don't have a band room, I have a cafeteria so in order for me to make that work I transfer them back and forth from different venues to allow them to understand what playing is like in a cafeteria versus an auditorium so again it's that placement and we want to make sure we educate our kiddo's ears as well. I think that kids have a different opportunity to view WGI, DCI, BOA, their local groups whatever that is, and I think in a lot of cases we are just giving them another avenue to do that. I think some kids worship the DCI/BOA model and now they're starting to see that the WGI model is stronger and just as if not more educationally sound. I just think it has so many extra ramifications. That's what we're, WGI, is really looking for at this point, as a matter of fact, I don't know, they're concerned about the different venues at Dayton and so they're looking again at what's going to be in the best interest of the winds groups dependent on size and design as to what we're going to use next year. Do we need to change that up? And I think in a lot of cases other organizations may not be that and I think that's something WGI is taking a look at for future years.

I: Some people see it only from it's competitive exoskeleton, what are your thoughts on the competitive aspect of WGI?

P: I think there are a lot of directors that are involved that look at it only from the educational perspective. I don't think in this case it's driven quite as much as some of the other activities as the competitive, yes the competitive is there, but again I think people are looking at this a little bit more as the driving force in educating their kids and so they look at that. For me, again, it's what they take back. I'm a very competitive person, I'm used to competing in all of those different arenas, but now that I've been involved in WGI for the past several years, I look at things from a very different perspective. How are we going to make the programs grow first and then whatever ends up happening from there, great. That's the end result. I think we need to continue to allow that to, you know we say it's great to go home with a gold medal, but what have your kids really learned along the way, and I think that....Have you strengthened your program? Has your staff strengthened themselves and are working together as a well oiled machine and how does that impact your program? So, I think that's really what we're looking at across the board. I think it's great to sit back and look at somebody that reminds you of what the whole thing is about. I grew up in the competitive world, my dad is a DCI hall of famer and that's what I knew getting into this as an educator, so like I said, I've changed my views and my thought just being involved with WGI because I've seen it from a different perspective. I've also seen a philosophy change with WGI just simply because I believe that they want to continue to see things grow, so I think they're not afraid of making those philosophical or educational or rule changes if it's in the best interest of where the

kids are going to go. But I think that working, and if WGI continues to evolve, I feel very confident that there's going to be a continuation of that core thought of the direction of this is first educational and then competitive along the way. And I think that you're going to see that more as the groups continue to grow tremendously and continue to grow as well. Which is interesting because I watched a couple of groups clap while other groups went off the floor. They were standing in the back tunnel after finals, watching the groups leave, and the kids stood there and clapped – that doesn't happen in every arena and to me that's family, comradery, showmanship, a team. It becomes so much more than just competitive.

I: Anything else?

P: The only thing I would add is I think it goes for any activity, if you have the means to be able to do what WGI and the indoor marching activity does, and it doesn't negatively affect anything else you're doing, and it doesn't take away from your daytime program, and it supports your kids, I'd strongly urge you to be involved in the activity, I think that it has the impetus to be the most supportive part of your day program along with what you do on a regular basis in your own educational field. I think if you have the funds and the design process to do it, I strongly encourage you to do it. I think it's a sharing capacity to help develop and I believe that it is a great public relations tool for your program as well with support in numerous ways that other things don't allow you, as well as financial ways. And I stated that earlier, it's not as financially strapping as some of the other things we get ourselves into. But I believe as long as your administration and your

parental groups are behind you, I think it's an amazing activity to be involved in where people are truly teacher-counselor-critic. I think that's such an important thing that we do and its stated by [REDACTED] and crew that we need to make sure that we continue to adopt that and we pull that forward.

“Edward”

September 13, 2018

I: Tell me your age, please.

P: 47

I: Can you please briefly describe your background in the marching arts and WGI?

P: Certainly, before WGI, my earliest experience would be as a performer in the marching arts, obviously having started with marching band in high school, and then on to Phantom Regiment Drum and Bugle Corps as a summer activity, and then continued through college marching band, and then began teaching drum corps in the late 90's with The Glassmen, and then returned again in the early 2000's as a percussion captain head for eight years. I began judging indoor activity in 2000 at the circuit level out of Dayton with the Mideast Performance Association, became a WGI judge in 2005, and then became the [REDACTED] for WGI in 2013.

I: What have you experienced in terms of WGI?

P: Because of my responsibilities I've experienced quite a bit of the game from the granular nature of having responsibilities of being a judge, and understanding that craft and understanding my role within the caption that I judged, and then having that evolve

into an administrative capacity where I needed to understand a little more all of the captions, and within that, also the management side of having to work with the team of judges, and be responsible for the team of judges and then going forward. Due to the nature of being a judge there's an interactive nature to the relationships with staffs. So, I've slowly developed friendships over the last twenty years in doing this. There are several words in terms of synonyms: colleagues, friends, etc. Just over time, and those relationships have allowed me to have a candid relationship with a lot of these people in the activity which I feel makes my role more effective, not only when I was a judge, but in my capacity as judge coordinator because I have to field a lot of concerns and questions from instructors. So, the relationships we've been able to galvanize over the past twenty years allows me to have a little more candid conversation and be more approachable when they have concerns. I've experienced one-on-one with students. I've traveled internationally many times, so I've had the one-on-one relationship with WGI's influence internationally, to see not only the brand, but also to see the philosophy and educational components and aspects being instilled in other countries that have to deal with, obviously, a whole other world of challenges with regard to: is it the curriculum, is it government sponsored, where's the money, how do the kids get access, just different challenges than a lot of the groups in the United States have. So, under the brand and umbrella of WGI I've experienced the most remote parts, domestically, but most remote parts internationally, and it's amazing to see how similar some of the students experiences can be on the other side of the world.

I: Having judged in areas outside WGI, other organizations and such, what has your experience been in terms of WGI's approach to judging vs. what judging is like in other organizations?

P: Philosophically, they are by and large, all the ones I've been associated with, and any one that postures to have a national paradigm or national perspective, they all come from the same philosophy. There are several different off-shoots and such when it comes down to micro numbers management, numbers management philosophy, but by and large there's a lot of consistency. Once everything shifted from what used to be a tick system where everything started with a hundred and you break the points down. When the philosophy shifted to where everything is a build up process, and everything is reward that which is being presented, that became instilled everywhere. There's a lot of similarity there. There are some minor differences. The one big difference that WGI has compared to any other is that WGI is the only one that operates within the three-tiered system where it breaks up the competitors based on their skill sets and based on their maturities. So, there are three tiers: A, Open, and World, which is different certainly than anything in the fall. I guess some of the local circuits will perhaps go by band size, etc, but BOA, which is the largest of the binding national linear perspectives, it's all on the same sheet. So, you're comparing the parochial band that has five wind players to the heavy-hitter bands that have 300, and then you define their way on that scale. So, I've loved and I've embraced and I've trumpeted the three-tier process because it allows basic students to compete against other basic students and it allows intermediate students to

compete against other intermediate students. That whole classification system we still struggle with. I think we get it about 97% right, but there's always going to be those people that kind of have a foot in each paradigm, and that's classically where most of our discussion and review come in. But, I think the biggest nod within WGI is the fact that it is three-tiered so that most beginner students are only competing against their peers where students are on the learning curve in the same way. With WGI, I think the fraternal or the comradery that the judging panel, that I'm associated with at least, has I think pays dividends throughout the season because of the rapport and the relationship with the staffs, the candid nature that we're able to talk to groups with, I think it facilitates a better, more effective exchange of information, and ultimately we always lead with the trust that they are the clients and we're there to serve and do our best for them. WGI has chosen competition as a means of binding all of this together, and to the extent that we're responsible for making those decisions competitively, we are part of the process, but the more we can be trusted to do so the better the process works.

I: Do you feel like WGI is doing something different with relation to training and development of the judging panels that is moving beyond what is happening in other organizations?

P: I think WGI is, but I think WGI benefits from different parameters, also. This past summer was my first summer judging for DCI; as long as I was involved in it this was my first summer doing DCI. DCI's judge training, just because there are so many judges.

On the WGI roster we're now at 54. I think active WGI roster. When I first got my job as the judge coordinator there were only 24 percussion judges in WGI. But, because of the explosive growth of the activity and the needs to staff shows, especially when it comes to world championships, and the addition of a 4th caption, the roster has grown by over 100%, but we're still only dealing with 54 or so people that would need to be flown to a meeting to have that room where everybody can sit there and have that fluid, organic, bounce ideas conversations. I know within DCI there are well over 100, so to fly all of them to a city over a weekend it would be extraordinarily expensive. Likewise with BOA, I'm not sure of the exact count, but I'm sure it's certainly more than we deal with. And, even on the color guard side of WGI, color guard has a meeting as well and they just absorb the cost, but there are just way more judges and way more captions. So, I think we benefit from a little leaner, meaner model because we can. We're lucky that it is a weekend only activity, so the best of the best can do it. By and large people can reserve 3 or 4 weekends a year to do this. The summer is a little more challenging, not to mention a lot of guys teach. But, as far as implementation of philosophy, the DCI training was fantastic. I'll lead with that. Instead of flying all the judges in, they do a YouTube channel and do an all-day 8-hour multiple-presenter training session. It was fantastic. I think nothing compares to having those 54 people in the same room talking. What you learn from each other, what you learn from the dynamic. We do 54 of them, we break into captions. I think we benefit from a leaner meaner standpoint, and again, I say leaner meaner because we only have as many judges as we need on Thursday of world championships, which is stacked, and then there some guys that don't even judge on Friday and Saturday. But, we look at where the singular most need is to staff the

biggest competitions, and it is Thursday of world championships, and if that number is 52, 54 then that's how many we have to hire. There just aren't that many opportunities throughout the season to have everybody have multiple, multiple, multiple regionals. Most of our guys do go judge elsewhere within the circuits obviously, but we try to keep it lean enough that our roster can be managed in a room, get as much exposure as they can throughout the regional process, but that we can functionally afford to still have the hands on. That hands-on weekend is not only motivational, but just the information shared by being in the same room with those bright minds. You just can't replace it.

I: What are your core beliefs about WGI that guide you in your current role within the activity?

P: I'm kind of lock-step with a lot of the purpose and values and mission statements that WGI puts forth. The all-inclusiveness; certainly from a creative process. I think it's the perfect marriage, I don't think I've ever actually verbalize this or been asked to verbalize this, but I think it is the perfect marriage of careful educational curriculum and guidance yet also having the creative motivation to bring forth that which has never been done. At least in my capacity, a judge is responsible for adjudicating both ends of the spectrum, and we're responsible for bringing young staffs and young students that far along the learning curve that they are in the very most basic stages just barely experiencing and discovering, but then turn around and immediately be trusted to provide input but also make competitive scoring decisions at the very highest level of the activity that is truly

creating art. Just the way the 21st century, and the access to technology and such, WGI is on the cutting edge of all that is being implemented in all forms of art. The groups are pushing that forward still motivated by the basic nature of creating music, but the programs they are putting together could be influenced by so many other areas of the arts, and so easily. So, what I love about WGI is that it's that full spectrum. We are, as judges, sometimes responsible to be the teacher role because there are still students and designers that are just barely experiencing and discovering not only playing an instrument and putting it together into a program to the very other end of the spectrum where it rivals professional productions, and it's only a function of touring and those types of other platforms. Our platform is competitive process on Saturdays and Sundays, but it rivals any other professional genre that is out earning money. I think money is one of the guiding determinants as far as where groups can go. Things obviously do cost and things have a cost. But, through sponsorship, that's a whole other behind-the-curtain world that all of the industries that provide instruments and provide technology and provide uniforms, how much those industries have exploded, they turn those profits back and sponsor groups just to let the creators do what they do. So, as a judge we are responsible for the most basic kid just learning how to hold sticks to the very most advanced people who are basically professional and could go make a living doing it. So, I think that's what excites me.

I: What are the outcomes you desire for participants in the WGI activity, and how have these evolved over time?

P: This would parallel a lot of other marching arts and pageantry arts. Committing to a process, making sacrifices, to having a focus, having dedication, and seeing it paying off when it comes to a reciprocal relationship with an audience when you're actually out there performing. My favorite part of world championships is during retreat when you see the groups line up and the kids are crying when they receive even just a medal. That type of reward because we all know the sacrifices, how many times those kids got up at 3 o'clock in the morning to do what they have to do to get where they have to be to raise the money. It's putting a lot of their energy, a lot of their dedication, a lot of their sacrifices behind the opportunity, the hopes and opportunity to perform in front of an audience. I'm responsible for something that's so detached from that, but to see that relationship is a function of who I am and how I am. I think that's the most that I get out of it. We always say it's for the kids, but I don't take that lightly. Seeing the genuine excitement of the kids is where the path is for me.

I: Can you expound on the comment you made earlier about seeing students overseas having similar experiences to those of student in the US with regard to WGI?

P: I've been all over the world if your just looking at the major darts like western Europe, asia, south Africa, and seen all those kids. The kids are all the same. They all have the same excitement. They all have the same enthusiasm. What's made all this happen obviously is the internet, and these kids can see and they can get on YouTube and watch videos of everything that happens domestically. That's why there are a lot of opportunities for American designers and instructors and judges to travel, because they

look here for the guidance. But, as I traveled to all these places, in each of those regions and even micro inside of those regions there are different parameters they deal with. We have, by and large, strong curriculums here in the United States. A lot of countries don't. There only opportunity is through a church group, or it's government sponsored, or it's some impresario that through his money at a neighborhood and the kids get together. That shows up in the equipment that they have, the teaching that they have. A lot of their teaching just comes by rote. They watch YouTube, they watch online. They'll hire American designers to write shows for them. It depends on where else you are in the world. Most know what WGI is certainly, and they've tried to galvanize groups around those principles, those philosophies, those purposes, those values. But, down to the micro student, you go into a gym they are all sitting around just like you would go to a band show and they're all sitting together. Kids are playing on pads, kids are laughing, kids are going out and getting food. Remarkably similar, remarkable similar. They just love the experience. By and large, they don't care whether they win or lose. They just want to be part of this presentation that is watching the audience get excited.

I: Is there anything else you would like to add?

P: I'm extraordinarily proud to be involved and I'm extraordinarily proud of what gets done. Even in my position where I feel like I'm part of a lot of decision-making conversations, there's a world above us; the board of directors and the visionaries that look ten years ahead to see where things are. Specifically WGI, but of course this would count for marching band, certainly into the DCI scene and all that, there's so many

students involved. It is such a proven commodity with the audiences and with the reaction it creates. I would love to see it have even more access. I think that's where my vision would be. I would love to be independently, extraordinarily wealthy and pull a team of investors together and build the perfect arena right in the middle of the country with like 15,000 seats that are perfectly acoustically treated on the concert side. The perfect flow, just a perfect venue. That dream is not going to die Jeremy, by the way. Mark my words. I would love to see it happen 10 years from now. But, anyway, I think the students deserve that, and I think it's one of the things we constantly struggle with. Just making sure that the arenas feel like the experience that it deserves for all the time that gets put in. I'm a huge advocate and ambassador for the activity. I think it's worth every ounce of effort to give these kids the opportunity and exposure to do it. I know kids run upstairs, grab the drumsticks, sit on the drum pad without any guidance and they'll sit there for four hours a night. And, even if they're practicing wrong, they're still that excited about it that they're doing it. So, that says something. Those stories are repeated over and over. The sponsors are great. There's a lot of money being thrown at the activity. I think the activity is in great hands guidance wise at the top. I know if you were looking at the 3 seasons, obviously DCI has the summer, BOA has the fall, and WGI has spring. Everybody understands that everybody is in this together. Even down to like the copyright considerations, and the challenges that each goes forth with. So, that is a really great relationship with all three of those to make it a year-round consideration. Things are going very well. I think we're at the point now where it's exploding so much that the challenge is accommodating it. So, now not only are we trying to accommodate in the next 3-5 years, but if this keeps going 10 years from now what are we going to do?

I think the visionaries and the people that can make those decisions and geographically and money and financing, all those wheels are turning. This isn't slowing down. This has been happening for a long time. It survived the 2008, 9, 10, 11 mess. Financially, if there were two districts that couldn't do a group, there were 8 more that did. It is one of those that just keeps coming. And again, because of the accessibility, because they can see it online, the kids can see it online, the kids have access to it, it's going to keep going.

I: Because of the exponential growth of the activity what do you think is its influence on instrumental education?

P: I do have a unique perspective since WGI now has the winds division. I was on the steering committee that first formulated, and then eventually launched, and then eventually implemented the WGI winds division. So, I was privy to a lot of those conversations and had that insight. What fueled a lot of it was looking into percussion, what the WGI percussion activity has done to curriculum based, even non-competing schools, I don't know that it can be quantified. I would love to sit down with 100 college studio professors that have been here and have been in their roles from, say, the late 90's until now to see the quality of the student, to see the accessibility to the instrument, to see just the sheer proliferation not only of numbers but of talent and quality. It has to be in the 4-digit percentile, percent growth. I would trace that back directly to WGI because it is something that can be done so easily as far as having a high school group. There bad teaching everywhere of course, so it's not just a function of all the kids being together Wednesday night. But, if you have an indoor percussion ensemble, whether they move

or not, and those kids get to stand behind that marimba for another 8 hours a week that they wouldn't have otherwise, how is that not good? How do those kids not get better? And, out of those 8 keyboard players, even if only 3 of them get super-motivated to stick with it even beyond high school, those kids really embrace it, and that student that enters college into a studio compared to a student twenty years ago where their high school didn't even have a marimba, and their coming from a high school that had six, and one 5-octave and one bass-only marimba that doesn't even get used except for, like, concerts. The proliferation is staggering. There are high school groups doing now what college ensembles twenty years ago, there might have been one or two, weren't doing. It's absolutely undeniable that there is a direct correlation between the influence of WGI and all those students that are involved to then being headed off to better professors at better colleges and those ensembles flourishing. I challenge anybody one-on-one with that. So, where we are with WGI winds, that was part of the motivation behind that, part of the thought process behind that was: why wouldn't that model work with winds as well? Why wouldn't you want Jimmy or Sallie to have another 4 hours a week playing their clarinet? Why is that a bad thing? The concern was that it's going to mess up their embouchure. It's going to mess up how they approach their instrument. It never did with percussion. They actually got better. Again, to say the activity, to have to move and play at the same time is... That's why I offered it. Like I said, there's bad teaching everywhere. There are people on the podium that shouldn't be on the podium. So, that's happening. So, why should you immediately assume that just because a student is responsible for any physical or visual activities that it's going to make them a worse clarinet player? I would still say playing long tones on Wednesday night for 20 minutes

and having F in their ear, and then taking that out on the floor, that's going to be better than if they went home and played video games. So, even if it doesn't turn around in a year or two, maybe 8 years from now, does that make Jimmy more excited about playing his saxophone? Don't we want those kids excited about music?

“Bill”

October 22, 2018

I: Can you tell me your age?

P: 42

I: Do you work in the capacity as a professional music educator? In the sense that you have a degree in that field and are employed by an educational institution?

P: I do not have a degree in that field, but I am employed by a high school.

I: What have you experienced in terms of WGI?

P: Growth would be the first word. Excitement. Creative expansion of a lot of things, but for me initially as a marching member back in 95 to 99 I witnessed it going from indoor drum line and wearing shakos and band uniforms to being more theatrical, more costume oriented to being having floors painted versus just marching on the gym floor and using the basketball markings and stuff like that as places to march on. So, the evolution in general of creating a set design and really kind of creating what's important along with that which is quality. You know people want quality. I think over time people, we're so inundated with this technology around us and everything is so synthetic, I think over time people have just sort of gravitated toward it just being better. Doing less percussion

ensemble music was one thing, people do a lot more original music now versus published music back in the day, it was just a lot easier to get a hold of that kind and re-orchestrate it. There's a lot of things that have gone on, organizationally I think WGI offers a lot of great things and they market themselves better to students and they're real helpful towards designers and things like that. They're more educational I think than they used to be just because it was new and everybody was kind of getting into it and now I think their community outreach is much deeper than what it was for sure.

I: You were talking about the synthetic nature of where things have evolved to. Where do you think that influence has come from? What do you think has lead towards people moving in that direction?

P: I think what's hip is hip and you know people listen to stuff on the radio and it's produced, it sounds great, and it's easier to do once the technology became more accessible. Like, when rules change, boundaries are broken and now all of a sudden we've got this tool of electronics to provide this element that provides more of a universal experience to the layman. Like it breaks the barrier of "oh this is rinky tink percussion ensemble music" and all of a sudden now we've got this really integrated electronics portion of the show that kind of fills up the space a little bit and like I said kind of gives the layman's ear an opportunity to be involved because it's recognizable to what they hear on your local radio station. Also, I think, in my experience, that people have been able to produce at a level that they see things being produced around them in their normal environment. A car commercial, music you hear on the radio. The

production value over the last 20 years in our everyday lives has risen to these synthetic values, and I think that really pushed people on the design level to kind of adhere to that.

I: Do you think that potential plays a role for contributing to the growth of the activity in terms of maybe it's more relevant?

P: I mean yes. Just because there's more indoor drum line doesn't necessarily mean that music education didn't exist back then. I just think the outlet has become more mainstream and there's less old school band directors. I think it's a generational thing, as more people get out of positions of power and more people that are more progressive become available to make those decisions is when things evolve. But even then I think a lot of it has to do with the fresh factor. You can do your set design really cool, you can get drum wraps, you can have cool electronics stuff, you can have just two or three people in the ensemble that do nothing but push buttons and make noises. Like the whole aspect of how it's perceived is different I think.

I: In terms of experiencing WGI, do you think in your experience has there been a social component? Away from the music and the performance part, is there a social aspect that you think is significant?

P: Yeah I think it's huge. I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing now if there wasn't that social aspect of it. I, for me personally, in Mystique, my involvement with the organization there, the staff, everything we did outside of it, the group of friends, it was

energizing and it was an outlet for me to be creative when I wasn't really able. I just wasn't getting that from college. To be able to kind of have that hands-on, instant results approach for me. For me personally I like to, I remember at the time I did a lot of free stuff so I had a lot of leeway to make mistakes away from people so when I was able to do the stuff that was important I already had enough experience kind of out of the way.

I: Doing what you do, I would say there are a lot of relationships that exist within that activity because of your participation.

P: I would say 100%. 100% of my friends and all of my best friends are in the activity no doubt. Because when you're being creative with things and you're having to have hands on experience with a lot with things, it's better to have personal relationships with people that you feel can either finish your sentence for you or you finish it for them. I'm talking about working relationships but all those working relationships are that way because we're also friends. I think it definitely cultivates a lot of great experiences with all my friends. I can only say within the last five years that I've found a hobby outside of marching band where I've started to like meet other people within my wheelhouse which is great, but that just goes to show you my life has been nothing but that. And they've all been great people which is also shown that the people I've met outside of this, it just means I've been sheltered a lot by good people. I've always surrounded myself with good people and here recently it's like "man, the world is not as friendly as I think it is."

I: When you look at where you were in the early days of this when you were a performing member and you were just coming into it and then you look at those people who are just now joining the activity what are your thoughts on that?

P: I have often thought about that because at Mystique we're going on our 25th year now and the people that are marching in Mystique weren't even born the first couple years you know meaning that the experience has changed; however, every audition process I still have that connection, it's the same feeling, it just feels like yesterday. You know being around all these years is what makes it feel like that I guess? I think the biggest difference is there's more pressure than when I was doing it, you know back in the day it was like can you show up - do you have two sticks? And the staff was able to build something. Now, Mystique has just this aura when these members are showing up, they know the responsibility, they know what's expected, they've seen the organization. Where in my time we were in it, we were kind of creating that vibe that is kind of what it is now. But now there's an expectation over 20 years even past then you know it's just created by all these other members that's just to me... The pressure I can't imagine. It's definitely far superior than what it was when I did it for sure.

I: Do you think that with the technological advancements and with the design advancements and all that, does it make it harder to jump in now than it did to begin with?

P: No, I would say because even then it's like if you can do it, you can do it. So now the activity is that's what's expected, all these high school groups are that, they're just mini independent groups. Like they're trying to mimic what's going on there all over the country and everybody's got their own vibe, but there's still a much more produced quality than what it was back then even in high school. Playing and visual. I think just the expectation and training is already going on in high school so if they wanted to do something in the independent world, they've already got their feet in the water. Just like I did 20 years ago but my experience was in high school or whatever was very similar to what Mystique was but better.

I: What are your core beliefs about WGI that guide you in your current role in the activity?

P: Well, competition number one, that's why we do what we do. Number two is providing the experience for the members because ultimately, I mean, Mystique sent me in a direction that enabled me to have a life that I would never regret. Right? So, my experience going back to that in Mystique is even when it was my first year on staff, my soul purpose is just to give back the same experience that the staff gave me, but better. Right? I mean ultimately that's what you want to do. And so, I think for me personally what lies with WGI is just caretaker almost. I like the way that WGI is like this conglomerate of people that really, they do care, it is a business, but they do care about the experience of the members. You know whether it's judge training or experience at regionals or making sure that we're not in rinky-dink gyms and they're moving things up,

so they're always trying to enable the experience of the performer. And of course, they've got the advisory board which enables designers to open parameters on things if they want to. So, for me, I like that aspect of it, I don't indulge myself with the advisory board anymore because I just I don't care. I'll play by whatever rules are out there, but I think the avenue of having that creative outlet for me and WGI is probably the most connecting point I guess for me.

I: Do you view the activity as being restricted only to what we normally think of as WGI, rather it's regionals or world championships, or do you think it has potential for moving outside those walls in terms of being able to have an impact beyond the boundaries of the organization as it sits now? From an entertainment standpoint.

P: You mean like put it on ESPN sports or something like that?

I: Yeah, I mean like do you think it has the potential to continue to move in terms of relevance beyond the band world so to speak?

P: I can tell you if they've got cheerleading and dance team stuff going on then, yes. You know what I'm saying, if that's like an ESPN channel and they are showing badminton or curling or whatever, then the answer is yes. I think it's a marketing thing. I think like for instance this past year, I watched a lot of groups in WGI throughout the season, but the scholastic world that I saw, top six they're all great. You know, entertaining. The show like Darmuth, who wouldn't pay money to see that - The Laymuth? You know, sure, If I

was watching tv and I saw that as I'm flipping through I'd probably stop and keep watching it, I'd be curious. What is this? I'll reference DCI. Man, DCI to me, God smacked the hell out of everybody as far as their quality top to bottom, which is good, but you can totally 100% see that means you've got influence in DCI. And it's great, you know. I'm not going to be a naysayer and be like oh quit swinging off WGI's back or whatever, but you also notice that a lot of these designs are coming from more percussion-oriented people that are leading the creative side on these things and I think there's an underlying tone there about pacing and effect and what is considered "entertainment." I think that drummers inherently know what's more entertaining. Yeah- we just typically do as far as like creating effect, we're not caught up in the nuance of trying to create cool melody sometimes, we just want to do cool tricks. You know what I'm saying? So, I think inherently the smarter people combine the best of both worlds and understand how to get that visceral reaction. Now I think top to bottom WGI is getting to a better point to where the quality is worth watching something 15 groups back, 15 groups deep. In my opinion, this is my opinion, I would do away with A class at WGI. Now, it has pros and cons. OK? Pros is - it opens up more time for better quality groups to show up because at this point in time there's only so many facilities. WGI is going to keep growing. So (A) Do we keep having these groups here or Do we just cater to the better quality groups? Now all of a sudden we can get maybe TV to come in because the groups are much better quality and there's more of them and it's more entertaining, right? Still have A class at the regionals, you know, have that be their ending show or whatever; but just keep WGI championships open at Worlds. Now the cons of that is you're not going to get the A class kids to see the Artist EC's, Rhythm X's, The Pulse's, The

Mystique's at finals so they're not going to be able to have that growth. So, it has its merits and unmerits I guess but yeah. It could go in a lot of different directions. I think Flo Marching is doing a really good job as far as like, what they do in their space, but I didn't really realize what Flo Marching was until last year when I started looking at it and they do like everything. They do like high school wrestling, volleyball, I mean they just have so many things going on in different places which is really cool, I just don't know how DCI stands out in that. It's like you only know what you know. It even goes back to say you're in high school band and you're doing it up, I mean who's coming to see you? Your neighbors, or your mom and your Pop and your grandmother that like loves you and knows you and she's coming there to see you. Like you only know what you know and what your connection is to. So, I think it still, that is as relevant now as it was back then because the media that's out there I don't think means anything. I think, you know social media is like spreading things out to their friends, people can get things out to their friends quicker, you can kind of get the activity out there, but as far as putting butts in the seats somewhere, people are going to have to care a little bit more. It's an activity of passion and I think you're gonna have to have that to come watch it.

I: What are the outcomes that you desire for participants in WGI? And how has that evolved over time?

P: I think WGI is such a different outlet than anything any kid can do, you know through college or what not. Just like a performance outlet, especially through WGI finals. And crowds are like 20 times bigger than they were when I did it. But to be able to have like

360 arena around them and to be able to feel that energy, to me that far exceeds anything I would expect. But I think ultimately that they have that same experience that drove me the passion to do what I do, you know. But I don't want too many of them doing what I do, I don't want them to leave the activity yet. But just to kind of have that same type of passion is really what I think they should experience.

I: What are your thoughts on those people that view WGI as just about competition or a trophy chase. What would be your response to them?

P: I would say they're partly right, I mean you know they're not wrong but they're also missing out on the part that drives that which is ingenuity, you know the part behind the scenes that pushes somebody to outdo somebody else. And don't get me wrong, it's all very friendly competition with all our peeps and what not. There's no animosity like maybe some other parts or the color guard. It's fun. Everybody applauds each other for like damn that's pretty witty, that's good. You know there's no heat like that on the back end. But I think the creativity part is a part that can ultimately always grow.

I: In your answer you were definitely implying that within the activity despite the competition, it sounds like from your experience there's also a lot of camaraderie within that.....

P: Yeah there's definitely a lot of camaraderie, but like for me the reason why creativity drives the competition is just because that's really the driving force. If there was no

trophy at the end or bragging rights or anything like that everybody would just show up, stand still and play eight on a hand, you know and kind of be done with it. Maybe move around a little bit or be a PAS type drum line. But I think the fact that every year they're opening new roles and people have new ideas and directions about how they see things go and then that obviously opens up more evolutions of ideas and more tools in the shed basically, you know, to build your product. So, I don't know, competition, even in business, competition drives products, right? It's going to make the Apple phone that you probably have or Droid or whatever is that reason because there was an evolution of phones that drove it to that point, it was like you know it's got to be better. But if everybody had the same old push button phone you know somewhere that would suck. Everybody wants options. I don't know. Also, I think people that say that with seething tone about it's just a competition for trophies, I think are the people that can't do it. So, I think for me, that's where that tone may come from, or jealousy or whatever reason. I know that I cannot put a drum line together in the summer that's going to beat a "Collin McNutt" drum line you know what I'm saying? But I don't hate those guys or I don't think Paul Renicon's thinking oh they're just chasing a trophy. I'm thinking man those dudes have got it figured out, you know it's great. So, I don't know, I kind of... It IS a competition, I'll just end it with that.

I: Your area has been focused in the profession so out of it. Take away the design, take away the competition, take with audiences and all that. Do you think there's something about that drumming experience with a group that just draws people in?

P: 100%, it's tribal. It's in your nature, it's, like the first language spoken was beating rock on another rock and creating rhythm and you know what I'm saying as a way of communication so like the Civil War they're calling out commands on drums because they can feel it, they can hear it from a distance. Rhythms, we recognize rhythms every day in our speech tone and things just around, you recognize space, like the normal layman is what I'm talking about. So, drums I think is something that brings people together rhythmically and kind of gives them more synergistic connection with people. Because the margin of error when you're playing on a snare drum and quads and full front ensemble with like 40 people is like nonexistent. So, to have that many people dialed in on such a zero margin of error is like I don't think there's a much bigger high than that. To be able to do that kind of thing. Now, and the reason why I started to realize some of this rhythmic connections to people, I mean obviously you go back to Africa and you see them drumming on things and it's part of their culture, right? Well 2005 culture New Orleans I was in a Bucket drumming group, we did it for like 10 years or something like that and we traveled around and New Orleans was like we did Mardi Gras several years in a row and the thing I realized it was, we were all Mystique drummers so we had like this 45 minute set that was choreographed and about 40% of it was like [drum talk drum talk] but the moment we hit one of the big open cheesy beats that we can play in our sleep or whatever everybody started shucking and jiving and got into it. But the moment you went into some [drum talk drum talk] type stuff it was just like their head stopped moving and they were kind of like waiting and then all of a sudden....boom they're in. So that right there just made me realize back then when I started writing a lot, what connects people to music? Is it a bunch of busy stuff or is it something that's open,

that's readable, that's digestible, that has some space to it that just a common layman can kind of gravitate towards? So, I think there's something behind all that.

I: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

P: That people in this activity, if they were doing another job to make a whole lot more money. So I'll just say that. If people were producers on things or whether it's TV shows or writers for certain things or even there's some great composers in this activity that could be writing for movies or TV shows or that kind of thing. You know like the opportunities and the skill sets that people have here don't always line up and I think that a lot of people do this out of passion. But I think some people are starting to realize that there's a much bigger dollar bill to be chasing out there than what's going on. But as far as like the talent goes, I think that's what it is, like it's a hidden gem of creative arts and people that are driven by holistic ideas, not necessarily by the Almighty dollar by any means, you know, you got to eat right?

I: I did want to ask you this question too, for the participants and the performers on the floor, do you think that what people get out of this translates beyond the activity and into other careers and other experiences outside of WGI and music?

P: Oh heck yeah, 100% without a doubt. Oh yeah man, I've got guys that I marched with Drum Corps and things like that, they're all in like executive positions in tech places and some places around Nashville and stuff like that too and every one of them they just

carryover the same work ethic. To me it's the problem-solving skills - to me that's the hugest contribution that I think Drum Corps can make, rather it's problem solving skills and how do I eat lunch-you know drum Corps situation-how do I eat lunch, call my mom and practice this all within 45 minutes to an hour? You know those are the type things where it's just every day decision making and WGI is I've got to be able to manage my schoolwork while I'm trying to learn this music because we've got a show coming up. And I think there's like that level of pressure and responsibility that they get put on them and I think stress man to be honest with you. I think stress, if you don't experience stress enough that when you do experience it, it's more impactful to you. So, I think the more that people experience stress, whether it's in rehearsal situations or in performance-just in general just anxiety of that and just the pressure of making sure your executing right. I think all of that pertains over to like group team effort stuff whether you work at Taco Bell or some tech company or something.

“Luke”

August 26, 2018

I: Could you please tell me your age?

P: I am 52 years old.

I: And as I recall you are a professional music educator in the sense that you are employed in a school district teaching instrumental music education, is that correct?

P: That is correct.

I: What have you experienced in terms of WGI?

P: Well WGI is an organization that really promotes the performance of the pageantry arts, and I believe they do it as well if not better than anyone in the sense that the winds division, the percussion division, and the guard division, which is the oldest of them, I find that the philosophy of WGI is to not only promote these activities but also how these activities, the philosophies, the teaching behind them, go into growing and developing the person as a whole far beyond their WGI Winds years or percussion or guard. We can say the same thing about our school programs about becoming lifelong learners and independent and things of that nature. I think that WGI is a great way for that to occur with all the members. WGI has so many opportunities for young performers to get

experience performing and learning music and choreography outside of the classroom; the traditional school environment. My experience with WGI has been extremely positive going all the way back to the mid-80s watching guards. I'm a big fan of the guard division because I can't do any of it and when I see the choreography, the eye, hand, and motor skills it's just unbelievable they can do as independent performers. Then that expanded to percussion in the early 90s, and now we're in the winds division. I have experienced the joy of performers. I have experienced how the adults involved with WGI, how they support every group and every individual. I've witnessed WGI and its representatives educate the performers, and I'm really thrilled with how WGI promotes the uniqueness and diversity of each and every group. I find their philosophy to be so refreshing and so modern day. Especially with where we are in 2018 with our society and cultural change and certain sensitivities, I feel like WGI does a great job of promoting and embracing every single person, belief, and philosophy. It's just really great and I really think that they really work very hard to make sure that every group is highly proficient as it can be with regard to the performers and instructors. The competition aspects are very, very, very helpful. I think that it sometimes gets some people motivated to participate. But, I think the underlying reasons that I already mentioned make it more of a family atmosphere for many of the groups. They provide great leadership to all the groups and all their participants, and I think that is basically in a nutshell my experience with WGI, both as a young adult watching in awe of all the performers and what they do, and now as an individual who works for WGI as well.

I: Can I just ask what roles have you played in the WGI activity?

P: Well, my experience in their employment basically started in 2015 where I judged for them in the inaugural season of WGI Winds, and for the first two years. Since then I have been the Chief Judge or judge administrator for the winds division.

I: Could you describe what your view is of the judging experience within WGI?

P: Sure. Part of that responsibility is to educate the judges. That is one of my main responsibilities, and with that comes judge training. So that's where the judging experience really begins as it did for me and as it does for the judges currently employed right now. We have a Winds advisory committee which is made up of directors of the participating units, and certain levels within that committee are voted upon. We engage in conversation and collaboration to steer the activity of WGI Winds in the direction, a shared vision between the participating units and WGI itself. So, we take that process and incorporate it into our judges training for the next season. Obviously, we have a scoring system with the judging experience and we are to encourage and reward the new standards of creativity, artistry, and excellence in design and performance while providing a vehicle that will educate; educate the instructors, the performers, and also the audience. We believe that this is a very positive system rewarding successful efforts at every level and is designed to encourage all of our groups to develop and maintain and project their own styles. We have in WGI, throughout the judging experience for both we as judges and also for the participating groups to be adjudicated, we have what we call a multi-tiered system. Based on the classification that they're in, whether that is A, or

Open, or World class. There are tiers to that: the teacher, the counselor, and the critic. We believe every judge is a teacher for the beginning, novice groups and members, and that for that intermediate level, the open level, the judges are a counselor for those groups and members, and that requires the greatest patience and strongest concern and greatest amount of effort for adjudication, and for those top-tier world class groups the judging experience as we relate it to the judges and therefore that is related to the groups themselves is that you are a critic as you would be in art. A critic for the advanced groups and their members and we must challenge and encourage them to set even higher goals. And at any given time, we are sometimes moved back and forth between these roles. At the teacher level, the great teacher learns from their students, the great judge continues to learn from the instructors and performers and we encourage all of our judges to judge with their head, with their heart in a very positive and nurturing and challenging manner as they contribute to the growth and develop to this still newer and unique activity and its performers. We expect our judges to have a very high code of conduct and strong ethics, that is part of their agreement to be subcontracted employees of WGI and therefore with the personal highest standard of individual – must match that high standard of individual. And right now, that's probably the best way I can describe the judging system at this time in very general times.

I: What are your core beliefs about WGI that guide you in your current role in the activity?

P: Well, my core beliefs, let's start with me and then extend out, I think integrity has to be the number one – integrity as a person and integrity as a judge. Like for example, there are so many adjudicated contests out there, through independent, invitational marching band contests at thousands of high schools throughout the United States to national level like WGI, DCI, things like that. But the integrity of the person doing what's right for right's sake, not having any preconceived notions, that's part of integrity. I think that also has to be transferred to let's say, when you're looking at a particular caption – you have to stick with that caption in the sense that – I've been on panels out at marching band contests and I've heard judges say out loud when we've had a break between groups, "Okay, I know I want this group 5th, but how do I get them there?" and my jaw kind of drops within my own mind so to speak because what you have to do with integrity is based on the sub caption process. You allow all of the sub captions of the sheet to determine what the score is, you know one or two tenths are pretty close with just some little minor differences, three, four, five tenths are some noticeable differences and six, seven, eight nine tenths now we're talking some pretty obvious, major differences and you let sub caption dictate the process. And I see some people that do it backwards and they try to let it where they want them ranked overall on their sheet and they don't let the – so that's part of the integrity process in itself, to me anyway as a judge. That core belief – your original question is actually integrity itself and that can go from a very open, broad, general base term like what is integrity to being very specific like how do I come up with a bottom line for this group? And I think that integrity has gotta be that guides me into how I relate my role as WGI chief judge or to quote WGI: honesty, integrity, a knowledge of oneself, and beliefs and understand oneself. I think those really, really are

key essentials that we expect of everyone. But for me personally, I'm a person that if I have a hard decision to make, whether it's in a moment of judging or like if I'm doing judging assignments...how do I try to balance this if I feel like maybe one judge is stronger than another judge for this particular regional based on my evaluations of that judge. Then I'm going to find a very kind and confirming way to make that happen. And then if someone questions hey, how come I'm not doing as many assignments or how come I didn't get this one gig, I want to make sure I can answer their question with honesty, integrity and most of all affirmation. And if there are certain weaknesses to convey those to them that is still affirming and positive and not too critical. But of all of my aspects of my core beliefs that go into WGI, integrity has to be first on the list -and honesty of course – to me they're synonymous and indivisible.

I: Is it your sense that there is a sense of integrity with regard to WGI and their philosophy in terms of consistency?

P: Yes, I do. I believe that in the WGI Winds division which I know the best, and we're a smaller, newer division, so I know the people very well, some just through professional connections and some through personal connections because we're friends and we've discussed, and we've hung out and we've created relationships. But yes, I believe as what you've just said, I believe those core values, we all should and do share our philosophy of our judging process and the WGI experience for all of our performers and all of our instructors and all of our groups. I think it starts there and I think we do a pretty good job in our evaluation process in being able to discuss with judges if there's differences of

opinions, if they're apart, how do we make the criteria, get the criteria on the same page and things like that. I don't know if that answers the question or not.

I: That spoke to it....yes that consistency....from your point of view, do they just seem to be consistent when they deal with people and what their objectives seem to be for participants?

P: I think with integrity, absolutely, I can say that without hesitation or pause. I find that WGI makes decisions that they sometimes don't want to make, but they're the right ethical choices to make. For example, last year there were two Winter Guard judges that were judging two different competitions in two different parts of the country. They were texting back and forth, I'm not privy to all the details or what was in those texts, but WGI somehow was privy to that. The two judges were talking about some of the groups that they were evaluating back and forth. It could have been commentary that was detrimental, unflattering, or it could have been like, "Hey, I saw Smith High School and they were awesome, I love them, they were wonderful." It could have been anything, I'm not privy to the details. What I do know is these judges were 20+ year veterans who had very much been there a long time and were well respected and at that moment were fired because there was a perception of collusion or there was a perception of impropriety. They may have not meant to have that at all, they may not have meant to come off that way whatsoever. Maybe their conversation was innocent and maybe it was not. But what I do know is they made a decision, which from what I hear, and I am not a source, but what I've heard from people who are closer to the situation, was a painful decision for

WGI. They really admire these judges and they really enjoy them as people. But one of their policies in their book was broken, in their handbook, and they acted on it and they let them go. And they practice what they preach and they practice what's in writing. I think with regards to consistency, that's a very fluid, ever-changing criteria based on experience in the moment. For example, I think we all struggle at times with consistency. I think sometimes it's very easy. It depends on experience in the moment. Rather that moment is I want to be consistent and then you realize that maybe okay I need to adjust some of my scores because we don't always submit scores until usually a few groups or even an entire class. So, you're working on consistency to make sure your judging process is consistent. First like sub caption makes a score, okay but this group was only two tenths away and I really think there's more differences and they really should be four or five tenths away and if so, which box? I think that's part of the consistency, it's like driving a car – judging, it's the navigation of the process. Which, if you're driving a car on a newly paved road – man life is good and easy but if you're driving in Michigan you're hitting a pothole about every three seconds and so you to try and work on consistency with driving. And so, with units and with participating groups and competing groups – their consistency is based on our training in the process and so if they were at Prelims Finals and man they were on FIRE at prelims and they were great, and I had them ranked at this ordinal. Then they go out at Finals and don't do very good, but you know what they're capable of – you can't do that! You have to judge them as you see them now. I think that just for the purpose of your dissertation, I think that some of the other groups of pageantry arts, I think there are plenty of groups that struggle with that consistency if there's like a two or three-day process of adjudication and I've seen groups

in the last night but still get the exact same ranking and ordinal and scoring they got the day before and it seems very clear they aren't even in that ball park. So, we work very hard to make sure that we explain to our judges on the microlevel of consistency within adjudication for that moment, that time, in that show and let no other viewing, even if that viewing was two hours ago, don't let it affect what you are seeing and doing now. And at recaps you can see that there are definitely some ordinal placement changes and things like that even though it was the same judges both times because some of those groups had different performances than they did from their other show within a 24-hour period. So, I do think that we work very hard to be consistent in that aspect. Consistency can also extend to the critique. If you're like with a group and they've go their notebooks out and they're taking notes on what you're saying. You're an A level group and so you're giving them exact things like maybe changing this part because it's way above your heads and they're writing it down versus a group that comes in and doesn't matter what class they're in – they're very unhappy with their ranking or ordinal, they don't even care about your commentary, they're not even talking about whether it was good, bad, constructive or helpful – they just want to know why are we in third? So, sometimes groups might come in with a little emotion, they might be a little heated and so that is consistent with their approach with professionalism in the moments – rather it's easy or rather it's hard. And so, the consistency changes for every single group you see – rather it's performing or rather it's critique and so you have to have a process and a training that will allow you to be consistent in all those situations and I believe we have that in WGI.

I: What are the outcomes you desire for the participants in the WGI activity and how have those evolved overtime?

P: First and foremost, acceptance of who they are and what they do. I know that sounds – we're in a basketball arena or a gym. And here's Susie Smith – and I'm never gonna know their name and they're never gonna know mine and we're never gonna interact. But in the combined experience of the vehicle of their group and their name, the vehicle of the instructors, the vehicle of the creativity that has been designed for them, and the vehicle of WGI to create a performance venue of highly proficient and highly competitive platform, first and foremost it is my hope that every individual feels accepted. That they are appreciated. That they are applauded. That they have value in who they are. With part of that criteria being what they're doing in that moment in time on that court. So, they feel like WGI provides a venue for them to allow themselves to express at their own personal highest level. That to me is the minimum that I hope that every performer get from WGI. And on another different level or column if you will, that they feel that they have been awarded a competitive experience, an artistic experience, and that the commentary of the judges for them as performers and to their instructors is of high quality and is stated in a way that allows them to grow as individuals and a group. And if I was going to oversimplify and maybe overgeneralize, it is my hope that every performer has fun at WGI events.

I: Do you feel based on your experience that the WGI as an organization consistently strives to deliver what you were just talking about?

P: I think they do. I think that WGI has achieved that already, but I think that WGI continues to strive for the level of excellence and artistry for all of its performers and rather that's at a small regional that just started up all the way to WGI World Championships with groups from all of the country, hundreds of kids from around the country and some parts of the world. I believe that they not only strive for that, now after so many years and decades, not only do they achieve it, I think they continually strive to make sure that happens and now can refine it again. Sure, we have a nice big closing ceremony with lots of glitter and paper falling from the roof and video montages and things like that but ultimately the experience is created by the individuals and their groups. And WGI, in reflections, tries to give them a platform to allow them to be the very best selves they can be. And I believe overall that WGI is very successful in that endeavor. Whether it's professionally in the handbook or personally in meetings, when we're in meetings talking about the upcoming season, how much they stress about the enjoyment, the enjoyable experience of the students and the members on the court. They really care about that a lot, and so I find them to be very kid-centered. Very student-member-centered, and I think their ethics and their morals as an organization are wonderful, that truly go past their own personal mission statement. I figure if I did not want to be involved with WGI, they would live without me and I would live without them. But I am honored to be a part of that organization in a small way, and I really believe in the organization, which is just a big thumbs-up in my book.

I: Do you have children?

P: Yes, I have 3 children.

I: Is the WGI experience something you would be comfortable letting your children be a part of?

P: Without hesitation, yes and for short time my older two children, who are now grown adults, my youngest did color guard for a while, and my middle child did percussion for a while and there were competitions involved in the WGI format, so yes, without hesitation, absolutely yes.

I: Would you say that the WGI model is centered and focused on the students themselves? And would you say the model they have could be an educational model that guides them in what they do?

P: In a nutshell, yes. With the first question, I really believe that because everything that we do just from providing the platform to the evaluation of every group and performer, it is the educational aspects and the rubrics, they're all designed to make sure their experience is not only a great experience, an educational experience, but also give them the criteria to go to the next level of their performance. With the second question, yes, absolutely, I think it provides a wonderful, educational opportunity for all performers, whether that's educational or competitive or both. Sometimes I think you can intermix

those. Yes, I really, really believe that WGI does an outstanding job at providing an educational opportunity for all of its participants.

I: What are your thoughts about the role of competition in WGI?

P: Well, I'm going to share my own individual beliefs on that. I think that the competition is secondary to the educational experience and the display of pageantry. I think the competition is the venue, but it doesn't define the venue. If you are 1st place or you are 114th, and that does exist. We can't equate the value of the person or the experience of whether they want to call it fun or whether it's just a great way of expression. The competition is just an evaluation model of assessment. It doesn't define who they are or their level of investment in the product they are performing. But I do believe that while there is a competition aspect, I believe that to be secondary to the education and pageantry of WGI.

I: Is there anything you would like to add?

P: I would like to add regarding the trophy hunt. I think that there are some people who enjoy competition. If one were to look at my resume at a job interview and they were to look at the achievements aspects, they would be like, "Wow, this guy's had a lot of success!" And you and I know that it takes a team of about 1,000 people to make any one individual successful. And nothing is ever done individually. If your band does well at competition there are a hundred students and parents to thank for that, and instructors and

things like that. And so, I do think that sometimes the competition promotes for some groups, I can't speak for every group, but for many groups it's their sense of family. From the competitive aspect of things – I'll leave names out, but I'll give you some real scenarios of feedback we've gotten from participating groups. In the fall, in marching band season, there may be in my state, there may be a national BOA finalist group, they've taken forever and decades to do what they do, and they're highly successful with tons of resources and tons of cash to help with that and all this, and I'm from about 100 miles away with about 35 kids in my band and we can't compete with that. As a group sometimes, and it's not about size, but it's sometimes about the opportunity, urban vs suburban vs. rural. But in WGI, many groups have come to us and they can go into a competition or an arena of artistic comparison and they can be in competition in the same class with that same group in the fall that has a WGI winds and they are very close and sometimes even better. And so, there is more comparing there because of the intimacy of the stage. Instead of being a giant football place or a national football team, we are kind of in a cozier theatre to some degree. And we are in a smaller venue and the experience for the audience and many of the performers can be some ways even more intimate. Where the quantity can be a "standing O" at a show, sometimes the experience of that smaller venue can have a very profound effect on performers on their artistry and their expression and sometimes that translates into the other aspects as well. And I can also say that for several groups that have given us feedback as well that WGI Winds has really helped their concert program quite a bit, many of them have worked to be consistent with their concert band approach to sound to their indoor or outdoor approach to sound in a pageantry arts division. And sometimes they even repeat some music and they'll do it in

both arenas and by doing this in the spring, they bring that same high standard and intensity back into their concert program. And they've been very happy about that. And some have even made the transition to not do a competitive marching band in the fall but do more like a pep band at the football games and do their competition in the spring. And it's also much, much – way less expensive than having a lot of tractor trailers and buses and all that stuff of groups of 150-200 and all the props and stuff. And with WGI we can do this a rental of Ryder and one school bus. So, with that being said, I do think there are aspects of WGI that can be an improvement for some groups to be an amazing experience and one they did not anticipate. The only other thing I would add is we're about ready to start our 5th year of WGI Winds and I am thrilled to see this activity grow and prosper even more, and we are very student-centered, first and foremost on their success. And success not always has to do with competition, it has to do with expression and artistry and education. I'm proud and the new Winds division, their philosophy is quite great, and they want every kid to feel like a super star and I think in many cases that really does happen, in most cases.

I: Do you think a social benefit to participating in WGI for the students, in terms of their social development?

P: I very much believe that. I think that there are a lot of groups, for example, there are groups that they may have hundreds in their group, and I'm a clarinet player and I know my clarinet section and some of my kids in my class. I'm a junior but I don't know Stevie, a freshman because we're not in the same group. I don't know a lot of people on a

smaller level. With WGI winds, and WGI in general, I think that because the teams are inherently smaller than a lot of other teams at a school, that closeness and friendship is much easier to develop. I think that WGI has embraced diversity for decades and I think in American society today we are sensitive to certain cultural and diversity issues and people across the country are accepting of that or they reject that, and many I like to believe are accepting of that. So now everything from local communicates to multimillion and billion-dollar corporations are trying different ways to promote diversity and cultural acceptance in their companies or communities. WGI did that 30 years ago and they've been doing it ever since. And I think for the umbrella of WGI, I think it provides a great social platform for whoever they are and however they self-identify.

“Kevin”

August 11, 2018

I: Can you please tell me your age?

P: I'm 42 years old.

I: Are you college graduate?

P: I am not.

I: Are you currently a professional music educator or do you work in a different field?

P: I work professionally and pageantry arts.

I: What have you experienced in terms of W G.I.?

P: My experience from WGI has been that you can make anything happen with any sort of ensemble. Just kind of from instructing and ensemble standpoint, when you play literature hey sometimes this is a challenge in Texas, I'm from Texas, if you don't have the band with the instrumentation to play the team you don't get rewarded the highest reward you can't get a wine. And in other states I think they kind of look past that. And in WGI you can make it up based on whatever you have. The wind kids being able to

play percussion before they had the winds section was a huge thing. There's a number of times that wreck kids or an extra bass drum player would be a wimpy kid. So that flexibility to make it whatever you want to just to simply participate is something that I think is really great about the activity.

I: In addition to what you are saying in terms of that aspect of it is there any non-musical or non-performance observations that you have about the people that participate in the activity?

P: I think again it kind of gives you the opportunity to play an instrument you might not be able to play. It might allow kids to go into roles that they've never been into before, like you may come from a big band that has this huge infrastructure at section leaders, sometimes when you go into the WGI part of it especially if you're a developing ensemble it allows kids to step into roles that they've never had before. This is sort of not music related are usually try to do is whoever is going to be the drum major for the marching band next is maybe the second drum major for the indoor drum line she kind of learn the processes and be able to facilitate the rehearsal and get used to the kids in a smaller group so when they wake back up to the large ensemble they could easily adapt. So a lot of people used WGI for a long time as a training mechanism, I think you can use it as a participation negative, developing leadership mechanism. Because it is so multifaceted you can adapt it to whatever you need to grow your program, it doesn't have to be a certain thing.

I: What are your core beliefs about WGI that guide you with in your current role of the activity?

P: I'm trying to think, I judged so much this winter my brain kind of. It's a bit of overlap so I'll talk about it from the judges perspective. Every group has to be isolated as their own ensemble and you have to reward them for whatever choices they are making and assist down for whatever choices they are making. Regardless if there an unusual ensemble with an unusual musical groupings they can present whatever they want to present and you have to back up as a judge and figure out does it have a sense of unity, does it have a sense of arc, are their ideas connected, regardless of what it is even if it's Surrealism to like the simple show about water, you have to give value to every ensemble as a judge. So I think that's one thing that's really cool, there's less preconceived notions because of such a wide range of expressive opportunities and musical options that make it where you have to reward almost anything. Of course it has to be formal quality, it has to be professional, it has to tie together; But it challenges the judges to how can I reward that and why should I reward that which is much different then a concert in piece.

I: Do you think, since you're talking about judging, is there anything especially unique about the judging experience within WG.I. as compared to other organizations or other activities with in the pageantry arts? Administratively or in terms of the actual judging function?

P: One thing I would say that is administratively different is WGI and makes a really aggressive effort to judge the show of the day. Like it's in the moment. Because the shows are spread out and there's not too many shows and there's not an arc to the season like in Drum Corps, A marching band there's more points of music, I think because of WGI, I think the venue might change the experience, the way the show develops might change the experience, the groups that you might see in the order might change the experience and you're in real time to react. Just like if you see Star Wars in the movie theater, it's overwhelming and if you watch it on TV, maybe it's not overwhelming. It's all real time and that's one thing that I really like about the judging aspect of WGI It's like, what is it right now and they reward it. Because there might be something in the show that's very timely now or there might be something that's pop culture driven and it connects to the audience and it gets reaction from the audience, then you go how do I reward that, because they're all laughing and that's an effect, so how do I reward that. So that's one thing that I think is really true about the WGI experience.

I: I want to take what you were talking about and connect it back to what the initial question about what you've experienced with WGI., a lot of what you were talking about is opportunities that kids have to expand their experiences. Maybe there a wind player that's playing percussion or you mentioned it could be used as a leadership development tool, a performance development tool. Those things to me as a music educator kind of raining "education", the educational part of it. What are your thoughts in terms of education and judging within WGI. Is there a connection there that you believe is very overt or is that more driven by the background of the judges themselves do you think? Or

is it more of an activity, does the judging portion of WG.I., is it specifically driven for educational reasons or performance reasons?

P: I don't know if I have a very good answer but I can kind of response towards education side of it, maybe, because they do make a very big point of kind of checking in with judges and just making sure that they are evaluating everything properly. The education part of it is, it is an educational activity and everyone is always aware of that at all times. But in that moment you have to judge it as a performance at that point. But talking about the education part, at least in my experience, I'll take off my judges hat and put on my teachers hat, and again in initial ensembles, I don't think you would be able to do this as much with an older ensemble or a world ensemble because the level is so high - you have to be very specific with your decisions. My experience with doing A groups sometimes without piece the ensemble together - I can think of a very specific situation, we had a small ensemble of two snares, to Tanners, five bases and of that main one my best player was my second bass player. Because I didn't have a kid that was good for that position, so I had to take that kid and say I really need you in this position because you're going to have the most bang for your buck because you're going to have the best player that has the hardest music and leave that section. But that passed me do you have to make some decisions the other way she kind of balance things out, there was an old sneer and Young's near and then I kind of hand selected the bass drums. I could hand select kids into certain positions knowing that they had a general musical knowledge but then I would just adapt that on top of that with percussion knowledge and I am not a percussionist. We were kind of in this ride together, like how are we going to solve this

problem? They were like I don't know how to play this and I was like I don't either so how are we going to figure this out? And to see the kids kind of raised into this, now the level has to be designed to their level but you can kind of lay out all the pieces to get the most out of the kids. The kids just have to be fair minded like you have to be fair minded. I think if you're really really realistic, they can be realistic and suddenly the ensemble is in the best position to kind of be successful and have a successful season. Because it's an ensemble that you can make it whatever size you want, that's the thing, like a marching band I don't know that you can do that ever. Maybe Wintergard if you were doing a smaller guard, maybe I would say you can but I think you can pick your battles to make your kids look as good as they can be, but everybody has to be honest in that moment.

I: With WGI we talk about the three tiered system, do you think with in terms of the ability to be successful, at the level where you currently are, do you feel like WGI is perhaps more successful for that then maybe some of the other marching arts? Is it possible for a group to experience success with WGI that might have difficulty experiencing competitive success in other marching arts?

P: Yes, very specific. I do you a school called Homer Hannah from Brownsville Texas and I think the last two times they went up they were seventh in world class and I want to say the school is 99% free and reduced lunch and they serve all free meals for the whole district. I don't think they would be able to do as well with a larger ensemble situation. But because it's a smaller ensemble and because you're comparing 20 and 30 kids to each other they can then be more competitive. I don't know if they would be able to do

that with marching band because when you have more kids you have to have more money and that gets to a much bigger challenge. But those kids were very successful.

I: What are the outcome is that you desire for those who are performing participants in the WGI activity and how have those desires changed over time? What is it that you want the performers to get out of participating in WGI?

P: I'm going to have to kind of flip this just slightly. What I think is great for performers is the first time those kids get to go to WGI because when you watch it on the video they're such a disconnect, it's like this amazing person that is old and much better than me, but when you get the kids to sit in that arena and they see that kids the same age as me, that kid is awesome - if that kid is 16 and I'm 16, I can do that. Because you see their faces and specifically the percussion part of it just because I am more familiar with that, it's more physical and they can look at them and go I can do that. I've had ensembles were earlier in their careers I got to go to WGI and then there was a huge leap the next year because they were just able to have that look in the mirror moment like oh I can do that too. And I don't know if marching band is that way because there's so much further away and the corps kids are so much older there's a bit of a disconnect But WGI, especially scholastic, you get to look in that mirror and it's cool.

I: Judging right now, are you judging in the circuits or are you also judging on one of the WGI panels?

P: I keep not being to be on a WGI panel because I have a group that goes so whenever a group goes my name has to come off the list. So it's come off the last three seasons because I have a group, I have a group. So I do you a lots of circuits all over the country, Midwest, and West Coast mostly.

I: So other than that, the work you're doing is mostly design work?

P: Yes primarily. The drill design, marching band design, program design for marching band and then the same thing for percussion.

I: Is there anything you'd like to add?

Alone it's a great, unique experience that can get a lot of kids involved and I think the physicality part of it is a really healthy part of it because, you know, we need to burn energy and be physical in our lives. And that attachment a physical to music, I think sometimes is a little over looked in music education as being not music education but I think it's a great way of getting more people to participate.

P: And the fact that you specifically used music education, do you think that, is it possible in your mind that WGI has a place in school based music education and has the ability to positively influence that beyond that specific activity itself? In terms of beyond indoor it's self is there a place for WGI to positively impact music education?

I: I can only speak for my experiences with van Reims across the country, the southeast in Texas, but band room is the place that everybody can come too, band room is the safe place, where everybody's involved. And if you need to talk to the band director or you need to talk to your friends, it's a very safe place and I think if you've attached that to thinking about including WGI, it gets more people kind of in the pool. It's more of a safe place. And we can expand and branch out to include more because color guards, a lot of them now, in the "old days", you had to be in the band to be in the colorguard are a lot of programs and then that slowly went away so that allowed more colorguard people to come in that were maybe dance people. So maybe a school doesn't have a dance teacher but now they have a colorguard. So maybe a school doesn't have a percussion ensemble but maybe you get when kids to do WGI so then they cannot do percussion ensemble, it just expand your reach and expand your opportunity to get more kids involved.

APPENDIX D IRB APPROVAL LETTER



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

118 College Drive #5147 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

Phone: 601.266.5997 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | www.usm.edu/research/institutional.review.board

NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.
Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 18062903

PROJECT TITLE: Participation in Winter Guard International as Experienced by Ten Stakeholders: A Phenomenological Study

PROJECT TYPE: Doctoral Dissertation

RESEARCHER(S): Jeremy Morgan

COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Arts and Sciences

DEPARTMENT: School of Music

FUNDING AGENCY/SPONSOR: N/A

IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Exempt Review Approval

PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 08/07/2018 to 08/06/2019

Edward L. Goshorn, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board

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