

## Rethinking the Traditional Wind Band

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### ABSTRACT

The 21st century has brought new struggles to the instrumental band program, yet little has changed in wind band pedagogy (Kirchhoff, 1988). There have been alternative approaches to the traditional wind band rehearsal that could help support the growing diversity in schools and school band programs. World music pedagogy, typically employed in general music classrooms, can be adapted to engage students in multiple musical experiences in both traditional repertoire as well as other genres and styles. Critical pedagogy encourages students and teachers to work together to better understand their world through music, deconstructing the need for the director at the podium instructing students how to interpret the repertoire. Finally, there have been multiple studies that encourage wind band instructors to go beyond the traditional large ensemble and incorporate smaller ensembles that can include chamber groups, mariachi ensembles, and steel bands. It is easy to forget that while students do not know how to play the instrument, they come to the music class steeped in their musical knowledge. By stepping away from the podium, even for a little, we can offer our students the chance to think critically and creatively that deepens their connection to music. Band directors are not just rehearsing for the next performance; we are educators supporting our students on their musical journeys.

*Keywords:* band, instrumental music, wind band pedagogy, world music, critical pedagogy, chamber ensembles, mariachi, steel bands

### Introduction

I was privileged to experience strong role models in instrumental music growing up. I was also privileged, in a way, to have poor role models as well. Entering undergraduate music education, I had a clear picture of what it meant to be a “good” band director and a

“bad” band director. I took classes in conducting and rehearsal techniques along with music history, theory, and music pedagogy. I was able to hone my skills as an educator through a whirlwind semester of student teaching in both a general music class and in the band room. I graduated feeling comfortable and prepared for teaching band and general music, ready to take on the world.

My first teaching job, which I held for ten years, was in a school in a small city in the Northeastern United States. I walked into my first day and realized, as a white woman, that I was part of the minority. My students did not look like me, and more importantly, did not have the same musical background that I did. Their childhood was filled with folk music from the countries of their heritage, whereas I had been taught American and European folk songs. I worked diligently through my first years, frustrated that I could not get my students to connect to wind band music the way I had. While my young musicians learned the music that addressed their musical abilities, I also had them listen to more advanced bands playing “good” literature. I thought I had found a way to connect with my students one day when we listened to a piece based on “Take me out to the Ball Game.” When the piece was over, and we began to discuss, I quickly realized that I had failed to find that connection. These students did not know the song! They were soccer (or should I say football) fans from their home countries. It was then that I realized I needed to do more for my students. What I assessed as appropriate literature for them to play and listen to had little connection to the music they were familiar with.

The instrumental classroom in my experience was a closed space reserved for the dominant culture and the dominant music: western art music. The structure of the wind band rehearsals I have observed was a ‘teach how I had been taught’ model. There was an understanding that students were not to speak, and the band director identified mistakes and delivered instruction on how to fix them. I found myself in a quandary; I did not know where to begin to incorporate collaboration in such a teacher-centered classroom. I had received no instruction on alternative approaches in teaching band while the pressure to produce high quality band concerts persisted in my first teaching position. Paulo Freire (2018) wrote that the current systems of education promote the dichotomy between the

teacher and the student and suggested that, "they [teachers] must abandon the educational goal of deposit-making and replace it with the posing of the problems of human beings in their relations with the world" (Freire 2018, 79). In my experience, the wind band rehearsal is an example of the banking-model Freire describes. If as band directors, we desire to support our students' music making experience beyond this deposit-making model, an understanding of history of the "American Wind Band" may be an essential component to making change. Until we understand our history and engage in a critical reflection of our pedagogy, band directors may not be unable to enter a genuine dialogue with our students.

### **Historical Perspective**

Chamber music written for the wind section of the orchestra existed as early as the 16th century (Battisti, 2018). The first wind band was the French National Guard Band in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, followed by the US Marine Band, established by John Adams in 1798 (Battisti, 2018). Through the 19<sup>th</sup> century, local militia and formal military groups formed wind bands. Community bands also gained in popularity after the establishment of the Allentown Community band, Allentown, Pennsylvania, which continues to this day (Battisti, 2018).

With advancements of wind instruments in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the invention of the saxophone, wind band's flexibility and popularity grew. Relying on transcriptions of orchestral works, Patrick Sarsfield Gilmore established the Gilmore band in 1873 and settled on an instrumentation of 66 members by 1878 (Battisti, 2018). He later became known as the father of the Modern American Concert band with this ensemble, and both the size and part voicing of concert bands would become standardized. The golden age of band, from 1880-1925, was led by John Philip Sousa, also known as the March King (Battisti, 2018). This era was led by a desire for band to be entertaining to audiences. The Sousa band performed concerts in parks and concert halls that featured transcriptions of orchestral works, instrumental solos, and his own compositions for audiences to find joy in music (Battisti, 2018).

Lowell Mason, American composer and educator, was a pioneer in implementing music in public schools in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. While Mason helped with the inception of vocal music programs, school band programs were not added to the school curriculum until the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Battisti, 2018). Furthermore, despite the 20<sup>th</sup> century being monumental for women's rights, girls were still bound by cultural expectations of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. This meant that being a part of instrumental groups, like band, was not considered to be a proper pursuit for girls and newly established band programs were only open to boys. Just as instrumental music was being added in schools across the country, the United States was pushed into the Great Depression. School band directors started contests after struggling for financial and community support. These contests, most widespread in the Midwest, aimed to create community spirit, gain support for their programs, influence membership, and improve the overall performance level of the groups (Battisti, 2018).

The modern wind band movement was sparked by English composers Holst, Grainger and Vaughan Williams during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Their interest in the possibilities for wind band began with a plea from the military bands for new and original works. While many composers ignored the idea of composing for these military groups, Holst and Vaughan Williams met with band masters and agreed to write pieces for the wind band. Holst's and Vaughan Williams' works for wind band changed the role of the group as a military ensemble for outdoor celebrations to an ensemble with an instrumentation worth exploring. The expansion and development of wind bands continued through the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the implementation of composer competitions, larger symphony band formations, and the formation of nationally recognized associations and clinics (Battisti, 2018).

Wind bands in education are a relatively new institution. Moreover, implementing wind band into the school curriculum mirrored the military and community bands comprised of musically proficient adults. Additionally, decisions made about programming and performance were based on issues of funding and community support, not the musical education of the children. O'Leary (2019) suggests that band directors find themselves stuck between the public recognition and student motivation created by competition and

their own pedagogical goals for the band. Rehearsals run to prepare students for concerts and contests, creating the need for a stream-lined format of teacher-direction and little to no student-centered learning; teachers told students what and how to play and students were expected to reproduce the music on their instruments. Allsup & Benedict (2008) stated that in utilizing this style of teaching “we do not ask our students to think, let alone be vigilant” (p. 164). This exemplifies Freire’s banking-model of education in which band director pride themselves on being “10- and 20-second teachers” (Allsup & Benedict, 2008 p. 162) who identify problems, tell students how to fix them, and move on to the next section of music.

### **Problematizing Wind Band Pedagogy**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century brought new struggles to the instrumental band program, yet little has changed in wind band pedagogy beginning with the push for standardized testing in the 1990s through the early 2000s. With the implementation of federal accountability programs, there has been a decline in school band membership (Battisti, 2018). Students cite scheduling conflicts with other activities as the primary purpose of not participating in school music programs. Perhaps of greater concern is that students report that they are uninterested in the music classes offered (Battisti, 2018). Examining the declining enrollments in Texas band programs, Jolly (2008) identified scheduling, competition and an over emphasis on “old school” traditions were contributing factors. There were also administrative factors contributing to declining enrollment. Johnson (1990) researched declining enrollment in school band programs in Alabama after the publication of *A Nation at Risk*. He found that the new recommendations for graduation were causing a reduction in teaching time for music as well as growing focus on academics causing a drop in high school band enrollment. In spite of declining enrollments in some areas, the marching, pep-band (a small group of students playing music during sporting events), and concert bands are still one of the most visible components of many public-school music departments.

As band directors, we know that the instruments we are introducing to our students are new. It is easy to forget that although students do not know how to play the

instruments, children come to the music class steeped in their musical knowledge. Allsup and Shieh (2012) reminded teachers that "music teaching is more than the teaching of sound and sound patterns alone—that there is something non-neutral about music that requires our moral engagement" (p. 51). If music is more than notes on the page, what then is the role of the traditional band rehearsal? Rolle (2017) offered questions for teachers to ask themselves in these changing times: "What is to be done? Which issues are to be taught? What music should be performed? What are the musical experiences that we want to enable the students to have?" (p. 96) Additionally, the power struggle between the dominant teacher/director and student/musician continues to persist. The question remains: How can teachers open the space of the instrumental music class while continuing to support elements of the performance-based class?

### **What does an open space look like?**

Despite the radical demographic and cultural changes throughout the past hundred years school band programs continue to be entrenched in traditional communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). Wenger (1998) identifies that within creating communities of practice there has been a reification of what the wind band means in communities and for its participants. This reification created within wind band has created an identity that continues to require band directors to put students in military uniforms and have them parade down the street. The reification of school bands, as communities of practice, in the early 1900s grew in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and continue to persist today under the guise of tradition. As an ethnomusicologist, I am intrigued by the understanding of tradition. Although there may be traditional ways of understanding music and traditions that continue to be preserved throughout the world including those of wind band. However, as the populations of public school in the United States become more diverse, the question remains as to how band directors balance the traditions of the ensemble with the growing population. The master apprentice model is still prevalent in many cultures, and there is often an understanding that a student is not a proficient musician until they move past imitating their master and make the performance their own (Schippers, 2010). I propose

that perhaps by exploring different ways of musicing, band directors can support traditional goals and objectives while opening spaces for divergent learning. Allsup (2016) offers new ways of approaching the performance classroom that allows for exploration and opportunities for students to connect instrumental learning to the informal music learning they currently engage in.

Dewey (1990) suggested students learn best through problem-posing and problem-solving activities that are connected to a community. Similar to Dewey's acknowledgement of a student's connection to and influence of the community, Freire challenges teachers to remember that students are not empty vessels to be filled with knowledge by teachers, because students already come to school with their own unique cultural and contextual knowledge. He posited that "through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-students with student-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach" (Freire, 2018, p.80).

Pedagogies following Dewey and Freire call for radical changes that have the potential to open up school music programs to new and exciting musical avenues such as constructivist activities involving composing and improvisation and critical activities allowing students to question musical choices and engage with music on a deeper social and political level. However, many school band directors continue to rely on traditional rehearsal models and concert and contest driven goals to structure their programs (Wall, 2018). Middle and high school band directors struggle to see where these pedagogies work within the structure and demands of their large group instruction. They rely on general music or music appreciation classes to cover the genres of music outside of the performance box of band. Having students work collaboratively, even in large group instruction, has the potential to address the changes envisioned by Dewey and Freire while supporting band directors' musical goals for their students. A constructivist classroom may have dyads, small groups or large ensembles working together in improvisation and



composition activities. Freire's critical framework could be brought in as the students become critics of the work they create as well as the works they recreate (Holsberg, 2009).

While scholars have suggested many ways to change how instrumental music is taught (Abrahams, 2005; Allsup, 2016; Jorgensen, 2003; Sarath, Myers, & Campbell, 2016), the reality is that the large group ensemble, with all its tradition of concert and contest focus and performance driven pedagogy has made change difficult. Hopkins (2015) stated that because of performance obligations, band directors tend to focus more on getting their students sounding good instead of offering a variety of musical experiences for their student. Much of the research in wind band is focused on rehearsal technique, classroom management, and concept teaching (Blocher, Greenwood, & Shellahamer, 1997; Glover, 2015; Howard, 2001; Hubbard, 2013; Juchniewicz, Kelly, & Acklin, 2014; Rush, 2006; Singletary, 2016; Whiteside, 2013). Opportunities for world music, informal learning, culturally responsive teaching, and creativity find a better fit in the general music classroom (Carlos R Abril, 2013; Campbell, 2002, 2004, 2018; Campbell, ProQuest, & Queensland Conservatorium Research, 2005; Lind & McKoy, 2016). Teachers are also fighting to legitimize their craft for financial and scheduling support as classes are eliminated (Conrad, 2006).

In the following sections I will outline pedagogies divergent from the rehearsal model of the traditional wind band. First, I will explore the possibilities brought to the field of music education from ethnomusicology. This world music perspective not only supports teachers in exploring new musics, but also has the potential to examine and experience Western art music differently. Critical pedagogy supports the idea that students should not be passive re-creators of music, but should be questioning, reflecting and experiencing music on a deeper level. Finally, there has been a growing trend of the incorporation of alternative ensembles in a school's music curriculum. These ensembles, both of Western and non-Western tradition, can support learners and provide new entry points into school band programs. These perspectives and pedagogies have the ability to support teachers that desire to expand their wind band programs beyond tradition.



### **An Ethnomusicological Perspective**

Ethnomusicology, and in turn, the tenets of world music pedagogy, have a similar goal in investigating and uncovering the contextual underpinnings of music. While ethnomusicology has been traditionally defined as the study of music that is outside the European art tradition, it is strictly the study of music in a sociocultural context (Ethnomusicology, 2019), that is, the study of how music and culture are connected. This broader definition, more closely aligned with the origins of the term ethnomusicology, has opened the door for all musics to be studied through a sociocultural lens. For the performance-based educator I propose a starting place, through an ethnomusicological lens, where Western art music, even American band music, is not disconnected from the culture that created it. A large ensemble classroom should be a space where students and teachers culturally situate their musical selections. It should be a place where students can then work critically through repertoire's musical and contextual attributes.

Campbell had a vision of world music pedagogy that “concerns itself with the role of music within its culture of origin, how it functions, for who, and for what reasons” (Campbell, 2018). This pedagogy focuses primarily on different levels of listening to music and then interacting with it in a variety of different ways. Campbell illustrates this in her *Five Dimensions of World Music Pedagogy*: attentive listening, engaged listening, enactive listening, creating world music, and the cultural context (Campbell, 2004). While this can be used as a step by step approach to general music or music appreciation, she argued that each of these levels of engagement are not linear and can be incorporated into the performance-based classroom as well. These five levels of musical engagement can be used in both non-western musical traditions as well as those of a western art music tradition. Through their incorporation, band directors can expand their students musical understanding by exploring ideas of wind band's origin, its function in the United States and Europe, and for who and why it is still part of music education today.

The first level to an ethnomusicological approach to teaching is that of attentive listening. This level of listening is a surface level exposure to a new piece or style of music. Most band directors believe they are engaging their students in attentive listening by

directing their students to listen across the band or to their intonation (Montemayor, 2018); however, attentive listening uses recordings to allow students to discover music attributes themselves. Attentive listening, I believe, could also be achieved through carefully guided listening of section rehearsals during the large group rehearsal. This kind of listening allows students to explore a new piece and then discuss with the group everything they hear without guided questions from teachers. Through the process of multiple listenings, new discoveries and more in-depth understanding are possible. Because this level requires multiple listenings, the use of recordings is suggested, however, weaving live performance and recordings could support a deeper understanding of the performance and performance practice. The second level is engaged listening. This level requires the active participation of students with the recording. While playing with the recording is usually frowned upon in a school band setting it does not have to consist of strict playing along with the written music. Students can sing the melody or find the ostinato.

These two levels engage students with music through recordings. I believe this could be supportive of music learning in the band room in two main ways. If the recording is the piece of students are performing for a concert, they could sing their part to see how it fits within the overall structure of the piece. Students are not just playing their part with the recording but are given the chance to engage with their music and the music on a higher level. Through subsequent dialogue about the music students can articulate what they hear and how they are reacting and reflecting to the music they are hearing as they play. Elliott (1995) also emphasized the importance of listening during rehearsal. He suggests that engaged listening “deepens students’ awareness of how to play, sing, or compose more expressively” (Elliot, 2019, p. 272). Listening selections can vary, from traditional band works to medleys from around the world. While working in styles that are familiar to students is a good place to start, the options are only limited to the creativity of the teacher to weave the piece into a lesson. Suggestions for these two levels range from working with Ghanaian drumming through jazz works, to salsa rhythms and Ravel’s *Bolero* (Montemayor et al., 2018). Band directors can focus on pieces that have a “hook” or

ostinatos that students can identify and imitate. Teachers can engage students by asking guided questions such as ‘How many layers of sound do you hear?’ and help guide them to notice different aspects of the piece (Montemayor et al., 2018). I believe this can also progress in order to help students begin to make decisions about how a piece should sound and guide their own choices for articulation, dynamics, and style.

The third level of musical engagement is enactive listening. This level requires students to perform a stylistically appropriate rendition of a piece of music. This level has to do with capturing the musical nuances of a piece. This can include articulation, sound production, and even dance steps (Montemayor et al., 2018). The idea of expression and performance practice is not only seen in non-western musicing but is something that is also historically common in western art music. It is the fourth level, creating, that many band directors look to the general music/music appreciation teachers. As band tends to be a product-driven class, it is hard for many directors to step away from the teacher-centered classroom and allow students to explore their own creativity (Wall, 2018). I agree this is often uncharted territory, and traditional band literature is probably a hard jumping off point for more creative engagements. A suggestion for band would be that students could write their own arrangement or melody with a given harmonic line for their instrument or small ensemble. Writing and arranging music also supports music learning and, perhaps eventually, musical independence. By supporting these small groups, student compositions could even be featured in a performance (Stringham, 2016). This level of musical engagement has been the focus of tension for many band directors. Directors agree that composition is an important aspect of musical learning but claim they cannot begin such teaching for reasons such as time, resources, and their own understanding (Hopkins, 2015; Koops, 2013; Menard, 2015; Stringham, 2016).

The fifth level is the perhaps most important and the most accessible to the performance-based classroom teacher. Campbell (2018) suggested that the act of playing instruments invites students to experience many different cultures, but it is through providing context, perhaps through storytelling, that students can make that connection. Beyond the focus on cultures from around the world, by incorporating the cultural context

of pieces our students are playing, they could better be able to situate themselves into their experiences (Lind & McCoy, 2016). This level can and should be implemented throughout the musical engagement process. An engagement with cultural contexts allows students to situate the music they are hearing and playing with a time and place. Questions to explore in the band classroom could include "Who created the music? When and where was it created? What inspired the creation of the piece?" (Montemayor et al., 2018, p. 143). Questions can also include ideas of musical meaning (social or cultural meaning) and musical continuities (do performances vary, how and why).

Questions that surface through the world music pedagogy process support Freire's need for students and teachers to engage in dialogue about different musical practices. These dialogues create opportunities for the line between teacher and student to blur and for teachers to become teacher-students and students to become student-teachers (Freire, 2008). I believe that many band directors construct their curricula with an understanding that the instruments we are introducing to our students are new. However, music is a salient part of a student's existence in many other ways. Through dialogue with our students we are able to learn about their musical understanding and connect it to the musical traditions we wish to teach. If the director never steps off of the podium and rehearsals remain entirely teacher-directed and performance driven, it is unlikely that the openness needed to facilitate dialogue will occur.

### **Critical thinking**

Johnson (2011) defined critical thinking as the "reasonable reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do [with newly acquired information]" (p. 258). Tan (2016) posited that "learners ought to engage in critical thinking through a two-step process of inquiry and reflection" (p. 158). The use of reflection as a part of learning and critical thinking is consistent with the teachings of both Freire and Dewey. Both saw learning as a holistic process in which knowing leads to doing and doing leads to knowing. They also believed that this way of learning allowed learners to connect new knowledge to their own experiences and questions, through reflection, the validity of that knowledge

(Tan, 2016). Critical pedagogy in music education is a way of approaching the repertoire that teachers chose to use in their classrooms. Abrahams (2007) begins this approach with a set of questions a teacher should ask themselves before approaching a new unit: "Who am I? Who are my students? What might they become? What might we become together (p. 229)? Allowing for reflection on learning while students are in the process of learning creates connections and relationships desired by both Dewey and Freire.

The critical pedagogy approach to teaching is one of exploration, problem posing, and dialoguing. Hess (2017) studied the teaching of four music teachers. One of the teachers, Susan, had created a lesson that explored the Mandarin song *Mo Li Hua* through Puccini's opera *Turandot*, the movie *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, and the arrangement composed for the Beijing Olympics. This teacher could trace a "traditional" piece of Mandarin folk music from its use as exoticism and nationalism across the world and throughout time.

Repertoire is the vehicle that ensemble directors use to teach music. For directors that wish to engage in critical pedagogy, choosing repertoire is more than including composers of color. It is making choices that connect to the cultures and communities in which their students live (Lind & McKoy, 2016) and using it as a catalyst for social change. Hess (2019) explores this activist movement and the ability we have as musicians and teachers to forge connections and think critically about the society.

Critical pedagogy, to some, is the ideal end goal of the process of critical thinking. Shaw (2014) suggested that there are levels of critical thinking ranging from passive or neutral to a critical pedagogy of connecting content to the student's lives. He believed that critical pedagogy is essential in order to engage students deeply with the music's context. The use of critical pedagogy is further justified by Abrahams (2007) who stated that: "Critical pedagogy for music education as a best teaching practice fosters transformational experiences that will move music education in the schools from the peripheral to a more worthy place in the center of all learning" (p. 235). Critical thinking opens doors and breaks down walls between students and teachers (Abrahams, 2005). It is a way of challenging power relations within and without the Western art music canon (Hess, 2017). It is a way

to rethink the classroom, have band directors step off the podium, and encourage student's thoughts and questions, giving validation to the knowledge they bring to the classroom. Abrahams (2005) suggests that by asking who we are, who are student may become and who we can be together, we can begin to think critically within the band rehearsal. He reminds readers that music is inherently political, and supporting students as they explore the connection between the music being played in the band room with the music they experience outside of school can support learning beyond the notes on the page.

### **Alternative Ensembles**

Beyond the teacher-centered traditions of wind band there has been a growing concern that the instrumental ensembles do not reflect the population of students that they serve (Abril, 2009). While participation rates have been steady, many performing ensembles continue to be comprised of primarily white, non-Hispanic students while the school population of minority students steadily grows (Abril, 2009). For teachers who want to continue to offer large ensembles, opportunities for alternative ensembles could allow new points of entry for students who otherwise would not find a space in a schools' music program. These ensembles could range from small chamber groups performing western art music, to Mariachi, steel drums, and djembe groups.

Alternative ensembles are those that step away from the "traditional" concert band and orchestra, which are prevalent in secondary schools throughout North America. Ensembles range in difficulty, previous knowledge needed, and size and cost. Steel drum bands and djembe groups tend to be some of the most accessible. Prior experience in traditional ensembles is not required to participate in these new ensembles (Williams 2008). Student are capable of producing characteristic sounds on the instrument while learning proper technique (Schippers, 2010). These ensembles offer more than accessibility, allowing for exploration into the cultural context from which the music originates.

Mariachi is one example of and emerging alternative to instrumental programs throughout North America. Abril (2009) and Smith (2016) suggested that teachers who are

proficient in Mariachi and as well as musicians and teachers who are interested in it, can start Mariachi ensembles in their schools. While there is the possibility to use students who are also part of the traditional ensemble, the Mariachi ensemble is not limited to students with prior knowledge of the genre. Both teachers studied by Abril (2009) and Smith (2016) saw a need to include all students within the school population, and Mariachi was a vehicle for that connection.

In addition to Mariachi, Steel bands and Zimbabwean Marimba groups have also grown in popularity (Campbell, 2002; Williams, 2008). These ensembles can either mirror the culture of the community in which they are taught, or be chosen to introduce new musics from around the world. Mixon (2009) illustrated that teachers do not need to be experts in the style; teachers can both teach and learn from their students. A teacher's willingness to learn from students supports Freire's framework for problem-posing dialogue. Students are given the space to be student-teachers and teachers can step off the podium to become teacher-students. As an advocate for the addition of steel bands, Williams (2008) encouraged teachers to take master classes for training and even laid out resources for repertoire and instrument purchase and maintenance. Campbell (2018) also suggested the inclusion of culture bearers, persons from the community who are immersed in the performance practice of their culture, and who are invited to perform and teach both students and teacher. The inclusion of culture bearers, I believe, can support students' authentic desires to learn and explore the performance practice music, both within the structure of school band and beyond its walls.

### **Conclusion**

There are ways to open up the closed structure of the band room (Allsup, 2016). We can ask our students, throughout the rehearsal process, to think critically about music they play in their ensemble as well as their role in the ensemble. As students engage in conversation with each other, they will both demonstrate their understanding of the music and begin to question its purpose and how they can effect change within the band community. Freire (2018) stated that: "knowledge emerges only through invention and re-



invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human being pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other" (p.72). Through authentic dialogue and critical thinking, the doors to the wind band can be thrust open, no longer perched on its podium, but part of the community through community outreach and the inclusion of culture bearers as guest musicians in the band room.

Much of what a person learns to become a successful director revolves around rehearsal strategies and classroom management (Rush, 2006). Often, there are over twice as many students in the band room as there would be in a regular classroom setting. However, by stepping away from the podium, directors can offer our students the chance to think critically, creatively, through a new way of engagement that deepens their connection to music throughout their lives. The question for many band directors is where to start.

I do not believe that a deconstruction of wind band is needed, however, an examination of traditional band practices pedagogical goals needs to occur. For a place to start, I suggest exploring the repertoire we chose to teach through. As directors choose pieces to teach and perform, consider not only what it sounds like and the skill level of your group but what else can you bring to the classroom. Can you engage students in new ways to listen through original renditions of folk tunes? Is there a way to work in small ensembles and composition into the rehearsal? For those who have the space and time, creating culturally specific small ensembles can also be a way for students to engage musically that otherwise would be inaccessible. Directors are not just rehearsing for the next performance; we are educators supporting our students on their musical journeys, wherever that may lead.

### **About the Author**

Dr. Lauren Diaz is a horn player and educator. She was an elementary/ middle school band director for ten years in the Gifted and Talented K-8 School in Elizabeth, NJ. Lauren holds a BS in Music Education from the Indiana University of Pennsylvania and a Masters of Arts in Ethnomusicology from Hunter College, CUNY and a Doctoral degree from Teachers College Columbia University. She was an active member of the Eastern Wind Symphony for nine years. Lauren has also participated in the NYU Summer Brass Workshop and The Smithsonian's World Music Pedagogy Workshop.

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