

IDENTITY FORMATION AND WELL-BEING IN LGBT COMMUNITY BANDS

by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study was to determine what relationships exist, if any, between psychological well-being, psychosocial well-being, internalized homonegativity (IH), and LGBT community band participation, as well as to holistically investigate these constructs, with identity formation, through participant experiences. Participant responses to survey data ($N = 100$) were analyzed via Pearson correlation. Significant relationships emerged between psychological and psychosocial well-being ($r^2 = .12$), as well as between psychological well-being and IH ($r^2 = .05$) at both the $p < .01$ and $p < .05$ levels, respectively. No significant relationships were found between any of the constructs with years of participation, or between psychosocial well-being and IH. Following survey data collection, interviews of select participants ($N = 10$) revealed five unique findings. This study has implications in developing methods for supporting the general well-being and identity development of LGBT students via music curriculum/community visibility and adaption.

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I would like to dedicate this study to my grandmother, Rita Eubanks-Matthews. In life, you helped foster in me a love for reading, poetry, and art, which are integral parts of who I am today. Below is a poem you shared with me before your passing:

*I read of a man who stood to speak at the funeral of a friend.
He referred to the dates on the tombstone from the beginning... to the end.*

*He noted that first came the date of birth and spoke of the following date with tears,
but he said what mattered most of all was the dash between those years.*

*For that dash represents all the time they spent alive on earth
and now only those who loved them know what that little line is worth.*

*For it matters not, how much we own, the cars... the house... the cash.
What matters is how we live and love and how we spend our dash.*

*So think about this long and hard; are there things you'd like to change?
For you never know how much time is left that still can be rearranged.*

*To be less quick to anger and show appreciation more
and love the people in our lives like we've never loved before.*

*If we treat each other with respect and more often wear a smile...
remembering that this special dash might only last a little while.*

*So when your eulogy is being read, with your life's actions to rehash,
would you be proud of the things they say about how you lived your dash?*

--Linda Ellis

We love you, Grandma Rita. Rest in peace.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Researchers have investigated LGBT identity formation and well-being across a number of contexts, finding that psychological and psychosocial issues, particularly as they relate to internalized homonegativity¹ and homosexual identity formation, have been heavily correlated with substance abuse and other high-risk behaviors in LGBT² populations (Cabaj, 2000). Historically, gay bars and nightclubs have served as venues for LGBT individuals to seek social support from other LGBT people, and to navigate their own identity formations (e.g., “coming out”) (McKirnan & Peterson, 1989). However, these venues have been shown to contribute to disproportionate rates of substance abuse and high-risk sexual behaviors plaguing the gay community (Greenwood et al., 2001). According to this research, abuse behaviors are often normalized in LGBT culture, which result in these venues functioning as a primary mode of socialization in the LGBT community. Often, these substance abuse behaviors function as coping mechanisms which inherently exacerbate the abuse and related psychological distresses (Cabaj, 2000), including depression, anxiety, internalized stigma, and high-risk sexual behaviors.

These distresses are themselves also associated with LGBT minority stress.

Minority stress is any stress that is associated with an individual’s minority status within

¹ As per Mayfield (2001), and Berghe, Dewaele, Cox, and Vincke (2010), the term “homonegativity” will be used throughout this manuscript in place of “homophobia” due to the latter term’s heteronormative connotations.

² The extant literature in this area focuses primarily on lesbian, gay, and/or bisexual individuals. For the purposes of this research, the acronym will be extended to LGBT in order to more appropriately address the participants of this study, as “LGBT” is the acronym cited in the mission statement of the Lesbian Gay Bands Association (LGBA).

a given society (Meyer, 2003) (e.g., women in certain professional settings, ethnic minorities in certain communities, etc.). In the context of the LGBT community, LGBT individuals may experience stress derived from perceived social stigma, discrimination, and other factors related to acculturation and day-to-day prejudicial experience within a predominantly heteronormative society. For lesbian and gay individuals, research has shown that the foundational stages of identity formation are strongly correlated with measures of psychological stress and perceived social stigma (Fingerhut, Peplau, and Gable, 2010); these findings also suggest that a sense of belonging to one's minority community has great influence on an individual minority's psychological well-being, and reactivity to stressors associated with belonging to that group. Further, Meyer (2003) posits that, "minority status is associated not only with stress but also with important resources such as group solidarity and cohesiveness that protect minority members from the adverse mental health effects of minority stress" (p. 6).

Social support, or connection to other LGBT individuals, is an integral part of an LGBT person's formative identity development process, which influences and interacts with psychological and social well-being in various ways. Bilodeau and Renn (2005) offer models of LGBT identity formation which deviate from the ubiquitous stage model; these models include life-span approaches and frameworks through queer and feminist theories, as well a call for new theoretical models addressing transgender identity formation specifically. The challenges and limitations of linear (stage) models of identity formation are further reviewed by Eliason and Schope (2007), who proposed that evolving cultural/social contexts call into question the effectiveness of these models (See *Homosexual Identity Formation*). One identity formation framework discussed at length

by these researchers is the Homosexual Identity Formation framework conceived by Cass (1979). This model specifically exemplifies the necessity of interactions with other gay people in the development of identity formation for LGBT individuals (see Table 1) in order to cope with inescapable feelings of isolation and alienation within heteronormative society.

Related research supports the positive impact social interactions and community connections can have for LGBT individuals in terms of positively progressing through stages of homosexual identity formation (Detrie & Lease, 2007; Frable, Wortman, and Joseph, 1997). This progression has a direct impact on well-being, as lower levels of homosexual identity formation have been shown to correlate with higher measures of internalized homonegativity and psychological/psychosocial stressors (Halpin & Allen, 2004; Malcolm & Rowen, 2002). Internalized homonegativity (IH), broadly termed “internalized stigma,” is societal stigma toward sexual minorities which is internalized by LGBT individuals (Meyer, 1995). IH is a particularly insidious factor pertaining to psychological/psychosocial well-being, as researchers have suggested its relationship with higher measures of psychological distress and a diminished perception of connection to the LGBT community at large (Berg, Munthe-Kaas, and Ross, 2016). IH is also analyzed through the framework of minority stress, as it is a factor relating to diminished psychological and psychosocial well-being in LGBT populations and their marginalized status, which is resultant from their personal/social formation in a predominantly heteronormative society (Fingerhut et al., 2010).

Considering the imperative nature of connecting with other LGBT individuals in the process of positive identity formation, and that connection’s influence on

psychological/psychosocial well-being and internalized stigma, researchers might consider investigating the effectiveness of alternative venues that support the aforementioned constructs outside of the traditional gay bar and nightclub scene.

For example, there is a body of research investigating the positive impact of LGBT-identifying choirs in terms of their members' motivations for participating in these ensembles, which often encompass aspects relating to identity expression, engagement with the community, and visibility (Latimer, 2008). According to this research, participation in these community ensembles often also assisted in facilitating the coming-out process.

Apart from social aspects of community music involvement, research has shown that musical motivation is the primary incentive for community music participation (Cavitt, 2005; Darrough, 1992; Mantie & Tan, 2019). However, LGBT ensembles have been investigated as a means of expressing identity through participation simply by belonging to a musical group which identifies as LGBT (i.e., proclaiming identity by "just being" in an LGBT-identifying group). In addition to motivations related to coming out, individuals also perceive participation in these ensembles as a means for social change and activism through community involvement and visibility. A study of the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus (Hilliard, 2002) demonstrated that the group's membership was highly affected by the AIDS crisis, and that the group's first performance was on the steps of San Francisco city hall the night Harvey Milk (California's first openly gay elected official) was assassinated by former board member Dan White.

Table 1	
<i>Homosexual Identity Formation Framework (Cass, 1979)</i>	
Stage	Brief Description
1 – <i>Identity Confusion</i>	This marks the beginning of the formation process. Realization that non-heterosexual thoughts, feelings and ideas are incongruent with previous self-perceptions elicit confusion and feelings of personal alienation. Actions are often taken to inhibit homosexual thoughts, feelings, and ideas, which is difficult and causes personal turmoil.
2 – <i>Identity Comparison</i>	Confusion and turmoil in this stage are reduced, as the individual accepts they <i>may</i> identify as homosexual. Perceptions of what others think of this identification causes deeper alienation from heteronormative society. Several factors (geographical, social, etc.) contribute to the actions the individual will take in order to cope with this alienation (some more harmful than others).
3 – <i>Identity Tolerance</i>	Here, identity tends to shift toward the realization that “I am probably homosexual.” On one hand, this frees the individual to acknowledge sexual, emotional, and social needs, but also deepens the incongruence between the self and heteronormative society, heightening alienation. Here, contact with other homosexuals is seen as a necessity in order to combat this alienation.
4 – <i>Identity Acceptance</i>	At this stage, contact with other homosexuals becomes regular, and the individual develops a preference for homosexual social contexts over heterosexual ones. Philosophies of disclosure (partially out vs. fully out, etc.) are developed based on these relationships. This display of identity influences deeper conflict between self-perceptions, and the perceptions of how people in heteronormative society view the individual. Attempts to resolve this incongruence lead the individual to stage 5 - not all individuals progress further through the formation process.
5 – <i>Identity Pride</i>	The individual acknowledges the possible perceptions of heterosexual society on their identity, which they combat by devaluing the importance of heterosexuals’ opinions. A strong dichotomy between homosexual and heterosexual characterizes this stage, as well as animosity and confrontational behavior toward heterosexual individuals and institutions.
6 – <i>Identity Synthesis</i>	The previous dichotomy between heterosexual and homosexual dissolves, leaving the individual to acknowledge that there are heterosexuals that accept them as they accept themselves. Instead of homosexuality being <i>the</i> identity of the individual, it becomes merely an aspect of self. While pride is still present, less animosity exists toward heterosexual society at large, and the individual grows to value heterosexual relationships and ideas.

Thus, musical performance as a mode of activism in the LGBT community has been foundational to this ensemble since its inception. Research by Bird (2017) corroborates these themes as motivations for LGBT community ensemble participation, as it was found that performing in the San Francisco Gay Men’s Choir sent a “message of progress” to society at large, and was an active way to reach out to heterosexual members in the community to foster ally-relationships and combat heteronormativity.

In short, musical growth, social connection, visibility/activism, and identity expression all serve what Knoke and Prenskey (1984) would describe as motivations for participation in voluntary associations. Voluntary associations (i.e., community music ensembles, faith-based organizations, recreational sports teams) are a subset of organizational theory, and are defined by the authors as formally organized, named groups of which membership is not a means of livelihood for participants. This is in contrast to “firms,” which are described as organizations which are comprised of members who are awarded economic exchange (i.e., wages) for their skills and services (see Table 2).

Although some administrative and staff positions of voluntary associations may offer economic compensation (e.g., wages), leadership positions within these organizations tend to be ideologically and philosophically motivated. Knoke and Prenskey (1984) offer five dimensions to voluntary associations derived from previous research in organizational theory: (1) incentives and commitment, (2) formal structure, (3) leadership and authority, (4) environmental conditions, and (5) organizational effectiveness (see *Organizational Theory*).

Mantie and Tan (2019) analyzed community band participation through the lens of voluntary associations, particularly citing the environmental aspect of community bands in the United States. The researchers found that a general expansion in the “ecology” (i.e., variety of musicians) of community band musicians has led to a proliferation in the diversity of community bands forming within respective geographical areas. These separate, yet proximate, ensembles specialize in focus and reflect a more nuanced range of particular musical (and social) interests, which are managed through varying types of motivations and incentives for participation. LGBT community bands are one example of this specialization.

This study elaborates on extant research investigating the roles LGBT community bands can serve with regard to homosexual identity formation and psychological/psychosocial well-being. While LGBT community choirs have been studied for their ability to function as venues for positive identity formation and general well-being (Bird, 2017; Hilliard, 2002; Pawluch, Shaffir, & Miall, 2005), no such research exists investigating LGBT community bands, especially within the frameworks of homosexual identity formation, internalized homonegativity, minority stress, and organizational theory.

Table 2*Voluntary Associations (VA's) vs. Firms* (Knoke & Prenskey, 1984)

Type	Incentive Systems and Participant Commitment	Formal Structures	Leadership and Authority	Environmental Conditions	Effective--ness
<i>Firms</i>	Utilitarian-centered incentives systems Resources from markets	Complex division of labor	Hierarchical authority patterns Centralized decision making Professional Leadership	Specialized structures favored in stable environments	Goals of profits, growth Quantifiable performance indicators
<i>VA's</i>	Normative, affective-centered incentive systems Dependent on members and constituents for bulk of resources	Simple division of labor and formal internal structure	Collegial, confederated authority patterns Amateur leadership	Generalist structures favored in turbulent environments	Goals of aggregating and expressing member interests Ambiguous or diffuse measures of goal-attainment

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter will explore various constructs related to identity formation and well-being in LGBT populations, as well as topics concerning community music participation in its numerous forms. In order to thoroughly review these concepts, this chapter is divided into the following sections: (1) Psychological and Psychosocial Well-being; (2) Internalized Homonegativity (IH); (3) Homosexual Identity Formation; (4) Community Music Ensembles; and (5) Organizational Theory.

Psychological and Psychosocial Well-being

The global and cross-disciplinary proliferation of research addressing well-being in LGBT populations could be attributable to the reality that these individuals suffer from mood and anxiety disorders at a rate not commensurate with their heterosexual counterparts (Cochran, Sullivan, & Mays, 2003). This disproportionality has often been contextualized through the framework of minority stress. Minority stress is defined as “the excess stress to which individuals from stigmatized social categories are exposed as a result of their social, often a minority, position” (Meyer, 2003). From this framework, Meyer posits that LGBT individuals experience minority stress through internalized proximal stressors that manifest via perceived distal societal stressors. Distal stressors have been defined as perceived external societal structures (e.g., school, employer, religious institutions) and attitudes (e.g., homonegativity) toward the LGBT community, while proximal stressors have been conceptualized as internalized appraisals of those attitudes. For example, prejudicial events in the community at large may function as a distal stressor to which an individual will appraise, internalize, and react to in order to

form a proximal stressor, which impacts psychological well-being via factors like concealment of identity, expectations of rejection, or internalized homonegativity (IH). Proximal stressors in LGBT populations have been shown to manifest through a plethora of mental health problems, including general depressive symptoms, general anxiety disorder, conduct disorder, and suicidal ideation/behavior (Fergusson, Horwood, & Beautrais, 1999; Herrell et al., 1999; Shelby, 1999). It is also worth noting here that ethnic minorities who identify as LGBT are prone to experience more stress than their white counterparts (who are represented in most of the extant literature), for they are managing more than one stigmatized identity (Ryan & Futterman, 2001). In one study, 88% of participants identified as Black, Hispanic, or “other” – results indicated that gay-related stressors in this demographic were more common in individuals who had attempted suicide. Further, these individuals were also more likely to drop out of school and be rejected from their own homes (Rotheram-Borus et al., 1994).

In order to cope with these stressors, LGBT individuals employ a variety of mechanisms and strategies both individually and through community/social support systems. Speaking to the latter, Meyer (2003) argues that “minority status is associated not only with stress but [also] with important resources such as group solidarity and cohesiveness that protect minority members from the adverse mental health effects of minority stress” (p. 677). Considering the central role of social connection in Cass’s (1979) framework of HIF, Meyer’s assertion that social support has a constructive relationship with the well-being of LGBT individuals is in line with a substantial body of related research. For example, research by Detrie and Lease (2007) found that social support had strong effects on several dimensions of psychological and psychosocial well-

being in LGBT populations. Specifically, results from this study indicate that familial support primarily impacts psychological well-being (e.g., depressive symptomology, suicidality, etc.), while friend/peer support is more closely related to psychosocial well-being (e.g., perception of interpersonal connections, efficacy of group memberships, etc.). In terms of transgender individuals specifically, extant research supports that higher collective self-esteem (i.e., positive perceptions of trans-community) correlates with lower measures of psychological distress (Sánchez, Vilain, & Mallinckrodt, 2009). Relatedly, LGBT people often withdraw from peer social/group activities during formative stages of social development due to stress caused by belonging to a stigmatized minority, which has been shown to negatively impact psychosocial development (Grossman, 1997).

While many social and psychological theorists have often predicted that individuals who belong to minority groups would experience lower general self-esteem, empirical research does not necessarily support this claim (Crocker & Major, 1989; Crocker, Luhtanen, Reis, & Harry, 1990). Several explanations for this violation of expectation are contextualized through collective self-esteem, which posits that individual well-being is partially contingent on social well-being, particularly through perceptions of collective group effectiveness and efficacy relative to other groups (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). This research indicates that higher social well-being through collective self-esteem is related to more frequent utilization of “strategies” by minority individuals in combatting prejudice through these social group memberships. These strategies include: reevaluating group attributes, attributing stereotypes/negative vocalizations made on group to prejudice, and assigning more personal value to stronger

facets of group. However, collective self-esteem as a means of maintaining both social and psychological well-being changes form in the context of what Crocker and Major (1989) describe as “concealment stigmas,” which are stigmas that can be hidden by the individual in order to “pass” as a member of the dominant group in society. Young LGBT individuals, particularly those within the formative stages of their identity development, fit within this category, and are thus challenged to utilize the above strategies to combat negative stigma and maintain self-esteem and well-being, as making these associations may reveal their membership to that group.

Withdrawal from the social environment, the context of well-being, is especially pertinent for LGBT youth, who spend many of their formative years in the public-school setting. According to the *2017 National School Climate Survey*, more than 70% of LGBT students reported avoiding school functions and extracurricular activities (Kosciw, Greytak, Zongrone, Clark, & Truong, 2018). Within these environments, LGBT students often experience hardships related to their sexual and gender identities (e.g., homonegativity, isolation, maladaptive coping skills) as a result of their primary socialization being within heteronormative settings (e.g., schools), which are naturally latent with homonegativity stigma (Little, 2001; Kosciw, Greytak, & Zongrone, 2018; Mufioz-Plaza, Quinn, & Rounds, 2002). In the school setting, 59.5% of LGBT students felt unsafe at school due to their sexual orientations, and 44.6% due to their gender expressions (Kosciw et al., 2018). Also according to these researchers, 95.3% of LGBT students heard homophobic slang beyond the term “gay” used in a negative context, and 70.1% of these students experienced verbal harassment at school. A further 28.9% of LGBT students reported physical assault while at school, while 55.3% of all harassment

victims (verbal and physical) claimed not to report the incidents to school staff. Relatedly, 62.2% of these students reported experiencing discriminatory school policies and practices at school. These statistics are in line with other research which indicates that victimizations experienced in school may persist long into adult life (Toomey et al., 2010), and are linked to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in young adulthood (D'Augelli, Grossman, Arnold, & Starks, 2006).

LGBT youth (and young adults) tend to seek the social support of peers and adults before their own families – primarily due to fear of rejection from those that are closest to them – in an attempt to combat stressors associated with the various aforementioned victimizations. Further, LGBT youth in school settings often seek out “parental figures” within their social environments; not only for various types of support, but as a means to gain connection to the LGBT community at large (Nesmith, Burton, & Cosgrove, 1999). This desire for parental figures who identify within the spectrum of LGBT coincides with research by Ryan and Futterman (2001), who found that LGBT youth face developmental challenges largely because, unlike other stigmatized minorities (e.g., people of color), these individuals must learn to cope with stigma without parental or familiar support/modeling. Support for these individuals manifested in this context through parental support/modeling, which was shown to create a “buffer” against social hostility, functioning as a vital coping mechanism for adolescent youth in the formative years of their identity formations.

Research by Cox, Dewaele, Van Houtte, and Vincke (2010) indicates that social connectivity fosters what the authors refer to as “stress related growth,” which are feelings of personal growth that are developed in response to stressful experiences (e.g.,

“coming-out”). According to this research, LGBT youth who associated strongly with the LGBT community, and perceived higher levels of social support from others, experienced more stress-related growth from their coming-out processes than those who did not perceive similar connections to the LGBT communities. These perceptions thus culminated in a healthier, and more constructive, perspective of their coming-out process. For those of age, this connection to the LGBT community often begins and gravitates toward the gay bar/club scene, which has been found to worsen the already-existing mental (and physical) health risks for these individuals (Greenwood et al., 2001; Jordan, 2000; Sullivan & Wodarski, 2002).

According to some research, there is danger in including the entire “LGBT” spectrum in studies pertaining to well-being, social support, and identity. While there is an acknowledged gap in literature addressing systematic support for LGBT individuals in general, this is especially true for transgender and bisexual people (Walker & Prince, 2010). For example, Gray and Desmarais (2014) sought to investigate the differentiations in political activism and collective self-esteem between different sexual minority identifications (i.e., “bisexual,” “queer”). Results from this study indicated that while those who identified as “queer” tended to be more activist-oriented, bisexual individuals had the lowest measures of collective self-esteem. This is in line with a substantial body of research which implies the necessity of using caution when conducting research investigating constructs related to sexual identifications, as each identification, particularly bisexuality, is likely more nuanced than assumed.

For example, bisexual individuals have been shown to experience higher rates of domestic abuse/violence, higher levels of identity disturbance, higher rates of

suicidality/depressive symptomology, and higher childhood adversity accompanied by diminished familial support relative to their lesbian, gay, and heterosexual counterparts (Jorm, Rodgers, Jacomb, Christensen, 2005; Saewyc et al., 2006; Talley, Tomko, Littlefield, Trull, and Sher, 2011). Further, bisexual individuals are prone to experiencing more stigma, prejudice, and exclusion compared to other identifications (Brewster & Moradi, 2010; Brown, 2004), which is often combatted through disproportionate rates of substance and alcohol abuse (Robin, Brener, Donahue, Hack, Hale, & Goodenow, 2002). Given evidence that bisexual individuals experience significantly higher rates of stressors related to mental health, some researchers have suggested that previous studies may have “overstated” the risks of mental health issues in LGBT populations (Jorm, et al., 2002). However, most studies (except for Brown, 2004), support analogous, albeit lessened, negative mental health effects resultant of LGBT individuals’ sexual minority status. Research investigating the minority of bisexuality within the LGBT community, and within society at large, informs the nuance of the LGBT spectrum, and directs the present study toward the cited demand for programming in educational settings which is constructed to foster inclusivity for all of these groups (Brown, 2004; Robin et al., 2002).

Providing a safe social environment for LGBT individuals to constructively participate, and promote visibility, has been shown to be an effective strategy for combatting related harmful behaviors, such as drug and substance abuse (Jordan, 2000). For youth specifically, researchers propose examining the heteronormative, and often homonegative, structures of schools in order to create safer learning environments for LGBT youth in schools, where much of their formative socialization occurs (Chesir-Teran, 2013). In terms of internalized homonegativity (IH), connection to the LGBT

community and with other LGBT individuals through social participation was also shown to correlate negatively with measures of IH (Herek, Cogan, Gillis, & Glunt, 1998; Malcolm & Rowen, 2002) – an idiosyncratic component of LGBT psychological and psychosocial well-being.

Internalized Homonegativity

Internalized homonegativity (IH) is a social construct described as the direction of perceived societal homophobic attitudes toward the self (Meyer, 1995). Long before individuals self-label or even recognize their homosexuality, they will to some capacity interact with and internalize societal heteronormative or “homophobic” attitudes. “Homophobia” itself is a term which garners contention in the academic community for a variety of reasons. Most notably, the terms “homophobia” or “homophobic” emphasize an affective, or fear-based, component of prejudice which is contextualized within the individual rather than society (Williamson, 2000). While several paradigmatic alternatives have been explored for denoting this prejudice, this study will use the concept of homonegativism (Hudson & Ricketts, 1980). Homonegativism is a multidimensional construct which focuses on the operational value systems and beliefs of prejudiced individuals and societal attitudes, such as “heterosexism,” which posits that heterosexuality is the natural, or superior, sexuality.

Berg et al. (2016) suggest a relationship between IH and higher levels of psychological distress caused by minority experiences in heteronormative society. To what degree, and in what way, individuals experience IH depends largely on their personal experiences. For example, Ross and Rosser (1996) described four dimensions of IH: (1) public identification as gay; (2) perception of stigma associated with being

homosexual; (3) social comfort with gay individuals; and (4) the moral and religious acceptability of being gay. Among other correlates, high IH was significantly related to low disclosures of identity (e.g., “selectively out”), and less social interaction with other gay people. Behaviors associated with internalized homonegativity (remaining “closeted,” isolation from LGBT community) are associated with higher measures of psychological and psychosocial distress, which include depressive symptomology, demoralization, and lower self-esteem (Herek et al., 1998).

Further research supports the notion that immersion in more supportive environments or communities, which provide safe-spaces for LGBT-identifying individuals to connect, may be an effective approach in combatting IH and related psychological distresses, thus propagating positive homosexual identity formation (HIF) and well-being. Specifically, social constraint and collective self-esteem have been investigated for their effects in moderating the impacts of “external heterosexism” (e.g., distal stressors; societal discrimination) on “internalized heterosexism” (e.g., proximal stressors; internalized homonegativity) within the context of minority stress theory (Meyer, 2003). Social constraints refer to the social restriction LGBT individuals feel in sharing experiences related to their minority status, and is associated with higher measures of proximal stressors, including: stigma consciousness (i.e., expectations of rejection based on sexual orientation), internalized heterosexism (e.g., homonegativity), and concealment of sexual orientation (Lewis, Derlega, Clarke, and Kuaang, 2006; Pinel, 1999). Mason and others (2015) indicated that amongst LGBT-identifying women, less social constraint with other LGBT-identifying friends, as well as higher collective self-esteem within the context of the LGBT-community, functioned as a buffer between

externalized and internalized heterosexism (e.g., internalized homonegativity).

Additionally, there was an interaction between social constraints with heterosexual friends and internalized heterosexism, but not enough to constitute a buffer effect. These findings suggest that speaking with other sexual minorities about issues related to individuals' stigmatized identities, as well as fostering positive social/collective identity within the LGBT community, may potentially serve as a buffer against internalizing societal discrimination.

Internalized stigma within the framework of minority stress has also been utilized to address the concern of internalized stigma in transgender populations. Research by Austin and Goodman (2017) indicated that while social-connectedness was not found to reduce the impact of internalized transphobia on self-esteem, there was a statistically significant positive relationship between social connectedness and self-esteem. Further, higher measures of internalized transphobia were correlated with lower measures of self-esteem. The authors of this study cite a need for more “community-based programming” as a means for developing and fostering social connectedness for transgender individuals.

Combatting internalized stigma through social collectives becomes especially challenging when considering LGBT youth. For example, Little (2001) opined that “Although [IH is] not isolated to a specific developmental level (i.e., adolescence), urban adults usually have greater access to resources, support and like-company social circles (gay bars, gay sports teams, etc.). GLBTQ youth, however, are more disenfranchised” (p. 101). Berghe, Dewaele, Cox, and Vincke (2010) corroborate the notion that LGBT youth face challenges in finding social support relative to their older peers, which in turn has negative impacts on internalized homonegativity and general well-being. According to

these researchers, LGBT individuals younger than 21 years of age were found to experience significantly higher rates of unsupportive social interactions with heterosexual peers, as well as less LGBT-specific confidant support; here, confidant support is defined by the researchers as “the availability of persons to whom one can turn to talk about personal problems” (p. 155). Given the importance of social support in the many facets of healthy identity development and well-being for LGBT youth, it seems pertinent that researchers and educators explore mediums (within schools) in which to cultivate these communities for LGBT students, who comprise approximately 10% of the student population in the United States (Mayberry, 2006).

Homosexual Identity Formation (HIF)

Homosexual Identity Formation (HIF) has been described as a heavily dynamic and idiosyncratic formational process related to multiple facets of LGBT well-being, including internalized homonegativity (IH). Various frameworks have been provided in extant literature; these include stage models (i.e., Cass 1979; Coleman, 1982; Hencken & O’Dowd, 1976; Lee, 1977; Martin, 1991; Minton & McDonald, 1984; Troiden, 1989), multi-dimensional approaches to non-heterosexual identity acquisition (i.e., Horowitz & Newcomb, 2001), and lifespan approaches (e.g., D’Augelli, 1994). D’Augelli’s (1994) lifespan approach describes six “identity processes” which operate independently of each other and do not occur in a specific order: (1) exiting heterosexuality, (2) developing a personal LGB identity, (3) developing an LGB social identity, (4) becoming an LGB offspring, (5) developing an LGB intimacy status, and (6) entering an LGB community. Renn and Bilodeau (2005) suggest that D’Augelli’s six formational stages have the potential to also address transgender identity acquisition, while Bilodeau and Renn

(2005) offer an altered version of D'Augelli's lifespan framework specifically for transgender identity acquisition.

Horowitz and Newcomb (2001), who present a multi-faceted identity model rooted in social constructivism, are particularly critical of stage models (e.g., Cass, 1979). They suggest that stage models operate from an "essentialist" perspective, meaning that identity development is contingent on an individual "realizing" or becoming aware of their underlying non-heterosexuality, then reacting to this realization in order to develop identity. Following the notion that this viewpoint inherently excludes some groups (e.g., those who do not identify as homosexual exclusively), the authors offer what they refer to as a "constructivist perspective," which posits that identity development is a fluid transaction between individual and environment, and changes in nature over time and between different environments. Horowitz and Newcomb (2001) suggest that the constructivist perspective improves on the shortcomings of stage models, which include not only a failure to incorporate a vast range of identifications within sexual minority populations (i.e., bisexuality), but also a failure in addressing how sexual identity development relates to group/social identity. Specifically, the authors suggest that there is an intersection between social identity and personal identity, as considering the nature of group oppression is imperative in understanding individual perceptions of stigma, minority status, and societal attitudes toward their identifications – all factors which influence personal identity. In addition to failing to integrate aspects of collective and social identity, stage models have also been criticized for being biased toward young individuals, and as being "Euro-American-centric" (Lynch, 2004).

However, Horowitz and Newcomb (2001) go on to describe the utilization of stage models in research, “Before critiquing the developmental models, we must point out that they may be accurate and helpful in describing a general framework for the process of homosexual identity for some individuals, especially those who lack any heterosexual desire, behavior, or identity” (p. 4). Further, when examining Cass’s (1979) framework of Homosexual Identity Formation, it can be observed that social connection (see Table 1, stage 3) is a central factor to identity acquisition and development (somewhat contrary to Horowitz and Newcomb’s assertions). This original framework suggests that negative psychological distresses and feelings of isolation are characteristically countered by contact with other LGBT individuals. That is, progression through stages of HIF involves combatting IH and negative well-being, which is often contingent on developing relationships with other self-identifying LGBT peoples.

Given its generalist nature and ubiquity in research related to non-heterosexual identity acquisition, there is a formidable body of literature which investigates Cass’s model of HIF relative to various factors of both psychological and social well-being. For example, research by Halpin and Allen (2004) indicates that the formative stages of HIF, which are often characterized by feelings of isolation, alienation, and disconnect from an individual’s (predominantly heteronormative) social community, are associated with higher measures of psychological distress. Additionally, higher measures of IH were found to correlate with lower stages of HIF (Malcolm & Rowen, 2002). These lower measures of well-being encompass a wide range of inhibiting factors for LGBT individuals, including: increased depressive symptomology, high loneliness, low

satisfaction with life, low sociability, low self-esteem, and low levels of self-concepts of physical appearance and emotional stability.

While there is a plethora of research exploring stage models relative to HIF and associated facets of well-being (e.g., internalized stigma, depression, loneliness), there is less literature regarding transgender identity development in respect to these factors. This sentiment is shared by Levitt and Ippolito (2014), who describe the “umbrella” nature of the term “transgender,” under which many identifications exist (e.g., “transman,” “transwoman,” “crossdresser,” “butch lesbian,” “transsexual”). Addressing transsexuality specifically, Devor (2004) offers a model which describes a 14-stage progression (Table 3) in which transsexual individuals combat anxiety, confusion, and internalized stigmas before discovering transsexuality and related educational resources, which inform perceptions of personal identities and decisions to transition or not. Similar to Cass’s model of HIF (see Table 1), the later stages of this model are characterized by identity synthesis and integration.

Beyond Devor’s stage model, D’Augelli’s (1994) lifespan approach is contextualized within the process of transgender identity formation by Bilodeau (2005). Through this framework, Silveira (2019) investigated the experience of one transgender college music student, and found an intersectionality between gender and sexual identities. Specifically, the subject (anonymized as “Joseph”) communicated a fear of losing a sense of acquired homosexual identity (i.e., gay/lesbian) in the transition from female to male gender identification. Bilodeau and Renn (2005) emphasize the importance of regarding the intersectional nature of sexual and gender identities, advocating for frameworks which account for this nuance.

Table 3*Transsexual Identity Formation* (Devor, 2004, pg. 43)

Stages of Transsexual or Transgender Identity Formation		
Stage	Some Characteristics	Some Actions
1) Abiding Anxiety	Unfocussed gender and sex discomfort.	Preference for other gender activities and companionship.
2) Identity Confusion About Originally Assigned Gender and Sex	First doubts about suitability of originally assigned gender and sex.	Reactive gender and sex conforming activities.
3) Identity Comparisons About Originally Assigned Gender and Sex	Seeking and weighing alternative gender identities.	Experimenting with alternative gender consistent identities.
4) Discovery of Transsexualism or Transgenderism	Learning that transsexualism or transgenderism exists.	Accidental contact with information about transsexualism or transgenderism
5) Identity Confusion About Transsexualism or Transgenderism	First doubts about the authenticity of own transsexualism or transgenderism.	Seeking more information about transsexualism or transgenderism.
6) Identity Comparisons About Transsexualism or Transgenderism	Testing transsexual or transgender identity using transsexual or transgender reference group.	Start to disidentify with originally assigned sex and gender. Start to identify as transsexed or transgender.
7) Tolerance of Transsexual or Transgender Identity	Identify as probably transsexual or transgender.	Increasingly disidentify as originally assigned gender and sex.
8) Delay Before Acceptance of Transsexual or Transgender Identity	Waiting for changed circumstances. Looking for confirmation of transsexual or transgender identity.	Seeking more information about transsexualism or transgenderism. Reality testing in intimate relationships and against further information about transsexualism or transgenderism.
9) Acceptance of Transsexual or Transgender Identity	Transsexual or transgender identity established.	Tell others about transsexual or transgender identity.
10) Delay Before Transition	Transsexual identity deepens. Final disidentity as original gender and sex. Anticipatory socialization.	Learning how to do transition. Saving money. Organizing support systems.
11) Transition	Changing genders and sexes.	Gender and sex reassignments.
12) Acceptance of Post-Transition Gender and Sex Identities	Post-transition identity established.	Successful post-transition living.
13) Integration	Transsexuality mostly invisible.	Stigma management. Identity integration.
14) Pride	Openly transsexed.	Transsexual advocacy.

Further findings by Silveira (2019) emphasize the blind spots held by educators concerning supportive transgender practices (e.g., language, use of former name, concert attire) in schools – a primary venue for social interaction and support, or victimization, for LGBT populations (D'Augelli, Grossman, Arnold, & Starks, 2006; Toomey et al., 2010). Social support and related practices, as well as venues in which this support can be found, is a central component of identity formation in LGBT populations. Detrie and Lease (2007) suggest that perceived social connectedness, as well as collective self-esteem, significantly predicts psychological and psychosocial well-being – correlates of HIF developmental processes.

Venues in which social support and identity formation are cultivated vary greatly in type and in number, depending on the selected geographic location and community. Historically, social support and HIF have been sought out through gay bar and nightclub attendance, which has been linked to disproportionate rates of substance and alcohol abuse among LGBT adolescents and youth (Greenwood et al., 2001; Jordan, 2000). Other harmful behaviors have also been associated with gay bar/club patronage. For example, research by Sullivan and Wodarski (2002) proposed that, while the gay bar scene traditionally is a social hub for those old enough to participate, it is also an environment where gay youth “mix alcohol with strong sexual desires that often lead to engaging in risky sexual behavior” (p. 12). Considering these potential detriments to psychological and physical health, it seems warranted that researchers might choose to investigate other venues in which homosexual identity can be cultivated. Some psychologists have suggested that psychological well-being can be developed through music participation (Blacking, 1969; Keil, 1987). Within the aforementioned constructs, the nature of

homosexual identity formation's relationship with psychological and psychosocial well-being in the context of community music ensemble participation presents a considerable gap in the extant literature. However, there are a plethora of studies that exemplify the positive roles community music ensembles potentially play in homosexual identity formation in lieu of traditional gay bar and nightclub attendance.

Community Music Ensembles

Western community music ensembles in the United States have their roots in the arrival of European settlers in the 17th century (Leglar & Smith, 2010). Over time, community music ensembles evolved from sacred to secular; militia bands proliferated in the United States, which functioned as a means of disseminating secular music throughout the continental United States. Militia bands served a “utilitarian function” in the 18th century, as the secular concerts they performed during conflicts represented “the beginning of yet another facet of American musical activity” (Leglar & Smith, 2010, p. 346).

From the proliferation of military bands came a populous demand for secular music. The Peace Jubilees of the late 19th century, the Sousa Band, the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America, and the Grand Ole Opry all exemplify this demand, as well as the centrality of popular music in community music making. Community music making in the United States is generally situated within one of three general categories: (1) Community music ensembles to carry out educational objectives; (2) Community music ensembles that has performance as its primary goal, but also has an educational component; and (3) Community music ensembles for cultural transmission and/or social and entertainment purposes (Leglar & Smith, 2010).

In terms of community music ensembles serving as a means to carry out educational objectives, Mantie and Tan (2019) found that adult community band members in the United States rarely cited “education” or “learning” as a motivation for participating in these ensembles. In line with previous studies (i.e., Cavitt, 2005; Darrough, 1992), Mantie and Tan (2019) found that the primary motivation for participating in these ensembles was for musical pursuit. Results from related studies also cite personal satisfaction, pride, increased self-esteem, self-discipline, and combatting social isolation as strong motivations for community band participation (Cavitt, 2005; Coffman, 2006). Further, coinciding with organizational theory’s facet of fertile “musical ecology” (discussed below), Mantie and Tan (2019) also found that growing memberships in these ensembles and communities led to a proliferation of community instrumental ensembles which existed separately from each other and differed slightly in focus, goals, and musical/social incentives for participation. This phenomenon outlines a national trend in community music specialization which accommodates individual tastes musically, socially, politically, and otherwise.

Hayes (2008) makes the assertion that the term “community music” lends itself particularly well to minority groups in that it prompts inquiries related to both community (“whose community?”) and music (“whose music?”) relative to these groups. According to Hayes, “music is, for the most part, a specific outgrowth of a cultural community, whether it be written and/or performed as reflections of past historical practices within the community, or written and/or performed to reflect the cultural identity of a specific racial, religious, geographic, idealistic or linguistic group” (p. 63). This linear perspective of “musical outgrowth” from “cultural communities” assumes that a community has been

established prior to a music's inception. However, this is not the case with the LGBT community; conversely, LGBT community music ensembles, if anything, developed from, or around, music. In other words, music functioned as a means of cultivating or bringing together a community of musicians, rather than "LGBT music" in the context of ensemble performance proliferating from the LGBT music community at large. In this respect, Hayes argues that community music helped give a largely disenfranchised LGBT community a voice in the formative years of LGBT culture in society.

Prior to the 1970s, gay culture was somewhat "unheard of" or unestablished (Hayes, 2008). During this age of sexual and cultural expansion, gay individuals (primarily men) began to populate unlikely areas of cities which were relatively free of conservative ideologies (i.e., Castro District in San Francisco, Greenwich Village in New York City). The year 1978 marked an important date in the history of LGBT community music and the LGBT community at large, as this was the year which Harvey Milk, the first openly-gay elected political official in the history of California, was assassinated in the San Francisco City Hall by former board member Dan White. It was during a vigil that same night, while the city mourned, that members of the newly formed San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus had their first performance on the steps of City Hall, and LGBT community ensembles, particularly choirs, began their service in functioning as a means of unifying culture, expressing activism, and aiding as a voice for the community at large.

Within a year of Milk's assassination and the establishment of the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus, analogous ensembles had been established in both Los Angeles and Seattle (Hayes, 2008). The trend continued as choruses formed in cities across the nation;

so many to the point that in 1981, the Gay and Lesbian Association of Choruses (GALA) had formed in order to create a unified mission statement, series of by-laws, and governance rules/financial strategies meant to assist fledgling ensembles in finding a voice in their communities. While Hayes (2008), who directed the Gay Men's Chorus in New York City, suggests that these choirs still "sing the same message of love, peace, and tolerance to anyone who will listen" (p. 65), former GALA artistic director John D. Sparkes cites three motivations for participation in these ensembles: community, politics, and artistic/musical quality. The following is an excerpt from Sparkes (2005) *Gay and Lesbian Choruses Then and Now*:

Singing in a gay choir is essentially a political act because society has made it so. Still, not all choristers are thinking primarily about the politics, especially now that society is more accepting of gays [...] They come because of the music, of course, and to socialize, but also for the sense of community and friendship [...] Although this can also be said for their non-gay counterparts in other choruses, in the gay community, the chorus plays a major community role. There is a very, very strong support network within the chorus. (p. 25)

Contemporarily, LGBT choral ensembles have shown to serve their members and their communities in a variety of ways relative to Sparke's above assertions. For example, these ensembles have functioned as a means of self-expression, acculturation, identity formation, political activism, and community service (Bird, 2017; Hilliard, 2002; Latimer 2008). Further, Bird (2017) posits that "youth choruses position [themselves] as social services providing safety for young members, enabling young people in coming

out, and providing peer support away from the commercial bar and club scene” (p. 195). Community choir participation, in all of these studies, functioned not only as a vehicle for coming out and LGBT-peer social support, but also as a means for achieving visibility in their communities, as well as achieving musical growth as practicing musicians. In terms of youth specifically, researchers have posited that political activism in public schools can be an effective tool in transforming “chilly educational environments” in which LGBT students suffer from institutionalized homophobic attitudes within school social environments (Mayberry, 2006). Similarly, research by Knotts and Gregorio (2011) found that incorporating musical lessons and discussions of diverse composers through programs which were designed to promote visibility for historically significant LGBT musicians led students, post-test, to demonstrate significantly greater understanding of issues related to sexuality. Given the political nature of LGBT-identifying music ensemble participation via community visibility and activism explored in the aforementioned studies, analogous ensembles or curricula-adaptations may be a constructive for students to combat homonegativity in their own social communities through musical participation.

While a body of research exists devoted to studying gay and lesbian choruses for their influence in general identity formation, far less literature exists regarding LGBT instrumental ensembles. Further, the impacts of LGBT community music making on the factors of HIF, IH, and psychological/psychosocial well-being reveals a gap in the current body of research. Beyond community music ensembles functioning as a means for social connection, acculturation, and belonging/bonding, community bands also provide opportunities for musicians to participate in leisure (Coffman, 2006; Ernst, 2001;

Rohwer, 2016). Extant research indicates a variety of factors which influence individuals decisions to participate in music ensembles. Specifically, these consequences can include aesthetic, psychological, informational, political, social, or economic factors (Gates, 1991). Gates further suggested that music education researchers investigate music participation through the lenses of theories being developed in the sociology of organizations and leisure activities.

Organizational Theory

Organizational theory will serve as the theoretical framework for this study. Originally the conception of German sociologist Max Weber, organizational theory is a multifaceted model which has been heavily researched in the context of both businesses and generalized social groups, which are differentiated in the literature as “firms” and “voluntary associations.” While firms are organizations which acquire members by trade of economic capital (e.g., wages) for membership, skills, and services, voluntary associations are “formally organized, named groups most of whose participants do not derive their livelihoods from the organizations' activities, although a few positions may receive pay as staff or leaders” (Knoke & Prenskey, 1984, p. 3). Glanville (2004) describes two types of voluntary associations: expressive (existing primarily as a mode of socialization) and instrumental (organization has some extrinsic goal which is a product of members' work in the group). Further, these researchers describe five characteristics of voluntary associations in the context of organizational theory: (1) incentives and commitment; (2) formal structure; (3) leadership and authority; (4) environmental conditions; and (5) organizational effectiveness. Each of these characteristics is discussed at length in the following sections.

Incentives and Commitment.

General organizational theory states that an organization must acquire possession and control over resources which allow it to function as desired and designed (Knoke & Prenskey, 1984). While firms (e.g., businesses, corporations) acquire this control and power via market exchange, voluntary associations derive power through various forms of membership contribution, such as: individual participation, information and expertise, labor power, and access to target groups through external/internal social networks. These researchers cite three types of incentives: utilitarian, normative, and affective. Voluntary associations primarily utilize normative and affective types of incentives, because utilitarian incentives manifest primarily through compensations such as salaries, wages, and pensions, which are not offered by voluntary associations (Knoke & Prenskey, 1984). Thus, normative and affective incentives serve as the primary motivations for volunteer associations. Normative incentives appeal to the values held by the participant, which include “civic obligations to contribute a fair share or strong convictions about the value of the global purposes sought by the organization” (p. 5). Further, affective incentives take root in the interpersonal relationships within the groups, and the emotional attachments members may experience to the group and its members.

Formal Structure.

Deemed one of the least relevant characteristics of voluntary associations, formal structure is primarily related to the centrality of bureaucracy to business firms. Knoke and Prenskey (1984) note that while formal structure is one of the most highly studied components of organizational theory, most components of formal structure do not apply to volunteer associations because these organizations are “primarily vehicles to aggregate

and coordinate the expression of political or socioemotional values of their participants, functions that require neither complex nor technically esoteric processes” (p. 7).

Leadership and Authority.

As with formal structure, leadership and authority have stronger positioning in firms than it does in volunteer associations. This is primarily because firms are more able to economically compensate individuals for their roles as leaders, while volunteer associations are relatively disadvantaged in this respect. While leadership and authority does often take an important role in these organizations, the motivations for individuals stepping into these roles is often ideologically-motivated, and for non-utilitarian benefit. Further, the role of leadership in voluntary associations tends to be distributed across the organization, as individuals often will hold themselves, and others, responsible in self-regulatory behavior which allows the group to meet collective goals and ends.

Environmental Conditions.

With regard to environmental conditions, Knoke and Prenskey (1984) cite the “ecology approach” for voluntary associations. This model “emphasizes how environmental constraints and contingencies—especially competition among organizations for finite resources and a limited carrying capacity of the environment—selects certain organizational characteristics and forms for reproduction (survival) or attrition (extinction)” (p. 10). Stable environments in this context are defined by a healthy flow of “resources” (e.g., diverse and varying levels of membership within the community), and are thus characterized by the predominance of organizational specialization; that is, related groups within these environments (e.g., communities) which have varying foci/goals to provide a diverse pool of participants with even more

specialized experiences. Conversely, turbulent ecological environments are characterized by a scarcity of membership, and thus demand more generalized organizations.

Organizational ecology also encompasses aspects of what Popielarz and McPherson (1995) refer to as the “ecological theory voluntary affiliation.” This principle purports that individuals who are most atypical of the group are likely to leave the organization (especially in an expressive voluntary association), as these individuals will benefit less from participation in terms of social incentive. Here, the researchers also cite the “homophily principle,” which describes the tendency of individuals with similar social characteristics to form social bonds and networks. Popielarz and McPherson (1995) argue that those who are most socially dissimilar to the group as a whole will gain less social networking/connection to other members, and thus lack the social capital to contribute or benefit from participation in the volunteer association.

Organizational Effectiveness.

While organizational effectiveness has been described as the ability of an organization to efficiently exploit and harness resources in a competitive environment, Knoke and Prenskey (1984) speculate that organizational effectiveness for volunteer associations is more accurately defined by the organization’s ability to meet established, or perceived, goals. Effectiveness for volunteer associations has been categorized by the researchers in the following classes:

1. Satisfying the members’ demands for services (including social and emotional)
2. Achieving recognition and approval from other “organizational elites” in the surrounding community

3. Influencing public policy and perceptions in the domain of the organization's collective values

Goals of voluntary associations have also been contextualized as organizational “foci” (Feld, 1981). According to this research, group interactions within these organizations are associated with joint activities which are constructed around collective foci of the group, and work to foster interpersonal connections which facilitate social networks. This relationship between interpersonal relationships fostered in voluntary associations and the development of social networks is elaborated upon by McPherson, Popielarz, and Drobnic (1992), who describe social groups and social networks as “coevolutionary forms,” in that as social groups grow and evolve, so do social networks which arise from connections made in these organizations. Ultimately, an organization's effectiveness can be equated to their ability to engage members in expressive activities which foster a sense of momentum toward group foci through the vehicle of shared special interests and in-group social networking (Babchuk & Edwards, 1965).

Purpose

According to the extant research, internalized homonegativity and homosexual identity formation (especially as they relate to a perceived connection to the broader LGBT community) have been linked with substance abuse and various impacts on psychological and psychosocial well-being. Historically, connection to the broader LGBT community and identity formation has predominantly been fostered through gay bar and nightclub attendance. Other researchers have investigated alternative ways in which individuals connect with the broader LGBT community. For example, community music ensembles have functioned as a mode of acculturation and identity formation. While

choirs have been investigated in the music education research literature, there is a dearth of related literature regarding LGBT community bands. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate homosexual identity formation via participant experiences, and determine relationships between psychological well-being, psychosocial well-being, and internalized homonegativity of members of LGBT-inclusive community bands.

Specifically, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What relationships, if any, exist between psychological well-being, social well-being, IH, and LGBT community band participation?
2. In what ways, if any, does participation in LGBT community influence members' homosexual identity formation (HIF)?

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Pilot Studies

Pilot Study One.

Prior to this research study, a pilot questionnaire was created to determine feasibility of administering the originally selected measures to the target population. This first questionnaire consisted of six sections: Section I prompted the participant to provide informed consent given information pertaining to the activities, risks/benefits, confidentiality, and voluntariness of the study. If the participant did not provide consent, they were directed to the end of the questionnaire. Section II consisted of items intended to collect demographic information, including age, years of participation in their respective ensembles, gender/sexual identity, and level of education. In Section III, participants were prompted with 21 items from the *DHS (Depression-Happiness Scale)* (McGreal & Joseph, 1993) meant to address the construct of psychological well-being. Section IV was designed to address social well-being, and consisted of 16 items from the *CSES (Collective Self-Esteem Scale)* (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). Details for both of these measures are described in more detail below.

Section V utilized the *Gay Identity Questionnaire (GIQ)* (Brady & Busse, 1994), which comprised 42 of the 72 original questionnaire items. As per Berghe and others (2010), redundant items (seven in total) were removed from the *GIQ* in order to relieve participants of the already considerably lengthy questionnaire, which the researcher anticipated would stifle participation. These seven items were removed following discussion and consensus by the author and a published music education researcher with

17 years of teaching experience. Additionally, in order to most appropriately address the target population, language was changed from the original wording to improve inclusivity for those who may have identified outside of the term “gay.” Section VI, the final section of the pilot questionnaire, consisted of five items from the *SMISS (Short Measure of Internalized Sexual Stigma)* (Lingiardi, Baiocco, & Nardelli, 2012), which were incorporated to measure internalized homonegativity in the target population. This initial pilot questionnaire was administered to a smaller subset of the target population – one LGBT community band in the Pacific Northwest.

Pilot Study Two.

In response to feedback received from the first pilot study, alterations were made to the questionnaire in order to maximize participation and ensure that the instrumentation was appropriate for the target population, which expanded to multiple LGBT community bands in the United States. Upon consideration of feedback provided from participants via free response, the *GIQ* was ultimately removed from this iteration of the questionnaire given its cumbersome length and inability to effectively address the target population, which demonstrated nuance in gender and sexual identifications which could not be effectively addressed by this measure. Additionally, a shortened version of the scale used to address psychological well-being (Joseph, Linley, Harwood, Lewis, & McCollam, 2004), which was developed for the purpose of efficient online data collection, was incorporated into the questionnaire in order to reduce completion time and garner a larger number, and wider range of participants. This alteration resulted in the questionnaire which was used by the researcher for the extant study, and will be discussed in more detail throughout this chapter.

Sampling and Participants

Participants ($N = 100$) were derived from a convenience sample, and recruited through an online protocol in order to address the population of interest (i.e., LGBT-identifying community band members) across multiple regions in the United States. The mean age was 41.90 years ($SD = 13.44$), and the mean length of participation in the community band was 8.48 years ($SD = 8.35$). 47.5% of these individuals identified as male, and 34.7% female; further, 2.0% of participants indicated identifying as transgender. An additional 15.8% of participants identified as “non-binary” or “other,” citing combinations of gender identities (i.e., “male, transgender, non-binary”) or unlisted gender identifications (i.e., “genderfluid,” “genderqueer,” “human”). In terms of sexual identification, 49.5% of participants identified as gay, 23.8% as lesbian, and 7.9% as bisexual. A further 17.8% of these individuals identified outside of these categories; as with gender-identification, a plethora of sexualities were also cited (i.e., “lesbian and bisexual,” “pansexual,” “queer,” “asexual”). Concerning education, 40.2% of participants indicated having earned a master’s degree, and 34.3% indicated having earned a bachelor’s degree from a 4-year program. Beyond the 7.8% of participants who reported earning a doctorate, the remaining 7.4% of participants either cited completion of a high school degree, or a professional credential outside the conventional bachelor’s or master’s degree program.

Participants included adult (≥ 18 years of age) LGBT-identifying LGBT community band members who were currently active in their respective ensembles during the time of data collection. These criteria were chosen in order to adhere to both institutional review board protocol, and age-restrictions imposed by the LGBT

community bands' parent organization. Data collected from participants who did not identify as LGBT (i.e., heterosexual/cis-gender) were excluded from this study, as these individuals did not meet the criteria for participation as defined by the study's research objectives and frameworks regarding internalized stigma, minority stress, and homosexual identity formation.

Instrumentation

The questionnaire (Appendix A) was comprised of 27 items which addressed the research questions pertaining to psychological/social well-being and IH (internalized homonegativity). The first section of this questionnaire provided the participant with general information regarding the nature of the study (e.g., purpose, risks/benefits, voluntariness, etc.), as well as a prompt collecting consent from the participant. If consent was not given, the user was directed to the end of the questionnaire. The following section was designed to collect demographic information from participants, including age, length of participation, education, gender identity, and sexual identity; those who identified exclusively as heterosexual were directed to the end of the survey, as these individuals did not meet criteria for participation (i.e., LGBT-identifying).

Proceeding demographic information, the *Short Depression-Happiness Scale (SDHS)* (Joseph et al., 2004) was incorporated to measure psychological well-being. This four-point Likert scale ($\alpha = .80$) was chosen because of its ability to reliably, and expediently, measure depressive symptomology on a continuum-basis over the week preceding data collection. Additionally, this short version (comprised of six items) was developed specifically for rapid assessment through online survey methods, and is

frequently utilized in studies related to LGBT well-being and identity formation (e.g., Halpin & Allen, 2004).

Luhtanen and Crocker's (1992) *Collective Self-Esteem Scale (CSES)*, which consisted of sixteen items, was employed to measure social well-being. This seven-point Likert scale was chosen because of its ability to reliably ($\alpha = .85$) measure well-being through perceptions of belonging to social groups, and because of its recurrent incorporation in a plethora of studies related to LGBT populations, social support, and well-being (e.g., Detrie & Lease, 2007). Consistent with other studies which have utilized the *CSES*, some language from the original measure was changed in order to address this construct in the context of LGBT community band participation (e.g., "social groups" was changed to "LGBT community bands").

To measure the final construct, internalized homonegativity (IH), the *Short Measure of Internalized Sexual Stigma (SMISS)* (Lingiardi, Baiocco, & Nardelli, 2012) was chosen because of its reliable ($\alpha = .89$) and concise nature. Also a seven-point Likert scale, this particular measure consisted of five items, and was developed to measure IH in both lesbian and gay populations, giving it an idiosyncratic versatility which was attractive given the challenge of addressing a sexually and gender diverse target population. Validity for the *SDHS*, *CSES*, and *SMISS* were demonstrated by predictable correlational analyses with other measures which had been frequently utilized to measure the same, or analogous, constructs.

Procedure

This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board (See Appendix B), which included alterations to conventional consent processes in order to appropriately

reflect the design of this study. Specifically, in lieu of providing consent through the traditional written format, consent was acquired via the aforementioned prompt (see Instrumentation). Similarly, consent for the interview portion (see below) of this study was collected orally before the start of questioning so that consent could be provided remotely.

The researcher contacted LGBA band directors individually through email, as well as through the national parent organization's online databases/social media. Identifying information (e.g., IP addresses, names, emails) were removed from participants' responses in order to protect anonymity and minimize risk of participation in this study. Data for the two research questions addressing well-being and IH were collected through the questionnaire which was completed online via a survey link. In order to address the final research question, participants were also provided the option of engaging in a follow-up interview with the researcher (via Skype, Facetime, etc.) in order to further discuss their experiences, particularly as they related to identity formation, in their respective ensembles.

Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview protocol in which questions were designed to serve as points of departure in order to more holistically investigate the experiences of participants. Interview participants ($N = 10$) consisted of LGBT-community band members who completed the questionnaire, and elected to provide contact information to participate in a follow-up interview with the researcher. The interview questions (Appendix C) were written by the investigator, and their reliability in effectively addressing specific research questions was verified through inter-coder reliability checks between the researcher and a reliability observer. This process

included independent construct attribution for each interview prompt by the researchers; differences in construct attributions were reconciled following discussion by the investigator and reliability observer.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to determine what relationships exist, if any, between psychological well-being, psychosocial well-being, and internalized homonegativity (IH) for members of LGBT-inclusive community bands, and to investigate these constructs, as well as homosexual identity formation, via participant experiences. Specifically, the following research questions were addressed: (1) What relationships, if any, exist between psychological well-being, psychosocial well-being, IH, and participation in LGBT community bands? (2) In what ways, if any, does participation in LGBT community bands influence members' homosexual identity formation (HIF)?

Quantitative Analysis of Survey Data

Raw data for the first research question consisted of participants' Likert-type responses to the *SDHS*, *CSES*, and *SMISS* (see Tables 4, 5, and 6). After reverse-scoring to adjust for opposite-valence in specific items (see Table 7), Results revealed a mean *SDHS* score of 20.12 ($SD = 3.1$). While scores on the *SDHS* range from 0 (most depressed) to 24 (most happy), previous researchers (Joseph et al., 2004) have suggested scores lower than 10 may be indicative of clinically relevant depressive issues.

Pertaining to social well-being, responses from the *CSES* ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). After reverse-scoring (see Table7), results from this measure indicated a mean score of 6.07 ($SD = 0.62$). While the literature does not offer a benchmark score as to what constitutes "good" or "bad" collective self-esteem, higher scores are indicative of stronger collective self-esteem, while lower scores represent

diminished social well-being through the context group efficacy, identity, and effectiveness.

Lastly, scores for the *SMISS* were reported from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), with higher scores representing a stronger presence of internalized homonegativity. Results here indicated a mean of 2.07 ($SD = 0.93$), which represents a generally low presence of internalized sexual stigma in this sample. Given precedence in previous research using these scales, and their high internal consistency, aggregate means for each construct were then calculated with these reverse-scored items in order to conduct correlational analyses of these constructs.

A Pearson bivariate correlational analysis of the aggregate means revealed a significant moderate positive relationship between psychological well-being and psychosocial well-being ($r = .349$, $r^2 = .12$), and a weak significant negative relationship between psychosocial well-being and internalized homonegativity ($r = -.223$, $r^2 = .054$) at both the $p < .01$ and $p < .05$ levels, respectively (see Table 8). No significant relationships were found between psychological well-being and internalized homonegativity, or between any of the constructs and years of participation in LGBT bands.

Qualitative Analysis of Interview Data

Raw data for the second research question ($N = 10$) consisted of interview transcripts (see Appendix D). Following transcription, qualitative coding techniques by Saldaña (2016) provided the framework for analysis of collected interview data. According to Saldaña, codes are defined as are words, sentences, statements, or even paragraphs that represent summative, salient, or “essence-capturing” attributes of the

data. Saldaña (2016) provides a variety of coding methods, suggesting Process, In-Vivo, and Values coding techniques for interview transcript analysis. These are the primary coding techniques which were used by the researcher for the first cycle of coding.

Table 4
Psychological Well-Being (*SDHS*) Response Frequencies (%)

	Rarely (≤ 1 day)	Sometimes (1–2 days)	Occasionally (3–4 days)	Frequently (5–7 days)
I've felt dissatisfied with my life	52 (51.5%)	27 (26.7%)	11 (10.9%)	11 (10.9%)
I felt happy	8 (7.9%)	14 (13.9%)	26 (25.7%)	53 (53.5%)
I felt cheerless	55 (54.5%)	35 (34.7%)	8 (7.9%)	3 (3.0%)
I felt pleased with the way I am	4 (4.0%)	15 (14.9%)	34 (33.7%)	48 (47.5%)
I felt that life was enjoyable	2 (2.0%)	7 (6.9%)	32 (31.4%)	61 (59.8%)
I felt that life was meaningless	71 (70.3%)	22 (21.8%)	5 (5.0%)	3 (3.0%)

Table 5
Social Well-Being (CSES) Response Frequencies (%)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am a worthy member of the LGBT Community Band	5 (4.9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (6.9%)	6 (5.9%)	28 (27.5%)	56 (54.9%)
I feel like I don't have much to offer the LGBT Community Band	61 (59.8%)	27 (26.5%)	6 (5.9%)	5 (4.9%)	3 (2.9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
I am a cooperative participant of the LGBT Community Band.	2 (2.0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (2.0%)	6 (5.9%)	34 (33.7%)	57 (56.4%)
I often feel I'm a worthless member of the LGBT Community Band.	68 (66.7%)	21 (20.6%)	9 (8.8%)	2 (2.0%)	2 (2.0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
I often regret that I belong to an LGBT Community Band.	88 (86.3)	7 (6.9%)	2 (2.0%)	4 (3.9%)	1 (1.0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Table 5 (cont.)*Social Well-Being (CSES) Response Frequencies (%)*

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
In general, I'm glad to be a member of an LGBT Community Band.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.0%)	4 (3.9%)	20 (19.6%)	77 (75.5%)
Overall, I feel that the LGBT Community Band is not worthwhile.	79 (77.5%)	18 (17.6%)	1 (1.0%)	1 (1.0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.0%)	2 (2.0%)
I feel good about the LGBT Community Band.	1 (1.0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.0%)	1 (1.0%)	34 (33.3%)	65 (63.7%)
Overall, the LGBT Community Band is considered good by others.	1 (1.0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.0%)	3 (2.9%)	17 (16.7%)	33 (32.4%)	47 (46.1%)
Most people consider my LGBT Community Band, on the average, to be more ineffective than other social groups.	34 (33.7%)	34 (33.7%)	8 (7.8%)	19 (18.6%)	4 (3.9%)	3 (2.9%)	0 (0%)
In general, others respect the LGBT Community Band that I belong to.	0 (0%)	1 (1.0%)	0 (0%)	5 (4.9%)	16 (15.7%)	42 (41.2%)	38 (37.3%)

Table 5 (cont.)*Social Well-Being (CSES) Response Frequencies (%)*

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
In general, others think that the LGBT Community Band is unworthy.	51 (50.0%)	34 (33.7%)	11 (10.9%)	2 (2.0%)	2 (2.0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.0%)
Overall, my membership in the LGBT Community Band has very little to do with how I feel about myself.	16 (15.7%)	33 (32.4%)	19 (18.6%)	10 (9.8%)	7 (6.9%)	10 (9.8%)	7 (6.9%)
The LGBT Community Band is an important reflection of who I am.	3 (2.9%)	0 (0%)	3 (2.9%)	8 (7.8%)	26 (25.5%)	32 (31.4%)	30 (29.4%)
LGBT Community Band is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am.	31 (30.4%)	31 (30.4%)	13 (12.7%)	6 (5.9%)	11 (10.8%)	5 (4.9%)	5 (4.9%)
In general, belonging to the LGBT Community Band is an important part of my self-image.	0 (0%)	8 (7.8%)	2 (2.0%)	14 (13.7%)	19 (18.6%)	31 (30.4%)	28 (27.5%)

Table 6*Internalized Homonegativity (SMISS) Response Frequencies (%)*

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am careful of what I wear and what I say to avoid showing my sexual identity.	33 (33.0%)	33 (33.0%)	8 (8.0%)	9 (9.0%)	17 (17.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
I am careful of what I wear and what I say to avoid showing my sexual identity.	60 (61.2%)	20 (20.4%)	1 (1.0%)	13 (13.3%)	3 (3.1%)	1 (1.0%)	0 (0.0%)
When I feel attracted to another LGBT person, I hope no one realizes it.	56 (56.0%)	22 (22.0%)	11 (11.0%)	8 (8.0%)	3 (3.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Sometimes I think that if I were heterosexual/cis-gender, I could be happier.	51 (51.5%)	18 (18.2%)	9 (9.1%)	13 (13.1%)	8 (8.1%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
At work, I pretend to be heterosexual/cis-gender.	49 (49.5%)	18 (18.2%)	9 (9.1%)	10 (10.1%)	9 (9.1%)	4 (4.0%)	0 (0.0%)

Table 7

Items Reverse Scored on the SDHS and CSES

<i>SDHS</i>	<i>CSES</i>
1. I felt dissatisfied with my life	2. I feel like I don't have much to offer the LGB Community Band
3. I felt cheerless	4. I often feel I'm a worthless member of the LGB Community Band
6. I felt that life was meaningless	5. I often regret that I belong to an LGB Community Band
	7. Overall, I feel that the LGB Community Band is not worthwhile
	10. Most people consider my LGB Community Band, on the average, to be more ineffective than other social groups
	12. In general, others think that my LGB Community band is unworthy
	13. Overall, my membership in the LGBT Community Band has very little to do with how I feel about myself.
	15. LGBT Community Band is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am.

Table 8*Pearson Correlations Matrix**Psychological Well-Being, Psychosocial Well-Being, Internalized Homonegativity, and Years of Participation*

	Psychological Well-Being	Psychosocial Well-Being	Internalized Homonegativity	Years of Participation
Psychological Well-Being	-	.349**	-.223*	.160
Social Well-Being	-	-	-.191	.085
Internalized Homonegativity	-	-	-	-.110
Years of Participation	-	-	-	-

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Process coding uses gerunds to label actual or conceptual actions of participants (e.g., “fighting,” “risking”). In-Vivo codes are derived directly from the language of the participant, and can manifest either as single words or short phrases. Values coding involves the identification of codes which reflect a participant’s values, attitudes, and beliefs, which represent their personal perspectives or world-views (e.g., “awareness,” “accountability,” “visibility”). Saldaña (2016) specifically recommends Values coding techniques for studies involving identity, belief systems, and inter/intrapersonal participant experiences. In order to further rationalize intentions for selected codes, the researcher also utilized analytic memos (Saldaña, 2016) during the transcription and coding process. Analytic memos are essentially short journal entries, or descriptions, written about codes which serve to justify, explain, and rationalize codes identified by the researcher. Analytic memos, and related materials for the first cycles of coding, can be found in Appendix E. A second coder was consulted for the purposes of reliability. The independent coder was given a random selection of 30% of the interview transcripts to identify words, sentences, and statements that captured the essence of the data. After independently coding the data, the researcher and the reliability coder met to discuss codes that emerged from the data. Consensus was achieved through discussion and review of codes and analytic memos.

Subsequent coding cycles utilized Focused Coding and Code Mapping techniques. Focused Coding is recommended by Saldaña (2016) for coding processes following specifically In-Vivo and Process coding techniques, and is endorsed for all methods of code identification. Focused Coding involves developing connections between

codes purely by categorization, regardless of each code's idiosyncratic property, meaning, or dimension. Relatedly, Code Mapping prompts the researcher to compare items on a list of codes, and sort them into categories that range from physical or real (e.g., people/institutions) to ideological or abstract (e.g., political beliefs/values). Overarching themes were then derived from relationships identified through these grouping methods. Based on the coding procedures, the following five findings emerged:

1. Band members emphasized and prioritized musical motivations for participation.
2. Band members communicated visibility, LGBT normalization, and prestige in global community as incentives for participation.
3. The bands served as a catalyst for positive identity formation and expression.
4. The bands served as an alternative medium for developing social connections and networks
5. Band members communicated shifting values of the ensembles and community.

Finding 1: Band members emphasized and prioritized musical motivations for participation.

When prompted to identify motivations for joining their respective ensembles, participants consistently cited musical motivations for participation over social ones. Beyond being referenced simply as venues for participation in band via the large-ensemble format, the bands were often described as performance environments which provided flexible musical standards, commitments, and requirements relative to their respective abilities, commitments, and various performance needs:

...it's been a place where I can play very comfortably, to the best of my capabilities. And, they [the bands] have been very flexible about [saying] "what do you want to play?" and trying to help me meet their needs. (Greg interview, February 7, 2019)

Further, in terms of participation, being in the bands was often described as "being in any other musical ensemble," in that the primary function of these groups was collectively understood to be about music-making in the community band format, which was desirable given its ubiquity among participants' previous musical experiences:

Well, I think the... being in the band itself was not that different from being in any other musical ensemble. From the time I was in college going on, I've managed to continue to participate almost continuously in some large ensemble or the other, so the experience was like being in any other large ensemble. (Cory interview, February 22, 2019)

Beyond these motivations for participation, musical quality, expertise, and fulfillment were shown to be highly valued by the interviewees. Several codes were derived from the data pertaining to musical quality specifically, these included: "high musicianship," "professional-level," "well-respected," and "legitimate" (see Appendix E). Fulfillment, especially via the creative outlet of music making, was a particularly salient force in driving participation in these community bands:

I know I'm never fully at my most content, and most happy, and most fulfilled – and I never will be – unless I have my music in my life. Because bringing back music in my life... you think you may be struggling with like day to day problems or issues at work, or things that bother you, or relationships that annoy you, and you stress on them, or whatever, you have problems that seem hard to overcome and you can't figure the answer out. And, when I started playing music again, oh my god, suddenly, and almost in an instant, all these little worries went away, and all my problems, things that I was stressing on, suddenly made sense and I knew what I had to do. (John interview, March 5, 2019)

Finding 2: Band members communicated visibility, LGBT normalization, and prestige in global community as incentives for participation.

Visibility, in both the immediate and global communities, were recurrently coded as values for participants in terms of their LGBT band participation. This value was contextualized not only through the act of representing the LGBT community by performing and identifying with an LGBT community band, but also through the importance of normalizing gay culture and lifestyles via visibility to a wider range of the population, namely youth:

We give visibility to the LGBT community, especially to younger folks, like my younger step-siblings. I mean, my family is from a very small town. I didn't know gay people were a thing until I was 13, and so, us putting on our concerts, especially the educational ones that are free to the public, it gives access, it gives people access to the gay community that normally wouldn't [exist]. Because, like I said, a lot of LGBT-centered events are at bars, or at clubs, or they are 21 and over events where families typically don't go. And so, it gives another platform for people to experience the LGBT community, and something that's not a bar, or *Rupaul's Drag Race*. It's normal people, sitting on a stage, and playing music. And, you know, our conductor and his metallic gold blazer and silver pants. (Justine interview, February 3, 2019)

I think it's important that we're visible to all ages. That's the nice thing about our band - it's not just adults that we play for, there are children in our concerts, there are children at the pride festivals, [there are] children at lots of places we perform. We do a lot of different performances, and I think it's important that we show them that it does get better, and that we're not going anywhere, that we are part of this community, and that we can lead normal lives and have friends and family, and be visible as part of the LGBA. Pride, visibility, music. (Tabitha interview, February 19, 2019)

Relationships and visibility between the LGBT ensembles and schools/students were frequently discussed, which was impactful given the role of schools in society as arbiters of morality, societal values, and acculturation. These relationships manifested in a variety of ways. Not only did members report receiving logistical support from schools (e.g., using band room as rehearsal space), some participants described the formation of

LGBT youth ensembles within their respective community band organizations which served to provide analogous visibility, and support, to LGBT youth community members. In one community, the LGBT band was involved annually in what was described as “Rainbow Days” – a week dedicated to promoting visibility for LGBT family configurations in elementary schools:

And, so I think what they do as far as the school, they have certain days where they, you know, explain, they have the parents come to the school, and instead of having like, you know, career day or, you know, your mommies or daddies you know... anyways, it's all explained to the children in a way that is positive and normal and supportive, and then they invite us to come and we do some... we play music for them, and they get a chance to approach us and learn some about the musical instruments, and it's all done in a very normal and healthy environment for the kids. Some of my favorite events are at the schools. (John interview, March 5, 2019)

Relatedly, participants regularly cited community music ensembles, particularly bands, for their societal roles as “wholesome” and “American” – identifiers which were perceived as instrumental in the normalization process through community visibility. Additionally, addressing the musical facets of performance, values of expertise, professionalism, and general artistic contribution were also integrated as tools in cultivating visibility and normalization, namely through combatting stereotypes of LGBT individuals and lifestyles:

The gay people were just like everybody else, and not monsters, and not only out for sex to destruct marriages. So, I believed in that principle of stability, and I thought that was a heart-warming way to do it. What could be more American and wholesome than a marching band? (Cory interview, February 22, 2019)

So what if their identity is gay? They’re bringing a level of performance, a level of expertise, a level of contributions to the community that we are finding very beneficial. (Nathan interview, March 25, 2018)

Visibility in participants’ immediate communities, and beyond, was also referenced as a point of prestige and pride for their respective ensembles. Pride for this

visibility manifested through a plethora of codes, including: “impactful,” “intimidating,” and “premier” (see Appendix E). Further illustrating the established value of prestige in visibility, one band was recently named the official band of the city and county in which the band is located:

We were just signed by the mayor of San Francisco the official band of the city and county of San Francisco, which is, you know, a pretty big deal. And so, we're very well-respected in the city. We do a lot of events in the city. So, my friends, not only supportive, but also impressed, they're proud. I mean, it's a group that... they're all kind of jealous they're not musicians and that they can't also be a part of it. So I discuss it a lot, it's a group I'm very proud of. (John interview, March 5, 2019)

Finding 3: The Bands Served as a Catalyst for Positive Identity Formation, Expression, and Activism

Various facets of the LGBT community bands were described as being beneficial in processes related to identity formation (e.g., coming out), as well as in providing safe-spaces to facilitate the expression of identity through the inherently activist/political nature of these ensembles. Most fundamentally, interviewees cited the significance of expressing identity simply through membership to a musical group which identifies as openly LGBT, for example:

... [The band] gives more opportunities to those people in the LGBT community, that want to make music, and this is a way [they] can and continue to show off their identity. (Emily interview, September 24, 2018)

And I'm getting to the point where I don't hesitate [to identify the name of the LGBT band]. I say [name of the LGBT band]. I think that definitely goes back to growing up for 40 years in [a conservative state], and having to hide that, you know, any association all the time. (Emily interview, September 24, 2018)

In addition to the band serving as a venue in which to demonstrate identity, interviewees frequently discussed the beneficial nature of the band as a safe-space which helped to facilitate identity expression and related processes. For example, these

participants discussed their experiences in joining the band after coming-out, relative to their proximal community's stigma toward their identification:

It [the reason for participating] was mainly because I love playing, and the fact that it was a gay community band was better, because I was newly out, and I was like, this will help me figure out a way to be active in that community, and be more involved in it. (Tabitha interview, February 19, 2019).

So, it's [the band is] a great organization to be a part of, especially in this day and age when, shoot, you know, I could be walking down the street, and where I live, because I live in a very red area of [redacted], you know, my wife and I can't be ourselves. She can come to a concert and support me and afterwards she can come up to me and give me a huge hug and give me a kiss and say "Babe, you were amazing!" And, we can do it in the middle of the theater, and we know no one will do anything, so it's nice to have a safe place to be. (Tabitha interview, February 19, 2019)

[Home state] wasn't really feeling like home anymore. A lot of my friends in [home state] stopped talking to me after I came out, so I felt really out of place.... And [name of LGBT community band] made [current city] feel like home again, which is not something that I was expecting, but it's definitely... it's definitely nice. (Justine interview, February 3, 2019).

And the bands, and that community, was pretty integral in me actually coming out, because I have a fear of loss, I guess, and with all of that [experiences in South] behind me, I knew I knew I was going to be okay. (Samantha interview, September 29, 2018)

Similar to the musical flexibility discussed previously, the bands were also referenced in terms of their unique nature, relative to other community music groups, in allowing participants to demonstrate their identities flexibly, freely, and idiosyncratically:

And I think it's also really good for me to have kind of a safe-space for me to be part of the LGBT community, without necessarily having to be overly-out or anything like that, just kind of have my own little niche that I can participate in my own way. (Athena interview, March 7, 2019)

But, it [the band] was a little different [than the orchestra] in this feel that, you know, in the band, I knew I didn't have to watch what I said whether it was about my life, or my partner, or anything like that, whereas in the orchestra, I did have to watch myself a little bit.... You never want to make someone feel uncomfortable. (Tabitha interview, February 19, 2019)

While the various aforementioned benefits regarding safe-spaces for flexible identity expression are contextualized within adult LGBT community bands, two interviewees acknowledged a trend in the proliferation of LGBT youth ensembles through these existing organizations. One of these band-members, Samantha, described one such ensemble as "...not just a place to play their instrument, but a safe-place where they can come every Wednesday night and just put their frustrations into something, and we'll understand" (Samantha interview, September 29, 2018). Another participant (Athena) corroborated the notion of these youth ensembles as safe-spaces for LGBT youth:

But basically what it was... [it] was after Tyler Clemente's suicide, that really touched off a lot of activism in the community, particularly the "It Gets Better" movement. And basically, what this band was formed to do was act as an honor band, where LGBT students and their allies can have a safe space to come and play together with the adult members, and play side-by-side with the adults, get coaching from the adults, and basically just feel free to be who they are, free from bullying and harassment related to their LGBT status. (Athena interview, March 7, 2019)

Activism, as referenced above by Samantha, is an integral part of community band participation in terms of identity expression and concept. This emphasis on activism can be contextualized in the historical lore associated with the formation of the first LGBT community band in San Francisco. These members of the San Francisco Lesbian and Gay Freedom Band have the following to say regarding the historical foundations of the group:

There's a lot of politics in these groups. You know, the [San Francisco] Freedom Band was founded as a way to build bridges back in the day in '78... between, you know... the straight community and the gay community, and help better foster relations in our allies and help better understand [each other]. The band was formed at the height of [when] the Anita Bryant crusades [were] going in, and you know.... the proposition that, proposition 8... that restricted gay teachers from teaching in California, was going on. And, Harvey Milk was a big thing going on

in San Francisco. Harvey Milk was just elected as the first gay supervisor. In fact, our very first gay parade in San Francisco back then – it was called the "Gay Freedom Day Parade" – they marched behind the convertible that Harvey Milk rode down the street in. I don't know if you saw the movie "Milk," but they recreated all that in San Francisco and hired the band to once again march. So we were all in the movie. It is a very political... there's a lot of politics in it, but it's a good thing. We've come a long way. (John interview, March 5, 2019)

He [the founder of the San Francisco band] charged us with being "Ambassadors of Joy." So, I'm trying to search for words. It was, like I said, it was a way in which I felt comfortable contributing, and making a statement. Back then, leaders like Harvey Milk talked about the importance of coming out and demonstrating. (Cory interview, February 22, 2019)

One way in which this activism regularly manifested was through music selections made by directors for concerts and public performances. Throughout their history, LGBT band leaders programmed music in order to speak to the past and present conditions of the LGBT community, politically and otherwise. Interviewees perceived programming LGBT-related music as a thread connecting the shared experiences of LGBT people in general; a cornerstone of the identity of the community holistically:

But, the same founder of the New York band eventually moved to San Francisco and was one of the directors of the [San Francisco] band for a while. And she would program pieces like "Empty Chairs and Empty Tables" from [*Les Misérables*], speaking directly to that issue [AIDS crisis]. Or, she would program pieces that were arranged by another of the conductors, who had also passed away from AIDS. (Cory interview, February 22, 2019)

[Commissioning LGBT-related pieces] are, you know, it's a sign of respect, and bringing people together with a shared connection. Everyone has a different story, but I think in the LGBT community everyone has, in essence, fought the same fight. And it's our way of paying tribute to the people who did those things before us. I was alive when Stonewall happened, but I was like a little kid. So it's kind of passing the baton to the next generation... and, I think it talks about who we are and where we are going. (Greg interview, February 7, 2019)

Finding 4: The Bands Served as an Alternative Medium for Developing Social Connections and Networks

Social connection and networking, particularly in the context of establishing safe-spaces in which to express identity, were repeatedly cited as central motivators for participation in LGBT community bands:

Having that community is... it's that's just a support system, it's having people around you that you know share your interests and your love of music, and having people that you don't have to hide from, or hide a part of yourself from; because that's not something that I ever want to do again. You know, because the reason we come out is, I don't want to have to hide anymore. And so, being in a group of people who not only love music, but I can freely be who I am as a queer person, is very freeing and liberating. (Justine interview, February 3, 2019)

Further, the LGBT music ensembles were described as venues in which to combat social isolation, and maintain a sense of connectivity to the LGBT community at large:

It [participation in the LGBT band] keeps me engaged in the gay community at the same time.... I think once a week is a great dose my needed "gay-ness" – to feel present and engaged. (Nathan interview, March 25, 2018)

Yeah, it's just kind of my only connection to the gay community. You know, that I have any regular relationships and ritually, you know, this is what I do every week. I kind of grew out of going to the bars a long time ago. So yeah, that's an important connection to the bigger community. (Justin interview, March 12, 2019)

"Family" – and related codes – were ubiquitously derived from interview data pertaining to the ways in which participants described the culture and social climate of their respective LGBT ensembles (see Appendix E). That is, interviewees described the various ways in which the bands functioned as familial support networks, often in the absence of such interpersonal structures (due to proximity or otherwise). The following quote offers a salient perspective of one interview participant:

But with the Freedom Band, it's like... these people have been... they're part of my family. I love them. When we go on vacation, or when the holidays come and

everyone takes off for three weeks, I miss them. I miss them like... I can't wait to see them again. I enjoy these people outside of the group. We do social things together. We, you know, we have bonds that I just don't... that just aren't there with the other groups. And, you know, I feel safe with them. I feel... yeah, I've gotten to know them in ways... and, you know, I have to say that with all of the music groups, the ones I know, I feel in common with all the music groups, because all of these people are working people, they contribute to society. All of them, well, you know, 99% of them have jobs, they are productive, they have families, their own homes. I mean, they're not... you know, I feel good being around them, I mean they all vote. It's a good, positive experience. But, all of them have that. But, with the Freedom Band folks, I also feel a sense of safety, love, I mean, truly love these people. You know, and there's more of a family bond. (John interview, March 5, 2019)

In line with the notion of familial support, the bands were also discussed by interviewees as a place where mentorship/role-model relationships were established in order to foster, or support, healthy identity formation and related processes. The following participant, Tabitha, discusses the importance of these relationships in terms of her own experiences coming out shortly before joining the band:

They're all a lot of the older gays [and] are like big brothers to me.... When I first started band I was in my mid-30s and newly out of the closet, and had no idea what I was doing. They kind of all adopted me. (Tabitha interview, February 19, 2019)

There's a couple times when I had some questions, like, "Ok, so what's this part?" The nice thing is that a lot of them, they've been like some of the people I've met, the older ones, it's been nice to learn the history from them of the gay history. The ones that are in their 60s, going into their 70s, just to hear from them, what they went through, having to hide it all, and, you know, how far they've seen us come. Anytime, the first time we performed we did a performance and it was actually on World AIDS Day. We had people come up and share their stories, and it was just eye-opening to me, because I was a kid when that was going on in the 80s. It was like, okay, people are dying, they don't know what it is, they don't really... they didn't talk about it to me. I was 10, so, you know, it's been... it's nice to be in an ensemble of all different ages so that I can learn the gay history, because I think it's very important, as someone now fighting for our rights, to know what has been in the past. Because you learn from the past, you have to know what has then happened in order to be able to move forward, to know how did they do it, okay well that worked. So, let's continue doing that and build on it. (Tabitha interview, February 19, 2019)

LGBT community bands were not only described as alternative venues to cultivate familial bonds and broaden support networks, but also as constructive, positive influences in the lives of participants. The following interviewees reference their respective bands as having been instrumental in overcoming substance abuse behaviors, and related psychological stressors:

It was so supportive, and it's just like everything that I had once in my life that I had forgotten, it was needed and craved, and forgotten how much... and I still look at it this way, like sometimes every now and then you can't help [who] steps into your life, and you just kind of have to look at it in a way, you have to have better judgement about knowing who is who, and what kind of people you want around you. But, I do use my weekly rehearsals and my time spent around these positive people as a way to kind of determine where I'm... let's see, what am I trying to say... if I find myself like, blowing off rehearsal, or making an excuse not to go, you know, then I use that as a tool to judge myself. Am I like... you know... who do I have around me in my life? Am I partying too much or whatnot? Because, you know, that will be the first indication of where I don't want to be going - making excuses not to do my music, because somebody around me is trying to influence me on that, or I'm drinking too much or this or that. It's always, it's kept me in check, so for 20 years, I've stayed clean, and I'm around these people... I know if I didn't have these people that I saw every week who are positive and have that, you know, support from, then I would probably be a lot more depressed. I know that I probably, I don't know, I don't think that I would be as productive. So, they're not just family and I don't just love them for that, in a way what I'm saying is that I use them as a tool to keep myself in line. Yeah, so that's something personal about me, I don't know. I know it took a long time to get to that point. (John interview, March 5, 2019)

And so, one of them [epiphanies] was to stop living the life that I had been living, because the path I was going down at the time, it had the potential to lead me down a path of self-destruction. And so I had a new lease on life and I just decided, you know, I've done that, and it's time to move on and experience other things. (Nathan interview, March 25, 2018)

Finding 5: Band members communicated shifting values of the ensembles and community.

The perception of a political and social climate which is largely more accepting, and inclusive of LGBT lifestyles prompted a variety of responses from interviewees in terms of their personal/organizational values relative to collective, and personal, goals, identity, and inclusivity. These conversations persistently manifested as discussions surrounding the names of these ensembles, many of which had been changed from incorporating specific identifiers, such as “gay” and “lesbian,” to including more all-encompassing terms such as “rainbow” or “freedom” bands:

Limiting the identifier to “gay” or “lesbian” doesn’t exactly show where we are as a community right now. (Samantha interview, September 29, 2018)

Is there really still a need for a lesbian and gay band, because it's so [accepted now]? But, and every now and then, we find out that yes, there still is [a need], because it's not all about... there's still events and things go on politically as well as, you know, socially that require [the name]... that say we still have a ways to go when it comes to acceptance among, you know, even here in the Bay Area. I mean, our other bands have... that's more obvious and they have a lot more issues than we have. (John interview, March 5, 2019)

I don't know where I stand on that... I don't think it is harmful to use the words... but I am also very proud of it. I don't know, I mean I guess you could say that since we live in a bubble here, I don't know if it's necessary to actually use the words anymore, but then again, like you said, it being San Francisco's, signing it in to be the official band of the city and having those words in it, I'm very proud of that as well. Does that make sense? (John interview, March 5, 2019)

As mentioned by John above, pride in personal identifiers being integrated into the ensemble name was regarded as an important consideration in changing the names of these organizations. Some members acknowledged the dialectic of striving for acceptance and equality, while also feeling a sense of loss of an identity formed around an LGBT-marginalized perspective:

So, it's kind of funny because it's nice that you have so many choices, but at the other time it means you aren't all that special. (Emily interview, September 24, 2018)

There comes a point to when you want to be recognized for who you are, but at the same time you want to be like everyone else. (Nathan interview, March 25, 2018)

We've found our identity. We know our identity... young straight couples have moved in and kind of changed the whole scene, so our identity there is kind of being lost. (Nathan interview, March 25, 2018)

Above, Nathan mentioned "young straight couples," or allies, moving into the LGBT scene and changing the dynamic of the social environment. This observation was corroborated by several other participants. The following interviewee, Justin, discusses his perceptions of the evolving role of allies in his LGBT band below:

It was [an] all LGBTQ band, except for the three [straight allies]. And they're super passionate allies, but the band was kind of busted by those three women, and that kind of grew year-by-year, and so we have a really mixed group. Allies, straight, everything. And that also kind of was, I stay away from the Lord and the politics, that's not why I go to the band. But, a couple people left the band because they allowed someone who wasn't gay to be on the board. (Justin interview, March 12, 2019)

You know, I think I said a couple people stepped away from... like, some of the original people, [who] thought the gay band needs to be all gay. And, I think, and I think most of the people, and it's been, I don't know if I can generalize, but it's been more welcoming being a mixed group. And allies have been nothing but beautiful, and make us stronger, and I've wanted to shake a couple people and just say, "come on, look at the bigger picture." I think if we learn anything from marriage equality, we absolutely need diverse communities and the support of allies to get things done, and to live in the world. That's my personal opinion. The band kind of mirrors that right now. (Justin interview, March 12, 2019)

According to interview data, LGBT community bands were not the only institutions within the community evolving with its constituents. Bars and dance clubs were often discussed by participants as having changed in nature to become pillars of support for the contemporary LGBT community. John has the following to say regarding

the evolution of one niche of gay bar culture symbiotically with his own LGBT
community band:

It [the bar/club scene] doesn't exist like it used to. Like there's no more big dance houses [or] dance halls like the Trocadero, or Ivy, or whatnot. It's mainly, you know, just the bar scene. Some of them have dance floors, but as far as the leather party community goes within the gay community, they're [the gay bars], all the music organizations, the gay men's chorus and the lesbian gay chorus in San Francisco, and the band, they're all very much respected within those communities. And, coexist beautifully within the city. (John interview, March 5, 2019)

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine what relationships exist, if any, between psychological well-being, psychosocial well-being, internalized homonegativity (IH), and LGBT community band participation, as well as to holistically investigate these constructs, with identity formation, through participant experiences. Specifically, the following research questions were addressed: (1) What relationships, if any, exist between psychological well-being, psychosocial well-being, IH, and LGBT community band participation? (2) In what ways, if any, does participation in LGBT community influence members' homosexual identity formation (HIF)?

Addressing the first research question, analysis of survey data revealed several interesting findings. Upon correlational analysis of the data, a moderate positive relationship between psychological and psychosocial well-being was found in LGBT band participants, suggesting that positive psychological well-being (at the time of test) was significantly related to higher measures of collective self-esteem in the context of LGBT band affiliation. These findings are in line with research by Luhtanen and Crocker (1992), who proposed that well-being was contingent on collective self-esteem, or psychosocial well-being in terms of individual perceptions of self and group efficacy, effectiveness, and worth. In the context of this study, the positive relationship between psychological and psychosocial well-being suggests that positive perceptions of participants' social group, namely LGBT community bands, were associated with lower measures of psychological distress and depressive symptomology. This finding is in line with previous research, which found that higher measures of collective self-esteem were

significantly related to lower measures of psychological distress, and social connectedness, in both LGBT youth and general populations (Detrie & Lease, 2007; Sánchez, Vilain, & Mallinckrodt, 2009). Considering the framework of minority stress, Meyer's (2003) assertion that the LGBT minority status is associated with "group solidarity and cohesiveness" (i.e., social well-being) that "[protects] minority members from adverse mental health" (p. 677) is in line with these findings.

Further, correlational analysis of the data revealed a weak negative correlation between internalized homonegativity (IH) and psychological well-being, suggesting that higher measures of internalized stigma were associated with lower measures of psychological well-being. This finding is corroborated by previous research proposing negative relationships between psychological distress and IH (e.g., Berg et al., 2016; Herek et al., 1998; Ross & Rosser, 1996). However, no significant relationship was observed between social well-being and IH. This finding is somewhat at odds with previous research supporting relationships between social-connectedness and internalized sexual stigma (e.g., Herek et al., 1998). However, further research may need to be conducted in order to more deeply investigate the relationships between internalized homonegativity and social support (i.e., collective self-esteem) with what Detrie and Lease (2007) differentiate from social connectedness, especially in the context of LGBT community bands.

Given the medial position of psychological well-being between collective self-esteem and internalized homonegativity, it may be appropriate here to assert the possibility of collective self-esteem moderating the impact of internalized stigma on psychological distress, which is an effect that has been investigated in previous research

(e.g., Mason et al., 2015). However, more research is needed to investigate the potential role of collective self-esteem serving as a buffer between IH and psychological well-being in the context of psychosocial well-being through LGBT community band participation.

Observing the relationship between the three aforementioned constructs – psychological well-being, social well-being, and internalized homonegativity – and years of LGBT community band participation yielded no significant correlations. While it may be possible that no relationship exists between these constructs and length of participation, it may as well suggest a non-linear relationship between them. While the following discussion of interview data may help holistically illustrate this notion, more research on the matter would be necessary to investigate the non-linear relationships between years of LGBT community band participation and the constructs of psychological well-being, social well-being, and internalized homonegativity.

Addressing the second research question, many noteworthy findings were derived from interview data pertaining to both identity formation, and the constructs discussed thus far. In line with research by Cavitt, (2005), Darrough (1992), and Mantie and Tan (2019), participants cited the normative incentive of music-making as the primary, or at least initial, motivation for participation. Interviewees frequently discussed the band as being “like any other ensemble” in terms of musical participation. Additionally, the organizational effectiveness of the bands was often contextualized by ensemble-members through their musical-clout, and positive reputations, among other musicians and the surrounding community in general.

Related to public perception, promoting LGBT visibility through the medium of LGBT band participation was a strong secondary normative value after the purely musical incentive. This value of visibility is a particularly salient point in the context of organizational theory, as normative incentives are defined as the value of “civic obligations to contribute a fair share or strong convictions about the value of the global purposes sought by the organization” (Knoke & Prenskey, 1984, p. 5). The “global purposes” or “civic obligations” here would be the visibility of the LGBT experience through community band participation and performance. These findings mirror themes from research by Bird (2017), Hilliard (2002), and Latimer (2008), who found similar values for visibility among LGBT community choir participants. Further regarding visibility, the effectiveness of these organizations, in terms of ability to influence public perception and policy in the domain of the bands’ collective values, manifested through the experience of one ensemble, which was named the official band of the city and county of San Francisco. This recognition by the mayor, an “elite” in the surrounding community, exemplifies the LGBT community band’s capacity to serve as a medium for positive visibility through the mode of musical expression.

Visibility was especially valued in terms of youth and family audiences; codes such as “family friendly” and “American” were frequently used to describe the bands in this context. Through the lens of organizational effectiveness, the incorporation of this language can be interpreted as an appeal to normalize gay culture to the “organizational elites” of society in general, who would here manifest as the heteronormative/cis-gender, predominant sect of the population. The incentive to demonstrate that LGBT individuals are not “monsters,” that their lifestyles are not “destructive,” and that they are “just like

everyone else,” through a medium (bands) which lends itself to the predominant, traditional, heteronormative sect of society, can be understood as a means of normalizing and communicating LGBT identity through musical participation and visibility; because “what could be more American and wholesome than a marching band?” (Cory interview, February 22, 2019).

A perhaps tertiary incentive to musical motivation and visibility/normalization was the affective value of identity expression, formation, and related processes (e.g., coming out) cited by participants. Most fundamentally, interviewees communicated the ability to express identity freely simply by belonging to a musical group which identifies as LGBT. This perception was conveyed repeatedly through codes associated with “safe-spaces” which were cultivated by the ensemble environment in order to foster a flexible and idiosyncratic venue for identity expression. Through one particularly salient experience, a participant proposed that their comfort in disclosing the identity of the band coincided with their own comfort in disclosing their sexual identity, which had evolved considerably from their upbringing in a conservative region of the country. The identity of (and with) the band (i.e., collective self-esteem) mediating fear of disclosure – an aspect of internalized homonegativity – could be interpreted as experiential evidence for collective self-esteem’s potential in buffering the effect between the two constructs (see Mason et al., 2015). As mentioned before, this buffer-relationship, in the context of LGBT community bands, requires further research to be validated.

Another prominent incentive for participation in LGBT community bands related to the activist/politically-oriented nature of the ensembles. Historically speaking, older members of the ensembles cited the origins of the group relative to the origins of the gay-

rights movement in the 1970s. These origin stories parallel the published history of LGBT community choirs in San Francisco; for example, each ensemble had their first performance in San Francisco the night Harvey Milk was assassinated. While further research is needed to verify the factual history of the Lesbian and Gay Bands Association (LGBA), the underlying themes of these ensembles emerging in response to the political climate at the time are consistent with the foundation of LGBT choral community ensembles (e.g., Hilliard, 2002). These activist-oriented, political motivations were frequently cited by participants, and functioned as a normative incentive for participation which fostered a sense of contribution to the LGBT community at large. This activism also manifested through the musical selections of the directors, who often programmed music related to the LGBT experience and history. Programming music in this context was described as a means of “showing respect” to the previous generation, and “passing the baton” to the new one. In addition to transmitting and communicating LGBT history and experience, learning and acknowledging the history of the LGBT community through these musical experiences was itself a valued aspect of community band participation.

For some participants, learning this history was a social benefit derived from coming to know older members of the band through these community ensembles. One interviewee described her senior bandmates as “older brothers” who took an active role in not only helping educate her of the LGBT community’s history, but also in helping enculture her into the LGBT community at large when she first came out of the closet. This experience corroborates research which proposes that LGBT individuals in the formative stages of identity acquisition may seek out parental figures and role-models to assist in crossing over into the LGBT community (Nesmith, Burton, & Cosgrove, 1999).

This social benefit exemplifies the affective incentive of social connection, and networking, by participants. McPherson et al. (1992) described voluntary associations and social networks as “co-evolutionary forms,” implying that they grow and evolve with, and from, each other. In terms of affective value, social networks derivative of ensemble participation were frequently cited by interviewees as an incentive for participation. This manifested both inter-organizationally (e.g., support from other bandmates in finding an instrument for a co-worker’s foster child) and intra-organizationally (e.g., band members from another city letting the interviewee’s wife stay with them on a cross-country road trip, despite not knowing her personally).

This finding coincides with the HIF model (Cass, 1979), in that it exemplifies the central role social connections play in identity acquisition and development. While social incentives do not eclipse musical motivations for participation, they were often cited as the primary motive for staying in the ensemble when given an ultimatum (e.g., choosing to participate in an LGBT or traditional community ensemble). LGBT and traditional community ensembles were frequently equated in terms of musical participation and motivations; however, participants also repeatedly described non-LGBT ensembles as lacking in the quality of “safe-space” in which to express identity without fear. Thus, while social motivations did not precede musical ones, they did appear often to take precedence when participants were prompted with a choice to participate in an LGBT ensemble or a traditional ensemble; this choice is, in itself, an indication of a healthy community band ecology in the United States.

In terms of the value of social connection and networking, participants often described their “love” and “familial” connections with other members of the LGBT

community bands. Further, this affective value extended so far as to be a tool for combatting social isolation – a factor related to psychological distress in LGBT individuals. One participant cited their band as instrumental in regulating behavior related to psychological distress and substance abuse, claiming that the positive support he derived from his bandmates assisted in moderating his tendencies toward alcohol and socially precarious situations. Considering the established relationships between psychological distress, risky sexual behaviors, and substance abuse in LGBT individuals, particularly youth (e.g., Greenwood, 2001; Jordan, 2000; Sullivan & Wodarski, 2002), even anecdotal evidence of LGBT community band participation moderating individual tendencies toward these behaviors should be a further direction for research based on these experiences.

An overarching theme across multiple interviews surrounded the names of these LGBT band organizations, and their effectiveness in reflecting the community's extant values, goals, and identities. As a part of the formal structure of the bands, the name was often a point of contention among ensemble participants. While some felt that it was important to have specific identifiers in the name (e.g., "Lesbian and Gay Band") by justification of maintaining an activist-valence and promoting visibility, many claimed that a more neutral term (e.g., "Rainbow Band," "Freedom Band") was organizationally more effective in communicating the ensembles' collective goals of inclusivity.

This dialectic is reflected in what participants consistently described as a "dilution" or "appropriation" of identity, "So, it's kind of funny because it's nice that you have so many choices, but at the other time it means you aren't all that special" (Emily interview, September 24, 2018). While this experience, through organizational theory,

reflects a healthy ecology of specialization in terms of instrumental community music, it also illustrates how environmental conditions may be more nuanced than “healthy,” or “unhealthy,” for a population like the LGBT community. While options for acculturation, socialization, and identity expression proliferate beyond bars and nightclubs (i.e., LGBT community bands), a juxtaposition of normalization and acceptance over an identity formed around minority status and political activism threatens that which was frequently cited as a strong normative incentive for participation in these ensembles in the first place – contributing, in a political paradigm, to an organization which inherently challenges the status quo of a heteronormative society.

This dilution was repeatedly contextualized through the propagation of ally membership, which has, according to interviewees, increased greatly over the years. One participant described how the growing number of allies in their band “rocked the boat,” and eventually led to some LGBT members quitting the ensemble when an ally was elected to the board of officials. This exemplifies the aforementioned dialectic, as the bands were “founded as a way to build bridges back in the day in '78... between, you know... the straight community and the gay community, and help better foster relations in our allies and help better understand [each other]” (Cory interview, February 22, 2019).

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study that potentially may have influenced the results, and also exemplify the need for more research in the context of LGBT identity formation, psychological/social well-being, collective self-esteem, and internalized homonegativity. The inherently independent nature of gender and sexual identities rendered investigating “identity formation” within the context of an LGBT population

sample difficult through one single identity framework. The original incorporation of Cass's (1979) framework of homosexual identity formation for its quantitative development turned out to be quite limiting, in that it did not exhibit the capacity to investigate a population with nuanced, diverse sexual/gender identifications. In the future, a similar study might choose to adopt a different framework for identity formation – perhaps Renn and Bilodeau's (2005) "lifespan approach."

Similarly, the construct of "homonegativity" does not necessarily address internalized stigma for transgender individuals, especially in terms of their transgender identities. While future researchers might choose to incorporate, or develop, a more generalized scale for measuring internalized stigma in these populations, they may also consider narrowing the scope of the study to encompass only one identification, as the nature of internalized stigma is heavily contingent on the idiosyncrasies of that identification. This specialization of study by identification is in line with research by Jorm, et al., (2002), who proposed that bisexual individuals may experience more psychological distress than their lesbian and gay counterparts, thus potentially skewing data in most extant studies of these, and related, constructs.

Further, the results yielded from the survey portion of this study do not tell us how measures of internalized homonegativity, social well-being, and psychological well-being in LGBT community band participants compare to the general LGBT population. Future researchers may choose to investigate how these constructs compare between LGBT community band members, and the general LGBT population.

Finally, data collected pertaining to the second research question (i.e., interview data) do not represent a robust qualitative analysis of identity formation, or any of the

other constructs – these interviews alone served to provide a holistic perspective of community band participant experiences relative to the constructs of identity formation, internalized homonegativity, and psychological/social well-being. Based on the plethora of evocative data collected from these interviews, further research via a robust qualitative analysis of identity formation processes (or any of the aforementioned constructs) in the context of LGBT band participation would be a viable direction for future research.

Implications for Music Education in Public Schools

LGBT community bands, through growing programs like LGBT youth ensembles, have the capacity to provide access to safe-spaces for identity expression and development which, for the most part, do not exist for LGBT students in public school music classrooms. However, this mode of participation requires a specific degree of parental, familial, and musical support which is not accessible to all, or even most, students contemporarily. Extrapolating on the newfound relationship between psychological well-being and collective self-esteem in community band members, LGBT – and non-LGBT – public school music students may also benefit psychologically from the establishment of positive social identities (i.e., collective self-esteem) within school music programs. Various partnerships between the LGBT community and schools were cited throughout the interview process of this study; for example, “Rainbow Days,” to which one local LGBT community band regularly contributed, sought to promote visibility and normalization for LGBT families in the community’s public elementary schools. Considering the present findings promoting well-being through visibility/normalization and social-support, more research should be conducted investigating effective ways to foster these partnerships across a variety of communities,

especially those which have social or political climates which may oppose these partnerships.

Further, the present study exemplifies not only the importance of visibility for LGBT musicians in the community and in our educational environments, but also the stark lack of visibility for LGBT students in our public-school music classrooms. Future research should aim to develop music teacher training/practices, as well as curricular adaptations, which may be utilized in a variety of communities (conservative or otherwise) to promote visibility and support for LGBT students, who will constitute 10% of students we encounter yearly in our public schools (Mayberry, 2006). In terms of teacher training, supportive practices for LGBT students in music classrooms require further elaboration through research, especially regarding transgender individuals. While Silveira and Goff (2016) investigated music teachers' attitudes toward transgender individuals and supportive practices in public schools, more studies are needed in order to investigate methods for directly adapting teacher-education programs to equip future music educators with tools for supporting transgender individuals especially. Additionally, while some researchers (e.g., Knotts & Gregorio, 2011) have investigated the effects of curricular visibility – namely through programming and discussing music by known LGBT composers – on student perceptions of LGBT-issues in music in progressive social environments, more research is needed in order to determine specifically how to adapt the music curriculum to promote visibility and support LGBT students across a variety of political and social climates.

Conclusions

While the results of this study indicate relationships between psychological well-being, collective self-esteem, and internalized homonegativity in the context of community band participation, more specialized and focused research is needed to more robustly, and reliably, investigate these constructs – especially identity formation – in a gender/sexually diverse population like LGBT community bands. The present research signifies the beginning of an investigation of LGBT community bands in the context of identity formation, psychological/social well-being, and internalized stigma. It is the hope of this researcher that this study serves as a point of departure for more related research, and more conversations pertaining to LGBT visibility, advocacy, and support in music education.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for participating in this research study!

Before you begin, please read over the information below and check the appropriate answer to consent or decline to participate.

Activities:

If you agree to participate in this study, you will complete a brief questionnaire regarding identity and well-being. You will also be given the opportunity to volunteer to participate in a one-on-one interview with the researchers to expand upon your responses if you choose to do so. The total time to complete the questionnaire will be approximately 10-15 minutes.

Risks/Benefits:

This study is low risk as you will be providing your opinion and perceptions about your own experiences. This study is not designed to benefit you directly, although this research will promote visibility and advocacy for the LGBT community.

Payment:

You will not be paid for your participation.

Confidentiality:

No identifiable information will be collected from you; the researchers will not know the identities of who completed this questionnaire (unless you volunteer to be interviewed). Your responses will be confidential and anonymous to the extent permitted by the technology being used. If you volunteer to be interviewed, no identifying information will be provided in the final research report.

Voluntariness:

Participation in this research study is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any time without consequence.

Contact Information:

Should you have any questions about this research study, please contact the principal investigator, Nick Soenyun, at nsoenyun@uoregon.edu.

Sponsor:

This research is unfunded.

Please select one:

- I **agree** and **do consent** to participate in this study.
- I **do not agree** and **do not consent** to participate in this study

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

What is your age?

For how long have you participated in this group/ensemble?

I identify as: (Check all that apply)

- Female
- Male
- Transgender
- Non-binary
- Other (please specify)

Q5 I Identify as: (Check all that apply)

- Lesbian
 - Gay
 - Bisexual
 - Heterosexual
 - Other (please specify)
-

What is your highest level of education?

- Less than high school
 - High school of equivalent diploma
 - Some college
 - 2 year degree
 - 4 year degree
 - Professional degree
 - Doctorate
 - Other (please specify)
-

Please use the space below to add any additional comments you may have (optional).

(SDHS) Below is a list of ways you might have felt or behaved. Please respond with how often you have felt/behaved in these ways during the past seven days by selecting from the options below.

	Rarely (≤ 1 day)	Sometimes (1-2 days)	Occasionally (3-4 days)	Frequently (5-7 days)
I felt dissatisfied with my life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt happy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt cheerless	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt pleased with the way I am	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt that life was enjoyable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt that life was meaningless	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

(CSES) We are all members of different social groups or social categories. One such social group is your membership in this LGBT community band. Considering your membership in this group, please respond to the following statements indicating your level of agreement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am a worthy member of the LGBT Community Band.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like I don't have much to offer the LGBT Community Band.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am a cooperative participant of the LGBT Community Band.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often feel I'm a worthless member of the LGBT Community Band.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often regret that I belong to an LGBT Community Band.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In general,
I'm glad to
be a
member of
an LGBT
Community
Band.

Overall, I
feel that the
LGBT
Community
Band is not
worthwhile.

I feel good
about the
LGBT
Community
Band.

Overall, the
LGBT
Community
Band is
considered
good by
others.

Most
people
consider my
LGBT
Community
Band, on
the average,
to be more
ineffective
than other
social
groups.

In general,
others
respect the
LGBT
Community
Band that I

belong to.

In general,
others think
that the
LGBT
Community
Band is
unworthy.

Overall, my
membership
in the
LGBT
Community
Band has
very little to
do with
how I feel
about
myself.

The LGBT
Community
Band is an
important
reflection of
who I am.

LGBT
Community
Band is
unimportant
to my sense
of what
kind of
person I
am.

In general,
belonging
to the
LGBT
Community
Band is an
important
part of my
self-image.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
I am careful of what I wear and what I say to avoid showing my sexual identity. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I have sex with someone of the same gender, I feel awkward. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I feel attracted to another LGBT person, I hope no one realizes it. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sometime I think that if I were heterosexual/cis-gender, I could be happier. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At work, I pretend to be heterosexual/cis-gender. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

APPENDIX B

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

DATE: November 26, 2018 **IRB Protocol Number: 10212018.034**
TO: Nick Soenyun, Principal Investigator
School of Music
RE: Protocol entitled, "Identity Formation and Well-being in LGBT Community Bands"

Notice of Review and Exempt Determination

The above protocol has been reviewed and determined to qualify for exemption as per the Common Rule regulations found at Title 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2). The research is approved to be conducted as described in the attached materials.

Any change to this research will need to be assessed to ensure the study continues to qualify for exemption, therefore an amendment will need to be submitted for verification prior to initiating proposed changes.

Approval period: November 26, 2018 - June 30, 2019

If you anticipate the research will continue beyond the approval period, you must submit a Progress Report at least 45-days in advance of the study expiration. **Without continued approval, the protocol will expire on June 30, 2019 and human subject research activities must cease.** A closure report must be submitted once human subject research activities are complete. Failure to maintain current approval or properly close the protocol constitutes non-compliance.

You are responsible for the conduct of this research and adhering to the Investigator Agreement as reiterated below. You must maintain oversight of all research personnel to ensure compliance with the approved protocol.

The University of Oregon and Research Compliance Services appreciate your commitment to the ethical and responsible conduct of research with human subjects.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brandi Fleck'.

Brandi Fleck
Research Compliance Administrator

COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS ● RESEARCH COMPLIANCE SERVICES
677 E. 12th Ave., Suite 500, 5237 University of Oregon, Eugene OR 97401-5237
T 541-346-2510 F 541-346-5138 <http://rcs.uoregon.edu>

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APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why did you decide to join this ensemble?
2. How often would you say you discuss your participation in this ensemble with your family and friends outside of the ensemble? What do you talk about?
3. How do you feel other musicians or community music ensembles in the area view your band?
4. Can you describe the community or culture of the ensemble?
5. Was there a particular event or moment in your life that made you want to join this group?
6. What are the benefits of participating in this ensemble?
7. Do you, or have you ever, participated in gay bar/nightclub scene or culture? What are/were your motivations for doing so?
8. How do you feel that participation, or non-participation impacted you?
9. Can you describe your relationships with others in the ensemble?
10. How important is it to you to participate in this ensemble? In what ways, if any, do you feel that this ensemble is important to the community at large, and the LGBT community specifically?

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

“GREG”

N: “First of all, can you tell me a little bit about why you decided to join the Desert Wind Bands?”

G: “Yeah. I recently moved to [Redacted]. I spent the last 25 years in Olympia. You’re from Oregon, right?”

N: “Yeah, I’m in Eugene.”

G: “I’m going to [redacted] this weekend to see my daughter. In the Snow, great. So, I spent 25 years in Olympia, and even though I had a banking job, my background is in music. My degrees – I have a bachelor in Music Ed, and a masters in multiple woodwinds performance, so I’m a woodwind doubler – I moved to Washington, although I had a day job with a credit union, I was very active as a freelance musician. And one day, I guess it was almost 20 years ago, overnight, after a dress rehearsal for a show I was doing, I woke up the next morning and I couldn’t play. I don’t know what your instrument is, but as a woodwind player my embouchure is my bread and butter. My lips were like... I couldn’t even form an embouchure, and it just came out of the blue. It was a big shock, and I spent about two years doing research and trying to figure out what it was. I went to neurology, massage therapy, I had been at a music store trying piccolos about a month earlier for about half an hour, just playing piccolos, and so I called my flute teacher in Ohio, she had had lupus. You know, all this stuff, and it took about two years until I finally found a neurologist who said, ‘Oh, I know what this is. Focal dystonia.’ And its getting to be more commonly known for guitar players, pianists, people who use their hands a lot more. Embouchure dystonia is rare; it’s a little more common in brass players than it is woodwind players. And it was pretty devastating to my career, I couldn’t play at all for several months, and then after that it was just kind of a learning while we go. There wasn’t really a lot of treatment for it at that point. My neurologist said ‘the only treatment being done right now is at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore,’ and all they’re doing is they’re using very strategically placed botchillen(?) injections. Like, you know, for they’d do like plastic surgery and you know they’ll freeze whatever. And so it freezes like nerve activity, muscle activity, and it’s like so they’d have to know exactly what they’re doing with your embouchure, you know, you’d have to continue to go to Baltimore to get these done, fly from the West Coast, and there’s always the risk that you’re just not going to play at all for a couple months until the botchillen(?) wears off. So, I decided to go my own course and work a lot with icing and different medications. And it’s a very less related thing, so I was a high woodwind player so I was piccolo, flute, oboe, alto sax kind of stuff, and I, through the years, definitely noticed a degradation in my playing. This was almost 20 years ago. And so, there are certain instruments where, you know, my endurance is down, I can’t play the entire run of a show anymore, I would split nights with other players. And certainly the instruments that I can play are... they’re kind of drifting off. I’ve got a whole studio of about 20 instruments, and I’m in the process actually of trying to sell instruments that I know I will never play again. So, for me, it was a very... musicians with dystonia, it’s a psychological... its just an upheaval. It

completely... it's like finding yourself unable to walk. That you wake up and you just can't walk. You know, it completely changes, like what am I gonna do. And for a musician, that my was my whole identity. So it was psychologically just a big struggle, and I had to figure out 'what am I gonna do next?' And I had started learning the viola in 2010, I quit my credit union job because I was in the middle of the last recession and I was signing off on all the foreclosures, and it was really bad ju-ju, and I just hated it. It was terrible grinding work, I was supervisor, it was just awful. And so I said 'I need to get back in the classroom, do some music teaching;' the old 'get some good karma back.' So I quit that job and I actually became a teacher in a school district in Tomar, I don't know if you know, its just outside of Olympia, its kind of a farm community (kind of). And they hired me and they said 'We're gonna have you do winds and strings. Band and orchestra both' and I said 'sure – elementary, I can do that.' I hadn't played violin in 20, 25 years since, gosh, college. And when we finally got around to the school year rolling they just said 'Nah... we're just going to keep you on strings.' So I went to string camp – I had played violin for a year in college, I kind of had a background. And I decided I was going to get really serious about one instrument, uhm the ASTA, the string teachers association, recommended new string teachers, pick one, whatever your capability is, and just work on it. So, I decided to pick the viola because it was weird and I was always drawn to the weird stuff: bass clarinet...

N: "I'd pick that too."

G: "Are you a violist?"

N: "No, I wish I was!"

G: "Haha, so I studied with a couple players from the symphony players there, and started to get my viola chops going, and when, the last four years that I was in Olympia, I eventually got into a symphony there, through one of the community colleges. It was a very, very good symphony because the conductor was a big draw, and he recruited a lot of his old students who were just monster players and retired, other musicians. So I was, I'm like, my wind playing timeline, you know, it has a pretty short wick on it. I know this, so I need to continue as a musician, I better find something else to do. So I got serious about my viola playing, and I was still struggling to play the contrabassoon in the symphony in Olympia, which is about the loosest thing that I could find to play, and you don't play it that often, so it worked out great. You know once a week I could mess around on the contrabassoon for a few hours. So when I moved down here to [Redacted], I said I'm gonna lay low. It was awful to be in Olympia, in a place where I lived for 25 years, where everyone knew me as 'that music guy,' and they would call me and say 'would you play something for my church? Would you play oboe for this piece?' And I would start to stress out and most times I would have to bag out and say 'I thought I could do this but I just can't.' And it was... that was worse than not playing at all. So, when I came down here, I'm just gonna lay low, and see what the music scene is, and find if there's a little something I can do, where I'm not gonna over-commit. And nobody knows I'm a musician, so I'm just going to shut up and I'm gonna find out what group(s), who's around here, what can I do? Just teach... you know, whatever. And I had been down here, my husband and I bought this house 3 years ago, figuring we were going to retire. And on one of our little trips down here, on a vacation down from Olympia, it happened to be the weekend that the AIDS walk was going on, and we're like 'Oh! Well, we're here, let's go participate, and we'll get our friends to pledge and you know.' So we

were marching, we're with all the walkers, and I hear this music and I was like 'oh there's like a high school band playing.' So we turn this corner, and there's this whole concert band of adults on the street playing Donna Summer or something. So we're walking by and I stop and read the banner, it said: '[Redacted] Freedom band: LGBT Band.' And knew there was a band in Seattle, when I lived in Ohio there was one in Columbus, I was aware of kind of the like Rainbow band organizations, and I thought they were really cool. And I always thought 'Someday I live somewhere where there's a rainbow band and I'll play with them.' So I saw these guys and I got really excited. And so I instantly went online to see what can I do, what can I do. Well they only, well everything here in [Redacted] pretty much stops 6-7 months a year because its too hot – nobody is here. Between October and April is what we call 'season' and everyone comes down from the North, and the town like quadruples in size, all the tourist events happen, and all that. So the band, and all the other performing arts groups here, pretty much shut down from April and start to get back in the swing of things in September. So after I had moved down here in April, I was like okay, I was starting to figure out this was something that I wanted to do, so I was able, over the summer, to get in touch with the, Dean McDonald, the director, and also the board president. They both called me back and they said 'what do you want to do?' And I said 'Ok, listen. My embouchure abilities are limited, I would love to play oboe or bassoon for you, but it's a big commitment. However, I play these other low instruments and I have a big contrabass clarinet that no one has.'

N: "You own one, really?"

G: "Yeah. And I had just bought it like the year before, thinking 'I'm running out of stuff I can do with my embouchure. I had a bass clarinet, I actually went on tour with the Tacoma concert band last year in Europe and did great so I thought I could play bass clarinet, I could play contrabass, whatever. So he's like 'oh yeah let's do that.' I did the season on contrabass. And uh, people come and go in the band, and mostly they come, and between the seasons, D never knows who is going to show up to the first rehearsal. So the first rehearsal he looks around and he's like 'wow, we normally have like 10 saxes and now we have like... four, so I could really use some more beef in the sax section.' And so the next week he called me and said 'were going to have too many bass clarinets.' Even the contra, he said someone just called him saying he wants to play contra. 'So would you be willing to play contra?' and I said 'Yeah I can do that.' So I slid over and started playing sax in the alto group, and I was playing second, it was great for me, I could use really thin reeds and just play low. And then the principle sax left after the first concert, he moved out of state. And I was like 'Ughh.' Because Dean said 'Now I need you to play principle.' Now I gotta work on my thick reeds. So, I guess, the long and the short of it is, to answer your question, the reason that playing in the band is important to me, and how I got involved, is, it's been, a place where I can play very comfortably, to the best of my capabilities. And they've been very flexible about 'what do you want to play' and trying to help me meet their needs, and if I said I absolutely can't play alto, I have to go back to playing something lower, they would do that. And then, there are a few people Dean knows about my dystonia, I've talked to a couple other guys in the band who actually had it, experienced with dystonia, and they've been very supportive. But, it's just, I like the people in the band, so its important for me to do that. You know, I am playing viola in a symphony here, so I'm able to check both of those boxes.

N: "Busy, then!"

G: "Yeah! It's a nice band rehearsal at 7."

N: "Yeah, how many times a week do you guys meet?"

G: "Once. Thursday nights from 7-9:30. There's jazz band also that's an off-shoot, and they rehearse for like 45 minutes or an hour before us.

N: "Gotcha. So, how often do you, or, does the band come up in conversation... is it a big part of your life to the point where you're talking about it with friends and family and inviting them to events? How often do you say you talk about it?"

G: "Yeah! You know, I talk to my mom, she's still in Ohio, you know I talk to her on a fairly regular basis every week or two. And she's a musician, so she always likes to know what's going on here. Uhm, and so, my family here, its myself and my husband, and then we have two adult kids, and my daughter lives in Olympia, and she actually happened to be down here over Thanksgiving, when we had our first band concert. She actually came to our first band concert and then during Spring break she said she was going to hit our last concert. So they're excited about it. And the concerts all have a theme, so to the public, that's a good identity, something fun for them to do, and the next concert is all about civil rights. The different pieces represent, there's a piece about Stonewall. We commissioned a piece written about the Stonewall Riots. It's the first US piece actually to be commissioned. We're doing that, some music from the gay games, but we're also doing some stuff about racial discrimination, and ethnic groups that have been harassed. So it's going to be a cool concert, and everyone that I've invited to it says 'that's a great thing in this community. I want to be there.'"

N: "Can you maybe talk a little bit more about maybe the value of commissioning pieces that raise awareness on LGBT issues or politics like the AIDS, or Stonewall piece."

G: "Yeah, it's incredibly important here. Have you been to [Redacted]?"

N: "Mmm, once or twice, but I was kind of young, so."

G: "Yeah, [Redacted] is probably one of the most heavily gay-populated communities per capita in the country. You know, here, Provincetown, Key West. I think we beat out [redacted] in numbers, just because it's, you know, it's millions of people and it's just not a big deal there, you know, it's just like another demographic. Here, the population demographic in [Redacted] proper skews older. I mean, you're not going to see a whole lot of millennials walking down the street holding hands, unless they're here for an event. Tourism is our industry, and that's cool. We love our guests. So most people that move here are gay men in their 50's, or older, who have retired and moved to [Redacted]. So, a lot of us here, you know big joke is everybody looks like me. You know, my age, you know, not a lot of hair and the white beard and the glasses... everybody in the city seriously. But a lot of the folks here, I was just having a conversation with another guy my age talking about this very thing, a lot of the people here in the community have lived through the difficult times in gay rights. You know, have fought their own battles. You know, I know a lot of people who were kicked out of the house when they came out, who were married then outed, all kinds of horror stories. My backstory is, when I was with my ex in Washington, we were actually plaintiffs with the ACLU, we sued the state for the right to marry. We were in Newsweek, our picture was in Newsweek, and we were set to be the next state to give marriage rights back in 2007. The case was heard in 2005, and then we had to wait a year and a half to hear the verdict, and we lost by one vote in the Supreme Court. So, for me, that was my, kind of my banner moment. I'm not an activist,

I don't stand out on corners and wave signs, but it was a real turning point for me because I thought you know, this is what I did. I didn't win, but this was a stepping-block and there were kids from colleges all over the state that had driven all night to come to the court case in Olympia, and stand there in their t-shirts that say "we love our plaintiffs," you know they're from these LGBT groups, you know I thought it was, for me, this is the one thing that I've done, that is gonna carry on as I've made it an incremental step. So, everybody here has a story, everybody here... it has not been easy for everybody that I know. And it's been a lot easier I think in a lot of ways for younger generations that have followed, just because they're used to it. You know, I can go into any high school here and there's girls kissing in the cafeteria, and you know there's guys walking, you know the football captain and the baseball captain are going to prom together. You know, it's cool, and it's kind of in vogue. You can't say that about the entire country, but Southern California is pretty liberal in a lot of ways, and in this community, I think commissioning works that are LGBT-related, are, you know it's a sign of respect, and bringing people together with a shared connection. Everyone has a different story, but I think in the LGBT community everyone has, in essence, fought the same fight. And it's our way of paying tribute to the people who did those things before us. I was alive when Stonewall happened, but I was like a little kid. So it's kind of passing the baton to the next generation.

N: "So participating in the band and commissioning these pieces is in itself a means of activism for you in some way?"

G: "Yeah. And the Stonewall piece is very evocative. It's a very tense-sounding piece. There's a lot of stuff that's, you know, police sirens, you know there's this march that just won't stop; you know, this very determined march. And, I think it talks about who we are and where we are going, and I think that it's going to be very inspiring to the audience.

N: "When are you premiering that?"

G: "March 30th, I think? I can't remember... yeah, March 30th is the concert. I don't know if you know who Cleave Jones is, but he wrote the book *When We Rise*. He was Harvey Milk's assistant in [redacted] and he was in the office when Harvey was killed, and so he became an activist. They actually, he wrote a book, and he was portrayed in this ABC mini-series a year or two ago called *When We Rise* and he was instrumental in the gay civil rights movement in [redacted], and he started the AIDS quilt, and I've seen him speak a couple of times around here last year and he's, we're doing a piece called *When We Rise* that is, it's not a new piece, but it is dedicated to that theme and he's going to come here for that as well. So he'll be at the concert on the 30th.

N: "It sounds like a great concert, I wish I could go."

G: "They'll film it or tape it or something. Ask Dean or Dentzel, I don't know if you're in talks with them, but he's usually pretty good about getting those videos out."

N: "Good, that's good to know. So, on the topic of that, there's a string between you and the community... you described a piece as being 'evocative' and you described how the audience might react to it. How do you feel the general public and other musicians in the community view the ensemble and what you guys do?"

G: "I think we are very well-received here, and I'll preface that by saying I'm not super tight with a lot of musicians in the community just because, it's weird, there's so many people here who just show up and do their thing and you know. In Olympia, I had my

hands in so many pots. Everyone knew who I was, and I was the music guy. Here, I'm constantly running into people and I'm like 'Oh you look really really familiar' and they're like 'oh yeah I play trombone in the band I sit right behind you.' You know, there's like 75 people in the band and probably 60-70 in the symphony, and I, it just, I see new people all the time. But anybody that I've been talking to, like the people in the symphony I'm talking about playing in the band, and they just think it's great. And I talk to people at work and my clients and people that I've met in the community, and I mention the band, and everybody has heard of the band. We march in the pride parade, we march in the AIDS walk, so everybody is familiar with the band. And, the band has been around a long time."

N: "Do you know how long, by chance?"

G: "I think it was formed in 2001."

N: "Okay, thanks."

G: "Which for an arts organization is a long time!"

N: "Yeah, definitely. Can you describe the community or culture of the ensemble?"

G: "Yes, uhm, it's, to my mind, and because part of the whole LGBT experience here that was kind of a wake-up call, is you just stop being really curious about people and their stories. You know it used be I'd say "you know, I have these kids" – they're actually my husband's kids but I'm definitely their stepdad, you know, and they'd be like [disturbed noise]. And so, I understand like familiar relationships kind of in the band, you know, I had drinks with a colleague last night, who's like "oh yeah, I've been married since 1976 to this lady in Chicago" and they've got these kids and grandkids and yeah "we just have an open relationship and she knew I was gay when I married her." And I was like 'okay, cool. Alright, no questions.' So in our band, it's a very very friendly band, and it's a very supportive band. And, you know, I can tell occasionally there will be a little impatience or grumbling when we're like rehearsing the same thing and we're like "come on trombones" and every so often you'll here like a little *sigh* kind of thing. But, everybody in general is very supportive, it's not like backstabbing 'I want to be first chair clarinet and I'm gonna...' you know, whatever they get there. So, it's very supportive, you know, we do a lot of social events. We did a reception, a pool party in the fall to kick off the season and to welcome our guests that were there to play with us in the pride parade from other bands around the Southwest. We had a lot of people in town for pride, and they brought their horns and registered and marched with us. So we had a pool party at one of the guy's house, and one of the board members just had a Winter Social at his house. So we do other social events; the band is made up... I would guess... maybe 60% gay men, and maybe 20% lesbians, and the rest are, uhm, we've had married husband and wife couples that have just bopped it, because we are the only concert band in town. We have like a mother and son that play. So, you know, we'll get you know people who aren't necessarily gay or lesbian, or trans, but you know I try to be very open minded and embrace alternative life styles. If someone wants to be straight that's okay with me. I don't... (laughs) So, you know, our rehearsals are very friendly and collegial. Sections take turns bringing snacks – there's a whole chart, you know, next week clarinets bring snacks. So break time is snack time and everyone gets around and socializes. And, when you show up, you know, it's... you see a lot of people just going up to each other with a hello kiss and 'Sweety, how are you doing, I didn't see you at the cowboy night.' You know, that kind of stuff. And it's fun, you know, it gets kind of flirty. Rehearsals are

light-spirited. There are people who will offer sassy comments in rehearsal and it's, you know, not disrespectful, there's a nice comradery a nice [inaudible].

N: "Do you have friends that you see regularly outside of rehearsal?"

G: "I wouldn't say regularly, but we've certainly done some social stuff that people that I've met in the band, yeah. And I think the social things that we do are the [inaudible] of people, you know. The people that sit near me in rehearsal, but I mostly socialize with, like, other people that I've met at pool parties and stuff.

N: "So, the next couple questions kind of address why you joined the band, and what the benefits are for you, which I think you've described a lot in detail in terms of your dystonia and things like that. Was there anything else you wanted to add in terms of what you perceive to be the benefits for you participating in the band, or why you joined it?"

G: "Yeah, there's a range of benefits. For me, and I don't mean this to sound mercenary, but I'm a realtor, and, especially in a new community, it's important for me to connect with people, and meet them and not just wait for them to stroll into my office. And, when I was in Olympia in both the Symphony and in the other orchestra I played in I was a program sponsor. So, I had advertisements, you know, I was in the announcements, and stuff like that. And then, I got business out of it. You know, other people in the group, or people that, you know, there I was in my ad in my tuxedo with my viola, and then opening a door to a house, whatever. And they're like 'oh, that's kind of cool,' and so I got calls off of my work stuff. Part of why I do what I do, I'm in both of those groups, I volunteer with the film festival, and I volunteer at the zoo, are to make connections and to meet people and let them know that I'm a realtor. That is important to me, it's not like my number one, but I'd be stupid if I just sat home all the time. So, that's important to me, it's important to, I have to make music, I just... it's just... part of who I am, and if there were no musical outlets here I would just go crazy. I have a piano, and I could play for my own enjoyment but performing for me is everything... it's become much more, much more important, like kind of emotional for me, every time I perform, because I never know if I'm going to do it again. So, there's that, and I think in [Redacted] it's nice to be able to, you know, be proud of being part of a LGBT-allies group. You know, my husband and I, we walk down the street and we hold hands, and in [Redacted] that's totally cool. You know, nobody bats an eye; kids are used to it... male couples and stuff... so there's all of those things. I'd say those are the primary reasons.

N: "Great. Next question: do you or have you ever participated in the gay bar/nightclub scene and culture, and what/were your motivations for doing so?"

G: "Oh yes. Yes, indeed. And, uh, [Redacted] is really interesting, it's a small city, it's the size of Olympia so it's about 45,000 people, but it really has it going on. It's very clean, it's very compact, it's architecturally very innovative. It has a really interesting history. And, the gay bar scene in [Redacted], is, mostly, there's a little block on this one road that is right off downtown, and on either side of the street are gay bars and I would say, accompanying businesses, so there's like underwear stores, 'bear-wear' that kind of stuff. And so, the block, there's hardly any traffic, and so you just walk back and forth and I'm like 'oh let's go over to this place that's like a sports bar,' or 'let's go to the dance bar,' there's a bar where it's mostly like, 'retired, retired' people, you know, 70 and up, it's very quiet. There's a piano that's gay. There's a bar that just does like video and stuff like that. So, it's like, my husband I, we like to go down there just to hang out and, you know, on a weekend, we'll just go down and we're not rea big night-owls, so

we'll just go down there and socialize, and we'll just have beers ourselves and see if there's anyone we know to run into. You know, go down there for Halloween, Super Bowl, and Tony's, and stuff like that. So that's fun to do, we'll meet friends down there and just have drinks. It's a very laid back scene, you just go back and forth and they'll have drag bingo, and they've got, you know, go-go's, and all different kinds of themed stuff, you know, Cowboy night here and Latin night there. Some of the other bars we go to just kind of out of curiosity. They're a little bit more adventurous, but like we leave before kooky hi-jinx ensue. But there's kind of these leather fetish kind of places and there was this one place we went to that was doing a cowboy night just because a buddy of mine that I work with was, he works with the gay rodeo here, and so they were hosting a fundraiser and the place was packed wall to wall with cowboys and go-go's and stuff. So, yeah its mostly for us for socializing and for curiosity. They open, most of them will open at like noon or 2 in the afternoon, and people will be there as soon as they open they'll just be sitting there with a beer waiting for friends to come by, you know trivia on the screen kind of thing.

N: "Cool. Can you talk about maybe when you first started participating in the gay bar culture? Can you talk about maybe your first experience, if you can remember it, in the gay bar scene?"

G: "I grew up in Toledo, Ohio. It was about half a million people then, but it was very conservative. I was not out. I was, I had gone through college, then I stayed on and got my masters at the same school, and when I had gone through college I desperately didn't want to be gay. You know, I come from a very Christian family, all these expectations of, you know, grandchildren, and all this stuff. So, I dated a few girls in college, and was kind of 'getting my thang on' on the side with guys. But, after I graduated, and came back for my masters, I instantly fell into a relationship with this guy, who was a masters student like I was. So, we just moved in together, and had a thing going on, and he was very into like 'let's go to the bars, let's go to the bars!' Well, the bars in Toledo were like an hour away and I was like *sigh,* so we drove up to Toledo on night, and it was my very first time in a gay bar. And it was this big dance club in a nasty part of Toledo, and we walk in, and I had just completed the summer working at the zoo on the grounds crew, and I go in there with my boyfriend to meet some of his friends, and I run into this, my boss from the zoo, and this big lesbian who also worked on the grounds crew. And they were like "Hey! We were just talking about when we were going to see you here." And I was like *grunt* I hate that, when people are like 'Oh, he's got to be gay.' I was never like a big "go and dance" kind of thing. When I was single, you know, between boyfriends, I would go there just to try to meet people. But, I could probably, yeah I was not a big bar guy at all, I'm a terrible dancer. I would just go sit and have drinks and hope to meet somebody. This was before the internet, so basically you could, I actually met a guy through a personal in the newspaper one time I dated for a few months. You had to go to bars if you wanted to meet guys. And, there were no, there was like one really nasty dive gay bar in Olympia that was just sleazy. But in Olympia, there were so many gay people, there wasn't a need for gay bars. But, in [Redacted], it is much more of a social culture. I belong to a gay gym. There's gay everything here.

N: "Sounds fun. So how do you feel that participation... do you feel like that's impacted you in any way? Your first experiences at bars, or just the culture of everybody meeting at bars?"

G: “Yeah. I think it made me much more gregarious and easy to meet people. You know, I have a lot of younger friends, I have a client that I hang out with a lot, and he loves to drink. And, though occasionally when we’re off the clock, let’s go have a drink, and he’s on like Grindr going ‘oh where’s this guy’ ‘Oh him, no.’ And I’m like ‘I don’t know what you’re doing,’ I’ve never had a Grindr account,’ I’ve been married for 9 years, so I don’t understand that. And I kind of feel bad. You know, I hate to sound like grandad preaching down to the millennials, but like not having to go through that, it’s like all you are doing is screening resumes. And, I think that there’s a big loss in conversation skills, and going and meeting somebody at a bar, that you might not normally be physically attracted to as you’re scanning through your app, but then you meet them and you understand that they’re really super cool, and somebody you want to be with. So, I think there’s evidence that we’ve lost out. And going to the bars and learning those skills, my husband was married to a woman for 18 years, and had two kids, and he had like no experience – he didn’t come out until they were divorced. And, he had never done anything with guys until that, and he figured out late in the marriage that he was gay. So, he’s missed out on a lot of that, and so, when we’re out at the bars, and I’m noticing stuff, you know, some little cruise-y thing that’s going on, in the corner or somebody comes by with some look and he’s just like ‘la, la, la,’ and I said ‘he’s totally into you.’ You know, that kind of stuff. So I think there’s a lot of language that is missed if you didn’t go through that.

N: “So the bars served as a venue for enculturation?”

G: “Yeah, it’s like when you’re feeding babies things and you’re trying to develop their allergy tolerance, help their bodies to develop that, and I think you have to go through the bars, and I think it’s a great social thing here. And I don’t know if its just super big here in [Redacted] because of the age of the people who grew up going to the bars, but anytime we travel or go somewhere, or I go let’s just go check out what the gay bars are like, and just talk to people, meet people.”

N: “Good. So, in closing, you’ve talked about this quite a bit throughout, but if you wanted to elaborate on any reason participating in this ensemble is important to you, and in what ways the ensemble is important to your community?”

G: “You know, I did touch a bit on, for me, it’s my own personal thing, which may be selfish, that I need a place to play that’s going to give me the flexibility to do it. You know, I have certainly played in symphonies where I found out after I played in the symphony in Olympia for a number of years, that one of the oboe players had a dystonia, because I was telling somebody about it and they were like ‘sshhhh, don’t tell anyone, but Noel has dystonia.’ And that’s what happens to professional musicians. They don’t... as soon as word gets out, it’s like an air pilot that is passing out, you know. They get pulled from their jobs. Well if you’re having dystonia, you’re going to lose your job professionally. So here I know I have the flexibility stick it out as long as I can. I like the people, I like the music that we program. Dean isn’t the best rehearsal, and we have a really long rehearsal process. I think it’s 10 weeks that we rehearse for each concert, and with the band that we have now, it’s the best the band has ever sounded, he even said so the other night because everybody is in, and we’re just attracting more people. We get a lot of the people who are just here for the winter in the band, so the band is really hot right now. And, after like rehearsal five, I’m like we could do the concert this week, we could. So, what are we going to do for the next month and a half? So, I think it’s

important because it is a visible ensemble in the community. It's important to the community; we, you know, like I had mentioned for pride, we have people that are members of the... I can't think of the name for it, but there's an acronym and it's like the 'Lesbian and Gay Band Association' or something. GLBA. Gay and Lesbian Band Association. And there are bands all over the country that are in this group. And so, they advertise stuff on their boards if you're a member, you can log in and see that oh, Honolulu is doing a Pride next month, and you can go march with them, you just sign up online. And so, the people who signed up came from Phoenix, and wherever else, and we had a shirt for them, and an instrument, and were ready to march so we marched. We do that too. Dean just put out an email that they're looking for people to join New York City Pride, in, I think, June. And then in October is the next Gay and Lesbian Band Association conference in Orlando, so they're recruiting people from here to represent our region and go."

N: "Oh, very nice."

G: "Yeah. So, we're known outside the community as well. And one of the guys, and actually, we program a lot of his music, he's a composer named Russano Gilante, and he lives in LA. He's pretty well-known. I think he does primarily band music, he does film soundtracks too, but other band directors that I know from college are his friend on Facebook, so I know that they know him from other places. And he writes really fun music, and the band plays a lot of it, and he's buddies, he comes down from LA and he actually plays trumpet in the concerts with us. So, I think that's important to the community too, to see that kind of stuff, that he's involved in that."

N: "Well, those are all the questions that I wanted to hit. Is there anything you wanted to add, or any questions you had for me?"

G: "What do you play?"

N: "I play the clarinet primarily."

G: "Oh you do? Do you want to buy an eb? I'm selling my eb."

N: "No, I do not."

[CLOSING COMMENTS]

"JUSTINE"

N: "Why did you decide to join the ensemble?"

J: "So I actually have a... I was in Kappa Kappa Psi when I was at Missouri ST, and most of my friends ended up getting jobs in St. Louis while I ended up in [Redacted]. And, they joined the [name of LGBA St. Louis Band] Pride, and I was a little jealous, and I had considered transferring my job to a St. Louis office and moving over there because [Redacted] wasn't really feeling like home anymore. A lot of my friends in [Redacted] stopped talking to me after I came out, so I felt really out of place. I was feeling really down, so I figured moving across the state would help that because I'd be back with my friends; I'd be able to join [St. Louis Band acronym] Pride... is that [band acronym]? St. Louis's pride band – "Band Together?" I think that's it. So, I thought joining St. Louis's band, and you know moving over there would help things along, and then we discovered that [Redacted] had a band, had a gay band, and I decided I would try that out first. If I still wasn't feeling things after six months, then I'd move to St. Louis. A year and some change later, I'm still in [Redacted], it definitely helped. And Mid-America Freedom

Band actually made [Redacted] feel like home again, which is not something that I was expecting, but it's definitely... it's definitely nice."

N: "That's great. You mentioned feeling jealous of your friends that moved to St. Louis. Can you talk a little bit more about why, or what, caused those feelings, and what was behind that?"

J: "Yeah, so, again I was in KKPSI, and these were people that I met in KKPSI, KKPSI is a honorary coed fraternity for musicians."

N: "I'm actually a brother as well."

J: "Oh! Cool. Yay. So, my brothers in St. Louis were part of this band, they were still getting the same sense of belonging that we got out of the chapters when we were in school, but everybody in the band was also LGBT or an ally, which was another element that we didn't get at all. So, they were, one, they were in a band that they didn't have to audition for; two, they were in something that, you know, they were in something where they could get that sense of community and that was something that I was not getting here in [Redacted]. Because, I mean, I had my work friends, but I was the token gay friend."

N: "Yeah, it's tough when you're looking for that... to not fill that expected role in like heterosexually predominant setting for sure. Thank you for sharing that. So, moving along, how often would you say you discuss participation in the Mid-America Freedom band with maybe your family and friends who aren't gay outside the ensemble, if you do at all?"

J: "It's a pretty regular discussion topic. I work at a [Nebraska furniture mart?] right now, uh retail sales. And, uh, you know, part of, you know, talking to my customers, we talk about what we do outside of whatever I'm selling to them. You know, what do you do for fun? What do you, because I work with computers, and some people use their computers for music production, music writing, and so music gets brought up, and I'm like "Oh, hey, I'm in this band." I do talk to my co-workers about it and my family as well. My family comes to concerts, and I have friends who aren't gay who come to concerts too, which is exciting. I have friends that have become friends because I introduced them to each other at concerts and now they're friends and they sit together, and they, we do, like, wine basket raffles, and so they go in on getting more raffle tickets, so we can just split the wine baskets now. It's really fun.

N: "That sounds like a whole event, that's pretty cool. So you invite your family and friends out to the, to your concert, that's a good thing. How do you feel other musicians in the community maybe view your band?"

J: "I think that the musicians in community have a good outlook on our band, like they don't look down upon us. [Redacted] has a civic orchestra, and one of the local weathermen is a percussionist for them, and he actually joined us for the first concert that I played with the freedom band. Yeah, it was really cool. I got to meet, you know, [Redacted]'s gay weatherman, which was amazing."

N: "He's openly gay and everything? That's pretty neat."

J: "[Redacted] actually has two gay weathermen!"

N: "No way. Interesting. So you think other musicians in the community, they respect your musicianship and like to hear you and things like that?"

J: "Oh yeah. And we are welcome, I mean, [Redacted]'s mayor, X James, he, we've done [Redacted]'s AIDS walk pretty consistently the last few years and he [city mayor] always

gets a picture with us, and I mean even the non-musical community is very supportive of us, which is really nice.”

N: “That is really nice. Can you talk more about your participation in the AIDS walk? What’s that like?”

J: “The [Redacted] AIDS walk, uhm, it’s a fundraiser for AIDS awareness, kind of like the relay for life, but it’s geared towards people that are HIV positive or lost loved ones to AIDS. And, it’s to raise awareness, raise money, and people who are affected by HIV and AIDS to come together, and so, those of us who are in the freedom band, we have a marching/pep band that we put together, the folks that are in that particular group, we go to AIDS walk and we play. And, uh, folks love hearing us come out to play. It’s nice to see people get excited about a musical group that I’m in. Especially because it’s LGBT-centered.”

N: “Right. Would you say that participation in things like the AIDS walk, that, in your community, is that an important part of why you do it?”

J: “Yeah. I mean, it’s one thing to just be in a band, because if I just wanted to be in any ensemble, you know, I’d audition for the civic orchestra or, you know, find another community band. But having a band that’s also involved in the community like this, you know that’s important too, because being an active part of my community is something that I’ve always valued. I mean, my mom was the assistant director of a domestic violence shelter growing up, and so volunteering has always been something that I do, and working for awareness and worthy causes is just... it’s nice to be able to do something that I love while also advocating for others in a way like with the AIDS WALK.”

N: “Yeah that’s awesome. You get to like fulfill that musical part in your life, and also promote some aspect of visibility for yourself too. That’s pretty cool. Speaking specifically of your band, can you describe the community or culture of your ensemble?”

J: “It is, it’s honestly like one big family. We, it’s very laid back, very relaxed. It’s... we’re about 30% allies right now, so it’s not just, you know, just for the gays, just for queer folk, it’s for everybody. If you can read music, you’re welcome. We support each other; those of us who, you know, like, for me, I work in sales. Before working at Nebraska furniture mart, I was in insurance, and my bandmates, if they had questions about insurance, they knew that they could go to me. I know that if I have questions about particular topics, I can go to my bandmates first, because I know that somebody usually has, usually have a reliable source if they are that source for information. We do chili cook-offs, we do great fundraisers, because I mean it’s a non-profit, so we... we raise money ourselves.”

N: “Very good, that’s awesome. I know we talked a little bit about this in terms of your friends moving to St. Louis, seeking connections I guess through connections through the band there in [Redacted], but was there a specific event or moment in your life that made you want to join your LGBT band or do you want to elaborate any more on that at all?”

J: “Uhm... it was when my friends had first moved to St. Louis and they had joined that band, and St. Louis has a pride parade, and their band participates in the pride parade. [Redacted], like we, the freedom band participates in pride, we just don’t have a parade, but, because that was how they first heard about the band, they saw the band at the pride parade. And so, with them getting excited to, you know, march in pride and play this big part in their own local pride, you know, like I said, there was a little bit of that envy. But,

uhm, it was a good way, I saw it as a good way to get more involved with the LGBT community, because I felt really disconnected from the community out here, because I didn't know anyone else in [Redacted], except for a couple cousins that were gay."

N: "So have you made a fair amount of LGBT friends through the ensemble?"

J: "Yes, absolutely."

N: "Yeah, that's good, thank you! You kind of mentioned that the ensemble is like one big family, and that you all support each other in various, different ways. Are there any other benefits for participating in the ensemble that you would like to talk about?"

J: "I mean, the friends that I've made, having that community is, it's, that's just a support system, it's having people around you that you know share your interests and your love of music, and having people that you don't have to hide from, or hide a part of yourself from, because that's not something that I ever want to do again. You know, because the reason we come out is, I don't want to have to hide anymore. And so, being in a group of people who not only love music, but I can freely be who I am as a queer person, is very freeing and liberating. And I'm sure I'm not the only person who feels that, not just within my own band, but in other bands too."

N: "Right... I've talked to a fair amount of people across the country and that's kind of a prevailing theme. It's also a prevalent theme in previous research. It's cool to hear that. Do you or have you ever participated in the Gay club/nightclub culture?"

J: "We had a bad-drag fundraiser. I'm not one who frequents bars period, straight or gay; I'm very introverted, believe it or not, so bars aren't really my scene. I did participate in our bad-drag fundraiser, though, and I did this awful Freddy Mercury impression; it was... there's videos. I got cornered by a couple drunk queens afterward saying that I did it justice. I'm like okay, you believe that."

N: "That's high praise, that's high praise."

J: "But yeah, that's a, it makes for a really fun fact. The one time I went to a gay bar."

N: "What fundraiser did you say that was?"

J: "It was for our band's fundraiser, the theme was 'bad drag.'"

N: "That's a really great fundraiser idea, I like that."

J: "It was a blast."

N: "It sounds like it. Just based on your experiences within the LGBT community, how do you feel like your introversion or lack of interest in participating the gay bar scene, because it's such an institution in itself, the gay bar/nightclub scene, how do you feel like your lack of participation has maybe impacted the way that you've made connections with other LGBT people, or not?"

J: "I mean, the bar scene is very prevalent in our community. I mean, I'm sure you've read some of the same studies I have, you have so many reasons for that. Especially for those of us who don't come out until later on, because we have basically the second puberty of rediscovering ourselves after we come out, trying to be comfortable with who we are. And so, it's basically [inaudible]... because we can afford bars, and you know, drag makeup, and some of the money some of us in the community sink in to that life. It's expensive, but, where was I going with this, because I think organizations like this give another way into the community that isn't a bar, especially for, because our band is, you only have to be 18, it's not a 21 and up thing like most bars. And then, you know, there's also people that don't drink. And so, those of us who don't drink, like myself, there's not as, I mean, a bar is not a place that everybody goes to. And so having

something that is not centered around alcohol, not centered around partying, because not everybody is into that, I think it's really important that not only we keep the things that we do have going, but we bring more into the community, more ways to access people like ourselves that aren't centered around drinking, and partying, and doing things that not everyone is comfortable with."

N: "Especially considering the negative impacts that those habits can have on a person's life... that's very insightful."

J: "Our local [inaudible] center, we have a Dungeons and Dragons day every other Saturday. So, for those of us who are into Dungeons and Dragons, we can go, we can play together. Dave is really cool, but he's an experienced DM [dungeon master], but he keeps it light-hearted and fun, and we have a blast."

N: "That sounds fun. I've always wanted to try Dungeons and Dragons but haven't yet."

J: "It's so fun. My boss lit up like a Christmas tree when I told him I play, and I got him as a Secret Santa so I had to buy him a Christmas present, and so I put together a Dungeons and Dragons starter kit. So he got some dice, and some pre-made characters, and a notebook, and he was overjoyed when he opened it. It was..."

N: "That's awesome, I love that. You guys have a D&D community, there seems like there's some closeness within the ensemble; are there any other elaborations you can make on relationships inside the ensemble? What are personal relationships like? Are people generally really close, or are there cliques?"

J: "I would say there are some loosely-formed cliques. Like there are members who have been here since the band's formation you know 17 years ago (was it 17? 16). Those ladies that have been with the band since the very beginning. There's a group of people that work for [Serner?], so you know, they work together and, you know, it's like the little Serner family within the band. The French horn section, we're a bunch of odd-balls. They actually had to separate me from another member of the section because we got a little too sassy during a couple of rehearsals."

N: "So there's been a little bit of tension at times you're saying?"

J: "No it's not really tension. There's, it's not really clique-y in the negative connotation where, you know, people don't talk to these people, but at the same time people try to group together because we, like at the end of rehearsal or during breaks, same kind of people group together and chit-chat. But I mean, when you put a bunch of human together they are going to group together in some way shape or form."

N: "Right, thank you. So, in closing, overarching, how important is it for you to participate in this ensemble now? And also in what ways do you think it is important to the community perhaps?"

J: "I mean I think it's very important. It's important to me personally, and it's important to the community overall. We give visibility to the LGBT community, especially to younger folks, like my younger step-siblings. I mean, my families from a very small town. I didn't know gay people were a thing until I was 13, and so, us putting on our concerts, especially the educational ones that are free to the public, it gives access, it gives people access to the gay community that normally wouldn't because, like I said, a lot of LGBT-centered events are at bars, or at clubs, or they are 21 and over events where families typically don't go. And so, it gives another platform for people to experience the LGBT community, and something that's not a bar, or Rupaul's Drag Race. It's normal people, sitting on a stage, and playing music. And, you know, our conductor and his

metallic gold blazer and silver pants. But you know, it's, because my step-siblings, they went to a concert and they were really excited, and they told their friends about it, and that, you know, the next time my family had a get-together, one of those friends was asking me you know "how long have you been with this?" and it spiraled into "how did you know that you were not straight?" And then it helped give him the courage that he needed to come out to his parents. Because he saw his parents interacting with me in a positive way, as an openly gay person, and that's not something that he had that visibility, or that was not something that he had seen before, and so it helped him, you know, be comfortable with his sexuality and be able to come out to his parents. And so, that's just one person after one concert, and so people who see that over and over again, it'll have a wider effect, you know what I mean."

"SAMANTHA"

N: "So I'll go ahead and get started, and if you have any follow-up questions just feel free to stop me and we can go from there." J

S: "Okay."

N: "Okay so we'll start off with: why did you decide to join this ensemble?"

S: "I had been looking for a wind ensemble to play with. I had been playing with wind ensembles since my freshman year of high school, and I took a year off of it my first year of college (which was a huge mistake), and got back into it when I was finishing my undergrad., when I moved up for my grad degree, here in [redacted], the wind ensemble conflicted with some of my afternoon classes. So, I was in a taiko ensemble, so I was playing drums, but it didn't really fill the same void. When I found them, my first reaction was 'Oh my god a gay band, this is actually a thing!' And my second reaction is: 'this is what I have been waiting for,'

So, it was kind of a perfect fit!"

N: "Yeah, so I'm just curious, what was your major?"

S: "My undergrad was music ed., and my grad degree, I got it from [redacted] State in conducting.

N: "Oh, okay. Great. And how often do you feel like you discuss our participation with your family and friends outside of the ensemble?"

S: "How much do you hear about the band, honey? All the time. [laughter] "There's two different levels in which I discuss it. With my family, it's more of the social aspect, because I am the only professional musician in my family. So, the more technical aspects of 'oh my god, we are playing this this term, and we get do this' kind of thing I save for my close friends, who are for the majority also professional musicians. But for my family, we talk about the people, and my friends, and that kind of stuff. So it does usually come up every single time we talk."

N: "And how often do you think that is?"

S: "I talk with my mom and my dad roughly about twice a week, and I at least hang out with my sister once a week, but we call more than that. So, quite a bit."

N: "Okay. And how do you feel that other musicians or community music ensembles in the area view your band?"

S: “Right now, and I’m really glad you guys are doing the identity stuff with this because it is something we are also going through with our band. When they hear us, they love us. I think we are doing wonderful things. But, because we have so many different facets underneath this one big umbrella term, people don’t always recognize us my name, which is something that we are going to be fixing in the next year. We’re potentially putting forward a name change that, as far as I know, everyone is pretty positive about, then the name recognition thing will hopefully solve itself. But, when they hear us, they love us. When we say ‘oh, I’m part of the [redacted] Gay Symphonic Band,’ they’re like ‘I’ve never heard of you before,’ that kind of thing.”

N: “And in what ways do you think the name change, beyond recognition, might influence members’ perceptions of the group?”

S: “It’s the same type of name change that also the [redacted] gay men’s chorus and the [redacted] lesbian women’s chorus are going through right now, that limiting the identifier to ‘gay’ or ‘lesbian’ doesn’t exactly show where we are as a community right now. So the idea of, the majority of other bands within the LGBA, they usually have the word ‘rainbow’ or ‘pride’ in their names, they still give that to our history, but they’re not as specific, they’re more open, and then we’re not going to have the questions of ‘oh, I’m not gay, can I join this band?’ or ‘oh, I don’t identify as gay, I don’t feel comfortable with that being the only identifier of the name,’ kind of thing, which we do run into a fair bit. So, hopefully, its within, internally, the only pushback we’ve really gotten is from people who feel so attached to the ‘gay’ title, because it’s, I mean literally, it’s their identifier, it’s a part of their life. So, but, then there’s everybody else. So, hopefully it’s going to make us actually appear to be the inclusive model that we actually are. The outside will actually match what we are doing.”

N: “Could you describe the community or culture of the ensemble?”

S: “Yeah. We have right now three, soon to be four, different ensembles within it, and each ensemble has a very different vibe. The Symphonic Band is a rather huge band, we have over 60 people right now, and we each have our friends that we talk to within it. We go out to a bar after rehearsal every week, we also have a group of people who are part of the jazz band, and they’re all pretty close to each other too. And we have the pride band, which I actually direct, and we have tons of people that show up for pride, and then don’t show up for anything else. So, we have a core group of about 20 people that show up for every pride event, but then the parade itself is huge, and that’s something that I am trying to change within the culture of the pride band; I want everyone to show up for everything, because then I can actually argue that I can take them to different event, you know? But, yeah, it’s very open, it’s very welcoming. Each of the bands have something different that they focus on. The music that the symphonic band does is really hard, almost at a professional level. Pride band is more for beginners and intermediates, more pep-tunes, that kind of stuff. Bands can run the gamut. It’s not just, you know, ‘you have to audition to get in here’ it’s literally ‘everyone is welcome,’ and you are going to find something that will fit your needs. So, it’s pretty neat!”

N: “Great. What instrument do you play?”

S: “I play percussion. I, honestly, any giant instrument to bang on that makes noise... I love playing the timpani, because it holds down the bass line, and I can’t sing that with my voice, so I like it.”

N: “Well, great. You mentioned that each group has its own different vibe, and you talked a little about the musical differences, are there social differences among those three groups that you described?”

S: “I would only be able to speak to the pride bands and the symphonic bands, because I am not part of the jazz bands. The symphonic band, because we are so big, there are, you know, several pockets of friends but we all know each other and can all still hang out. The pride band, there’s that one core pocket of people that all show up, and we are all pretty close to each other, and you know, it’s a lot of these things that we do since, when we meet up together, it’s basically either rehearsal time or performance time. We try to schedule time outside to have people get together; sometimes it happens, sometimes it doesn’t, but you know, we do what can. We have to rehearse, it can’t be an hour and a half chat session.”

N: “Sure. [Laughter] Was there a particular, I mean you kind of addressed this at the beginning, but was there a particular event or moment in your life that made you want to join this particular group?”

S: “Yeah, I actually found the booth for this group at my first Pride that I ever went to. I am originally from the South; my family was, you know, born and raised [redacted], and I didn’t have access to this kind of community at home, and I wasn’t entirely out by the time I left home. I was out to my family and out to my friends, but I thought, you know, ‘this is part of a good process, I should go to my first pride,’ and then I found the table. And that’s when I had that realization: ‘oh my god, this is a thing; oh my god, this where I need to be.’ But yeah, I found the table at my first pride, it was pretty cool.”

N: “That’s great. And what brought you to Oregon, and [redacted] specifically?”

S: “My sister was already up here, so getting to live close to her, and getting [inaudible]. And also, I got accepted to grad school at [redacted] State, so it was, you know, at least move up here for two years, then I was just like ‘yeah, I’m not leaving.’ Alright Jason just hold on one second, I’m dropping my sister off.... Okay. Alrighty, there we go.”

N: “Could you explain some of the benefits, for you, for participating in the ensemble?”

S: “Yeah. I get a lot, personally. I love to take, participate in, ensembles that I personally don’t have to control, and it also teaches me a lot as a conductor, and band leader, and choir director to learn from other conductors and what they do during rehearsal. So, it also means that I’m not in charge of it. I get to sit here and make music with a bunch of people, but I don’t have to make the big, over-arching musical decisions. Like the stress is off of me. And musically, one of the things that I personally find hard, because I am a professional musician, when I join community ensembles it’s sometimes a crap-shoot. Am I going to be sitting there bored the entire time? Is the music actually going to be challenging for me? Am I going to be learning something? And I have honestly never been disappointed with the choices for the wind ensembles. It’s always provided me with growth, and challenge (interesting challenges), and I have learned a lot.”

N: “I’ve got to say, I went to your concert in July, the concert in the park in [redacted], and I was very impressed with the group. I mean, it sounded great, and what great repertoire too.”

S: “Oh yeah. That was one of our more poppy concerts that we [inaudible]. We don’t have as much rehearsal time for that concert as we do for our bigger ones, like the one we prepping for in November. So, if you’re up here in November you should come and see us.”

N: "Yeah, I will do that."

S: "It's going to be a different vibe. Everything we are playing right now is very late Romantic, so Joe is concentrating on a lot of listening and making music as a unit which is something we do need to get better at, so it's really, really cool."

N: "Great. Okay, and I think you answered this already: where you out before joining the ensemble?"

S: "Kind of. Kind of. It was, I was out to my parents, I was out to my sister, I was out to my close friends, but I wasn't 'out-out.' I was still in [redacted], I had just gotten my teaching certificate, and due to [redacted] state law, me being out could have potentially been grounds for me being black-listed or losing my teacher's license altogether."

N: "Oh my goodness."

S: "There's a situation going right now I think in [redacted], in North [redacted], close to where I grew up, that a woman, an art teacher, when she did 'about me' for the kids, did it exactly like all the other teachers did for their kids, but she happens to be married to a woman. She is currently on, she was on a paid administrative leave, and then they decided to change her school within the district, and she went from teaching elementary art to teaching high school art. Something that, although she was trained for, she had never done before. Which is basically like a 'we want you to get stressed out and leave the profession' move, and that is, that situation was my worst nightmare. I didn't fully come out of the closet until I graduated with my grad degree, so that was two years living up here in [redacted]. I was open about it with my new friends, and the thing that hit me the most was that nobody cared." [Laughter]

N: "Right."

S: "And the bands, and that community, was pretty integral in me actually coming out, because I have a fear of loss, I guess, and with all of that behind me, I knew I was going to be okay. So, yeah."

N: "Wow, and you did your undergrad in [redacted]?"

S: "Yes. My music ed. degree, when I graduated it was from a tiny little private college in Fort Worth, [redacted] called [redacted] Wesleyan University. Really cool school! Got me all of the, you know, small classes and focused attention that I needed."

N: "So you mentioned that being in the band was integral for you. Could you talk a little more about that, and (I don't want to put words in your mouth), but in what ways, if at all, they supported you?"

S: "Yeah, so when I was back in [redacted], after I had started telling my friends that, you know: 'hey, I'm pretty sure I'm queer,' the close friends didn't care, they were just like: 'I've never seen you act that way before, what are you talking about?' kind of thing. But, all of my friends who also were queer, or gay, or bi, they were all around my age or younger, so we didn't ever have access to the older community, the shared history of everything that people like us had gone through. We were pretty insular; we confided in each other, but never really reached out outside of that. And, one of the big things that the band helped me to see was that there are strong surviving older people in our community, and it really helped me to get to know, on a more personal level, what our history was like, and what it looks like, and what they've been fighting for, and that's really what it did for me in terms of support; I finally got to meet the older generation, and it was all going to be okay, right?"

N: “That’s great. Do you, or have you ever, participated in the gay bar/nightclub scene and/or culture? And, if so, what were your motivations for doing so?”

S: “I’m actually not that type of queer person! I am more of the ‘hangout with my friends and do board games, or dungeons and dragons, or get drunk in somebody’s house’ type of person. If I were to have done something like that, it would have been to, you know, date, but I met my fiancé online, so, you know. Just not my type of scene.”

N: “Okay, and could you describe your relationships to others in the ensemble?”

S: “Yeah, so what kind of relationships? Like, relationships to the director, relationships to my friends, like what kind of relationships?”

N: “Actually, both if you don’t mind.”

S: “Yeah, so the director is both the director of the bands and my colleague because we are both directors within the umbrella group. He’s pretty cool. I’m not, like ‘entirely friends’ close to him, but ‘talk-shop’ kind of thing, especially in terms of our ensembles. I have quite a few close friends: at least 3 clarinets, one of the flutes, all of the percussionists, because we are all back there hanging out together, and we all talk on a regular basis – some of us actually serve on the board, so we see more of each other. We check on you people are doing, that kind of thing. With the rest of the ensemble, the majority, I’m glad to at least know names. Some people I do check in with from time to time because of health concerns that I had heard about or something, but I do have my close set of friends within the ensemble that I check in with every time.”

N: “Okay. And, how important is it to you to participate in the ensemble, and in what ways (if any) do you feel that this ensemble is important to the community of [redacted], and the LGBT community specifically?”

S: “For me to participate in the ensemble, I think I would... like what happened my freshman year of college, going cold-turkey from every ensemble that I have been in – I would have a nervous breakdown. It allows me to put a lot of my unspent creative energy that I can’t put into my work with my students. It’s just something else, and it allows me to diversify what I do as a musician. What it does for the community at large. I think it is really important to actually have a community-based wind ensemble in the first place that plays this caliber of music, because a lot of the community-based wind ensembles in the area either aren’t big enough to play this caliber of music, or aren’t... I hate to say advanced, but we have people in our group who are former Oregon Symphony players. Like, we’ve got some champs in there, and Joe throws in some hard stuff. For the community at large, for the gay community at large, it’s... I can kind of do this [speaks indistinguishably] ... there are two students in the ensemble. They’re younger, I think they’re about 17 or 18, and they were actually students at our director’s school, at which he is the principal. I’ve watched these kids come into the ensemble and actually come into their own. I believe one of them is trans, and the other is gay, and they have just become so much more, like it’s [chilled?] they’re entire situation, because they now have not just a place to play their instrument, but a safe-place where they can come every Wednesday night and just put their frustrations into something, and we’ll understand. It’s, yes, we play hard music, but that’s not all we are there for. We are there to have a musical outlet that can be used as that kind of support, both for people who are playing and for people who are coming to our concerts. Yeah, I love those kids. Both of them are super sweet, and I’m really glad they found us.”

N: “Would you say that it’s fairly common for younger folks to join the group? Or are these two the exception as opposed to the rule?”

S: “Not as common. We do have, since we are an adult ensemble, minors have to have waivers to get involved. However, we are starting a youth band. Yep, we are in more than the beginning process because we have already contacted all of the local bands to basically say: ‘yeah we are going to be offering this kind of thing,’ it’s going to be a couple weeks long of a crash-course, kind of like the honor-bands that the state competitions do, and that will potentially bring more people into our adult ensembles as well, because a lot of these kids drop their instruments after high school, because either they’re not going on to play them professionally, or, you know, if they still want to, where would they do it? So, here we are. So, hopefully we’ll have more, but it does currently require a waiver.”

N: “Okay. Well those are the only questions that I had. At this point, if there is anything that I didn’t cover that you’d like to share or any questions that you have for me, I’d be happy to address those.”

S: “No, I like, I am so so so so flippin’ happy that you’re, that you guys are doing something like this. If you want to potentially expand who you are talking to, I don’t know where you are in your levels here, if you want to contact some of the people at the LGBA on their national board, that might be a good place for you guys to get an idea of what this is like on a national level. So, that might be something for you to look into. Other than that, I am so happy you guys came to find us, and that you came to one of our concerts, that’s amazing, and I really hope this research helps, seriously.

N: “Yeah, me too. We are very excited about the project. And we are using the RCGFB sort of as our pilot study, and Nick (who is my co-author) he’s using this topic as his thesis for this year, and as part of that expansion, he is going to contact the LGBA, and take this nationally. We’d actually like, at some point in the future, maybe once Nick finishes his thesis, I mean he is going to have enough to do, we are also looking at the London-based group and the group in Melbourne, Australia to see different cultural differences or similarities between nations with the groups.

S: “Absolutely, yeah. That’s awesome.”

N: “We’re real excited.”

S: “Alright, well thank you, so much, for taking the time to talk to me.”

N: “, thank you for taking the time. I truly appreciate it.”

S: “Oh, you’re welcome.”

N: “You take care now.”

S: “You too, thank you Jason.”

N: “Mhm, bye.”

S: “Bye.”

“EMILY”

N: Why did you decide to join this ensemble?

E: It was a way to participate in the community. I had just moved to [redacted]. So I was looking for ways to participate in the community here in [redacted]. I moved from Wichita, [Redacted], so there wasn’t a whole lot of visible participation there because it was pretty risky.

N: Any reason in particular that you chose this type of organization as opposed to some other community organizations?

E: Well because I've always played found opportunities to play music and I liked playing my trumpet. So, I was looking you know looking for a band, or a way to keep in shape, and this kind of allowed me to do that and be a part of the LGBT community.

N: I'm curious, how did you find out about Rose City Gay Freedom Band

E: At Pride.

NSN: How often would you say you discuss your participation in this ensemble with your family and friends outside of the ensemble? What do you talk about?

E: Well, I guess just whenever...the topic comes up as far as what are you doing this weekend, or what um if we have a concert coming up, I usually tell most of the people I know. So, pretty often, I mean I don't too much go out and really market things over the top. But I certainly send out invites on my website, and have pictures of the band on my, not website, my Facebook page, have pictures of band, make comments and stuff. Having to do with what the band is doing or whatever. So that's how often I talk with people, and there was another part of your question.

NSN: Yeah, it was what do you usually talk about if this is ever a point of conversation for you in your friends or family outside of the ensemble.

E: Yeah, ok. We'll talk about just anything as far as what kind of music we're playing, whether I like it or not, you know, what different people in the band are doing, who else they're playing with, just nothing different from any type of opportunity or event that I'm involved in.

NSN: So you mentioned that you talk about the people in the band. Can you elaborate maybe on how you talk about the band in a social aspect, other than a musical one ever?

E: Um, I'll talk about our conductor I'll talk about how the conductor that we have at this time is so different than the other ones that we've become much more than just a social group. That we really get into hard challenging things, and I enjoy that. But also, I guess sometimes that's one of the things I might push because I want people to realize that as far as the holding up the banner for the LGBT community, yeah you know there's professionals in the community too, and they can you know run with the best of them.

NSN: So it's kind of like a point of pride for you, to say that we're professionals too we can hang with our own?

E: Yes. Right, or I might say that this person is hilarious. They did this or whatever. Personalities, not necessarily even that they're with the band but, just preface it with, "A friend of mine in the band does such and such, or whatever."

N: How do you feel other musicians or community music ensembles in the area view your band?

E: Well, actually I've heard several of them say that we're really good. So, what I hear from them is more in the quality of music rather than the make-up of the band. And I'm getting to the point where even if a stranger says, "Oh well you're in a band? What band is it?" And I'm getting to the point where I don't hesitate. I say Rose City Gay Freedom Band. I think that definitely goes back to growing up for 40 years in [Redacted], and having to hide that, you know, any association all the time. So, but I know a friend of mine that's in another band, neither one of knew that we were in bands, but we found out. She says, "Oh what band do you play in?" I'll say "Rose City Gay Freedom Band," and

she'll say, "Oh, you guys are really good." [Laughter] So that's fun. It's like, yeah, I know.

NSN: Can you describe the community or culture of the ensemble?

E: Well we have different kind of groups within the large group. I think we're trying to be a little more cohesive, but we do have I guess – we have a group that just comes for the music, just be challenged and play, and then they leave. And they really don't have any more commitment to the ensemble than that. And then we have some people, or we had some people who just want to come for the social part, and you know don't want to have to practice the music. Just want to come and play musicals or something simple that they had in high school. They usually don't last [laughter], because we've moved beyond that. It used to be a lot of that, but we've really moved beyond that. I think, you know, unless people are pretty serious about playing, they don't like to sit in a band where they can't play the music [laughter] week after week. So those people usually find other places to go, or just come to the concerts. But I think for the most part we have people that enjoy having a good time, are good musicians, and are willing to put more than just their appearance every week at rehearsal into the organization.

N: Was there a particular event or moment in your life that made you want to join this group? I know that you mentioned that you were looking for something when you moved to [redacted]. Was there anything in particular?

E: Not any one thing in particular. I was really I guess I was really frustrated in [Redacted] that I couldn't be myself, and so when I came to [redacted] it was such a relief to not have to worry about you know what other people thought all the time. Or what was going to happen. So, it was just an accumulation of living through that closeted life for so many years, and finally being able to come out and say, this is who I am.

NSN: What are the benefits of participating in this ensemble? Other than the ones you've mentioned in terms of getting to engage musically.

E: Well I think the benefits are that it gets me out of the house, and out into the community a bit more. And of course, being a better musician, meeting more people, I guess that's really about it. Getting to meet more people and continue with music.

N: Were you "out" before joining the ensemble?

E: I was to a degree, usually not to strangers, but I had come out to my family slowly, and somewhat indirectly, I guess. And most of my, all my close friends I was pretty much out to. But again, people I didn't know very well, or strangers, I would really try to hide it.

N: What brought you to [redacted]?

E: Well, the partner I had at the time and I didn't want to stay in [Redacted] all our lives, and we figured that if we're going to move somewhere, we better do it before we're too old to move. And we had some friends who had traveled to many many places, and when they decided that they wanted to settle down, they wanted to settle down in [redacted]. So, we knew them, and it was kind of between [redacted] and Phoenix, and we chose [redacted].

NSN: On that note of getting out into the community to meet more people. Do you, or have you ever, participated in gay bar/nightclub scene or culture? What are/were your motivations for doing so?

E: Yeah, again as I said that I was thinking you know it was so funny because back in [Redacted] there were specific places you went to be with other gay people, and it was bars and maybe special meetings, or groups. Where in [redacted] is not so much that way

because I was appalled at the women's bars they had in [redacted] when I moved here. I thought, I mean we've got much better bars in [Redacted]. But in [redacted], I mean you've got so many choices and most of them are, almost all of the ones I can think of are very public. So, it's kind of funny because it's nice that you have so many choices, but at the other time it means you aren't all that special [laughter].

N: Could you describe your relationships with others in the ensemble. You mentioned that there was a certain social dynamic. Do you socialize with them outside of rehearsals?

E: It kind of depends. It's kind of interesting because up until just a couple of years ago, the trumpet section of the jazz band, we were really close. We'd get together on weekends, we'd go out after rehearsal, um I mean there was like four or five of us, and we were always goofing around together. Now not so much. I have two or three people that I might go other places with, but not as close as with the trumpet section in the past. So maybe if the band is doing something, I might show up, but now when they go out after rehearsal once in a while I'll go with them, but because I have to work the next morning. But also, because I just not that close with a lot of those people any more outside of the band. And they're a lot younger than I am anymore...most of them that go out.

NSN: How important is it to you to participate in this ensemble? In what ways, if any, do you feel that this ensemble is important to the community of [redacted], and the LGBT community specifically?

E: Well I think it's really important for me to participate because I love playing, and I probably wouldn't do it just by myself. So for my well-being, and that's a lot of times what I use music for, you know if I had a bad day or something, I'll pull out my trumpet, and start playing. So, for me that's important. As far as playing in this band in this community, that's also important. I often wonder if it wasn't for this band if I would be in another community band, which I probably would, but I don't think I would enjoy it as much. Like you said, I wouldn't have that pride of the group that I'm in. And then I think it's important for the band to be in the community to let everybody know that we're there and we can do good stuff, but also to give more opportunities to those people in the LGBT community that want to make music, and this is a way they can and continuing to show off their identity.

N: Do you have additional comments questions for us, or anything that we didn't cover that you think we should know?

E: I guess one of the things from filling out the survey, I was just kind of wondered about, a lot of the questions were multifaceted. In that well that I believe in this, but I don't believe in this or you know I felt like some of the questions assumed certain things. For instance, not everybody in our band is gay. We have a lot of straight people that play with us, and as long as they're allies, and don't have a problem with us, we don't have a problem with them. So, I felt like it seemed to me that the results that you would get from that would be difficult to put a lot of weight in, just because a lot of those questions I could answer different ways depending on how I looked at the question.

N: Right, well we are um, that particular questionnaire, we were actually piloting it with your group, so we took some of the feedback from some of the members, and you're, this comment came up in other peoples' responses that sometimes one question was asking two different things, or like you said from what perspective am I answering the questions.

We are in the process of revising that questionnaire to make it a little bit clearer, and also to make it a little bit shorter. It was a long questionnaire.

E: Yeah, it was a little...it was pretty long [laughter]. But I know how important things like this are. I'm glad that you're doing this, and especially targeting in on a musical community, so that's pretty cool. What about the results, what are you going to do with the results, and how do we find out.

N: Well we're presenting the preliminary results of the pilot study, so this would be results specific to Rose City Gay Freedom Band at a conference in Germany next week. Unfortunately, Nick can't come, so I'll be going by myself...oh well.

E: Darn. [laughter]

N: But this will be part of Nick's thesis, and we'll be publishing this somewhere in a music education research journal, and we'd like to present it at the LGBA conference in 2020 that'll be happening up in [redacted].

E: That would be good.

N: So, there will be multiple places to present. And once we do finish the study, and we've published it or presented it somewhere, I'm going to reach out to Denny, and ask him to pass it on to the group in case they're curious about the results.

E: Yeah, that sounds great. If you just let somebody know how we can get the results, that would be great. We are trying to gear up for 2020. I'm glad there's a group of younger people that are bringing that up, and are excited to do it.

[Ending comments]

“JOHN”

N: "I guess we'll just get started. Why did you decide to join your respective ensemble?"

J: "Well, let's see, back in the year 2000, I had moved to [redacted] in '94; I had just been itching to do music again. I had followed the band for like six years. Just, you know, the parades and this and that and what not, and I had always intended on joining, but not I've been at my place here for 22 years, and the only way I could live in [redacted], because it's so expensive here, is to move into a dump of a place and then fix it up. You know, with good [inaudible], the building I moved in to was about to be condemned really, it almost... it needed a lot of work. So, for six years I just didn't have time really to join the group. I followed them but didn't have time because I was working on my place here. And then, in 2000, I come to a point where I had time and I was just itching to play music again. So I joined up with the band and been with them since 2000, so that's almost 20 years now.

N: "That's great. What instrument do you play?"

J: "French horn."

N: "Awesome. So, you mentioned having followed the band for a number of years, wanting to join, what attracted you to wanting to join the band?"

J: "Well, ok, so a brief a little history of myself. I had been a musician for, I played music forever, [Redacted] is where I'm from, up North in [Redacted] [spelling]. In fact, the music program there started at the age of, or the grade of seventh grade. Much music programs start much earlier in school districts. But I started in seventh grade, and I just took off with it, except that little town where I lived in [Redacted] [spelling] didn't have much of a program. So, I left in my tenth grade year and went to Interlocken Arts

Academy, it's a private music school in Northern Michigan. It's kind of like a Juilliard prep school, and spent my last two years of high school going up to this school studying music. And then, when I graduate, I went to New York, played with the Amado [spelling] Opera of Manhattan and some other groups while I was there. Then, when I moved back to California... Oh, and while I was in New York, that was around the time it was like '82, '83, and '84, and the [redacted] band here started in 1978, they were the very first gay music organization in the world. New York, while I was living there, had just started theirs, it was gay organization. And, when I moved to New York was in '83, and they were called the "Big Apple Core," and I actually played with them before... that was my first gay band. I played with them for a couple years before I moved back to California. Then I moved back to California and moved to San Diego, and this is when I got out of my music. Living in San Diego, I was playing with their version of their gay band, which was America's city's finest freedom band was what it was called. It no longer exists, but back in the day it did. That was like... the late '80's. But, at any rate, I was living in San Diego and somebody broke into my apartment and stole my french horn. And, if you can imagine, this horn, I mean... the loss of my horn just threw me into a depression you would not believe. It was like my baby, you know, I had done everything on this horn and had it all through my years of music school and honor bands and whatnot. And, so, it just... I went through a depression for like 15 years maybe, well, until I... you know, I fell out of music until I joined this band here again, and you ask my why I join the [redacted] band, it's because, you know, during those fifteen years, I was just simply sick over the loss of my horn. I had insurance on it, but it was just one of those things you just cannot replace. It's like a child. And, I don't know, I'm getting off track I know, to answer your question, but I wanted to give you a little bit of a history. Yeah... I kind of forget what your last question was."

N: "So, I guess, these are great details. I'm assuming your not a musician by trade, since you went 15 years without playing?"

J: "Assuming what? I'm sorry, I can't hear you."

N: "Are you a musician by trade? Is that your professional career, what do you do for work?"

J: "Oh I'm sorry. That was the plan originally, but now I do it just to fulfill... for fulfillment of my life that now... now I am tending bar and I am a wood-worker, I work with wood, making furniture."

N: "Great. Can you talk more about the fulfillment in your life that participating in the band brings you?"

J: "Well, as you know, it's interesting because I... these fifteen years... because it's always been part of my life, far back as I can remember... and not really realizing how much it was until I was... okay so I fell out of it for 15 years. And, even though I was making good money during those 15 years, and you know, and eventually I went from my depression to, you know, I got into a relationship, so many friendships, then I moved to [redacted]. And, as soon as we came, I thought I was happy, I thought I was content, I thought, you know, I was making pretty good money. I thought I was a lot of things until I finally joined this group, the band, started playing music again, and it was so interesting, because what I found out was, then, that no matter how much money I was making or how happy I thought that I was, I was... I no know that... and if it happens in the future, I know I'm never fully at my most content and most happy and most fulfilled,

and I never will be, unless I have my music in my life. Because bringing back music in my life... you think you may be struggling with like day to day problems or issues at work, or things that bother you, or relationships that annoy you, and you stress on them, or whatever, you have problems that seem hard to overcome and you can't figure the answer out. And, when I started playing music again, oh my god, suddenly, and almost in an instant, all these little worries went away, and all my problems, things that I was stressing on, suddenly made sense and I knew what I had to do. Everything just fell into place, and it was like life made sense again. Suddenly everything was clear and I was clear and I was just, oh my god, it just brought back a rush of fulfillment and contentment and happiness and I can't really explain it other than I haven't looked back. I just haven't looked back, you know, I joined the group again, I found my music again, almost 20 years ago, and I will never, ever lose it again. As a matter of fact, I not only play with this band, but I also started an orchestra, I was one of the 8 original members in 2008, I started an orchestra. It's now doing extremely well, it's called the "[Redacted] Rainbow Symphony," and it's a gay group. Well, it's a mixed group, but it started out as a gay group. I also play in the Redacted West Academy wind ensemble, it's a contra costa group, and then [Redacted] the capital horn choir, and I just, I can't get enough of it. So, you just gotta do your... it's a musician thing I guess, I don't know how to explain it."

N: "I understand it, yeah. So, you mentioned being in ensembles that are not LGBT-identifying as well?"

J: "Yes."

N: "Great, can you maybe talk about the differences between the two if there are any?"

J: "Well, there's really not a lot of difference as far as, you know, I mean it's the music that gets you there. But, as far as these other groups, all I can tell you is that I don't feel, I mean, we're there for the music, we do our music, and then we, you know, we separate. but, I don't have, I don't feel the family camaraderie and the personal relationships as much as I do with the Freedom Band, the gay ensemble I play in. I mean, it's not, you see I don't have that sense of family, you know, it's like, we're there to do our music, and then we go home and we see each other the following week. But with the Freedom Band, it's like... these people have been... they're part of my family. I love them. When we go on vacation, or when the holidays come and everyone takes off for three weeks, I miss them. I miss them like... I can't wait to see them again. I enjoy these people outside of the group. We do social things together. We, you know, we have bonds that I just don't... that just aren't there with the other groups. And, you know, I feel safe with them. I feel... yeah, I've gotten to know them in ways... and, you know, I have to say that with all of the music groups, the ones I know, I feel in common with all the music groups, because all of these people are working people, they contribute to society. All of them, well, you know, 99% of them have jobs, they are productive, they have families, their own homes. I mean, they're not... you know, I feel good being around them, I mean they all vote. It's a good, positive experience. But, all of them have that. But, with the Freedom Band folks, I also feel a sense of safety, love, I mean, truly love these people. You know, and there's more of a family bond. Does that make any sense?"

N: "Yeah, it makes a lot of sense, thank you. How often would you say you discuss your participation in the [Redacted] band with your family and friends that are not in the ensemble?"

J: "I'm sorry, you know you called me on my backup phone, and the speaker on it is not as good, so I did not hear your question."

N: "It's okay, would you like me to call you on your other phone?"

~Calls back on other phone~

N: "Back to that question, how often do you discuss the [Redacted] band with your family and friends that are not in the ensemble?"

J: "Oh, any time I'm around them, if they ask. I mean, I just... my family I don't see a lot, but they're very aware of my involvement with the band. You know, I'm so open with my family there's absolutely no issues as far as, you know, my sexuality or anything like that. And, my friends here in town, they all know my participation with this music group. They're all very supportive. They may not all come to my concerts because, you know, they're... some of them are sports people, some of them are this and, you know, it's not their thing to sit through a concert. But a lot of them do, the ones who are, they do, and as far as the [redacted] band, it's not only the gay group, but it also happens to be, well, they've been around since 1978. We were just signed by the mayor of [Redacted] the official band of the city and county of [redacted], which is, you know, a pretty big deal. And so, we're very well-respected in the city. We do a lot of events in the city. So, my friends, not only supportive, but also impressed, they're proud. I mean, it's a group that... they're all kind of jealous they're not musicians and that they can't also be a part of it. So I discuss it a lot, it's a group I'm very proud of."

N: "You mentioned having invited friends and family to your concerts. Do you feel like they enjoy your concerts then? What kind of rep do you guys play usually?"

J: "There are three different parts of the freedom band. We have a concert band that we play, you know, your typical band concert, wind symphony type music in a concert hall. In that range is from classical music to, you know, there are a lot of writers now that are writing kind of new, fun, modern music. But it's all, you know, sit down... we also have a marching band and a pep band program. So there's three facets to the freedom band, and our marching band, it's those, the last two, are our most visible from the public's point of view, you know, because we do, we play at all kinds of events. We do events held by the city, we do private events, people hire us, you know, pay us to do weddings, we play at schools, for gay-day at elementary school, we play at the top of cemeteries, funerals believe it or not. I mean, just anything that people, an event that calls for a band, they call us and say "hey, are you available?" And we throw the vote to our membership, and then we do it. And the marching band of course plays in, we just did the Chinese New Years parade, not just the gay prides. We're lucky in [redacted], we live in kind of a bubble here. We get invited here to do events that no other city, you know, would be able to do, like the Veteran's Day parade, and, you know, and things like that that are just more accepted here, you know, to have a gay band be a part of it, than they are in other cities. So, as far as the music goes, you know, our concert band plays, it's concert repertoire, and our pep-band plays pop and fun, you know, stuff that's relevant on the radio or this and that. And our marching band plays, oh you know, we do fun marches. So, that's it. I mean, and we have different rehearsals for different.... for, you know, for each of these. We have a concert band rehearsal once a week. I think twice a month we do our pep band rehearsals, then in marching season we all meet at City Hall parking lot and do our... so, you know, we're always doing something."

N: "That's great. You mentioned playing at elementary schools. Can you talk more about that? I'm kind of curious as to what kind of events those were."

J: "Oh, you know, it's our... those type of events are personally my favorite events. Like, we play at the Clarindon [spelling] elementary school every year for their rainbow days, and that's just, it's their gay-awareness day that they have. There are a lot of families in [redacted] that have two daddies or two mommies, and these are children who are growing up with that as the norm, you know. And, so I think what they do as far as the school, they have certain days where they, you know, explain, they have the parents come to the school, and instead of having like, you know, career day or, you know, your mommies or daddies you know... anyways, it's all explained to the children in a way that is positive and normal and supportive, and then they invite us to come and we do some... we play music for them, and they get a chance to approach us and learn some about the musical instruments, and it's all done in a very normal and healthy environment for the kids. Some of my favorite events are at the schools. And there are several schools that do this in the bay area. And even in [inaudible] schools, there's, in [Redacted], one of our events that we do every year, and we've been doing it for I don't know how long, the pep band does, is the [Redacted] Gay Prom. And these are high school students... they have their prom, and they can invite their, you know, same-sex partners to take to the prom. And, this all started, when this started the parents, some of the parents had a real problem with this, at [Redacted] High School. So they were coming, the couples were going into the auditorium for their dance that night, you would get some parents who would be there to protest with their signs and their shouting at them as they're walking into the high school, and so we were hired initially back in the day to be there to play music while they came in to drown out the parents heckling and whatnot and give the high school students a supportive, more, you know, and cheered them on, and gave them, you know, just a sense of pride to be doing what they are doing. And then it just developed into an annual thing, we never miss... there's some events that the group doesn't even vote on, because we just do [them] every year, like the Chinese New Year. You know, most events, we'll take a vote within the membership to see if we want to do them as a group. Some of them have become, just events that we don't even need to vote on, we make sure to do them every year, and that is one of them. The [Redacted] Gay Prom, you know, and other events like that that have just become part of the band."

N: "I've gotta say, that's some of the most wonderful... I've never heard of anything like that. That's awesome that you guys do that. So it sound like there's a bit of a political component to your performances."

J: "Oh yeah. There's a lot of politics in these groups. You know, the Freedom Band was founded as a way to build bridges back in the day in '78... between, you know... the straight community and the gay community, and help better foster relations in our allies and help better understand, you know, it was... and, over the years, it's done a lot of that, because music is the universal language, it really is. I mean, the band was formed at the height of the Anita Bryant crusades was going in, and you know... the proposition that, proposition 8... that restricted gay teachers from teaching in California was going on, and Harvey Milk, was a big thing going on in [redacted]. Harvey Milk was just elected as the first gay supervisor. In fact, our very first gay parade in [redacted] back then it was called the "Gay Freedom Day Parade," they marched behind the convertible that Harvey Milk rode down the street in. I don't know if you saw the movie "Milk," but they recreated all

that in [redacted] and hired the band to once again march. So we were all in the movie. It is a very political... there's a lot of politics in it, but it's a good thing. We've come a long way. I sometimes forget that, you know, when all these other bands were formed, and they still exist, we were the first, then LA started one, then NY started one, and then Chicago started one, and then back in 1985 these top 5 bands that had formed had a meeting in Chicago actually and created an umbrella group, a non-profit of it's own of these bands, and they were called LGBA, which was Lesbian and Gay Bands of America, and through that organization (and that still exists), but now there are, I think, 35 bands throughout the country as well as Australia, and in Canada, in a few other places. And, they're all... they all join into the non-profit, the umbrella of LGBA, which we've had to change from America to Associated, so now LGBA now stands for "Lesbian and Gay Band Association." You probably know this from talking to those groups already. And, that's the group that, you know, sends music to the federation of the gay games every four years. So yeah, it's become, it's a big deal all around the world now, and it all started here with my band in [redacted]. Forty years ago this year."

N: "Oh really? That's so exciting. So you've touched on this a little bit already, but how do you feel other musicians or other community music ensembles in your area view your band?"

J: "Oh well they all know about us, and because, and I know this because I play with many with them, and there's a great deal of respect held by all of these bands about our band. I think some of them are even a little bit intimidated by, you know, because we have such a reputation. And now after being named the official band of the city and county of [redacted], it's even... it's a little more clout, even though we are very humble about that, and we take that with great pride. But we are very well-respected. They're all aware of us; our, you know the [Redacted] band not only... and many of them, you know, you don't have to be gay to be in our group, and a lot of them play with us even though they're straight. We accept all walks of life, so it's... you know, it's not one of these... and sometimes, in the [Redacted], like I said, we're in this bubble, and sometimes for us, do we even need a name like that still? Do we... is there... is there really still a need for a lesbian and gay band, because it's so.... but, and every now and then, we find out that yes, there still is, because it's not all about... there's still events and things go on politically as well as, you know, socially that require... that say we still have a ways to go when it comes to acceptance among, you know, even here in the [Redacted]. I mean, our other bands have... that's more obvious and they have a lot more issues than we have. Like we're the only group of all these bands of the LGBA that use the words "gay" and "lesbian" in our title - most of them can't even do that. Even New York is called the 'big apple core' and LA is the "Yankees Freedom Band." But there's no other of all the other 35 that use the word gay and lesbian because there's just, you know, there's just... they would.... a lot of problems would be posed to that. Not just getting financial help in a business sense, but just, you know, within the community the reaction that they would get. So, there's a ways to go when it comes to fostering allies and bridging gaps between the communities. Anyways, we are very well-respected by just about all the community here."

N: "Great. So you were saying that other bands that don't use 'gay' and 'lesbian' in their titles, you were implying that they do that to maintain sort of a political neutrality in their title?"

J: "Yes, yeah. I think that they, you know, like in their community... let's say the [Redacted] Freedom Band. [Redacted] isn't even... I mean they use the [Redacted] Freedom Band, it's not such an issue down there as it would, let's say in Phoenix, or maybe, just some of the other bands. The Minnesota bands, or even the [redacted] bands, there's a couple bands in [redacted] and whatnot. They all have their own creative name, a lot of them use the word "freedom," but none of them use the word 'gay' or 'lesbian' or anything like that, because it poses not only a financial and fundraising problem, but was it, yeah, just having... there's still a lot of people in the world who aren't cool with gays or lesbians, you know."

N: "Right. You mentioned there being a lot of allies within your group, and people who don't identify as lesbian or gay. Do you think that the titles are maybe a reaction to try to be inclusive of more groups of people outside of those labels?"

J: "Yeah? I mean, this is a... since the band has been renamed to use the words gay and lesbian, certainly, you know, a lot... there have been a lot more, yeah, labels that have been added to the LGBT, I mean, there was the questioning and the bi and the trans and all that. That was important to identify with, and clearly it would make sense, I guess, if we had a name that was more inclusive, but I think that within our group especially... those communities, the transgender, they don't think that we're not being inclusive. We certainly have our share of trans that play with us, and bisexual, and questioning. We have the whole rainbow, and they know they have a safe place they can come, and play, and be identified as who they are... I don't know, it's always a topic of debate, whether we should do something more inclusive with our name. But, so far, I mean, it hasn't been that big of an issue. Every now and then we will hold meetings, town hall meetings... just awareness nights where we can do whole town halls, and people can come in and voice their opinions about these things, and it's always resultant in everybody being... I mean every now and then we might... we might make changes to our handbook as far as re-wording things and using different terms and whatnot and updating all that so everybody feels more included. But we haven't had any... it hasn't come down to having enough issues to change the name yet. I mean, people are, everybody's still pretty comfortable with it."

N: "You mentioned it [the name change] being a sort of topic of debate nonetheless. Where do you stand in that debate? Do you think that it is important to maintain the labels of lesbian and gay in the title?"

J: "I don't know where I stand on that... I don't think it is harmful to use the words... but I am also very proud of it. I don't know, I mean I guess you could say that since we live in a bubble here, I don't know if it's necessary to actually use the words anymore, but then again, like you said, it being [redacted]'s, signing it in to be the official band of the city and having those words in it, I'm very proud of that as well. Does that make sense?"

N: "Yes. So there's a sense of pride associated with that label, since... yeah."

J: "Yeah, sure. At the same time, I think we're so accepted within our little bubble here in the bay area that it's not necessary to, you know: 'This is who we are' and you know, but, because we're so accepted and so loved and so supported by the community. But I'm also very proud to have it in there, so I guess that's where I stand."

N: "Great, thank you. You've talked about the nature of the ensemble being family to you, and people that you loved and had a lot of relationships with. Can you elaborate any more on the community or culture of your ensemble?"

J: "You mean outside the ensemble?"

N: "Like within the ensemble, what's the culture of your ensemble like?"

J: "Well, you know, we get together once a week for our rehearsals. But, you know, I got an email today about band camp and who's signing up for that this year, and I looked at the roster so far to see who signed up, and it's always a good turnout of our 70 members. There's, we always, you know, and our band camp is held up in the Redwoods up, it's a couple hours away, so it's a nice drive, but it's... but we still pull about 60 people coming up there to spend the weekend with... because, you know, it's one of these social things that we love to do with each other. We play our music... it's in a nature setting, and we.. it's more of a social, supportive kind of nightly... we have some little, like, party event that goes on, we sit around the campfire and get drunk with one another. We just, you know, sleep in big tents with each other, like a family would do during summer or on vacation you know? Somebody gets married, the whole band comes together and plays for them at their wedding. Or, some event, a retirement, or this or that. It's like, when I say family, we do things like a family. I don't know, I truly, I know these people probably better than I know my real family. I see them more, I spend more time around them, and I gotta tell you, one thing especially that I know there are a few people in the group, and I am one of them, I'll share a little something about... something personal... is that, in [redacted], like any city, there's many different types of crowds. When I first moved back here, and I say back here because between boarding school, my mother lived here while I was going to the Interlocken Arts Academy, and so in summers, between my years at school, even though I told you I was from [Redacted], my parents divorced while I was there, and so my mother moved to [redacted], so the summers between school I got to stay here, and in fact that's when I came out of the closet, that was during my summers here. But, when I say move back... you know, went back to school and graduated, and went to NY, then SD, so when I say moved back to [Redacted] in '94, and when I first moved back, I got into the wrong crowd around, you know, a couple years before the band, I started drifting over into the drug crowd, the crowd that was... yeah, we used to do a lot more drugs. And, you know, i was all new to me because I had never really been into that crowd, and I could see where it was going and I wasn't liking it. And I... then, when I joined the band, I was so glad to have found them because then it gave me some... you know I was able to get... with music back in my life, it was so much easier to stop hanging around the wrong people. And that was real important to have the band, because suddenly instead of having people around me who were doing drugs or not really working, and just doing the wrong things, things that certainly didn't make me happy, and... I saw people, like, either having to move home, because the city was so expensive with drugs... or going out to jail or whatnot. And, now it sounds really depressing, you know, I found that using drugs and being around people like that... the thing that was worst about it all was how depressing it was. I mean, and being around people who weren't doing anything and had no motivation, never got out of town and never, you know, and didn't have any desire to contribute in a way, that really bummed me out. And so, long story short, when I got into the band, or got back into my music and found the band, suddenly I'm around these people... they were, they couldn't be further from that type of crowd. Like I said, they were positive people, and they had jobs, and they owned homes, and had credit, and had relationships that were longer than a weekend or two weeks or whatever, who were married. It was so supportive, and it's just like everything

that I had once in my life that I had forgotten, it was needed and craved, and forgotten how much... and I still look at it this way, like sometimes every now and then you can't help you steps into your life, and you just kind of have to look at it in a way, you have to have better judgement about knowing who is who, and what kind of people you want around you. But, I do use my weekly rehearsals and my time spent around these positive people as a way to kind of determine where I'm... let's see, what am I trying to say... if I find myself like, blowing off rehearsal, or making an excuse not to go, you know, then I use that as a tool to judge myself. Am I like... you know... who do I have around me in my life? Am I partying too much or whatnot? Because, you know, that will be the first indication of where I don't want to be going - making excuses not to do my music, because somebody around me is trying to influence me on that, or I'm drinking too much or this or that. It's always, it's kept me in check, so for 20 years, I've stayed clean, and I'm around these people... I know if I didn't have these people that I saw every week who are positive and have that, you know, support from, then I would probably a lot more depressed. I know that I probably, I don't know, I don't think that I would be as productive. So, they're not just family and I don't just love them for that, in a way what I'm saying is that I use them as a tool to keep myself in line. Yeah, so that's something personal about me, I don't know. I know it took a long time to get to that point."

N: "Thank you for sharing that, that's great. You mentioned having drifted into the drug crowd briefly. Can you maybe just talk a little more about why that was, what you were seeking in those people, or in that scene?"

J: "Well, I know that I wasn't playing my music then... and I was making good money and everything and I had a good job, but I wasn't playing music. And that was the first time for me. I didn't grow up around drugs or anything but... when I look back on it all, I think that I just may have... I don't know how I got into it or what I was seeking, but I know that I, deep down, I was feeling unfulfilled and still like, missing, I don't know, the loss of my horn, and not having that in my life. You know, because I just found... I don't know I didn't do like therapy over it or anything, but I know I had more time on my hands, and I met up with some of the wrong people, and I didn't have that sense of pride, and my creative side... I wasn't allowing my creative part of me, which is the best part of me, and the part I like the most of who I am, is my creative side, and I was not... that part of me was not active within the entire time I wasn't doing my music. And, I just found... and I knew I... I mean, I never really [inaudible] or like I liked the drugs, I was doing it as a way I think to just kind of hide something or numb myself. Or, you know, temporarily make myself feel fulfilled because I didn't have my creative side... that's probably what it's all about, because as soon as I found my music, I just took off, and sadly left that all behind. Got my shit together."

N: "Right. Did any of this... let me try to find a better way to ask this question...but... have you ever participated in the gay bar and night club culture? How did that kind of interact with this time of your life?"

J: "Yeah, I have participated in that. In fact, when I say I tend bar, I tend bar at a gay bar here in town a couple blocks from here, And, to tell you the truth, it's interesting because it's a leather bar, and it's a whole different scene from... I'm not saying there's a lot of drugs here with in leather men, but it's a different crowd from the band. But, it's great, at least here in [redacted]. They all know I'm in the group, they all know I take it very serious - they're all supportive of it. The leather bar that I work at, in fact, you know, I'm

actually like our band's liaison into the leather community. It was myself who actually got the band to hold information booths at the Folsom Street fair, which is the big leather fair here, that turned out to be, and we do that every year, it turns out to be our best recruiting event of the year for new members. The band every year plays at the Eagle Beer Fest, once a year, and it's me who connected the two and who is the liaison of that event. We do a big BBQ - the bar holds Beer busts [not sure] for non-profits, you know, throughout the year on Sundays throughout the year and, you know, all proceeds from the BBQ and the beer bust go to that non-profit, so I got the band connected with them. So, you know, I don't know about the club scene, I'm not much a club person, you know the whole dance crowd, but I am part of the leather community and it's bar scene, and they're all... I was a big part in connecting, at least for our band, into the leather community. So much so, that we are now, after applying to be a beneficiary of the, of what in [redacted] is called Folsom Street Events, and this group puts on the Dorielli [spelling] fair, also known as the "Up your Alley" Fair, and the Folsom Street Fair, and these two fairs, every year, during the summer, one in July, the other in September, make a ton - you would be amazed how much money these fairs bring in, and all the proceeds go to non-profits in [redacted]. And we're talking good money, and for the last, I don't know, 15 years, our band has applied to become a beneficiary of these fairs, which, if accepted, we're talking like receiving checks of \$10,000 and upward every year from these... from having volunteers at these events, because that's what you've got to do; to become a beneficiary, you have to provide volunteers to work, you know, the gates and whatnot at these fairs. And we were never accepted until last year was our first year, we finally were received, and once you're in you're in... you can usually, every year, provide volunteers for these things and get, you know, quite a big check, written at the end of it all. And so, we were beneficiary last year, and it was myself who pushed for it, and wrote up the grant application and whatnot to become one, and we were accepted. So, you know, the Gay Men's Chorus is also one. So, within these communities, and I'm not so sure about the dance and club communities, but that whole community is really... it doesn't exist like it used to. Like there's no more big dance house dance halls like the Trucadero [spelling] or Ivy [not sure] or whatnot. It's mainly, you know, just the bar scene. Some of them have dance floors, but as far as the leather party community goes within the gay community, they're... all the music organizations, the gay men's chorus and the lesbian gay chorus in Sf, and the band, they're all very much respected within those communities. And, coexist beautifully within the city."

N: "Great, thank you. That's interesting. So, you've touched on both parts of this question throughout this question, so, I'll read it to you, and if you want to add anything to what you've already said, you're welcome to do that. How important is it to you to participate in this ensemble? And, in what ways (if any) do you feel that this ensemble is important to your community, and to the LGBT community at large?"

J: "Well it's important, it's extremely important to me as a person, in my individual life, as I mentioned for many reasons. As far as at large, these groups, I think that... as far as [Redacted] goes, it's important but for different reasons than it might be in these other cities. Like I said, I think it's important, real important in other communities outside the [Redacted] especially because they still have a lot of work to do it bridging gaps between the straight and gay communities and the overall awareness and normality of the LGBT lives, you know, being accepted within these communities. In [Redacted], it's not so

much for those reasons, and certainly more accepted here and part of the norm. But, you know, for other reasons, it's important to have within the community, because we are part of the community. You know, like I said, every business and every non-profit or charity group, they're all aware of this, and they all have an event at some point where they count on us being there, that we can go and it doesn't even have to be a gay event or this or that, they just need music at the event, or just want to liven it up with some... or have a marching band come in and kick off their event. We've played the [Redacted] Giants, for the [Redacted] Giants. Last year we played for the first time with the Warriors Game, and that will now become a regular thing for us. We play... when the Superbowl was hosted here, the 50th year [Redacted] hosted the superbowl, we played for that. It's important within the community to have us here for... to... and these are things that get televised throughout the world, and so I think for the local bands, it's more of an immediate, local type thing. With our band here, especially, it's more of a world-wide recognition. And, also the community. You know, it's important for our local businesses to know that we're here for them. But, you know, our band in particular is... I mean I don't know of anybody, especially when we go to the gay games, like last year it was hosted in Paris we were in, we went to Cologne Germany, that I... when we go there and I speak with the locals there, they've all heard of us. You know, they all smile and say, 'oh, yeah! Oh my Gosh! It was you guys who this or that.'" So, I mean, I feel a lot of pride in that, and we've got a great reputation, and it feels good to know that we've helped bridge understanding between a lot of cultures, a lot of... across the world, and that's real important to me."

N: "It's pretty amazing to have that level of visibility."

J: "Yeah, it is."

N: "Great, well Bruce, those are all the questions I had. Thank you so much for your responses."

“CORY”

N: "Why did you decide to join your LGBT community band?"

C: "Well, I was aware of it, and then I got a call from an acquaintance specifically recruiting me, and I said 'sure.' So that's kind of what got me over the initial hurdle. This was in the really early days of the [Redacted]LGFB... it was about 9 months, 10 months after the first appearance of it, which was 40 years ago. So, if you're looking for a more generic 'why did I join' kind of in terms of motivation, making music has always been my reward in life. At that point, I mean I had always played in some kind of musical ensemble. Let's see... '78... what was happening in '78? I was playing in a woodwind quintet, and I had just been nudged out of the University of California Orchestra for being a non-student, so I had room in my schedule for another regular ensemble. And, it was a nice way to combine music and politics. One of my housemates was active in one of the early democratic, gay democratic clubs, and, I'm not very comfortable ringing doorbells or making phone calls, or trying to persuade people in person to change their minds about stuff. But this was something I could do that I felt contributed to the community. So, that's sort of why I joined, and why I joined then as opposed to earlier or later."

N: "Great."

C: "Does that answer your question? Is that the kind of answer you were looking for?"

N: "Sure, we're not looking for anything specific, I thought that was great. What year did you say you joined the band?"

C: "1979."

N: "You also mentioned participating being a means of combining musics and politics and contributing to the community. Can you maybe talk about more specific ways that the band does those things? Or that your participation in the band does those things?"

C: "Well, the band's existence is a political statement. The founder of the [redacted] band had a really nice turn-of-phrase, that I wasn't aware of when I joined, but he used subsequently. He charged us with being 'ambassadors of joy.' So, I'm trying to search for words. It was, like I said, it was a way in which I felt comfortable contributing, and making a statement. Back then, leaders like Harvey Milk talked about the importance of coming out and demonstrating. The gay people were just like everybody else, and not monsters, and not only out for sex to destruct marriages. So, I believed in that principle of stability, and I thought that was a heart-warming way to do it. What could be more American and wholesome than a marching band?"

N: "Great, thank you."

C: "If it's at all useful... a few years ago I got really motivated and I went back to school to get a second bachelor's, this time in music, and I had to take a musicology course, and we were required to write a term paper, so I wrote one about the... initially I wanted to write about the gay musical movement, but that was too broad, so I just wrote specifically about the context of the emergence of the [redacted], and I'd be glad to share that paper with you if you'd like."

N: "Yeah I would love that, definitely. So the paper was on the context of the founding of the band?"

C: "Right, why it happened and why it did."

N: "Do you have maybe a quick summary for me, right now? I'd love to hear just a little bit about it, if you don't mind."

C: "So, my position was, the time was right. There were, around that time, emerging affinity groups, like a gay doctor's group, sports leagues, but the formation of the band has a certain amount of logistical hassles associated with it. You need to find enough of all the right kind of players, and rehearsal space. So, it requires significantly more work than just announcing a new sports team. The founder, the guy who most started doing it, was a high school music teacher, and felt personally threatened by the Brick's initiative, which would make it illegal for gay people to teach. And then he had the idea that this was what he could do to contribute to the community. He wasn't politically, overtly political, either. So, my paper just sort of documents the sort of conditions of the gay culture around 1978, by looking at newspaper clippings; what was happening then. The gay papers were put on microfilm in the [redacted] public library. So, I tried to write it from a musicological perspective, and the instructor was very pleased with the paper."

N: "That sounds really interesting, I'm excited to read it. So the band was founded in 1978?"

C: "Right, specifically to take part in the parade. Another statement from the founder was that he felt that the parade was so political, that [inaudible] a little bit of color and fun added to it. And he felt, like many people did, like the gay community in [Redacted] was a small town within a larger town, and what could be more appropriate than a hometown marching band? So, he finally got off his stuff, and put up flyers, and caused it to happen,

and people... you know, it's like a catalyst for a chemical reaction: once you start it, it takes part, it goes off, and people had a great time, and there was a lot of energy to continue it."

N: "So you mentioned the gay community in [Redacted] being a small town within a large town. Can you maybe speak to how that's evolved or changed over the years? Assuming that you still live in [redacted]."

C: "Well, I haven't really thought about the way in which it's change over the years. I think it's becoming a little bit more diffuse. I mean, possibly due to... I think there's still a vibrant community within the [Redacted] as a whole, but I think within [Redacted] itself, it's kind of a little less neighborly. Other than the heart of the Castro district itself, you can't walk around as much and see as many gay neighbors as you could back then."

N: "Do you still participate in the [redacted] band?"

C: "I do."

N: "How has the band changed since then? In terms of attendance, and whose there, and what you play, things like that?"

C: "Well, the band now is somewhat larger than it was at the beginning. It's probably a healthy thing, there's more equal gender pairing; at the beginning, there were relatively fewer women involved, now it's pretty equal. It went through a rough patch in the probably early 80's. John Simms was the founder, he himself got sick from AIDS and passed away. The next conductor had gone to a big 10 school, and he had sort of very low expectations of the group, and morale suffered quite a bit. I think for any community group, the group will rise to the expectations of the conductor, and if the conductor doesn't have... isn't... doesn't think it can achieve very much, that's exactly what he'll get... or she. The band has had a number of female conductors. In fact, the founder of the New York band, it's a woman. I don't know if you've heard of her yet, Nancy Corporon."

N: "I have not."

C: "I think she would be an important person to talk to during interviews. I'll see if I can... are you on Facebook?"

N: "I'm not on Facebook."

C: "Alright, so I will send her a message with your email address."

N: "That would be great, thank you."

C: "She knew John Simms because they were both in graduate school as horn players at Indiana University. They became very good friends, and stayed in contact. So, I think maybe I should not try to speak for her. I'll just... I'll tell her of your research project, and give her your email address and leave it up to her to contact you."

N: "Thank you. You mentioned that the founder of the founder of [Redacted] band passed from AIDS. Was there any more impact on the band from the AIDS crisis?"

C: "Yes, like 400 members... more than 400 members dying of it."

N: "That's awful."

C: "I think you'd have to call that... I mean not at all at once... I mean during the 80's, people, early 80's, people came and joined, and got sick."

N: "I don't want to pry at the situation if it's sensitive, because I understand that must have been a traumatic experience to go through. But if you want to speak any more about what that experience was like for you personally?"

C: "Well, I'm not sure I can say anything useful. You know, the kind of think is... the frame of mind that, and I wouldn't know at the time, but it seemed like it must have

been like, people during WWII. You didn't know whether your friends were going to live or die. Or, people when they're in their... when they're much older, and your friends begin to die off of old age... having to do that in your mid-20's, mid-30's, was... I guess, sobering is the word. It certainly would make you think about what your priorities are. Of what you want, what do you want out of life? What do you think is important?"

N: "Right. Was that reflected in the music in any way? Or in the band itself?"

C: "Well, sometimes people would choose pieces to acknowledge the fact that... and it was a bit of a sense of sensitive issue, because that might, in fact, depress members who were HIV+. But, the same founder of the NY band eventually moved to [redacted], and was one of the directors of the [Redacted] band for a while. And she would program pieces like 'Empty Chairs and Empty Tables' from *Les Mis*, speaking directly to that issue. Or, she would program pieces that were arranged by another of the conductors, who had also passed away from AIDS. After she left, I think people were sort of, so burned out on it, and after that people were reluctant to program these pieces specifically, you know, speaking to that issue."

N: "Thank you. Shifting gears just a little bit, how often would you say you discuss your participation in the ensemble with your family and friends outside of the band, and what do you talk about?"

C: "Well, I don't discuss it very much anymore with my existing family and friends because they are all aware of it. I mean, I can say like: 'we're doing a concert, or we're doing a piece which is really interesting.' But, the mere fact of it is really not a topic of conversation because they're all aware of it. So, this is going to be a little side-step for some context. During the early days of the AIDS crisis, a number of my friends who came down with it sort of reevaluated their priorities in life and stopped working, and went back to music school with what time they had left. This was in the order of five or six people who had gone back to school for music, and it seemed to enrich their lives in various ways. I was dating somebody around the time of the 'dot bomb' they call it, one of the periodic recessions, [he] had been a music major in college, and was making a living as a computer, database consultant, and he couldn't get any work, so he went back to school getting a masters in piano. He had been a theory and composition major, and was good at both classical and jazz. And then, a dozen years ago, I got hired for a regular union gig in [redacted]. During the summer, they have old-fashioned band concerts in Golden Gate Park. They're on Sunday afternoons, its a union job, and none of the real oboe players in town wanted to give up their Sundays during the summer, or at least half of them, and they couldn't commit to that, so I got hired. And, playing with real professionals inspired me to really want to up my game, so I went back to school part time. First at [Redacted] state, then enrolled in the master's program in oboe performance at State. And wherever it seemed appropriate, I mentioned my participation in the [Redacted]LGFB, and [Redacted] state I put up flyers for our concerts,. Just by my having mentioned it, I recruited a couple players. And a horn player, and people who were otherwise not aware of the existence of the band. I talked about it as a group that plays at the level of a really good college band, which I still believe."

N: "You mentioned having recruited some other musicians from your community into the band. Can you talk about maybe how other musicians or community music ensembles in your area view the band?"

C: "How they view the band?"

N: "Yeah. Do you feel like you have a reputation? Or that the community has a specific perception of your band?"

C: "Perception varies. So, when it first started, it was a novelty, and a lot of people loved it. Wherever... if we marched in a parade, or we played a concert, it started out with a great deal of cheering. That level of enthusiasm has seemed to wane over the years. It's kind of like 'oh yeah, how nice.' Not all the members were entirely thrilled with the level of... skill level in the band. I know that there's another group in the Bay area, I don't know if you know of them, it's not specifically band, it was started as... an LGBT-friendly orchestra, it's called the 'Rainbow Symphony.' The band has always had a position of 'everybody is welcome' no matter what their level of playing, no matter what their self-identification is, and for the [Redacted] band, there are a number of straight people in it. Primarily, I think because there's no other community band per-say within the city limits. Just outside, there's a community band that rehearses in Daley City, and the school ensembles at [Redacted] State and the University of [Redacted], which a Catholic university, are open to community members to the extent of filling in needed parts or instruments. But, there was no other community band within [Redacted]. If you wanted to play in one, and you were straight, you were welcome in the freedom band, and there are still a number of people, I'd estimate maybe like as much as 20% of people in the freedom band are straight-identified. For the situation with the orchestra is different in that it is by audition. It intends to play at a near-professional level, and does, but because of its musical aspirations, it has a much higher straight participation. I'd say there, maybe 50-60% are straight-identifying, and at least 40% of the people have music degrees. I'm not good enough, I auditioned to get in and didn't make it. And it was founded by the tuba player from the Freedom Band who felt that the Freedom band just was, to him, was a musical embarrassment. I don't think so. I'd be glad to share recordings; it's not an embarrassment. I think it plays at least at the level of a really good community band, especially because its non-auditioned, and anybody whose willing to attend rehearsals on a regular basis is welcome. But, I know for a fact, not everybody sees the band as warmly as I do."

N: "So is there some tension between the Rainbow Symphony and Band in any way?"

C: "I don't think so. There are a handful of people that play in both. It just sort of... the goals and lessons are a little bit different."

N: "Great. Can you describe the community or culture of the ensemble?"

C: "Well, despite having taken the musicology course, I'm not much of a sociologist. It's diverse. There are people from all walks of life. There are gay people, straight people, there are some transgender people in there. There's... it's tending demographically in the skew of a little bit older, although there are some people kind of late-twenties. And recently, there have seemed to be more of them, which is a good thing. At this point, I'm probably one of the... well, there around 60 active players I think, and I'd say 10 of those might be older than 60. Brass players tend to hang out with brass players more than woodwind players, but not exclusively. In terms of sub-groups or cliques within it, I don't perceive clique-ish-ness to the extent of being exclusionary. You're friendlier with the people you sit next to."

N: "Right. Is there at all a culture of support or anything like that within the ensemble?"

C: " Well, we tried instituting a mentorship program, and people were encouraged... if you see, if you're new to the band, we paired you with somebody who has been around for a while, that you're especially welcomed to ask players questions, or they would introduce you to other people that you might like to talk to. So that's one form of support."

N: "Did you ever participate in that mentorship program?"

C: "I haven't in the past, just due to time constraints. I try to be helpful and friendly to everybody."

N: "Great. Can you maybe talk about what the band was like for you when you very first joined, in terms of it socially."

C: "Well, I think the... being in the band itself was not that different from being in any other musical ensemble. From the time I was in college going on, I've managed to continue to participate almost continuously in some large ensemble or the other, so the experience was like being in any other large ensemble. But there was one difference, which was at the time I joined, I lived in the Redacted, you said you lived in [redacted], so that's meaningful to you. I was living in [Redacted], and when I went in to [Redacted] at that point, I did not have a car, and on public transit I would not a [inaudible], and that contributed to almost a little bit of a sense of alienation. You know, I would occasionally go to bars or clubs or other venues and really not know anybody. But once I joined the band, and sort of learned a lot of faces, any time I went into [Redacted] after that, I'd see a familiar face. And that definitely did increase my sense of belonging. That was a warm and fuzzy feeling.

N: "So it was a way for you to get to know people within the community. It helped you feel a little bit less isolated at the time?"

C: "Well that was not my motivation for joining, but that was a helpful effect."

N: "Right. You mentioned going to gay bars sometimes to meet people and whatnot. Can you maybe elaborate on that experience a little bit more?"

C: "Back in the late 70's... sexual morays were different... was a definite alley cat. I think that's as far as I want to go."

N: "Okay. Do you have any overarching thoughts and opinions on the way the gay bar and nightclub scene has evolved or changed, and how you feel about it's predominance in gay culture?"

C: "Well... so, these days, I rarely go to bars anymore, and I wasn't that... didn't go that frequently; I never [inaudible] in bars I guess. I'm basically kind of shy to begin with. My perception from reading of what everybody else says, it seems like bars now don't play as much as a part as they did. Other gay social organizations are still going quite strong. I mentioned the affinity groups, like political clubs, professional clubs, like the gay doctors group, there's the golden gate business association, now there's more than one musical group. I'd say all of these things play... continue as strong as ever. For the alley cats among us, things like Grindr or online services have supplanted a good chunk of the function of what bars used to provide. Since I'm not that actively involved anymore, it's hard for me to quantify that, that's just my impression."

N: "Right. So you mentioned professional associations and like more musical groups coming up which are maybe also helping take the place of the social demand that bars once filled. Do you... I guess if you were twenty... in your early twenties, back in 1978, when you first joined this band. Or even if you were younger than that, how would you

have felt... would the band have filled that social demand for you in any sort of way? Could it now for somebody that was your age now? I'm not asking that question super well."

C: "Well, it depends on what they're wanting. For people who are really young, I haven't noticed people who are really young who join the band and get involved in romances with other band mates. I have noticed some occasional other couples forming between people who came to the band separately. But, few people are coming to the band looking for romance. It's sort of like, when it happens, it just happens. I think in the early days of the band, there was what I called the 'incest.' Specifically, you didn't want to get involved with other band people because if there as a breakup, that would make things really awkward, and one of you might have to leave. And, in fact, occasionally, that did."

N: "Oh no. Can you describe your relationships with other in the ensemble, whether it was earlier or later or now?"

C: "My relationships?"

N: "Not like romantic relationships, but just like friendships, or any sort of relationships you have with people in the band, like what those are like."

C: "The number of people in the band that I'm really happy to see every week... I don't socialize very often.. you know like, going out on group movie expeditions, even going out with any group of people; I'm sort of a hermit to begin with. I feel more warmly and friendly and familiar, like family, toward... have more of kind of a connection with some people more than others, but that's just life. There's people that you click with, and people that are very nice, but they just don't seem to resonate with you. And, I don't think that's much different between being in the band and in the other groups I play with."

N: "Great. So, final question here on our list. How important is it for you to participate in this ensemble? And in what ways, if any, do you feel that the ensemble is important to your community, and the LGBT community specifically?"

C: "Well... I think the reasons why I am continuing to participate is like the reason.. is the reason I joined the group. It feels like a way I can contribute back to the gay community in something that I'm relatively good at. It is musically satisfying, it does get me out of my shell and get's me associated with other humans rather than just a computer in front of my face a lot. I worked as a computer programmer for 37 and a half years, and before retiring, and I didn't retire because I got tired of it, it was kind of like I worked at UC [Redacted], and funding got a bit iffy, and I wanted to go back full time for a masters, and finishing up my bachelors degree, being able to spend hours a day practicing and in ensembles. So, I continue to participate, and think it's important in my life, for the reason that it's always been important in my life, the whole time I've been in the band. I'm not sure if that's really the answer to your question."

N: "Oh, it's a great answer, thank you. Do you also think the ensemble is important to your community?"

C: "Well, it's a happy symbol of gay visibility. You may not be aware that one of the people in the band is a little bit more politically savvy than others. The Freedom band was named by law, recently, the official band of the city and county of [redacted], with no adjectives, not like community or anything else, it's just the official band, just like [redacted] has an official song, and it also has an official ballad; the ballad is 'I left my Heart in [redacted],' I don't remember what the city song is, and an official flower. But,

the [Redacted]LGFB is the official band of the city and county of [Redacted], and that's an important piece of visibility I think.

N: "Yeah, I didn't know that, that's really neat.... I just wanted to ask if you had any questions for me."

“JUSTIN”

N: "Why did you decide to join your LGBT community band?"

J: "It's a funny story. I was coming out of my last long-term relationship and I was looking for something like totally outside of my sheltered little couple-dome, and I was like: "There's a gay rodeo?" and I decided to go to that. And the beginnings of the band were playing at that, I don't know.... 15 or plus years ago. And, there was a baritone, and I was like 'Oh my God, I miss playing that horn!' And, look there's a lesbian with a baritone! Who knew there was a gay band? And they were called, like the 'Big Gay Band,' and the whole thing was like 'I have to find these people!' But, I didn't have horn, and it was actually one of my straight buddies at work who it was, to her girlfriend's... found the band online. And, I went to the concert and I'm like 'Oh my God, Ellen, you found the band I've been looking for for ten years!' And, like, the next week we were talking about it, and I was just like 'I've gotta find a horn.' Let's get on E-bay - I haven't had a baritone since college. And, her supervisor walked by and said 'I play the baritone; I just got one yesterday, and I'm looking for a home for it.' So, kind of funny entry into the band."

N: "That's convenient, how long ago was that?"

J: "Eight years ago? I'm trying to remember how long Leaves directed our band. One more year... Seven or eight I think. Eight and a half?"

N: "You mentioned you saw them at a rodeo?"

J: "Yeah, the gay rodeo, it was here, and I was like 'gay rodeo. Gay bands.' I was just like, completely disconnect from any kind of community. I was coming out of my last relationship and I was like, 'I need to find my way socially.' It was funny that I saw the band at the rodeo. I was at the rodeo by choice, I'm like, 'there's a gay band in this city?' Yeah, so, funny."

N: "Interesting. How often would you say you discuss your participation of the band with your family and friends that aren't in the ensemble?"

J: "All the time, you know, we have a concert or two each semester. And, yeah, my close friends and family know I play."

N: "Do you invite them to concerts?"

J: "Yeah, uh, I don't have any family here, but I do invite friends, yeah, regularly."

N: "Cool. Do they enjoy coming to the concerts?"

J: "For the most part. Yeah, it's weird, here in [Redacted], the Heart in Men's chorus has had such a big, hug, showy reputation forever. And, it's a little bit older than the band, so the band doesn't have quite the visibility. It seems like people have to pick what kind of music they're going to go to if they go to a concert."

N: "In terms of visibility, do you feel like other musicians, or people in your community, have a way they view your band?"

J: "I think, while I've been in the band that's been a huge priority, is visibility and the marketing of the band. Like I said, I couldn't find the band, and I was looking for it. So, I think it's grown a lot in the last five, six years that way, as far as publicly being known. I

would still say [it's] a huge kept secret within the music community here. It was super exciting that [inaudible] hosted the National Convention this Summer. And, I had no window in that, except one of my buddies had been on the board, and gone to several conventions. And, that was just overwhelming to meet the whole national group and family... in a good way."

N: "So you hosted, for the LGBA, you hosted the national convention."

J: "Yeah, this past summer, it was here in [Redacted]."

N: "Oh, nice. Can you maybe describe other ways that your band is actively trying to promote visibility in your community?"

J: "Yeah, one of our [inaudible] found this little pep band thing, and, it's like one of the shortest parades, but, believe it or not, [Redacted] has a huge Irish community, and there's like, okay, maybe only like 3 major parades, but it feels like there's 500. And, we march and play for the one that's coming closest to the City Center.... it's super family-friendly, and, how do I describe that community... they love the band. They love the rainbows. So we play in that parade. We have sort of been in and out of playing at pride. That's always sort of a funny joke every year, just because when it hits here the band is sort of in its off-season. And, one year I think it was just logistics; they forgot to return an email, so we don't have... that kind of regular visibility, but it's always the target. The [Redacted] Pride itself has been sort of either there, or a complete fiasco, it just kind of depends on the year. If that's even fair to say in one sentence... yeah."

N: "Gotcha. Can you describe the community or culture of your ensemble?"

J: "Man, changing and evolving I think would be good words. It was a much smaller band when I started. I'd say somewhere around the size of maybe forty the first year I played, and it got all the way up to in-between 70-80. Every year it's different, with people coming and going. And, one big change had been that it had been, except for my one friend and her two friends that came, it was all LGBTQ band, except for the three of them. And they're super passionate allies, but the band was kind of busted by those three women, and that kind of grew year-by-year, and so we have a really mixed group. Allies, straight, everything. And that also kind of was, I stay away from the Lord and the politics, that's not why I go to the band. But, a couple people left the band because they allowed someone who wasn't gay to be on the board. Really? You're gonna pick a fight over that? I mean, any organization has their little inside and petty things."

CALL DROPS - CALLS BACK

J: "So we were talking about the culture of the ensemble, and I just described that it was wildly changing and different from year-to-year, and depending on who's in the band."

N: "You mentioned, you used the term busted by three women who were allies instead of LGBT. Can you maybe describe the further impact of allies being part of the band?"

J: "You know, I think I said a couple people stepped away from... like, some of the original people, [who] thought the gay band needs to be all gay. And, I think, and I think most of the people, and it's been, I don't know if I can generalize, but it's been more welcoming being a mixed group. And allies have been nothing beautiful, and make us stronger, and I've wanted to shake a couple people and just say 'come on, look at the bigger picture.' I think if we learn anything from marriage equality, we absolutely need diverse communities and the support of allies to get things done, and to live in the world. That's my personal opinion. The band kind of mirrors that right now."

N: "How so?"

J: "In that we have significant... portion of the band is straight, and I couldn't say... not probably a quarter, but at least, you know, out of 60/70, at least a dozen maybe. And I have to say I don't really know, because I don't really know everybody that well, and I don't assume anything"

N: "On the topic of you not knowing everybody quite that well, do you have any closer friends in the band that you maybe see outside of rehearsal?"

J: "Yeah, a couple, and that's something that's also changed. When I first started playing some of my closest friends had moved away, and I hadn't really hanging out with anybody on a regular basis outside the band a lot. And one guy that I'd regularly do stuff with, just friend stuff... and yet, I guess it's been the history of the band and the culture of the band being more family for me. I don't know if this answers a different question, but I recently lost my best friend, and the band was so supportive. When I was filling out your written survey, I was just in tears, because I realized how important they were to me. And that's not just to me, there's a strong, super positive, supportive culture to our band. It involves having fun and making music, and I'm super grateful for that."

N: "That's great, thank you for sharing that."

J: "Yeah, it happened... kind of weird timing in December, and I had to... I took a week off to help plan his service. His family was from out of town, but it was also the week of our concert, and I kind of was not able to play, but the concert was the day after the service, and so I went to the concert, and I was just overwhelmed... and just yeah."

N: "I'm so sorry for your loss."

J: "And I had to be present in a very hard, painful time, and that's just the band, not even the people I know well, so, yeah, good family."

N: "So, you've touched on this quite a bit, but if you wanted to elaborate any further: was there anything else happening in your life that motivated you to join the band that you hadn't already talked about?"

J: "Yeah, it just kind of my only connection to the gay community. You know, that I have any regularly relationships and ritually, you know, this is what I do every week. I kind of grew out of going to bars a long time ago. So yeah, that's an important connection to the bigger community."

N: "You mentioned briefly there that you used to go to bars, to maybe fill that gap?"

J: "And I think that trend is, maybe I grew up with that coming out in the 80's, that's what there was, and we all did that. And maybe, like I said, I went through a couple relationships, and that became less of an important thing to do, and then just getting older, it was sort of a lot of... lots of parallel transitions there."

N: "Gotcha. Can you talk any more about your feelings towards when you were younger and participating in the gay bar and nightclub scene, and what your thoughts are on that?"

J: "I had a super not good family situation coming out, and, you, good Midwestern boys in the 70's, you know, we could [inaudible] far enough away from family and church and hometown to not come out until after college. And then, threw myself into Los Angeles at the age of 21. And I happened to work in a retail setting where I had a couple of gay friends, and I remember a couple, and they were mostly older than I was, stood up for me, and were just great protectors and said, 'bars are where you go with your friends, they are not places to pick up men.' And that was so the opposite of everything that was happening at that time during the early-mid 80's. In pre-AIDS awareness, I was lucky to

have those kind of friends. What else about the bars? Yeah, things have changed with bars being important in the gay community I think all over in the last 30 years. You know, at least here, it's hard... you know when I first moved here in '87... in [Redacted] there was almost.. I wanna say between [Redacted] and Missouri cities maybe a dozen? Some of those were just holes in the wall, but it's hard to keep one or two open, three maybe at the most now. And, just from what I read online, I think that's not just national, but globally with what's happened, more trend-wise I guess."

N: "Right. I guess addressing your younger self, how would you have felt about the presence of an LGBT band when you were going through that process of coming out and dealing with family and things like that?"

J: "Just for how incredible it has been in the short amount of time I've had with this band, I would have been so grateful for that then. And I remember walking into the band, coming into the band at an older age, and not really, you know, looking to date, but I was like "this is where I need to find friends, there's not anyone I'm gonna date here, I'm gonna walk in that way." You know, very focused. If I would have had that kind of community when I was in my 20's, and again it was that supportive and that positive, that would have been a beautiful thing, and I would have been super grateful then."

N: "Great. Did you want to add anything about your relationships to others, otherwise we will skip the next question."

J: "I guess the one thing I didn't say, and maybe it's not unusual, our band has also been seen as this activist culture that groups of go to, you know, march for our lives, and women's march, and it's nice to know that it's not a question, it's just like who's going to go from here, you know, and let's make a plan. It's like, you know, having a community about things I care about socially and politically."

N: "So, the band has a political stance, and being in the band kind of aligns yourself with that?"

J: "I know the mission statement is that it is not political, but because of the people and the relationships, I know who my core group is, and what we think and believe. I think, yeah, we don't take stands as an organization. It got clearer to me in the last year just because our director worked for Clarice Davis' campaign in [Redacted], and he just absolutely was like 'I can't say anything about what I'm doing for work. You're at band.' Yeah, so they're cautious about that, but it's also, yeah, it seems I'm passionate about lots of kindred spirits."

N: "Great. So, lastly, and you've definitely touched on this as well, but if you wanted to add anything: how important is it for you to participate in this ensemble, and in what ways, if any, do you feel that this ensemble is important to your community, and the LGBT community specifically?"

M "That' s a curious question to the LGBTQ community, because we have symbolic support from a couple groups that do some really excellent fundraising, but as far as those being people who fill seats at our concerts they're not there, but they're super passionate about funding the band every year. Like our local bear-mafia and a couple groups like that. Again, we're kind of like the step-child in the gay community as far as physically showing up to be there, or we all have the same friends and they're the ones who come. What's the first part of your question?"

N: "How important is it for you to participate in the ensemble?"

J: "Oh, super important. Yeah, I remember, I was thinking. I'm also a singer and I sing in

a classical sacred music group that was a part of one of the Catholic universities here for about 15 years, and when I found the band I was like, I can do both? And they were both directors of University schedules, and so they would schedule concerts on the weekend before they did their University concert, and they started it for the first year and a half when I tried to it on the same weekends, I'm like I can do this, and one week the concerts are on the same day, you know afternoon/evening, and I'm like 'I have to make a choice.' And I... I had to think and say the words out loud you know? This vocal group is not bringing my joy in my life, and this band has become so important for me. So yeah, it was an easy choice."

N: "Great. Others have mentioned the choice between choral ensembles and bands, and that it can be quite difficult to choose."

J: "Yeah, and the choir I loved, because it was mostly renaissance and earlier, old Latin masses, and we sang with the chamber orchestra, and it was not as much as a mixed group. There was a few gay people in it, but largely straight, and I liked that I was welcome there, and that was part about what I enjoyed about that group as well. But when it came down to it, I was like 'Yeah, no. I need that band.'

N: "So it wasn't an LGBT-identifying choir?"

J: "No it was through a Catholic University. We sang old Catholic masses in Latin, and some of us, we like that old music."

N: "Good for you, it needs love from somebody."

J: "Palestrina bring me home!"

N: "I do like Palestrina, I'll give you that, that's good stuff. So that's the end of my list of questions, do you have anything else you'd like to add, or any questions for me?"

J: "I don't know... can I tell you more about our band that is maybe more generalized and isn't my experience?"

N: "Yeah, I would love that."

J: "Because the band has worked hard with and we have had partnerships with bars, it's not that it wasn't... I think our band some [inaudible] midwinter after break have a little chili potluck. This is the first year we didn't do it, and what is combo, it used to be all country western, it used to be that and Latin. It switches off. But the band just got too big to have all those crock pots at one bar at one time. But we do support and have had events in bars. That hasn't been as important to me. If i were in my 20's or 30's, it'd probably be really important, I'm just... I'm 57."

N: "Do you see a fair amount of younger people in your band, or is it mostly people around your age or older?"

J: "Yeah, no, no, it's super mixed. Yeah, and of the younger folks, I think I'm starting to see more trans folk, and I really just don't know... the social work I do, this is kind of anecdotal, the other half of my department works with foster kids, I work with kids in juvenile justice, and one of my coworkers said, because I talk about the band so much, and she's also a singer in her world, she says 'one of my foster kids is playing clarinet and her foster parents are having trouble finding an instrument. I'm like oh please, yes, let me hit the band forum, and I told her, just knowing the souls in the band, I will bet you a soda we will have a clarinet within an hour if I put it in the forum. And, it was within 12 minutes we had like six. And, you know, I told her, I said, some of these people have been playing since college, and are in their 30's and 40's and have just gotten better instruments and they care about that, and they have an old one somewhere. And, she was

just so surprised, and I was shocked how quick people responded to it, and the generosity. And, the clarinet came from a woman that I don't know too well that sits a couple rows in front of me, and she and her sister are both straight, but like I said I don't know them that well. But that's the culture of the band, and it's that inclusive and it's that caring, and also for other outside of the band. Yeah, I was just overwhelmed with how quickly and how many people responded. That was, a foster kid, of course we have an old clarinet."

N: "That' awesome, I hope he's enjoying it. I play the clarinet, so that's great."

J: "I think that's why... I was thinking about this rolling home. That section, that role or part in how things get orchestrated still mirrors my family origins and stuff, but you know it's kind of instruments. Do we play with the trombones, do we play with the french horns, do we play with the trumpets? It's kind of my family stuff, and so to be in a positive place, being an outsider but still being part of a... it's a good reframing. I don't want to get all clinical, but if anything, even healing, and you know, having other people in the group with, you know, similar... it's the Midwest, we all have family and church stuff, you know, baggage, and it's hard to describe, having lived in places like LA and Denver, where they were super robust, very out community, how important that is in this region where things maybe are tolerant, but not as open. Yeah, my band family is pretty important to me."

“TABITHA”

N: "Why did you decide to join your ensemble?"

T: "I actually had recently just come out of the closet. I just left my ex-husband, and I went to my very first pride, and I saw the [redacted]Freedom band marching - actually I saw them first walking around the pride festival. I saw the shirts, and I was like that's french horn, that's a french horn. Is there a band? There's a band? Because I missed it, I missed it a lot. I played all through high school, all through college, doing both my undergraduate and my masters, and then when I moved out here to Florida, I just wasn't able to do it because of my job. It's really hard to be in an ensemble when you're working nights. So, as soon as I saw them, I got the information, I messaged them, and they sent the information about when they met, and as soon as I was able to, because I was still working nights, as soon as my [big?] went into effect, and I was working days, I was like 'yes!' I was at that first rehearsal. It was mainly because I love playing, and the fact that it was a gay community band was even better, because I was newly out, and I was like, this will help me figure out a way to be active in that community, and be more involved in it."

N: "Great. Can you maybe speak about your desire to be a part of the community, and what participation does in that respect for you?"

T: "I think it's important that we're visible to all ages. That's the nice thing about our band - it's not just adults that we play for, there are children in our concerts, there are children at the pride festivals, there's children at lots of places we perform. We do a lot of different performances, and I think it's important that we show them that it does get better, and that we're not going anywhere, that we are part of this community, and that we can lead normal lives and have friends and family, and be visible as part of the LGBA. Pride, visibility, music; music, pride, visibility.. that's what it is, yes."

N: "Gotcha, thank you. So you mentioned when you first joined the band you had recently come out of the closet, how long ago was that?"

T: "Let's see... when did I get divorced? How old is my kid? My kid is almost ten, we divorced when he was three, so seven years now. Jesus."

N: "So you've been in the band for approximately seven years?"

T: "Yeah, on and off. I moved too far away, and then I was playing with the Tampa band, then I moved to a job that unfortunately I work Monday nights, which is when the Tampa band practices. So, I try to perform when I can with them. Like, actually, right now, because their performance is Saturday - not this Saturday, but on a Saturday - and I have off on Saturdays, and they're like 'can you practice on your own and come play with us?' and I'm like 'sure!' That's why I'm trying to get music printed so I can practice on my own."

N: "Seven years ago, how would you say that, I guess, maybe your relationship with the ensemble has changed from that initial period when you first joined and you had just come out and moved. What was that like for you?"

T: "It was like coming home. I had missed playing so much, and as soon as I walked through that door, the founder of the CFB was like 'Oh, are you Melissa?' I'm like 'Yeah.' He's like well 'Welcome!' and gave me a huge hug, and then everyone else was very welcoming, and they were like 'oh yeah, clarinets are over here.' And it was... it was so... I was like *Gasp* 'I'm back home! I'm back where I belong!' You know, because I had been playing since I was in sixth grade, but it was also really nice, I was like 'I can be myself in this group.' I don't need to hide it. It was, you know, I can figure out where I'm going on my journey of coming out with them, and they can help me, because a lot of them have been out longer than me, or some of them have only been out for a little while, so it's nice to have someone along with the journey of figuring out what we can do, and what we can't do. And, you know, as I've grown in myself, it's been nice to welcome new people into the band. I love that about our band. As soon as someone walks in the door they're like 'Hey, how are you, what's your name, what do you play, okay you're going to be over here.' And, also, there's been a couple of high schoolers that joined right when they turned 18. They might have known for a while that they were gay, or trans, or lesbian, bi, whatever, and they didn't feel like they could talk to anyone. They found our band, they [trained?] us, and it's been fun, it's been really neat to watch them grow in themselves and become who they want to be. So, I've been kind of like a mentor to them now that I've been out for a while."

N: "Right, that's really great, that mentorship."

T: "As I got more involved in the band, becoming more involved in the leadership of it, I was on the board for a little while. That was nice."

N: "That's great. Do you have a fairly close relationship to these high schoolers in the band?"

T: "Yeah, I do. We don't allow anyone that's under 18 to be in our band, just because of the liability reasons. Some of the organizations do, we do not. But, it's nice, there's one person that's trans, and he actually, when he first joined the band, he hadn't really... he hadn't started his transition yet, and he was still going by his female name, and it was really, it was amazing when he showed up, and he was like 'oh, by that way, my name's Ryan now' and we're like 'Oh, alright, that's cool!' And just seeing his relief and his huge smile on his face when we were all like 'cool!' you know and went on with our day. We were like 'Whatever!'

N: "That's awesome. Well, if you are close with them, and you see them sometime soon, you should encourage them to maybe participate in this. I've talked to a lot of fantastic people, but it tends to be people who are a little bit more experienced, and a little bit older, and comfortable doing something like this. And, it would be really cool to get a voice like that."

T: "Yeah, I think they have a lot of anxiety, but I'll try."

N: "I totally get it. Especially just in terms of being a millennial and talking on the phone, it's hard enough, but."

T: "Yeah, he's... I can't remember how old he is now. I've known him for five years now so he's probably 24? 25 by now?"

N: "I see. I would love to hear a perspective from somebody like that, because I've heard a couple things like that, where younger members have joined the group and found that support in their transitions into the community, so I would love to hear more about that."

T: "Yeah, he's really lucky that his parents are very, very supportive, and amazing. So, he's got a great support group. Support all around."

N: "Awesome. So, next point on the list. How often would you say you discuss your participation in the ensemble with your family and friends outside of the ensemble, and what do you talk about?"

T: "Family and friends... well they all knew when I worked at Disney, they all knew I couldn't do anything on Tuesday, because it was gay band night. They were like 'Oh you have gay band tonight.' and I was like 'Yes.' I was always trying to recruit; any time I found out one of them played an instrument, I was like 'would you like to still play?' They... quite of a few of them have come to my concerts, to our concerts. My family members are very supportive, they love it, they love that I post everything. I mean, I don't have any in this state, but they're always saying 'oh, good luck today.' My mom actually came down for my birthday one year, and it happened to be a weekend I had a concert, and she came to the concert, and it was awesome. It was so funny to see her react in the same way I did when I was in high school."

N: "That's sweet:

T: "Running around, you know, everyone talking to her and everything. I'm constantly talking about music. I love it, it's part of me, so it's not hard for me to sit there and talk to people about it, and talk it up. I'm like 'Oh, so you used to play! Would you like to play again?' Even if they're just allies or whatever, I don't care, if you want to come and play with us, come and play!"

N: "Can you describe maybe what your concerts are like? What kind of rep do you guys play? Things like that."

T: "Actually, this one that we're about to play is actually to benefit a local youth coalition that helps the LGBT youth alliance, something they started last year. I'm doing it as a guest performer, because I can't get to the practices like I'd like to, but they said if I could practice on my own I could come and perform with them, I was like 'Sure!' But, it's very community-oriented. The band turns... ironically, the day after the Pulse massacre was the concert for the fifth anniversary of the band. That day was... I didn't even know about it, because I woke up, and my friends are posting 'Oh, I'm okay, I'm okay.' And I'm like, what the heck happened, why is everyone posting that they're okay? And why is it the gay community? What happened? And, I went and looked, and said 'oh, shit.' And, they just decided... we decided, the board decided that it had to go one. That the band will

show that fear and hate will not win. Love always will win, and the outpouring of support we had. Two newspaper organizations, interview our president and a couple board members, we had a couple of radios call and talk to us, and just the amount of support that this community in the Orlando and Tampa area is amazing. I've watched the band and the audiences grow over the years, and it's just... the outpouring of love and support is just amazing. They're a lot of fun. We do a lot of joint concerts, well not a ton, but they'll pull in, they'll do collaborations with local artists and other organizations which is really nice. Specifically, the Orlando Gay Chorus, or the Tampa Gay Chorus, they'll bring in a couple of their smaller ensembles, and they'll do some things at the concert. The nice thing is that we started including, the Orlando band has started including the artists in the area as well. They'll have an art show before and during intermission, and you can actually bid on the artwork, and go home with a piece of art, local artists as well. So, it's very community-oriented. It's very nice."

N: "That is really great. On that note of community, how do you feel other musicians or community music ensembles, or even just community members, view your band?"

T: "I think they view us as an actual part of the artistic community. It started... we've always had support from a lot of the bigger ones. When we first started, we [brought them in house?]. Like yes it's a club, but it's a huge gay club, and it's very, very popular in this area, and it's actually the #1 gay club in the US. They offered us a place to practice for free for the first year and a half. We didn't have any place to go, and then from there we had a member who worked at the Orlando Shakespeare Theater, and they allowed us, they were like... so she approached them and was like hey, we were looking for a more.. you know, a stage to practice on, a rehearsal area that's a lot bigger, and there's you know, a little bit closer to town, and they said sure, and they offered us that space for free. They've been a huge support, they let us... so, Orlando Symphony Orchestra, because that's who she worked for, with the symphony theater. They let us borrow the instruments we needed until we could buy our own. Percussion. It's just really good to know that the... they don't look at us like 'oh... you're just a community band, you don't need help.' They truly do support us as part of their community."

N: "Wow, that's really great. That's rare."

T: "It's Orlando. Orlando loves its art. It's amazing how much that area.. and Tampa too... how much they truly love and support their arts."

N: "Very cool."

T: "And we weren't viewed as 'oh, you're just tiny,' but as we've grown through the years, it's amazing to see how well and much more the arts community has embraced us."

N: "You mentioned earlier children coming to your concerts, and your relationship to that. Can you elaborate, or do you guys have any relationships with public schools, or outreach in youth that way?"

T: "I don't believe so. I know... like I said, I've been out of the loop for that for a couple years, because I have been working, unfortunately, nights now. I got a new position unfortunately that... it's a promotion, but it makes me work nights two nights out of the week, so I can't go to practices. I know last year was the first benefit concert that they did for the youth, and the second one last year, the benefit went to the zebra coalition [?], and this year is going to the alliance, the LGBT youth alliance. It's definitely something that they're working on, I don't know if we have anything with the public school systems or anything like that. I know a lot of our members do work in the public school system."

They practice at one of the schools actually.

N: "So there is some support coming in that they practice at schools."

T: "Yeah, we use the band room of one of our band teachers that's in the band."

N: "Nice."

T: "It's nice that they let us use it."

N: "That's great. Can you describe the community or the culture of your ensemble?"

T: "Family. Big family. Everyone is always welcome, and we even squabble like family sometimes. But, it's always a safe place to be. You can never not... you have fun, but we also have the seriousness of the practice, the 'hey, we have to get this stuff done,' but at the same time we're having a good time. I know that if anything happens, like there's actually been plenty of times where I've reached out to the extended band, the extended LGBT band family that I have.... case and point, my wife and I are moving to Reno, and as she was driving across the country, I contacted a couple people and asked 'hey, can she crash with you? We don't really have the money for a hotel.' They were like 'Yeah! Send her over!' So she stayed at what was strangers' house to her, but you know friends me, and welcomed her with open arms, gave her their spare room. And, when her father passed away, one of the people allowed, you know, gave her, was able to get her free plane tickets so she could be with her father before he passed away in the hospital. They're definitely family. They've never met my wife, and they were doing this for her."

N: "That's awesome. You mentioned the band as a safe place, where everyone is welcome, including allies, right? Can you maybe elaborate on that? The relationship... you've been in the band for a bit, has there been in a growth in the allyship population in your band?"

T: "I'm horrible in knowing whether or not someone is gay or not gay, so I wouldn't be able to tell you. Everyone is just, you know, everyone is welcome to me, I don't care who you are. But, I would say that there is definitely a stronger relationship because of the allies with the rest of the arts community, because lots of times the allies are the ones that work in the other areas of the arts community, I've noticed. Emily was the one who worked with the symphony orchestra. There was someone else who worked at the art museum that helped us perform at a couple places, you know, they have an art museum as a festival with trees and they bring in local groups to play and sing, and that's how we got invited to do that. But, I think as the group grows, and it becomes known as a community band that just welcomes everyone and... there are a couple of other community bands that also... I think it depends on 'hey, oh, you practice on Tuesday nights, I have that night free.' So, that kind of deal too sometimes I think."

N: "Do you know anybody else in other community bands?"

T: "I do not. I just know that they... there was one year in Lakeland, where I live, that they said that... for a while I was without a car. They're like 'Well, they come towards the end.' I guess they only come every now and then, because they're with this other community band, but I don't really know of anyone else who also plays with them. For a while there i played in a local community orchestra as well as this one."

N: "How did your experiences in that ensemble compare with the other band?"

T: "With the orchestra, I had never played with an orchestra before, so that was definitely something entirely different to me for type of music, and just the type of ensemble it was. But, being welcomed? It was the same, because, in my opinion, I walked in, and they were like 'Oh, you're here to play the clarinet, okay, well here's the section leader of the

clarinet section, and here's the 15 clarinet players.' And I'm like 'Okay, hi, nice to meet you.' you know and just started meeting some people, and, I think it was, again, it was very welcoming. It's a different mindset, because it was an orchestra, and I had never played in an orchestra before, so it was interesting to see how it was run differently, and the different types of music they were playing. A lot of, I noticed that there was a lot of the same types of people in the orchestra, doing the same... you know a lot of teachers, a lot of music teachers. I never, you know, never felt like I couldn't say I was gay, so that was good. But, it was a little different in this feel that, you know, in the band, I knew I didn't have to watch what I said whether it was about my life, or my partner, or anything like that, whereas in the orchestra I did have to watch myself a little bit. With my clarinet section, I know I just got the vibe that they they just didn't care. The rest of the orchestra, it was kind of, it was sometimes 'okay, feel this person out first before you... be your true self.'"

N: "So there was a layer of having to censor?"

T: "Yeah, you never know. You never want to make someone feel uncomfortable, unfortunately and, you know, you got to hold yourself back a little bit. But, overall, it was another musical organization that they were all there to play music because they loved it too. And, I actually found it because one of the people in the percussion section was in the band with me."

N: "Great. So, you already kind of talked about what happened in your life in terms of you coming out and joining the band. Was there anything else that happened, or any other reasons, that you wanted to join?"

T: "No... since I was finally not living in podunk... because when I was married, we had bought our house in the middle of nowhere, and I was also working nights. Mainly, it was just the fact that... I worked at Disney, and at Disney you have to have so many years of seniority before you can even get an AM shift, and that was... so I was like 'I'm now in the morning, and I can now have a life outside of working at Disney.' And then, as I said, it was coming out and just missing playing so much, because I hadn't played since the end of... it had been 12 years since I played... No, I've been here for 15... so it had been 9 years since I had played, and I just really missed it."

N: "Great. You've also already talked a bit about what the benefits are for you from participating in this ensemble. Was there anything else you wanted to add to that?"

T: "I just think it's great that this organization exists. And, being part of LGBA, the whole, the Lesbian and Gay Band Association, where it's all over the United States, and in other countries. They have bands in Australia and in.... and they have a conference every year. Been to a couple of them. My first year in the band, I joined in October, and in that January, they, LGBA applied and got into the inaugural parade for Obama the second time that he was voted to be president. I kick myself all the time now that I did not just try to attempt to march in it, but, at the time, I was like 'I'm not gonna get the time off, what am I going to do with my son?' When I should have just 'Let's go, just call in sick!' It was.. the first conference I ever went to was in Atlanta, and it was just an amazing experience getting to play with that many... because it's a band of usually people from all over, you're on a stage with 250+ musicians, it just reminded me of being in college again, because I was in the Pride of West Virginia marching with them, being with 300+ musicians on a field... never played in a concert band that big before. And then meeting all the new people. I've got... it opened so many doors. I have so many

connections all over the United States now. It's pretty amazing what the band offers to you besides being able to be someplace you're allowed to be yourself, and have family around you that loves you for who you are, and you don't care if you're gay, straight, bi, pan, asexual, non-binary. We don't care; you're here to play music and we love you, come on in. So, it's a great organization to be a part of, especially in this day and age when, shoot, you know, I could be walking down the street, and where I live, because I live in a very red area of Florida, you know, my wife and I can't be ourselves. She can come to a concert and support me and afterwards she can come up to me and give me a huge hug and give me a kiss and say 'Babe, you were amazing!' and we can do it in the middle of the theater, and we know no one will do anything, so it's nice to have a safe place to be."

N: "That is great. So, which... you mentioned being in a very red area. So, which LGBT community band are you in currently, or do you have to commute out?"

T: "No, there's not one in Lakeland. I can either perform with the Orlando band, or the CFFB, or the TBPB. The TBPB meets on Mondays though, and I work Monday nights, so that's not really... I could still go to the Orlando one, they meet on Tuesday nights, I have Tuesdays off, but with us moving cross-country and everything, we're, you know, in essence running two households right now, so money is very tight. Unfortunately, I do not have the extra gas money to trek to Orlando every Tuesday."

N: "How far is that?"

T: "From here to there? On I-4... about an hour drive if the... if the traffic is not crappy. So, it's probably about 60 miles. I mean, Tampa's closer, it's about 45 minutes away with traffic, so about 30-40 miles away depending on where they're practicing."

N: "Great. So, shifting gears just a little bit here. Do you, or have you ever, participated in the gay bar or nightclub scene or culture, and what are/were your motivations for doing so?"

T: "The only time I've actually been in gay bars or nightclubs has been with the band, with my band family. Mostly after concert, at the conferences, just, you know, we're all out having fun. 'Hey we're going to this bar! OK I'll tag along!' But I've never actually been a bar person; not really my thing to do. So, I'll go and hang out with my band family after practice or at the conference, you know, when we're all having a ton of fun living it up."

N: "Do you have any... because, I guess, gay bars and nightclubs are such an institution in their own, in the gay community, do you have any thoughts or opinions on that?"

T: "I think it's great that there's areas that people can go and feel like they're themselves, not worry about whether or not you're going to get smacked if you hit on someone. It's amazing to have the area to be able to... you know, go and relax, and... be with other people in the area that you can go and have that drink and just let yourself be yourself.

The ones that I went to were a lot of fun, I can see why people. I am not a clubbing person. I'm a 'Hey, come over and have a drink, and we'll get drunk at my house.'

N: "Sorry, I'm trying to deal with this phone, it keeps ringing. Sorry if that was distracting you. So, can you describe your relationships with others in the ensemble?"

T: "They're all... they're, a lot of the older gays are like big brothers to me. You know, they're in their fifties, I'm in my young forties, and I'm, when I first started band I was in my mid-30's and newly out of the closet, and had no idea what I was doing. They kind of all adopted me.

N: "Can you talk a little bit more about that? In what way specifically did they, I guess, mentor you...."

T: "Like the first time we went to the conferences, and we went to the clubs, they were like 'ok, got to take care of baby sister.' Like, guys, it's not the first time I've been in a club, come on. There's a couple times when I had some questions, like, 'Ok, so what's this part?' The nice thing is that a lot of them, they've been like some of the people I've met, the older ones, it's been nice to learn the history from them of the gay history. The ones that are in their 60's, going into their 70's, just to hear from them, what they went through, having to hide it all, and, you know, how far they've seen us come. Anytime, the first time we performed we did a performance and it was actually on World AIDS Day. We had people come up and share their stories, and it was just eye-opening to me, because I was a kid when that was going on in the 80's. It was like, okay, people are dying, they don't know what it is, they don't really... they didn't talk about it to me. I was 10, so, you know, it's been... it's nice to be in an ensemble of all different ages so that I can learn the gay history, because I think it's very important, as someone now fighting for our rights, to know what has been in the past. Because you learn from the past, you have to know what has then happened in order to be able to move forward, to know how did they do it, okay well that worked. So, let's continue doing that and build on it."

N: "Thank you. So, in closing, this is a kind of a culmination of a lot of the things you've talked about, but how important is it for you to participate in the ensemble, and in what ways, if any, do you feel that this ensemble is important to your community, and to the LGBT community specifically? And this kind of builds off what you were talking about in terms of learning and preserving history, and history, and all of those things. If there's anything else you would like to add..."

T: "I love that it's out there. I went to... I had been out probably for a year. Actually, it had been a year, because I had just come out of the closet when they had the first one, and they were like 'Oh, you're going to go to your first Pride!' Then it got cancelled due to torrential rainfall, it was awful. And, when they rescheduled it, I was like 'eh,' I had work, so I didn't go, so it was my first Pride, and it was just going to my first Pride and just walking around with my girlfriend at the time, you know, and my son, and just seeing that there were all these organizations, and one of them was a band. I was like, is it a gay band? Gosh, it's a gay band. It made me feel like, well there's an organization that I could join that would help me, because I'm not very knowledgeable about anything gay, because I've been in the closet for so long, I married a straight person and had a kid. I'm older, I'm not going to... I felt like there really wasn't a place for me to go. I was like, well what do I do? I'm not going to go out to the clubs. I'm not 20 anymore... I have a son, he's 2. I have to go home to him. So, it was nice to know that there was some place I could go that I felt so welcomed and felt like I fit in, because I've always been in music, so I knew that I could go there, and I knew that everyone was there could also, you know... and then, to have not only the LGBT, but also the allies there, that's the big thing I think. It was nice to see allies as well supporting us, and wanting to be, and play with us, and always be there at the community... and, I don't know, I'm rambling now. I just... I've always felt that music connects people, and this just definitely proved it when I saw that this band was existing and I wanted to be in it so badly. And immediately, as soon as I got home, sent that email to the membership email. And it's nice to be part of something where as soon as... to be part of that person to welcome everybody in now as well. Even though I

don't play with them often, it's... I love that the directors, like he just contacted me a couple days ago: 'Aw, are you sure you can't play with us?' I was like, 'well when's the concert?' He's like 'it's the sixteenth!' And I was like 'Oh, well that's a Saturday, well I can play Saturdays!' Because I work Sundays, and that's when their concerts usually are. He's like 'Great!' You need to print this music and have it read, and I'm like 'Ok!'"

[Closing conversation]

“NATHAN”

N: "...Um, opportunities with the chorus, well in the chorus (they've played a couple concerts with us. Well, the audience has begun growing, and adding over the years. And since I've returned to the band, under the direction of Denney right now, the quality of the music and the focus of the performers have become better and our audiences have become larger. And I think in turn there are other groups in the area (other performing groups) have starting reaching out to us to see if we want to do projects with them, or organizations have asked us to come perform with them. Since then we were the pep band for the [redacted] AIDS walk and we walked the [redacted] marathon when it was still an organization. So I think we have gained respect as a performance organization here in [redacted] with other groups. And they, as I was saying, they're feeling the need to work with us, or have us be involved in their programs, in one way or the other. And, also, if you think of what the schools in the area, the schools have been really good to us in terms of allowing us to rent their spaces for rehearsals which we have been rehearsing for many years at Cleveland high school but now we are at Franklin High School. And the band director there so, um, has been so excited to have us in his program and that has opened up opportunities for us to help work with his students, if we felt the desire to do so, and helping them improve their playing through our organization. So I think that speaks to the bar that we've raised for ourselves and for the community saying 'hey, I think this is a great organization that, okay, so what that their identity is gay? They're bringing a level of performance, a level of expertise, a level of contributions to the community that we are finding very beneficial.' And so I'm very excited about where we're going, and I look forward to other opportunities that we have to work with groups in this community that are starting to open their eyes to us, and say 'hey, we should try to follow their example (sort of).' But again, I'm just a player, I am not involved in the background of the organization, so I don't know exactly the specifics of any types of opportunities that we have been offered, but I've just been able to notice it by our audience sizes and by what is presented to us as opportunities for us to participate if we'd like to. So, I think that speaks for itself right there."

Interviewer: "Great, thank you!"

Interviewer: "Question number four: 'can you describe the community or culture of the ensemble?' And we kind of touched on this a little when we were discussing the social differences between choir and band."

N: "Right, it's, again, it's been very interesting to see how the dynamics differ from what I've experienced. Because it's a mixed setting of men and women and other gender identities, and there are a lot of music educators in that band, which is great. Again, I'm not much of a social person in terms of putting myself out there to hang out with people in the band because they're... I have some very good friends in the organization that I am

close to, but there are others that I don't yet know their names, and I've been playing for five years now so I can sit on the other side of the room and we only have fifteen minutes for break to interact. And so, but there are a lot of, I've noticed that there are a lot of smaller groups that have formed, and, also, there is a sense of community because, at times, when everyone is invited to go out after rehearsal and hang out and get to know one another. I would say it's a family, but it's not a family in the sense of... well, I don't even know how to frame that. Well, for instance, this coming Sunday we have a backyard social happening at one of our board member's homes that is being held in conjunction with the chorus. So it's a community that identifies a common struggle, a common hope, a common goal with our performing and with our outreach. Um, yeah, that's all I can think of to say for that one. Anything else you want me to...?"

Interviewer: "I think I am actually good on that question, thank you. Do you have anything Dr. Silveira?"

Interviewer: "Nope, nope. Okay, so let's go onto number five: 'was there a particular event or moment in your life that made you want to join this group?'"

N: "Well, okay, so I moved here in May of 2002, and as I have said it had been almost seven years since I had been last able to play an instrument, because I had sold my trombone and changed majors, so I had been instrument-less for seven years. And so I moved here in 2002 knowing ahead of time that there was a band that I wanted to see what their marching band was like in the pride parade. And so, in 2002, I attended the parade and saw the marching band and I knew right away: I've got to do that, I just really have to do that. That was the moment for me because seeing the organization in person and seeing it in a setting that is so welcoming and inviting and... it was just, it blew my mind; this is where I needed to be, and this is why I need to get back to playing. So that's why I came back to the band."

Interviewer: "Great, thanks!"

N: "So after I left the band the first time and went to the chorus, I still had that need for music-outlet/performing. Like, I label myself as a playwright these days, I don't do as much on-stage performing as I used to, and there are factors that have made that so. But I have that internal metronome, so I just had to find a way to, um, bring that out again, so that's why I came back to the band for a second time."

Interviewer: "Great, thanks!"

Interviewer: "Question six here: what are your perceived benefits of participating in the band?"

N: "So, okay, for me, for one, it gets me out of the house. It gets me to engage with others and playing music. And it allows me to perform again in front of audiences. That's the most important to me is just being able to perform with other and giving them something that they can enjoy. Other benefits would be just seeing the impact that we have on the community, and the plans we have in the future... and just knowing that we are doing a part to uplift our community even more and say 'hey, we are just like anyone else, and we can perform like anyone else, and we can do anything that anyone else can do, do we have to prove ourselves anymore? You should just come hear us play, you know? We sound just like anyone else.' In a way it is kind of like... I don't like the word 'gentrifying,' but it's kind of.. I don't know if that is a benefit or not, but it's like, but, there comes a point to when you want to be recognized for who you are but at the same time you want to be like everyone else, and when that happens, what happens to your

community, it's kind of like a sort of... I don't even know what that would be called, but do you understand what I mean?

Interviewer: "Yeah, so, it's kind of like promoting visibility for your community through band, and helping support it through things like playing in a pep band at an AIDS rally, or marching in the pride parade, right?"

N: "Right, right. And maybe I was just touching on a political topic within the gay community, but it's like at what point to do you... you know, we've found our identity, we know our identity, and we're just trying to put out a good product, while trying to... it, it's like... we're in the course, right now we are in the process for a possible name-change for our organization. Because right now we call ourselves the 'Rose City Gay Freedom Bands,' and there are group underneath that umbrella, and we are proposing changing the name of our organization to '[redacted] Pride Band,' or '[redacted] Pride Symphonic band,' or '[redacted] Pride Swing Band,' or '[redacted] Pride band that marches in the parade', or maybe the 'Rose City Pride Band.' So, I was thinking in my mind if you kind of look (this is off-topic for just a second), if you look at [redacted] and how the Castro district has, no longer, is no longer really the gay center of [redacted] that it was in the seventies, eighties, because younger people, young straight couples have moved in and kind of changed the whole scene, so our identity there is kind of being lost. So what I am thinking with this organization, 'the gay band,' yes, we want to keep our identity as a gay band, but at the same time, do we really need to continue using a label that sets us apart, or makes us part of a larger performing organization at large. That's totally off-topic, but that's what I was having in my mind when you asked me that question, that the benefits were as a.. I'm sorry that I've gone off tangent. Does that help you understand my train of thought?"

Interviewer: "That's perfectly fine. It does, thank you so much. I think we are good on that question."

Interviewer: "So number seven, Remy, were you out before joining this ensemble?"

N: "Yes."

Interviewer: "Okay, so I guess we'll go on."

Interviewer: "So number eight: do you, or have you ever, participated in gay bar or nightclub scene culture? We will just start there."

N: "Yes. Starting around age 19 when I went to college. Because I grew up, I attended high school and college in northwest Alabama. So, it wasn't until I got into college that I felt comfortable enough to start expressing myself or exploring what it meant to be who I was. And naturally, you might understand, there were not many opportunities to do so in that area. If I wanted to be with my community, to be close to my community, even though I didn't know who my community was, I had to drive to Nashville, or Birmingham, or sometimes I would go to Atlanta, just to go out to the clubs. But it wasn't... I enjoyed it for a period, then I realized that this isn't what I needed. So, I haven't, I don't go to the clubs anymore, I don't like going out to a lot of places dancing. I'm just... I did that in my twenties, and I'm done with it..."

Interviewer: "Yeah, understandable..."

N: "There are other people who I know who feed off of that, but that's just not how I thrive."

Interviewer: "You mentioned that college was kind of a place for you to start being yourself and start exploring your sexual identity a little bit more deeply. Can you talk

about how maybe the club scene or the gay bar scene played a role in that process, if at all?”

N: “I can’t. Because it wasn’t a... the bars were more of an outlet, as opposed to a constant encouragement or support in my life at the time. It was just a way for me to get away, and to meet new people that I would normally see. I wouldn’t say that... uh... I just used it as an escape for a while.”

Interviewer: “But it was a place where you would go to meet other people that maybe you had some stuff in common with?”

N: “Yeah, yeah. And, at that time too, it was also a place to hook-up. I mean that’s... I have no shame in admitting that. That’s just the culture of the club scene, at least the way it was in the nineties. I don’t know what it is like now. As I said I don’t... let me just interject a little bit of life experience from me, I have survived brain cancer twice, the first time in 2000, and the second time three years ago. So after I recovered from my first one in 2000, I had different priorities, I had different goals for myself. And so, one of them was to stop living the life that I had been living, because the path I was going down at the time, it had the potential to lead me down a path of self-destruction. And so I had a new lease on life and I just decided, you know, I’ve done that, and it’s time to move on and experience other things. So, I can’t say what it is like now compared to when I was going out two or three times a week when I was in college. I’m glad I did it, but I won’t ever do it again.”

Interviewer: “Right. So, you mentioned going out all the time kind of being a ‘path to destruction’ for you. How would you have felt about having a community similar to the Rose City Gay Freedom Band available to you in that situation back when you were coming out, exploring your identity, and kind of going to these bars to meet new people?”

N: “I would have found it immensely valuable. It... but again it’s that, because of that time in my life, it was just a different time in society, and I don’t think, there would not have been an [inaudible] like this for me. But if there had been, it would have been a great outlet to find community, that is your community, to find a way to perform, to all the other aspects that it gives me now. It would have been great at that time. But you know, like I said, It was a different time. That was almost 25 years ago; a little over 25 years ago. And I am sure that in your research you’ve... well, you know what I am talking about.”

Interviewer: “Thank you.”

Interviewer: “So we have already kind of covered number nine, which is describing your relationship with others in the ensemble. But if there is anything else you would like to add that speaks to that question...”

N: “No, I think I said... I probably have more... well, like I said, I have several good friendships in the band. Most of them are in my section, the trombone section. But there are also others that I have known for a good while here because I have known them since I first joined in 2003, and I only saw them sporadically over the years when I was with the chorus, so I’ve always stayed in touch with them. And, um, of course you can’t discount the effect Facebook has on everyone, in connecting with people. So, I think I’ve said everything I needed to in terms of that. Yeah, there are still people I don’t know, but that’s okay. I don’t need to know everybody. I just know that we are all there for the same thing, and that’s what matters.”

Interviewer: “The folks in your section – do you hang out with them outside of rehearsal as well?”

N: “One of them I do, one of them I do. But pretty much we, all of the conversing we have, all the connection we make is at rehearsal, or in our sectional time. But there are others in the organization that I see on a fairly regular basis.”

Interviewer: “You mentioned sectionals. How often do those happen?”

N: “Usually once a term. Or, leading up to a concert. It all depends on the space, whether it is available on a rehearsal night. Because we rehearse once a week on Wednesdays, but sometimes there are special events that happen at the school on those nights and so we don’t have access to the space we have to have sectionals to make up for that time we lose that week, and just hash it out with our section. But maybe once a term.”

Interviewer: “Alright, our last question, and we’ve definitely touched on this as well, so if you have anything to elaborate on just let us know. How important is it for you to participate in this ensemble, and in what ways, if any, do you feel that this ensemble is important to the community of [redacted], and the LGBT community specifically?”

N: “Well, for the first part: ‘how important is it for you to participate in this ensemble.’ I’d say, I think I have already spoken about already – it just keeps me engaged, for one, in music, and it keeps me engaged in the gay community at the same time. I’m not a social butterfly anymore. I’m not very good at going out and mingling with others on a regular basis. But I think once a week is a great dose of my needed gay-ness. To feel present, and engaged. As far as the second part: ‘in what ways, if any, do you feel that this ensemble is important to the community of [redacted], and the LGBT community specifically?’ I think I touched on that when I was talking about the benefits. But other performing organizations in the area, I think we continue raising the bar, and I think we are finally realizing that, and realizing our potential. And so I can’t even, I have great hopes for where this group is going, and I’m just hoping I am part of it as it moves forward.”

Interviewer: “Good, thank you.”

Interviewer: “So, just one question for clarification: something that Denny and I were talking about at your July concert, and he kind of touched on some of the stuff you were talking about earlier about the gay community band, I mean, is it the ‘Rose City Gay Freedom Band,’ or is it a community band that happens to have LGBT members...”

N: “Happens to be gay, right.”

Interviewer: “He was saying, much like you said, that it’s, he, and some of the board, actually feel that it’s the latter, which kind of speaks to what you were talking about with changing the name. But I don’t know, I guess that was more of a statement than a question.”

N: “Well, we do have a handful of straight players in that band, whose spouses and children come to our concerts. I mean, yeah, I don’t know what it must be like to them telling people that they play in a gay band even though they’re straight and have families. It’s like trying to find the right balance between a clear identification as one thing while also trying to appeal to all others at the same time. And so, with our name, I think it would be a good thing if we just called ourselves the ‘[redacted] Pride Symphonic Band,’ or the ‘Rose City Pride Symphonic Band.’ Because it makes it easier for people to connect to, like if you hear me say ‘we’re the Rose City City Gay Freedom Band’ when you say you’re in the ‘[redacted] Gay Symphonic Band’ – it kind of deletes everything.

We just want to make it clear: who we are, and what our mission is. And so I think that clarifying our name will help with that, and help others connect with it and recognize it.

Interviewer: "Great. Well, do you have any other questions or comments for us?"

N: "No, nope."

Interviewer: "Okay. Well if you do think of anything, please let me know, you've got my number and my email address. Thank you again for sitting down and chatting with us, we really appreciate it. And, looking forward to more of your performances."

Interviewer: "Have a good day."

Interviewer: "Bye-bye now."

"ATHENA"

N: "First question on the list here is: why did you decide to join your ensemble?"

A: "You know, my history with the LGBA is actually a little bit more extended. So, I joined a LGBA band, the Oak Lawn band in Dallas, [redacted], when I was in college, and that was when I was basically removed from the jazz band ensemble at my university (Southern Methodist University – SMU). And, I was like okay, well I still want to play, but where can I go play? So I just found the closest community band to me. And, so, after doing that, I came out to Miami for my graduate degrees over at FYU, and it took me a while to get myself stabilized and everything, but after I had a car, got a job, and all that other stuff I started playing with the [redacted]Pride Wind Ensemble about, gosh, six years ago now. Yeah, six years."

N: "So you mentioned you went to Southern Methodist University?"

A: "Yep!"

N: "And you were part of the jazz band there?"

A: "Yeah."

N: "Were you a music major?"

A: "No, actually, I majored in psychology, and so this was just kind of a fun thing on the side to do."

N: "Great. What's your instrument?"

A: "My primary is trumpet, but now I play euphonium. You know, in the Pride wind ensemble, we actually have a lot of trumpets now, and we're always a little short on low brass, so I switched over officially to the euphonium section about a couple years ago."

N: "Gotcha. You also mentioned leaving the jazz band at Southern Methodist, was that because you graduated, or for other reasons?"

A: "It was for other reasons. He had auditions and I didn't make it in, so I was like okay, I'll go find somewhere else to play."

N: "Okay, gotcha. You mentioned that was about six years ago?"

A: "Actually six years ago was when I joined the [redacted]Pride Wind Ensemble. I joined the Oak Lawn Band back in 2004, so that's about 15 years ago now."

N: "Can you talk maybe a little bit about your initial experiences [with the Oak Lawn band?] What brought you into the band in Dallas?"

A: "You know, they were a really open group. They didn't have any auditions or anything like that, and so kind of when I started with them, they were still in the process of trying to re-form and try to build up membership-base and audience-base and stuff like that. So they were, you know, kind of going through a little bit of a rough patch, trying to

move up on, you know, move on up. But basically, you know, they were a really open group, they were really nice people, I liked them a lot, I liked playing the music, and, you know, it was just something I was very familiar with. It reminded me a lot of my high school band, and that's kind of what I wanted, and I just kind of stuck with it."

N: "Great. What kind of, were you in the concert band, or the pep band, or the marching bands as well?"

A: "So while I was in the Oak Lawn Band, I actually did get to lead them in the gay pride parade, but it was mostly the concert band that I did."

N: "That's awesome. Can you talk about that experience (leading the band in the Gay Pride Parade)?"

A: "It was interesting, to say the least. I had actually never done a pride parade before, so I wasn't really sure what to expect. So, it was a really good time, being the drum major; so me and the other guy got ourselves dressed up in our uniforms and stuff like that and it was just a lot of fun, it was fun, I enjoyed it. It was a good intro into what that kind of experience would have been like."

N: "Have you been to many pride parades since?"

A: "Uhm, so, I did some... one summer when did an internship up in New York, I spent some time with the Lesbian and Gay Big Apple Corpse in NYC, and I did a couple of parades up there including New York Pride. And then, down here in South Florida, I have marched in the Lake Worth Pride, the Stonewall Pride in Fort Lauderdale, and the Miami Beach Pride down here with the band, most recently as the banner carrier with my husband."

N: "Oh, awesome. So how often would you say you discuss your participation with family and friends who aren't in the ensemble?"

A: "Uh, probably maybe like once a month when I mention a concert we are doing or something like that."

N: "Okay, what do you usually talk about? Do you invite your friends and family to concerts?"

A: "I do invite my friends, they don't always make it out, but I do invite them. My husband is usually the one that shows up, he's always there. And we had a really great time at the Winter Concert with the [redacted]Pride Wind Ensemble, because or Rabbi actually went to go sing a song, *Avenu Alkenu*, which is one of the centerpiece songs for the Jewish high holy day liturgy, and we brought up about fifteen people from Miami Beach up to the [Brauerston?] performing arts, so that was a really cool moment for me."

N: "That sounds neat. So, how do you feel other musicians or community music groups view the [redacted]Pride Band?"

A: "You know, I think, from what I've heard, is that it is really well-respected. We're actually recognized as one of the premier music groups in the Florida region in general."

N: "Great. And so do you feel like you all play difficult music, and you do it well and those things? What kind of rep do you all play?"

A: "We actually have a pretty wide range. But, we do play some more heavy really classical kind of music. I mean, that was the theme for a concert about a year and a half ago: "Heavy Classics," and we were playing like Beethoven's fifth, and stuff like that, and we were playing it really well, we basically sound like a really professional group, and people are always surprised when they come to hear us play, because typically when people think about a community ensemble, they're only expected to be so polished or so

professional-sounding. But, when they come here us, they're like wow, they always get blown away. But then we've got some lighter stuff; so for last June's concert we did "Cartoon Classics," and played cartoon music, and this June we're doing an "On Broadway" show, doing a bunch of Broadway tunes with the Gay Men's Chorus of South Florida."

N: "Great. Do you collaborate with other groups in the area, like the Gay Men's Chorus, often?"

A: "No, to be honest, this will actually be the first time, in my experience, that I've seen us do a collab concert like this."

N: "That's fun, that sounds like a really great time actually. Can you describe the community or culture of your ensemble?"

A: "You know, on thing that is a really big take-away is you know, my rabbi after he was done performing with us, and the next day he said, wow, everybody in the group is so nice. I've never been around so many nice people. Everybody is so friendly, they're very welcoming, they're very kind. And I told him, that's just how we are. We don't really have the time, or the effort, or the energy to spend on drama and nonsense. We are just really nice to each other, you know, there are always those one or two problem children, you know, there's always those one or two people who just don't like each other because the personalities don't mix. But it doesn't become an over-arching thing in the organization. You know, that's just their beef, they handle it the way they handle it, but for the most part everybody is really respectful, and kind to each other I think.

N: "Great. You mentioned having a husband, correct?"

A: "Yes."

N: "So is it same to assume that you identify as heterosexual?"

A: "I don't think that would be safe to assume."

N: "Okay, I don't want to make any assumptions about, how about as an ally?"

A: "Okay, yeah."

N: "Do you feel like you identify in the group as an ally? Or as a fellow member of the LGBT community?"

A: "You know, I really feel more like an ally than part of the LGBT community, but that's primarily because I know that the "B" is just not very trusted or welcomed in the community."

N: "Interesting. Can you maybe elaborate as to why that is? Or that feeling that you get?"

A: "It's not specific to the group or anything like that it's just generally within the community, you know, people say oh you can't trust them, they're not faithful, they don't know what they want, they need to pick a team, bla bla bla, they're really gay, bla bla bla. It's just, all of these really negative stereotypes, so, that's just something I tend to just keep to myself."

N: "Gotcha. So even in the band, you're not necessarily as open about that as you would?"

A: "Right."

N: "Gotcha. You've touched on this just a little bit, but was there a particular event or moment in your life that made you want to join the ensemble? Besides the jazz band."

A: "I don't really think there was anything in particular about it. It was just, it felt like it was the right time, now that I had gotten myself better settle in [redacted]with my job,

and stuff like that. It just felt like it was time to go back and play after stepping away for about 3 years."

N: "Great. Was there, I guess, a specific reason you chose an LGBT band over a different community ensemble?"

A: "You know, I think for me, I always had a lot of gay friends, like in high school and stuff like that, and I just kind of like, I feel like there's a little bit more camaraderie, you know, with some of the inside-jokes that we have and stuff like that. And, uhm, it also feels like I'm kind of serving a bigger community, serving a bigger cause, as well as part of it, so that's something that I can really appreciate as well."

N: "Can you maybe elaborate on how exactly you are serving the community at large, or a greater cause?"

A: "Yeah. So, I actually did a research paper while I was back at FYU regarding transformative and emancipatory learning for adults and how how LGBA bands basically contribute to those adult learning experiences. And basically what it is: is not learning just a little bit more about yourself, but kind of playing a role within the community. So, whenever, say, a gay band gets invited to go play in a parade, or an event that's considered to be typically more mainstream, meaning presumed to be primarily heterosexual, because it's not specifically aligned with the gay community, any time you're kind of doing something like that, you're basically acting as ambassadors for the community. And then people say, oh wow that was a really good group, those were really good people, bla bla bla, and people aren't really as focused on the gay aspects, which is the music that you're making and how it's making them feel. Then maybe that can maybe kind of break through and have them say, oh well, you know, everything that I may have thought before about gay people isn't necessarily true. I've met all these really cool, awesome people, and they were actually really normal, and whatever I've been told before doesn't necessarily ring true compared to my experiences with these individuals."

N: "Very interesting. Would you perhaps be interested in sharing that paper with me?"

A: "Uh-huh, absolutely. I'll send you the link."

N: "Great, thank you, I'd love to read that. So you definitely view your participation in the band and the visibility that you have in your community as a sort of political activism, almost?"

A: "Yep, basically. Another really good example is a special program that we have at the [redacted]Pride Wind Ensemble, and it's called the Youth Pride Band. And I actually did a fundraiser this past weekend for them to start trying to contribute to their scholarships next year. But basically what it was: was after Tyler Clemente's suicide, that really touched off a lot of activism in the community, particularly the 'It Gets Better' movement. And basically what this band was formed to do was act as an honor band, where LGBT students and their allies can have a safe space to come and play together with the adult members, and play side-by-side with the adults, get coaching from the adults, and basically just feel free to be who they are, free from bullying and harassment related to their LGBT status."

N: "What a great idea. How long has that band been around?"

A: "This was just the eighth season, and as of season eight we have given out \$104,000 in scholarships to students."

N: "That's amazing. So are these primarily high school, middle school, what's the age-range of the youth pride band?"

A: "It's strictly high school students at this point. We get so much demand for it because the kids know they can get scholarships in their junior and senior years, that we've actually started having to turn people away just by virtue of numbers. So yeah, so I think we bring in about 90-100 kids every year to play."

N: "You also mentioned that it's LGBT students AND allies. Do you have maybe an idea of the ratio of the two?"

A: "That I do not know, because officially we don't ever ask them to go on the record. So, they don't have to tell us anything about themselves that they don't want to. Again, the whole point of it is to just be a safe-space, if they tell us they tell us, great, but we've actually lost out on grants before because we did not have them formally identify as part of the community or not part of the community. And then, the grant people said, oh but you have to do it specifically for gay students, and we said we know this is the outreach that we do, but we don't force anybody to go on the record, and we lost, you know, the opportunity to get a \$5,000 grant because of that. But, those are the principles, that's what we stand by, and if we lose \$5,000 because of it, then okay."

N: "Right. So, how do you, out of curiosity, decide who gets into the band? Is it audition-based?"

A: "It's not audition-based. What they do is they apply through the different schools. So we do outreach to Palm Beach [Brauerd?] in Miami Beach County schools, and these are what we call the tri-county area. Public and private, you know, basically whoever is ready to come in. And what we'll do is they'll fill out an application, they have to get a letter of recommendation from their band director or something like that. And then, for some sections, if there's some sections that are running low, some years it can be easier to get.. a little easier to get in versus some other years. But, it's primarily done by seniority and the numbers. So, if we have a section that's primarily juniors and seniors, we usually tell the sophomores and freshman, hey, not this year, but please apply again next year when you cycle through so that you can also have the chance to get a scholarship, because our focus is really trying to get kids that can be eligible for scholarship."

N: "Gotcha. I'd be really curious to hear some of the experiences of the kids that are in that band. Do you have any stories, or just anything to say about the experiences of the [youth] band by it's members?"

A: "You know, I think for the adults that volunteer to serve as coaches, they're very dedicated. Because they're really sucking up a lot of their time to do that, because we are talking about 4-5 hour rehearsals every Sunday for 3 or 4 Sundays, and then you've got a 3-4 hour rehearsal the Friday just before the concert, and then you've almost an 8 hour rehearsal the Saturday before the concert, so it takes a lot of dedication, and people that really believe in the cause and what it is. So, I've not really heard anybody say anything negative about their experience as a coach, or a participant in the Youth Pride Band. I think people really believe in what it's about and what it's gained... what it's meant to do. And, you know, I think we would have not seen the success that we see if the other people didn't believe in it too, primarily the students."

N: "Right, thank you. What are the benefits of participating in the ensemble for you?"

A: "I like to play music, and you know it just gives me a chance to play music and be with friends. So you know, music, and then my social life. A lot of my friends come from the band."

N: "Did you meet a lot of your friends in the band, or did you just all kind of join together?"

A: "I met them through the band."

N: "Would you say that a lot of people are friends in the group? Or is that something that is kind of just in your circle?"

A: "I would say a lot of people do have at least 2 or 3 really good core friends in the band. Like, usually, it's primarily section-based, all the saxophones hang out together, all the flutes hang out together, it's like that, but we're not overly clique-ish, because we'll all just hang out with all different types of people, especially when we have a social event. But you know, I would say people have at least 2-3 core people that they basically run with in the band."

N: "Gotcha. Can you talk a little bit more about the social events that you guys might have?"

A: "Yeah, so, every week after rehearsal, typically we'll go to one of the gay bars on the strip for some dinner and drinks after rehearsals. And then, after the concerts, we'll also have a social event at any place over on the strip that'll basically... we'll have drinks and pizza and wings and stuff like that available for people if they want to have something to munch on. And, also, we'll just have stand-alone social events. Like, one day, before we kicked off the season for this year, we actually had a brunch at one of the restaurants, and that was really fun, because we all got together, we all had some brunch, we had mimosas, and drinks, and had a good time. It was fun!"

N: "Sounds like fun! You mentioned some of these events taking place in some gay bars. Considering gay bars as a whole as an institution in the LGBT community historically, how do you feel about the gay bar/night club scene, culture, have you ever participated in it?"

A: "Oh yeah! I mean, for my birthday last weekend, I got bottle service at Twist over here at South Beach with a bunch of my friends; there were seven of us, so we had a good time. But, for the most part, what do I really think about the gay bar culture? I like it because, you know, when I go with my friends, now is it a place I would necessarily go alone? Not necessarily, because I do think that there is a lot of sense of, you know, just a bunch of guys, it's very male-drive, it is very pretty boy-driven, and they just kind of want to go for all the sexy, cute little twinks or whatever else that they're looking for. And I'm like, okay, I really just want some wings and a beer, can somebody get me some service here? But, otherwise, when I'm with my friends, it's great, but it's not something I would necessarily do alone."

N: "Gotcha. So you've already touched on this quite a bit, but if you wanted to add anything else in terms of your relationships with other people in the ensemble, maybe even the director?"

A: "Oh, yeah. I think I have a pretty positive relationship with the people in the ensemble. The band director, you know, he's actually really well-respected, and he is a really good guy. He's always working really hard for the group, so I appreciate that. He's been our director for 11 or 12 years now, so he's got some longevity there, you know, so I appreciate that. We also have different component ensemble groups, and everybody there is equally as dedicated to making sure that the group sounds as good as possible, and represents us well whenever they get invited to do concerts or events."

N: "Great. In closing, I guess, I'd just like to ask you how important is it for you to participate in the ensemble, and in what ways, if any, do you feel that the ensemble is important to your community?"

A: "You know, I think it's really important for me to always have a place where I can play music, so that's always a top priority for me. And I think it's also really good for me to have kind of a safe-space for me to be part of the LGBT community, without necessarily having to be overly-out or anything like that, just kind of have my own little niche that I can participate in my own way. And then as far as the ensemble for the community, I think we play a pretty big role in the community. We're always having our ensemble groups play for some of the different events if there's a particular - not just the gay pride parades - but if there's like, a gala or something like that going on, then our group will basically go over and perform, or one of our ensemble groups will go and perform and represent the band and things like that. So, I think it's a pretty big deal, I think it's a pretty good dynamic that we have with the community overall."

N: "Could you maybe talk about how your participation in the band is important to the LGBT community specifically?"

A: "Yeah. So, obviously there's the gay pride parades. But, I can't think of any recent examples from this season, but I know that in prior seasons, whenever there's been something like the gay and lesbian community center, or something like that, whenever there was someone within the community that would call us up and say, hey we've got a pretty big event coming up, can you send some of your people over to come play for us? Or come play with us? Whatever the case may be. And, we are usually able to do that, and represent the group, and also represent the community."

N: "Awesome. Well, thank you so much, that's actually all I had. If you had any questions for me, I'd love to answer any of those."

A: "Uhm, so, what's your interest in studying the LGBA bands? How did you get started on that? Are you a member of one?"

N: "I'm actually not. I'm a graduate student at the University of Oregon right now, and last year I was prompted to find a research topic. And I'm a gay musician, and I've always been very concerned with identity formation and my own identity as a musician, and as a gay man, and how those both intertwine. So, I actually stumbled across an LGBA pamphlet one day at my university, and I was like, oh, gay bands are a thing! I had no idea. I had no clue. And I was very fascinated by it. And, uhm, so I kind of developed this study off of that interest I suppose, in both well-being in LGBT populations and identity formation, and how music is a part of that."

A: "Oh, wow, okay. So, how far are you from [redacted], then?"

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW CODES, ANALYTIC MEMOS, AND THEMES

Theme:	Code(s)/Memos:	Example(s):
Musicianship/Musical motivations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Value of high musicianship ▪ Value of expertise ▪ Desire to stay “in shape” ▪ Quality of music ▪ Musical growth ▪ Love of playing ▪ Pride in playing difficult music ▪ Rewarding ▪ Fulfilling ▪ Satisfying ▪ Enriching ▪ Professional-level ▪ Like other music ensembles ▪ Reliving ▪ Legitimacy ▪ Same as other music groups ▪ Music as necessity, fundamental ▪ Side-activity ▪ Well-respected ▪ Premier ▪ Dedication to craft ▪ Music as top priority ▪ High-quality ▪ Lens for life ▪ Intimidating ▪ Humble ▪ Separate from social ▪ Value of creativity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “...found opportunities to play music and I liked playing my trumpet.” ▪ “...we’re really good.” ▪ “...we really get into challenging things, and I enjoy that.” ▪ “...took a year off... huge mistake.” “...so I was playing drums, but it didn’t really fill the same void.” ▪ “...the quality of the music and the focus of the performers have become better and our audiences have become larger.” ▪ “...music had always been my reward in life.” ▪ “It was mainly because I love playing, and the fact that it was a gay community band was better, because I was newly out, and I was like, this will help me figure out a way to be active in that community, and be more involved in

		<p>it.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “I know I'm never fully at my most content and most happy and most fulfilled, and I never will be, unless I have my music in my life. Because bringing back music in my life... you think you may be struggling with like day to day problems or issues at work, or things that bother you, or relationships that annoy you, and you stress on them, or whatever, you have problems that seem hard to overcome and you can't figure the answer out. And, when I started playing music again, oh my god, suddenly, and almost in an instant, all these little worries went away, and all my problems, things that I was stressing on, suddenly made sense and I knew what I had to do.” ▪ “Well, there's really not a lot of difference as far as, you know, I mean it's the music that gets you there.” ▪ “I wasn't allowing my creative part of
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		<p>me, which is the best part of me, and the part I like the most of who I am, is my creative side, and I was not... that part of me was not active within the entire time I wasn't doing my music. And, I just found... and I knew I... I mean, I never really [inaudible] or like I liked the drugs, I was doing it as a way I think to just kind of hide something or numb myself. Or, you know, temporarily make myself feel fulfilled because I didn't have my creative side... that's probably what it's all about, because as soon as I found my music, I just took off, and sadly left that all behind. Got my shit together."</p>
<p>OT (Ecology, motivations/incentives, leadership/commitment)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Affinity groups ▪ Limited options vs. many ▪ Flexibility ▪ Availability ▪ Having to "make a choice" ▪ Abilities ▪ Capabilities ▪ Open (standard-wise) ▪ Principles > Economic exchange ▪ Dedication to ideologies and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "...and I'm like, I have to make a choice. And I... I had to think and say the words out loud you know? This vocal group is not bringing my joy in my life, and this band has become so important for me. So yeah, it was an easy choice." ▪ "...it's been a place

	<p>principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Well-respected director ▪ Director as hard worker ▪ Director as representative of values ▪ Democratic ▪ Volunteering 	<p>where I can play very comfortably, to the best of my capabilities. And they've been very flexible about what do you want to play' and trying to help me meet their needs..."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "So, they were, one, they were in a band that they didn't have to audition for..." ▪ "And then, the grant people said, oh but you have to do it specifically for gay students, and we said we know this is the outreach that we do, but we don't force anybody to go on the record, and we lost, you know, the opportunity to get a \$5,000 grant because of that. But, those are the principles, that's what we stand by, and if we lose \$5,000 because of it, then okay." ▪ "So it takes a lot of dedication, and people that really believe in the cause and what it is. So, I've not really heard anybody say anything negative about their experience as a coach, or a participant in the
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		<p>Youth Pride Band. I think people really believe in what it's about and what it's gained... what it's meant to do. And, you know, I think we would have not seen the success that we see if the other people didn't believe in it too, primarily the students."</p>
<p>Importance of visibility and stature in the community – Normalization</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Perceptions of other musicians/community members ▪ Community impact ▪ Positive relationships/perceptions with other community institutions ▪ Symbol of gay visibility ▪ Official band of the city of [Redacted] ▪ Visibility for youth ▪ Visibility beyond immediate community ▪ Marketing ▪ Family-friendly ▪ Visibility to younger generation ▪ Access ▪ Alternative platform ▪ Defying expectation ▪ Representing ▪ Impressive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "...there's professionals in the community too, and they can run with the best of them." <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "...I think it's important for the band to be in the community to let everybody know that we're there and we can do good stuff" ▪ "...when they hear us, they love us." ▪ "...so what if their identity is gay? They're bringing a level of performance, a level of expertise, a level of contributions to the community that we are finding very beneficial." <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "...schools have been really good to us in terms of allowing us to rent their spaces... the band director there

		<p>has been so excited to have us in his program and that has opened up opportunities for us...”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “It’s nice to see people get excited about a musical group that I’m in, especially because it’s LGBT-centered.” ▪ “We give visibility to the LGBT community, especially to younger folks, like my younger step-siblings. I mean, my families from a very small town. I didn’t know gay people were a thing until I was 13, and so, us putting on our concerts, especially the educational ones that are free to the public, it gives access, it gives people access to the gay community that normally wouldn’t because, like I said, a lot of LGBT-centered events are at bars, or at clubs, or they are 21 and over events where families typically don’t go. And so, it gives another platform for people to experience the LGBT community,
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		<p>and something that's not a bar, or Rupaul's Drag Race. It's normal people, sitting on a stage, and playing music. And, you know, our conductor and his metallic gold blazer and silver pants.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ “So, whenever, say, a gay band gets invited to go play in a parade, or an event that's considered to be typically more mainstream, meaning presumed to be primarily heterosexual, because its not specifically aligned with the gay community, any time you're kind of doing something like that, you're basically acting as ambassadors for the community. And then people say, oh wow that was a really good group, those were really good people, bla bla bla, and people aren't really as focused on the gay aspects, which is the music that you're making and how it's making them feel. Then maybe that can maybe kind of
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		<p>break through and have them say, oh well, you know, everything that I may have thought before about gay people isn't necessarily true. I've met all these really cool, awesome people, and they were actually really normal, and whatever I've been told before doesn't necessarily ring true compared to my experiences with these individuals."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "Like I said, I think it's important, real important in other communities outside the [Redacted] especially because they still have a lot of work to do it bridging gaps between the straight and gay communities and the overall awareness and normality of the LGBT lives, you know, being accepted within these communities."
<p>Participation as expression of identity - belonging to and supporting the LGBT community (via activism and political</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High musicianship as a validation or affirmation of identity within community ▪ Value of connecting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "...but also to give more opportunities to those people in the LGBT community, that want to make

<p>action)</p>	<p>with other gay people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Value of supporting other LGBT individuals in community ▪ Band as safe space ▪ Contributing (through musical participation) [to gay community] ▪ Combining [music and politics] ▪ Political foundations ▪ Appropriate ▪ Social commentary ▪ Awareness [of LGBT issues] ▪ Existence as activism/politics ▪ Letting go ▪ Disconnection ▪ Activist culture ▪ Introduction to community ▪ Bisexuality feeling unsupported, stigmatized ▪ Serving ▪ Diversifying 	<p>music, and this is a way we can and continue to show off their identity.”</p> <p>“...holding the banner up for the LGBT community.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “...it keeps me engaged in the gay community at the same time.” “But I think once a week is a great dose my needed gay-ness; to feel present and engaged.” ▪ “...not just a place to play their instrument, but a safe-place where they can come every Wednesday night and just put their frustrations into something, and we’ll understand.” “We are there to have a musical outlet that can be used as that kind of support, both for people who are playing and for people who are coming out to our concerts.” ▪ “It was mainly because I love playing, and the fact that it was a gay community band was better, because I was newly out, and I was like, this will
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		<p>help me figure out a way to be active in that community, and be more involved in it.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “But, it was a little different in this feel that, you know, in the band, I knew I didn’t have to watch what I said whether it was about my life, or my partner, or anything like that, whereas in the orchestra, I did have to watch myself a little bit.... You never want to make someone feel uncomfortable.” ▪ “God, I was feeling disconnected from any kind of community.” ▪ “Yeah, it’s just kind of my only connection to the gay community. You know, that I have any regular relationships and ritually, you know, this is what I do every week. I kind of grew out of going to the bars a long time ago. So yeah, that’s an important connection to the bigger community.” ▪ “If I would have
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		<p>had that kind of community when I was in my 20's [the band], and again it was that supportive and that positive, that would have been a beautiful thing, and I would have been super grateful then.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “It’s kind of my family stuff, and so to be in a positive place, being an outsider but still being part of a.... it’s a good reframing. I don’t want to get all clinical, but if anything, even healing, and you know, having other people in the group with you with, you know, similar [experiences]... it’s the Midwest, we have family and church stuff, you know, baggage, and it’s hard to describe... how important that is in this region where things maybe are tolerant, but not as open. Yeah, my band family is pretty important to me.” ▪ “Band commissioned piece about
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		<p>Stonewall Riots, racial discrimination, and harassment of ethnic groups.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “[Commissioning LGBT-related pieces] are, you know, it’s a sign of respect, and bringing people together with a shared connection. Everyone has a different story, but I think in the LGBT community everyone has, in essence, fought the same fight. And it’s our way of paying tribute to the people who did those things before us. I was alive when Stonewall happened, but I was like a little kid. So it’s kind of passing the baton to the next generation.” “And, I think it talks about who we are and where we are going.” ▪ “[Redacted] wasn’t really feeling like home anymore. A lot of my friends in [Redacted] stopped talking to me after I came out, so I felt really out of place.... And Mid-
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		<p>America Freedom Band actually made [Redacted] feel like home again, which is not something that I was expecting, but it's definitely... it's definitely nice.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ...two, they were in something that, you know, they were in something where they could get that sense of community and that was something that I was not getting here in [Redacted]. Because, I mean, I had my work friends, but I was the token gay friend.” ▪ <i>VIGNETTE:</i> “Yeah. I mean, it's one thing to just be in a band, because if I just wanted to be in any ensemble, you know, I'd audition for the civic orchestra or, you know, find another community band. But having a band that's also involved in the community like this, you know that's important too, because being an active part of my community is
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		<p>something that I've always valued. I mean, my mom was the assistant director of a domestic violence shelter growing up, and so volunteering has always been something that I do, and working for awareness and worthy causes is just... it's nice to be able to do something that I love while also advocating for others in a way like with the AIDS WALK.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “...having that community is, it's, that's just a support system, it's having people around you that you know share your interests and your love of music, and having people that you don't have to hide from, or hide a part of yourself from, because that's not something that I ever want to do again. You know, because the reason we come out is, I don't want to have to hide anymore. And so, being in a group of people
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		<p>who not only love music, but I can freely be who I am as a queer person, is very freeing and liberating.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ "You know, I really feel more like an ally than part of the LGBT community, but that's primarily because I know that the "B" is just not very trusted or welcomed in the community... it's just generally within the community, you know, people say oh you can't trust them, they're not faithful, they don't know what they want, they need to pick a team, bla bla bla, they're really gay, bla bla bla. It's just, all of these really negative stereotypes, so, that's just something I tend to just keep to myself."▪ “And basically what [the LGBT youth ensemble] was formed to do was act as an honor band, where LGBT students and their allies can have a safe space to come and play together
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		<p>with the adult members, and play side-by-side with the adults, get coaching from the adults, and basically just feel free to be who they are, free from bullying and harassment related to their LGBT status."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "And I think it's also really good for me to have kind of a safe-space for me to be part of the LGBT community, without necessarily having to be overly-out or anything like that, just kind of have my own little niche that I can participate in my own way."
<p>Ensemble as a venue for connection to other LGBT individuals and positive identity formation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Feeling of "calling" to the ensemble ▪ Ensemble being what participants have been "waiting for" ▪ Contrast of experience in [redacted], and in ensemble, with previous experiences/enviroments ▪ Coming out, coming "into own" ▪ Ensemble promotes pride in identity ▪ Need to be involved in community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "And the bands, and that community, was pretty integral in me actually coming out, because I have a fear of loss, I guess, and with all of that [experiences in South] behind me, I knew I knew I was going to be okay." "This is what I've been waiting for, so it was a perfect fit." ▪ "I've got to do that; I just really want to do that." "...in a

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A way to avoid social isolation, balance introversion ▪ Figuring out journey ▪ Acculturation ▪ Mentoring ▪ Transitioning ▪ Second puberty 	<p>setting so welcoming and inviting – it just blew my mind. This is where I needed to be.” (In reference to bands vs. bars): “I would have found it immensely valuable... if there had been, it would have been a great outlet for me to find community, that is your community...”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “And I’m getting to the point where I don’t hesitate. I say Rose City Gay Freedom Band. I think that definitely goes back to growing up for 40 years in [Redacted], and having to hide that, you know, any association all the time.” ▪ “I can be myself in this group. I don’t need to hide it. It was, you know, I can figure out where I’m going on my journey of coming out with them, they can help me.” ▪ “...it’s been really net to watch [the young trans members] grow in themselves and become who they want to be. So, I’ve been kind of
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		<p>like a mentor to them now that I've been out for a while.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ “Gosh, it’s a gay band. It made me feel like, well there’s an organization that I could join that could help me, because I’m not very knowledgeable about anything gay, because I’ve been in the closet for so long, I married a straight person and had a kid. I’m older, I’m not going to... I felt like there really wasn’t a place for me to go.”▪ “Especially for those of us who don’t come out until later on, because we have basically the second puberty of rediscovering ourselves after we come out, trying to be comfortable with who we are.”▪ “I think organizations like this give another way into the community that isn’t a bar, especially for, because our band is, you only have to be 18, it’s not a 21 and up thing like most bars. And then, you
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		<p>know, there's also people that don't drink. And so, those of us who don't drink, like myself, there's not as, I mean, a bar is not a place that everybody goes to. And so having something that is not centered around alcohol, not centered around partying, because not everybody is into that, I think it's really important that not only we keep the things that we do have going, but we bring more into the community, more ways to access people like ourselves that aren't centered around drinking, and partying, and doing things that not everyone is comfortable with."</p>
<p>Social connection and support through culture/environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All walks of life ▪ Mentorship ▪ Family ▪ Associating ▪ Coming home ▪ Welcoming ▪ Belonging ▪ Helping ▪ Flirty ▪ Comradery ▪ Productivity ▪ Chosen-family ▪ Good role-models ▪ Citizenship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "And then meeting all the new people. I've got... it opened so many doors. I have so many connections all over the US now. It's pretty amazing what the band offers you besides being able to be someplace you're allowed to be yourself, and have family around you

		<p>that loves you what you are.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “They’re all... they’re, a lot of the older gays are like big brothers to me.... When I first started band I was in my mid-30’s and newly out of the closet, and had no idea what I was doing. They kind of all adopted me.” ▪ “...having that community is, it’s, that’s just a support system, it’s having people around you that you know share your interests and your love of music, and having people that you don’t have to hide from, or hide a part of yourself from, because that’s not something that I ever want to do again. You know, because the reason we come out is, I don’t want to have to hide anymore. And so, being in a group of people who not only love music, but I can freely be who I am as a queer person, is very freeing and liberating.”
<p>Shifting values and identity of ensemble/community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Name change ▪ Shift towards musicality over sociality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “...limiting the identifier to ‘gay’ or ‘lesbian’ doesn’t exactly show where

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fear of cultural dilution ▪ Preserving identity while maintaining mission of inclusivity ▪ Higher rates of straight participation ▪ Waning enthusiasm ▪ Relationship with gay bars as pillar of community support ▪ Allyship ▪ Evolving ▪ Changing ▪ Growing ▪ Name neutrality contention 	<p>we are as a community right now.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “...there comes a point to when you want to be recognized for who you are but at the same time you want to be like everyone else...” “We’ve found our identity. We know our identity... young straight couples have moved in and kind of changed the whole scene, so our identity there is kind of being lost” (in analogy to the Castro district). ▪ “So, it’s kind of funny because it’s nice that you have so many choices, but at the other time it means aren’t all that special.” ▪ Gay bar allowed band to practice for free in their space for two years when they got started. ▪ “...it was [an] all LGBTQ band, except for the three [straight allies]. And they’re super passionate allies, but the band was kind of busted by those three women, and that kind of grew year-by-year, and so we have a
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		<p>really mixed group. Allies, straight, everything. And that also kind of was, I stay away from the Lord and the politics, that's not why I go to the band. But, a couple people left the band because they allowed someone who wasn't gay to be on the board.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “You had to go to bars if you wanted to meet guys... I think it made me much more gregarious and easy to meet people.” ▪ “For the alley cats among us, things like Grindr or online services have supplanted a good chunk of the function of what bars used to provide.” ▪ “Is there really still a need for a lesbian and gay band, because it's so [accepted now]... but, and every now and then, we find out that yes, there still is [a need], because it's not all about... there's still events and things go on politically as well as, you know, socially that require [the name]... that say we still have a ways to
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		<p>go when it comes to acceptance among, you know, even here in the [Redacted]. I mean, our other bands have... that's more obvious and they have a lot more issues than we have.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ “We have the whole rainbow, and they know they have a safe place they can come, and play, and be identified as who they are... I don't know, it's always a topic of debate, whether we should do something more inclusive with our name. But, so far, I mean, it hasn't been that big of an issue.”▪ "I don't know where I stand on that... I don't think it is harmful to use the words... but I am also very proud of it. I don't know, I mean I guess you could say that since we live in a bubble here, I don't know if it's necessary to actually use the words anymore, but then again, like you said, it being [redacted]'s, signing it in to be the official band of the city and having those words in it, I'm very proud of that as well.
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		<p>Does that make sense?"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ "It [the bar/club scene] doesn't exist like it used to. Like there's no more big dance house dance halls like the Trucadero [spelling] or Ivy [not sure] or whatnot. It's mainly, you know, just the bar scene. Some of them have dance floors, but as far as the leather party community goes within the gay community, they're... all the music organizations, the gay men's chorus and the lesbian gay chorus in Sf, and the band, they're all very much respected within those communities. And, coexist beautifully within the city."
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