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# Self-Efficacy and Racial Identity for Undergraduate Music Majors

## Abstract

Students' identities can impact their self-efficacy, or their confidence in their ability to succeed in producing a desired outcome (Bandura, 1997; Klassen, 2004a; Klassen 2004b; Oettingen, 1995; Usher & Pajares, 2008); however, little peer-reviewed research explores the relationship between racial identity and self-efficacy for undergraduate music majors. In the United States, undergraduate music students of color often navigate educational experiences where they do not find their identities represented in the curricula (Ewell, 2020), their faculty (Higher Education Arts Data Services [HEADS], 2020), or their fellow students (HEADS, 2020).

This convergent mixed methods study utilized the theoretical framework of critical race theory to explore self-perceptions of self-efficacy by undergraduate music majors of different racial identities. Mann-Whitney *U* tests found that mean rank self-efficacy scores for students of color were higher than White students on 10 out of 11 items on the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a), with the differences on Item 9 (potential failure as motivation) being statistically significant. Narrative interviews explored the self-efficacy beliefs and lived experiences of ten undergraduate music majors of color. Despite systemic barriers to self-efficacy, students of color were confident in their ability to succeed in the field of music.

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Self-Efficacy and Racial Identity for Undergraduate Music Majors

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A Dissertation in Practice

Presented to

the Faculty of the Morgridge College of Education

University of Denver

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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by

Rachel E. Lim

June 2024

Advisor: Norma Lu Hafenstein

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### **Abstract**

Students' identities can impact their self-efficacy, or their confidence in their ability to succeed in producing a desired outcome (Bandura, 1997; Klassen, 2004a; Klassen 2004b; Oettingen, 1995; Usher & Pajares, 2008); however, little peer-reviewed research explores the relationship between racial identity and self-efficacy for undergraduate music majors. In the United States, undergraduate music students of color often navigate educational experiences where they do not find their identities represented in the curricula (Ewell, 2020), their faculty (Higher Education Arts Data Services [HEADS], 2020), or their fellow students (HEADS, 2020).

This convergent mixed methods study utilized the theoretical framework of critical race theory to explore self-perceptions of self-efficacy by undergraduate music majors of different racial identities. Mann-Whitney *U* tests found that mean rank self-efficacy scores for students of color were higher than White students on 10 out of 11 items on the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a), with the differences on Item 9 (potential failure as motivation) being statistically significant. Narrative interviews explored the self-efficacy beliefs and lived experiences of ten undergraduate music majors of color. Despite systemic barriers to self-efficacy, students of color were confident in their ability to succeed in the field of music.

## Acknowledgements

Solórzano and Yosso (2002) described the power of critical race theory as a tool for naming realities faced by minoritized groups: “When the ideology of racism is examined and racist injuries are named, victims of racism can find their voice. Furthermore, those injured by racism and other forms of oppression discover they are not alone in their marginality” (p. 27). First and foremost, I thank my research participants for finding their voices so that, through this research, other undergraduate music majors of color can find that they are not alone. I was honored by your trust in sharing your stories, and I remain inspired by the brilliance and kindness that each of you bring to the world. Thank you!

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## Chapter One: Introduction

### Personal Context

In *The Light We Carry: Overcoming in Uncertain Times*, Michelle Obama (2022) described looking for heroes who shared her identities. Without naming this term directly, Mrs. Obama's story highlighted the power of vicarious experience as a source of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), or the idea that if an individual witnessed the success of someone with whom they identified, they would feel more confident in their own ability to accomplish similar feats:

In life, it's hard to dream about what's not visible. When you look around and can't find any version of yourself out there in the wider world, when you scan the horizon and see nobody like you, you start to feel a broader loneliness, a sense of being mismatched to your own hopes, your own plans, your own strengths. You begin to wonder where—and how—you will ever belong. (Obama, 2022, p. 96)

For years, I heard similar questions related to identity and belonging echoing through concert halls, music classrooms, and conversations with colleagues. Even with increasing attention to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) efforts, compositions by composers of color still accounted for fewer than 17% of the works performed by professional orchestras in the 2021-2022 season (R. Deemer & Mears, 2022). The compositions of composers of color accounted for less than 2% of the musical examples present in the top seven music theory textbooks used in the United States (Ewell, 2020). Faculty of color of any rank at music programs accredited by the National

Association of Schools of Music (NASM) accounted for fewer than 17% of the teaching force in 2020 (Higher Education Arts Data Services [HEADS], 2020).

These statistical realities form a cloud of ambient noise surrounding undergraduate music study. For students of color, it can be challenging to tune out this covert and overt messaging about their belonging and ability to succeed while they are engaging with the content knowledge and professional skills necessary for their growth as artists. My hope is that this research dials down the volume of student self-doubt while also amplifying student voices and strengths. By centering racial identity, I join students, staff, and faculty in advocating for authentic representation within music curricula, where too many voices have been historically excluded in favor of elevating a limited scope of music by predominantly White composers from western Europe in 1600 to 1900 (Cumberledge & Williams, 2023; Ewell, 2020; Liu, 2022; Lucia, 2007). This research explored self-efficacy for students of color and their experiences within undergraduate music education.

### **Overview of Research Topic**

Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as one's belief in their ability to succeed in a task. This confidence is informed by feedback from four sources: (a) mastery experience, or previous accomplishments; (b) vicarious experience from observing others; (c) verbal and social persuasion, or encouragement from others; and (d) emotional and physiological states, such as stress, anxiety, or mood (Usher & Pajares, 2008). Self-efficacy varies depending on the discipline and task at hand; for example, a student's self-efficacy in writing would be independent from their self-efficacy in mathematics,

and furthermore, the same student's self-efficacy beliefs could be different for geometry compared with calculus (Bandura, 1997).

Self-efficacy beliefs impact the choices students make, the amount of effort they invest, their likelihood to persist when confronting challenges, and their feelings of well-being while engaging in academic tasks (Usher & Parajes, 2008). Research connected self-efficacy to positive academic outcomes, such as higher grade point averages or persistence and retention in college (Feldman & Kubota, 2015; Gore, 2006; Kahn & Nauta, 2001; Komarraju & Nadler, 2013; Multon et al., 1991). While studies have explored differences in self-efficacy across racial, gender, and/or socioeconomic identities (Dortch, 2016; Inkelas & McCaron, 2006; Klassen, 2004a; Klassen 2004b; Metcalf & Wiener, 2018; Montas-Hunter, 2012; Oettingen, 1995), there is a gap in the research that centers *racial* identity while exploring *musical* self-efficacy for undergraduate music majors. By exploring self-perceptions of self-efficacy by undergraduate music majors of different racial identities, faculty and staff can better support self-efficacy and move toward delivering equitable, inclusive learning experiences.

### **Problem of Practice**

Undergraduate music programs in the United States often are spaces where predominantly White faculty (HEADS, 2020) teach predominantly White students (HEADS, 2020) about predominantly White musicians and composers (Cumberledge & Williams, 2023; Ewell, 2020; Liu, 2022; Lucia, 2007). Since students of color and White students experience campus climate and learning environments in different ways (Harper & Hurtado, 2007), it is important to consider ways that racial identity connects to



educational experiences and self-efficacy. My study explored self-perceptions of self-efficacy by undergraduate music students of different racial identities. This focus aligned with the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate's (CPED, n.d.) values of diversity, social justice, and students first.

### **Community Partner**

To capture the experiences of undergraduate music majors beyond a single institution, I partnered with the Music Admissions Roundtable (MAR) to conduct research among their member institutions. Established in 2011, MAR created a professional networking group of over 120 institutions in the United States and Canada, promoting professionalism, mentorship, and collaboration among music administrators (Music Admissions Roundtable, n.d.). As of 2023, MAR consisted primarily of college and conservatory music programs, as well as a few performing arts high schools, summer programs, and consulting agencies.

In 2023, over three-quarters of the bachelor's degree-granting college and conservatory music programs in the United States within the Music Admissions Roundtable were accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM, n.d.-a). Each year, NASM-accredited institutions provide statistical data to the Higher Education Arts Data Services (HEADS) related to enrollment, degrees offered, and faculty and student demographic information (HEADS, n.d.). The overlap between MAR- and NASM-affiliated institutions provided the opportunity to consider nationwide trends within the HEADS data for the racial identities of students. This was especially helpful, because MAR does not employ its own full-time staff and thus does not have the same capacity to conduct a similar census of demographic information as institutions

accredited by NASM. Additionally, focusing on MAR institutions rather than only NASM-accredited institutions provided opportunities to recruit potential research participants from some of the most high-profile colleges and conservatories in the nation: Juilliard, New England Conservatory, Oberlin, and the Manhattan School of Music were some of the notable institutions that would not have been included in the call for research participants if I had focused solely on NASM-accredited institutions.

Recognizing the dearth of research on racial identity and self-efficacy for undergraduate music majors, a representative of the Music Admissions Roundtable (MAR) partnered with me to recruit research participants and identify avenues for sharing research findings. This community partner representative forwarded introductory emails to faculty and staff in admission roles at MAR-affiliated institutions via the MAR listserv, along with a request for them to forward a recruitment email to their undergraduate music major email listserv. Additional dialogue with the community partner informed targeted outreach by email and phone to different types of MAR institutions to capture a more representative sample that would speak to the broad range of student experiences in college and conservatory music programs in the United States. Research findings from this dissertation in practice will be shared with MAR institutions after graduation.

### **Problem 1: Centering Whiteness When Self-Efficacy Beliefs Are Changing**

Students' self-efficacy beliefs have the potential to change as they encounter new tasks and develop new skills (Usher & Pajares, 2008). For many undergraduate music majors, their college and conservatory years are marked by artistic, intellectual, social, and professional transitions. Students whose musical experiences in high school consisted primarily of school ensembles or private lessons are, for the first time, grappling with

what it means to engage with music as an academic discipline by listening critically, analyzing harmonies, and writing about music (Winterson & Russ, 2009). As students transition from music being one part of a six- or seven-period day of high school to making it their central focus in higher education, students can feel overwhelmed by the challenges of adapting to new schedules and new demands for self-regulated learning (Burt & Mills, 2006).

The majority of undergraduate music majors enrolled at institutions accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) are learning new ways to learn while adapting to their predominantly White educational settings (HEADS, 2020). In 2020, NASM-accredited institutions included 68 Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), 29 Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs), 24 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), six Native American Serving Nontribal Institutions (NASNTIs), five Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs), two Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions (ANNH), and zero Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) (HEADS, 2020; Rutgers Graduate School of Education, 2021). In contrast, MAR-affiliated institutions included only six HSIs, four AANAPISIs, and one HBCU (MAR, n.d.; Rutgers Graduate School of Education, 2021).

Within these predominantly White spaces (HEADS, 2020), music majors are studying curricula centering European, White accomplishments (Cumberland & Williams, 2023; Ewell, 2020; Liu, 2022; Lucia, 2007; Wang & Humphreys, 2009). Music departments specializing in a particular musical style such as jazz, commercial music, or ethnomusicology may be more representative of the diversity of musical traditions,

composers, and artists from around the world; however, undergraduate classical music curricula typically center the work of composers from the western European art music canon who lived between 1600 and 1900 who identified as White, Christian, cisgender, heterosexual, and male (Lucia, 2007). Wang and Humphreys (2009) estimated that undergraduate music education majors enrolled at a large university in the southwestern United States spent 92.83% of their time focused on western art music traditions. Students recognize that composers with diverse racial and gender identities are not as present in their band, choir, and orchestra repertoire as they want them to be (Cumberledge & Williams, 2023). When artists from outside of this limited frame are incorporated into the repertoire and curricula, their work often reinforces the value of functional tonality present in western music, resulting in tokenization rather than a meaningful consideration of the ways that western music practices, Whiteness, and colonialism are intertwined (Ewell, 2020).

Without a critical examination of what music is deemed “worthy” of being studied at the college level, students may draw the conclusion that only the work of White western European musicians can be influential and valuable (Palfy & Gilson, 2018). How does this messaging impact the self-efficacy of students who do not see themselves represented in the music they study, the faculty who teach them, and the peers who learn alongside them?

## **Problem 2: Existing Research on Musical Self-Efficacy Often Ignores Racial Identity**

Although researchers have explored musical self-efficacy for over 20 years, peer-reviewed research rarely addressed racial identity within the research sample, much less

centered racial identity within the research. McCormick and McPherson's (2003) foundational study connecting self-efficacy with musical performance did not include demographic information regarding the race or ethnicity for the instrumentalists participating in their research. The peer-reviewed research on musical self-efficacy after this groundbreaking study often ignored race or ethnicity (Burwell, 2019; J. Clark, 2012; T. Clark et al., 2014; Cremaschi, 2012; Gavin, 2016; Ginsborg et al., 2009; Hendricks, 2014; Hendricks, 2016; Hendricks et al., 2015; Lim & Quant, 2019; Lubert & Gröpel, 2022; McPherson & McCormick, 2006; Miksza & Tan, 2015; Nielsen, 2004; Prichard, 2017; Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a; Ritchie & Williamon, 2012; Watson, 2010). Instead of race or ethnicity, the research exploring musical self-efficacy in higher education settings was far more likely to discuss demographic information about their sample by describing the students' type of music major (e.g., music education compared to music performance), the students' genre of music (e.g., classical vs. jazz), or the students' instruments/performance areas for lessons (Cremschi, 2012; Gavin, 2016; Lubert & Gröpel, 2022; Miksza & Tan, 2015; Nielsen, 2004; Watson, 2010).

This gap in the literature could be interpreted as the result of what Morrison (2012) described as an invisible color line: "An invisible color line is built into musicology's institutional foundations, and it is this line that determines which subjects and people are considered worthy or unworthy of entry into the discipline" (p. 850). Power and privilege often are part of the price of admission to study music at the undergraduate level, with audition repertoire requirements often reinforcing the value of specific musical styles and performance practices in ways that exclude students of color (Koza, 2008). Curricular and repertoire choices keep non-White composers at the

periphery of undergraduate music major study (Ewell, 2020; Wang & Humphreys, 2009). Against this backdrop, Morrison (2012) described the tension between his identities as a Black male PhD candidate in historical musicology and his scholarship and activism, which asked him to “reflect on both the protection and policing of these borders” (p. 849). Critically scrutinizing beloved, revered practices in undergraduate music education can be an uncomfortable space for researchers and their audiences alike.

### **Significance of Problem**

Undergraduate music students of color are navigating educational experiences where they are not seeing their identities represented (Ewell, 2020; HEADS, 2020), but researchers have yet to explore the impact of these experiences on self-efficacy for students of different racial identities. When faculty and staff have a better understanding of the implications of curricula and learning environments upon self-efficacy, they can better support the success of students of color. When the voices of students of color are an integral element driving meaningful change, college and conservatory music programs can better prepare their students to interact with diverse communities around the world.

### **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this convergent mixed methods study was to explore self-perceptions of self-efficacy by undergraduate music majors of different racial identities. Self-efficacy was defined as one’s confidence in their ability to succeed in producing a desired outcome (Bandura, 1997).

### **Research Questions**

The central research question for this study was, “How do undergraduate music majors’ self-perceptions influence their self-efficacy?” Sub-questions included:

1. What are undergraduate music majors' self-perceptions of self-efficacy?
  - a. For students of color?
  - b. For White students?
2. What relationships exist between self-efficacy and grade point average (GPA)?
  - a. For students of color?
  - b. For White students?
3. How do music majors perceive their racial identity within undergraduate music education?
4. How do educational experiences support self-efficacy?
5. How do educational experiences create barriers to self-efficacy?

### **Research Design and Methodology Overview**

This study used a convergent mixed methods design to explore the self-efficacy beliefs of undergraduate music majors through different but complementary data sources (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The quantitative data collected included demographic information about the research participants, responses to the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a), and grade point averages (GPAs) from unofficial transcripts uploaded by the research participants. Because this research used the theoretical framework of critical race theory (Bernal, 2002; Crenshaw, 1995; Gillborn, 2015; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Nardo, 2022; Patton, 2016; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) to center racial identity and amplify the voices of students of color, I used purposeful sampling to identify a nested sample of ten students of color who completed the quantitative phases of research to participate in semi-structured interviews, which were analyzed using narrative inquiry (Clandinin,

2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Mertova & Webster, 2019). Because narrative inquiry elevates the importance of experience, this qualitative approach was an ideal vehicle for exploring the stories of students of color within a three-dimensional narrative space of (a) personal and social interactions; (b) the intersection of past, present, and future; and (c) the place of the learning environment within college and conservatory music programs (Clandinin, 2006).

### **Quantitative Data Collection**

The Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) has internal reliability of  $\alpha = .82$  and demonstrated consistency in a two-week to one-month retest. Ritchie and Williamon (2012) also created the Self-Efficacy for Musical Performing Questionnaire, which has internal reliability of  $\alpha = .76$ . The two questionnaires include a considerable overlap in the wording of survey items. However, I selected the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire for use in this study for two reasons: the higher internal reliability and the emphasis upon the overall learning experience rather than focusing only on a single performance. Other instruments used to measure musical self-efficacy available via the APA PsycTests electronic database were geared toward more specific populations, such as children (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011b), adolescent male singers (Fisher, 2014), or musicians learning jazz improvisation (Watson, 2010). Within my systematic literature review, the other research studies that used an instrument to measure self-efficacy either were newly developed by the research team or adapted from broader, general measures of self-efficacy for a music-specific context; only two studies used the same, existing instrument to measure self-efficacy



(Afacan & Kaya, 2022; Üstün & Ozer, 2020), but since their tool (Girgin, 2015, as cited in Afacan & Kaya, 2022) was available in Turkish rather than English, I did not have the option to consider this instrument.

I created a Qualtrics survey to collect information virtually about research participants' demographic characteristics and to administer the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a). The recruitment email with Qualtrics survey link was distributed by my community partner to institutions affiliated with the Music Admissions Roundtable (MAR), who then shared this information with their undergraduate music major email lists. From September 2023 through March 2024, I recruited 30 students who identified as people of color and 40 students who identified as White, which met the sampling criteria required to run Mann-Whitney *U* tests for two independent groups (Gliner et al., 2009; Naghshpour, 2016; Wall Emerson, 2023; West, 2021). Participants within the sampling frame shared these characteristics: undergraduate students who (at the time the survey was completed) were pursuing a bachelor's degree with a major in music at an institution that was part of the Music Admissions Roundtable (MAR), who were pursuing a major in music that required lessons in a principal performance area (e.g., enrolled in a major requiring lessons in an instrument or voice, rather than composition or audio engineering programs that did not also require performance lessons), who were age 18 or older, who had enrolled at their institution as a first-time first-year undergraduate student (i.e., they were not transfer students), and who were domestic students.

Students who were transfer students, who were not pursuing a bachelor's degree, who were not pursuing a major in music, who were not pursuing a major that required

lessons in a principal performance area, who were enrolled in MAR institutions located in Canada, who were 17 or younger, or who were international students were not eligible to participate in the study. These exclusion criteria were selected to maximize the potential for shared experiences across the sample population. Because two of my research questions explored ways that educational experiences supported or created barriers to self-efficacy, focusing on the experiences of music majors who enrolled as first-time, first-year students rather than transfer students avoided unintentional comparisons between learning environments at different institutions, which was beyond the scope of this particular study. Because the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) required that students reflect on a recent musical performance and imagine preparing for a similar performance, this instrument would not be the best tool to measure musical self-efficacy for students who were pursuing a type of major that did not incorporate performance lessons as a curricular requirement.

I excluded international students from this study due to the nuances of racialized experiences within different countries and because of the unique ways that international students' experiences may impact their self-efficacy during undergraduate education. At the time when I conducted my research, my scholarly and personal understanding of race and racism in education were contextualized within U.S. institutions, and exploring broader themes of cultural, scientific, and social manifestations of racism throughout the world were beyond the scope of this specific study (Haeny et al., 2021). Both the process of academic acculturation and the act of navigating pedagogical differences between U.S. educational institutions and an international student's country of origin could shape their self-efficacy beliefs and their perceptions of racial dynamics in higher education (Bastien

et al., 2018). Because of these reasons, I did not include international students in the research sample for this study; however, researching the musical self-efficacy of international students studying in the United States could be a valuable future project.

### **Qualitative Data Collection**

As part of the Qualtrics survey administering the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a), research participants had the opportunity to indicate if they were interested in participating in the qualitative interview phase. I used purposeful sampling (Creswell & Poth, 2018) to identify ten students of color for narrative interviews. Sampling for the interviews was designed to represent some of the variety of institutions within the Music Admissions Roundtable (MAR): public institutions and private institutions, institutions that were accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) and those that were not, and institutions with varying numbers of majors enrolled. Although narrative research can explore the lived experiences of as few as one or two individuals (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018), this larger sample size increased the likelihood of capturing a broader range of different, nuanced perspectives within the data. This larger sample was an effort to humanize my research participants by acknowledging that use of the term “students of color” rather than more specific racial identities risked erasure and the potential suggestion of a monolithic experience across members of minoritized racial groups (Allen et al., 2019; Grady, 2020).

For the qualitative phase of this research, I conducted one individual interview lasting 45-60 minutes for each of the ten undergraduate music majors selected from the survey. Interviews were completed via Zoom, video recorded, and transcribed.

Participants participated in member checking to ensure accuracy of both the transcript and identification of themes in the analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To avoid inadvertently identifying research participants through certain aspects of demographic data (e.g., disclosing that they are the only Black student participating in a well-known ensemble with a national profile), I worked with the research participants to protect their anonymity. Research participants selected their own pseudonyms, and pseudonyms were assigned for individuals referenced within their interviews. When interview participants referred to the names of specific courses, ensembles, higher education institutions, cities or states, or professional arts organizations in their geographic region, I assigned pseudonyms or replaced the specific references with more general phrases (e.g., changing “Seattle, Washington,” to “a city in the Pacific Northwestern United States”) to protect anonymity. One exception to this occurred when an interview participant referenced a public-facing resource created by Juilliard (n.d.) promoting the works of Black composers; in this instance, the institution name remained in the findings to amplify the availability of this resource.

### **Strengths and Limitations of the Study**

This research project was an initial part of a much longer journey exploring self-efficacy and educational experiences for undergraduate music majors of different racial identities. It is my hope that this research offered meaningful contributions in at least three areas: (a) demonstrating the need for additional research surrounding musical self-efficacy and racial identity; (b) challenging deficit-based narratives surrounding students of color and their potential to succeed in higher education; and (c) calling for change in the ways that faculty and staff support the success of students of color enrolled in college

and conservatory music programs. The findings from my research contributed to the sizeable gap in the literature for studies of undergraduate music major self-efficacy in ways that centered racial identity, but I recognized there were limitations related to my sampling within the Music Admissions Roundtable (MAR) and in the ways that the Higher Education Arts Data Services (HEADS) collected data surrounding racial identities.

This project attempted to capture a snapshot of the diversity of racial identity and the diversity of experience among all music students from a broad range of college and conservatory music programs across the United States, but one study alone cannot fully represent the complex richness of diversity across all racial identities and all student experiences. In 2023, the Music Admissions Roundtable had fewer institutions designated as Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) compared to NASM-accredited institutions designated as MSIs in 2020 (Rutgers Graduate School of Education, 2021). Table 1 compares the different numbers of institutions within the Music Admissions Roundtable in 2023 and the institutions accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music in 2020 that were designated as Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) as of 2021 (Rutgers Graduate School of Education, 2021). Recognizing that my datapoints for NASM-accredited institutions from the *2019-2020 Music Data Summaries* (HEADS, 2020) and a 2023 website listing of MAR-affiliated institutions would never be an exact comparison of the same year's information, I selected the Rutgers Graduate School of Education's 2021 listing of MSIs as a midpoint between these years of data.

**Table 1.1***Types of Minority Serving Institutions Within MAR and NASM*

Type of institution	Number of MAR-affiliated bachelor's degree-granting institutions in the U.S., as of 2023	Number of NASM-accredited institutions, as of 2020
Total number of institutions	116	606
Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions (ANNH)	0	2
Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISI)	4	29
Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI)	6	68
Historically Black Colleges/Universities (HBCU)	1	24
Native American Serving Nontribal Institutions (NASNTI)	0	6
Predominantly Black Institutions (PBI)	0	5
Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCU)	0	0

*Note.* This table was created by comparing the list of NASM-accredited institutions (HEADS, 2020) and MAR-affiliated institutions (MAR, n.d.) with the list of MSIs compiled by the Rutgers Graduate School of Education (2021).

The limited number of MAR or NASM-accredited institutions designated as MSIs again highlighted the Whiteness within college and conservatory music programs within the United States. In 2023, MAR (n.d.) had no institutions that were designated as Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions (ANNH), Native American Serving Nontribal Institutions (NASNTI), Predominantly Black Institutions (PBI), or Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCU). Although a small number of NASM-accredited

institutions from the 2020 list (HEADS, 2020) were designed as Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Institutions, Native American Serving Nontribal Institutions, and Predominantly Black Institutions, none of the NASM-accredited institutions were designated as Tribal Colleges and Universities. None of the research participants in my study were enrolled at an MSI. Additional research is needed to explore the experiences of undergraduate music majors at institutions known for serving students with minoritized racial identities, and MAR could consider making additional outreach to music programs at MSIs to invite their participation in the organization.

I also recognize that although I centered racial identity through my selection of critical race theory (Bernal, 2002; Crenshaw, 1995; Gillborn, 2015; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Nardo, 2022; Patton, 2016; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) as my theoretical framework for this research, there is still much to explore regarding self-efficacy and the many other intersecting identities for undergraduate music students. The quantitative phases of my research collected some data surrounding gender identity and socio-economic class, and the qualitative interview phase invited students to comment on their own identities and others within their learning environment. The data collection processes were intended to humanize research participants and to provide opportunities for students to represent their authentic selves within the data. My decision to focus primarily on racial identity within this project both was an attempt to create a reasonable scope for this project as well as an acknowledgement that students hold multiple identities, which perhaps may be more salient to them in isolation or in combination than a consideration of race alone (Gillborn, 2015).

My decisions regarding the sampling frame also created limitations on the potential generalizability for this research. My attempts to identify a sample of undergraduate music majors who potentially shared similar educational experiences meant that I excluded international students, transfer students, undergraduate students under the age of 18, and undergraduate music majors who were not taking lessons in a principal performance area. Because HEADS data summaries in 2020 did not specifically report statistical information through these specific lenses, I could not determine how students were distributed across the reported racial demographic information for NASM-accredited institutions (HEADS, 2020). This may have had unintended consequences impacting the voices heard in my research; for example, it may be that for some institutions, the greatest number of students of color were transfer students and thus were excluded from my study. Despite these limitations, it is my hope that my research will amplify student voice, empower students, and challenge faculty and staff to better support students of color.

### **Chapter One Summary**

This study explored the self-perceptions of self-efficacy of undergraduate music majors of different racial identities. This work was impactful because of its amplification of student voice and empowerment of students by highlighting their own confidence in their ability to succeed within the field of music. The findings from this study are a call-to-action for faculty and staff to better support the self-efficacy of students of color and move toward delivering equitable, inclusive learning experiences for all.



## **Chapter Two: Review of Literature**

### **Undergraduate Music Education**

While depictions of college in popular culture typically portray an undergraduate degree as a time for students to explore their interests, try out a few different majors, and ultimately discover a career path, this often is not the case for undergraduate music majors. With rigorous admission requirements, unique curricular demands, and constant pressure to perform, undergraduate music majors may have more in common with high-profile college athletes than with their peers pursuing a major in another field within a liberal arts university (Schneider & Chesky, 2011). For students of color, navigating the nuances of undergraduate music education can create additional layers of complexity, since learning environments typically include predominantly White faculty (HEADS, 2020) teaching predominantly White students (HEADS, 2020) about predominantly White musicians and composers (Ewell, 2020).

### **Audition and Admission Requirements**

Many college and conservatory music programs have selective application and audition procedures that aspiring music majors complete prior to matriculation; on the extreme end of the scale, U.S. News and World Report (n.d.) reported the 2022 acceptance rate for the Curtis Institute of Music at just 2%. In schools of music where students are vying for one of only a handful of spots available to learn as an apprentice to a master performer, a student's privilege and affluence in the form of regular access to

lessons, professional-quality instruments, and required supplies can provide a real edge for admission (Koza, 2008). Acceptance into a college or conservatory music program often requires students to perform audition selections from a narrow range of repertoire, communicating not only value statements about particular compositions and performance styles but also demanding a type of musical code switching for students whose musical experiences in school differ from those of their home lives (Fitzpatrick et al., 2014). Hayes (2020) recounted one example of code switching and the Eurocentric supremacy of classical music on the curriculum at Texas State University, a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) which had only recently added faculty to teach mariachi performance lessons to support music education majors pursuing a mariachi track. Hayes (2020) shared Dr. Amanda Soto's description of this update:

In the past, a mariachi student could get in [be admitted to the music program] but they had to go through their private lesson studio, and their audition was in classical music and the faculty decided whether they were going to get into the School of Music or not. And so those were some of the barriers and the gatekeepers. With this proposal [a mariachi track within the music education major], this changes. The studio teachers are mariachi artists and I'm so very grateful for that. (p. 41)

Seeking admission to college and conservatory music programs occurs against the broader backdrop of education inequality. Patton (2016) highlighted that while society tends to think that college can be for anyone, there is a lack of acknowledgement of the role of systemic and structural barriers that result in students of color having less access to well-resourced schools and advanced coursework. The Supreme Court's 2023 ruling banning race-conscious admission raised university presidents' concerns about what this could mean in terms of diversity in higher education (Flaherty, 2023). Hurwitz (2011, as cited in Patton, 2016) found that having had a family member graduate from a highly

selective college made a student's probability of being admitted 23.3% higher. Without race-conscious admission and financial aid decisions having legal cover, students of color who have had to overcome systemic barriers to achieve "college readiness" may face additional roadblocks, while the status quo of White alumni replicates itself in the college student body.

### **Adjustment to Higher Education**

The early months at the beginning of a music major's undergraduate experience often are marked by artistic, intellectual, social, and professional transitions. Unless they attended arts magnet high schools, new undergraduate music majors can experience a 180-degree turn in their priorities: where ensemble participation was typically just one of the six or seven classes structured within a day of high school, music majors must quickly adapt to new schedules and demands for self-regulated learning in a setting where music is the central focus of their studies (Burt & Mills, 2006). This emphasis on the major field of study is an intentional distinctive for students pursuing a Bachelor of Music degree or other professional degrees accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM); 50-65% or more of the overall credit hours required for a professional undergraduate degree in music are devoted to music coursework (NASM, 2023).

Although this shift in focus may be what students actively were seeking out for their undergraduate degree, this adjustment can still be jarring. Students often are learning how to learn about music as an academic discipline for the first time, and their skills in writing about music, analyzing harmonies, and listening critically do not always develop at the same pace (Winterson & Russ, 2009). Gavin (2016) found that undergraduate music education majors experienced a notable dip in their musical

confidence early in their studies. Burt and Mills (2006) identified the first performance as a critical point, noting how students may fear being compared to their peers; one of their research participants shared, “I love playing solo stuff, but not here, not in front of my peers” (p. 58).

### **Relationships With Faculty and Peers**

Another defining feature of the undergraduate music major experience is the type of unique relationships that students develop with their faculty members and with their fellow students. The relationship between a music major and their studio professor, or the faculty member teaching them individualized lessons in voice or an instrument, often begins prior to the student’s admission to the college or conservatory music program; prospective students often have sample lessons with faculty members to get a sense of how they work together in the private lesson setting, which can influence a student’s enrollment decision. However, this apprenticeship model of learning from a master performer also creates unequal power dynamics that can make it difficult for students to seek clarification or additional guidance if those conversations might be construed as a critique of their faculty member (Burwell, 2019). In Gavin’s (2012) interviews with 14 students who had withdrawn from a music education program, interview participants referenced their instructor for performance lessons more frequently than any other individual as having a negative impact on their experiences in their music program.

Gavin’s (2016) interviews with music education majors included this acknowledgement of the complexities of the power dynamic, including aspects of intimidation or stage fright when working with a faculty member who is a high-profile performer on the international stage: “...every time I walked into a lesson with my

professor, or actually every time he walked into a room, I was pretty sure I was going to have a heart attack” (p. 48). Because students often study with the same faculty member for their entire undergraduate career, any tension or mismatched communication styles can create deeply rooted narratives and routines that are difficult to escape. One of Burwell’s (2019) interview subjects described his perception of the studio professor as not providing enough encouragement and positive feedback: “You imagine it—you get three years of that and all you can remember your tutor saying to you is where it went wrong” (p. 11).

Since many music programs include both undergraduate and graduate degrees, undergraduate music majors may also be navigating academic and social settings with master’s and doctoral students. Although graduate assistants serving as instructors may be perceived as more relatable, easier to approach, or more supportive than faculty members (Rowley, 1993, as cited in Russell, 2009), the relationship between undergraduate students and their near peers in teaching or leadership roles can be complex. Russell (2009) also found that undergraduate music education majors enrolled in courses taught by graduate assistants rather than faculty interpreted this staffing decision as a reflection of the course being a lower priority within the curriculum and within the music program overall.

Because music majors are constantly performing for one another in recitals, ensemble auditions, and master classes, they may find it challenging to navigate feelings of comparison or competition with one’s peers. Gavin (2016) described the stress of auditioning for ensembles in the first term of enrollment, when students are confronting potential disappointment if their previous success from high school is not immediately

replicated in higher education music programs: “After the lists [with ensemble audition results] come up, there are two happy people and one million angry people” (p. 47). Hendricks’s (2014) study explored some of the gendered impact on musicians in a competitive environment, finding that students who identified as female experienced decreases in self-efficacy. The influence of this competitive environment was measured only over the course of a three-day honor orchestra festival. What then would the impact be for students who hold marginalized identities when they are immersed in college and conservatory music programs where peer competition is a daily fact of life?

Interactions in the learning environment may become even more complex when students’ identities are not represented in the faculty and students surrounding them. Fitzpatrick et al.’s (2014) interviews with music education majors from minoritized groups revealed that while students were grateful for the mentorship received from their faculty, the students craved professional relationships with folks who shared common characteristics and backgrounds, such as race, ethnic group, or membership within the LGBTQIA community. Within institutions accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) in 2020, 83% of faculty of any rank identified as White (HEADS, 2020), meaning that music faculty are less racially diverse compared to the 79% White faculty demographics across disciplines found by the National Center for Education Statistics (Patton, 2016). In 2020, 63% of bachelor’s degree students enrolled in institutions accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music identified as White (HEADS, 2020). This percentage of White students enrolled in college music programs was similar to the demographic profile of high school seniors participating in music programs created by Elpus and Abril (2011): in the data from the Education

Longitudinal Study of 2004, 65.7% of seniors participating in their high school band, choir, or orchestra identified as White.

When surrounded by Whiteness as the status quo, students of color may experience pressure from a variety of sources to assimilate into music major life to find success and survive in undergraduate music programs (Weimer et al., 2019). The feeling of having to translate faculty interactions and feedback into ways that can actually apply to the lives of students of color can be a microaggression (Hess, 2022). In scenarios where students have few peers sharing their racial identity, students of color may also feel the added burden of stereotype threat, or one's perception that their performance would confirm other people's stereotypes about their group (Steele & Aronson, 1995).

Given that college and conservatory music programs are predominantly White environments, students of color may find it valuable to connect with campus multicultural centers, student organizations, or affinity groups affiliated with their racial identity. Many institutions initially created Black Cultural Centers to meet needs of Black students enrolling in college after the Civil Rights Era, and similar campus departments continue to provide academic support, foster belonging, and build community (Patton, 2006). Some institutions expanded the focus of Black Cultural Centers to evolve into multicultural centers with a broader range of objectives (Reid & Ebede, 2018). By supporting students' intersecting identities, multicultural centers can invite students to bring their authentic selves into university in humanizing, validating ways (McShay, 2011). However, given the time demands placed upon music majors for classes, lessons, ensemble rehearsals, practicing solo repertoire, rehearsing with accompanists, studying, and more, music majors may have difficulty finding the time to connect with student

organizations or campus centers dedicated to supporting minoritized students (Schneider & Chesky, 2011; Sternbach, 2008).

### **Mental and Physical Demands**

For music majors, navigating this environment of change, constant activity, and relationship dynamics can create an additional mental and emotional burden they must carry each day. Musgrave (2023) highlighted a paradox emerging from research exploring connections between music and mental health: while some researchers champion the power of music making to reduce symptoms of depression and improve mental health, the working conditions of professional musicians may lead to anxiety and depression. Musgrave's (2023) review of the literature identified factors that could negatively impact the mental health of individuals pursuing a career in music, including exposure to financial risk, gender discrimination, unequal access to opportunity, and high pressure to perform. Given these challenges, Musgrave (2023) called for music educators to critically examine ways to make music healthier and to be responsive to the voices of their students.

One well-researched threat to musician mental health is Music Performance Anxiety (MPA). In their literature review on Music Performance Anxiety, Herman and T. Clark (2023) recognized that MPA has been researched since the 1980s. Acknowledging this saturation of the literature, they even wrote, "You may be wondering why on earth we need *YET ANOTHER* [emphasis theirs] theoretical review of MPA" (Herman & T. Clark, 2023, p. 2). Paese and Egermann (2024) interviewed sixteen experts, many of whom recommended a combination of breathing exercises and meditation, not only to attend to the immediate needs of performance but also to counteract negative self-talk



and perfectionism. Despite the volume of research investigating MPA, Herman and T. Clark (2023) found that researchers have not agreed on what coping mechanisms are the most effective.

Beyond simple stage fright, MPA can impact musicians' performance in a broad range of ways: (a) physiological effects, such as excessive muscle tension, shaking, or dry mouth; (b) cognitive effects, such as worrying about the possibility of a negative result or evaluation; (c) emotional effects, such as helplessness, panic, and shame; and (d) behavioral effects, such as avoiding practicing specific sections of a piece of music or isolating oneself from others (Herman & T. Clark, 2023). In addition to impacting a musician's performance, MPA has been associated with lower academic achievement grades (Paliaukiene et al., 2018).

With the volume of research exploring MPA and its mental and emotional toll on musicians over the past decades (Herman & T. Clark, 2023), it might be easy to forget that music making itself is a physical task. Researchers have compared the time demands of college music majors to those of student athletes (Schneider & Chesky, 2011; Sternbach, 2008), but considerations regarding physical demands and niche medical support to recovery from injury strengthen the argument for continued comparison between these two student populations. With musical training beginning as early as age two, the odds are high that college and conservatory music majors would have experienced some type of health issue while accumulating their 10,000 hours of practice (Chaffin & Lemiux, 2004, as cited in Ginsborg et al., 2009). Chang et al.'s (2021) study exploring the physical health of music students was, to their knowledge, the first of its

kind to take a comprehensive approach to investigating multiple facets of health and factors that could predispose musicians to injury.

Given the potential for overuse and injury, the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM, n.d.-c) and the Performing Arts Medicine Association (PAMA) collaborated on a tool kit of resources to safeguard the neuromusculoskeletal and vocal health of musicians. NASM and PAMA (n.d.) provided the following definitions for these terms and the context for how these concepts relate to music making:

The neuromusculoskeletal system refers to the complex system of muscles, bones, tendons, ligaments, and associated nerves and tissues that support our body's physical structure and enable movement... The term "neuromusculoskeletal" is used to encompass not only overt physical movements (the pressing of a key, the strumming of a string) and overall body alignment, but also the small internal movements our bodies make, for example to produce breath and modify vocal sounds. (p. 2)

Williamon and Thompson (2006) found that music performance majors were more likely to turn to the professor teaching their private lessons in their performance area about physical and mental health problems before consulting even medical professionals. Although music performance faculty may be somewhat familiar with technical challenges associated with performance and/or have experience navigating Music Performance Anxiety, they are not trained as physicians or counselors and cannot be expected to provide diagnoses or prescribe treatment (Williamon & Thompson, 2006). This reliance upon the performance area faculty could highlight not only the unique nature of undergraduate music majors' relationships with their performance faculty but also some of the challenges for navigating the U.S. healthcare system when seeking out more specific care as a musician.

### **Conceptual Framework: Self-Efficacy**

Within this context of music major study, my research explored musical self-efficacy for undergraduate music majors of different racial identities. Self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) was defined as an individual's belief in their ability to succeed in a specific scenario or context. Self-efficacy is both discipline-specific and task-specific. There are four sources of feedback that shape self-efficacy: (a) mastery experience, or an individual's previous success or achievement; (b) vicarious experience gained through observing the work of others; (c) verbal and social persuasion, or encouragement from others; and (d) emotional and physiological states, such as mood, anxiety, or stress (Usher & Pajares, 2008). Oettingen and Zosuls (2006) highlighted ways that cultural values can inform the type of feedback that students receive and how they weigh that feedback as part of their self-efficacy; however, little peer-reviewed research explored ways that cultural differences manifest across racial identities within *musical* self-efficacy for undergraduate music majors.

### **Theoretical Framework: Critical Race Theory**

The theoretical framework that guided this literature review and overall research was critical race theory (CRT). Critical race theorists assert that race is a social construct and that racism is a complex, subtle, and flexible part of society that creates, perpetuates, and reinforces inequality (Gillborn, 2015). Delgado and Stefancic (2000, as cited in Gillborn, 2015) highlighted that legislation often serves only as a remedy to the most extreme cases of racism while doing little to address the day-to-day aspects of racism lurking just beneath the surface of normality that people of color encounter. Because majoritarian narratives are normalized as "natural" parts of everyday life, the lives and

stories of people of color often are silenced (Patton, 2016; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). CRT calls for naming the impact that invisible White supremacy has on higher education and using counter-storytelling as a powerful tool to disrupt deficit narratives (Patton, 2016; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

Although CRT scholars foreground race in their work, they also incorporate Kimberlé Crenshaw's (1995) concept of intersectionality, which acknowledges that individuals simultaneously are members of many different groups across categories such as race, class, gender, and dis/ability, while centering racial identity in their activism and in their work to enact meaningful change (Gillborn, 2015). Bernal (2002) recognized this intersection of power along identities of race and gender by acknowledging the ways that White feminism does not account for the differences in lived experiences when individuals hold other identities:

Whereas White feminisms often define themselves against a male-centered perspective, critical raced-gendered perspectives avoid male-female polarisms, instead examining how oppression is caught up in multiple raced, gendered, classed, and sexed relations. (p. 107)

Although increased representation of individuals from minoritized racial identities would be an important step in addressing some of the challenges individuals face when navigating predominantly White spaces and ways of knowing, CRT scholars acknowledge that racism is not purely a “pipeline” problem (Nardo, 2022; Patton, 2016). Within higher education, recruitment for a diverse incoming class of students too often becomes an act of “front-loading women and underrepresented minorities into the ‘pipe’ at the beginning” (Cannady et al., 2014, p. 447, as cited in Nardo, 2022). This approach reduces racial identity to a footnote about an individual learner's context, without

acknowledging the impact of institutional racism and inequality within educational systems (Patton, 2016; Nardo, 2022). Patton (2016) asserted that beyond recruitment alone, learning environments need to be disrupted to retain the students of color that institutions so diligently recruited: “The climate remains unchanged. Faculty are not challenged to rethink their curriculum, relinquish their biases, or connect with students of various racial groups (p. 328).” The infusion of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) within the curriculum too often functions as a “one-shot” approach, where a single stand-alone course is left to do all the heavy lifting of diversifying a Eurocentric curriculum (Patton, 2016).

Solórzano (1998, as cited in Bernal, 2002) identified five defining elements of critical race theory within educational research: (a) the importance of transdisciplinary approaches; (b) an emphasis on experiential knowledge; (c) a challenge to dominant ideologies; (d) the centrality of race and racism and their intersectionality with other forms of subordination; and (e) a commitment to social justice. Each of these elements influenced my research. While exploring the role of race and racism within undergraduate music programs, my research benefitted from CRT lenses research across other disciplines, including experiences of students in STEM fields with minoritized racial identities (Blake-Beard et al., 2011; Kuchynka et al., 2023; Nardo, 2022; Totonchi et al., 2021). Valuing experiential knowledge was central to my selection of narrative inquiry for the qualitative side of my mixed methods research (Bernal, 2002; Clandinin, 2006; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Confronting the status quo of the western European art music canon permeated the research setting the scene for my study (Ewell, 2020; Hess, 2022; Liu, 2022; Lucia, 2007). While race and racism were the central focus for my

research, gender and socioeconomic status informed data collection and analysis as well (Lewis et al., 2022). The entire purpose of my research was not just to “pin the tail on the systemic oppression” but rather to name systemic barriers and amplify student voice in ways that can lead to meaningful change. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) summarized this call-to-action, saying:

When the ideology of racism is examined and racist injuries are named, victims of racism can find their voice. Furthermore, those injured by racism and other forms of oppression discover they are not alone in their marginality. They become empowered participants, hearing their own stories and the stories of others, listening to how the arguments against them are framed, and learning to make the arguments to defend themselves. (p. 27)

These elements of critical race theory guided by research within the context of music education for my research.

### **Critical Race Theory Within Music Education**

Applying critical race theory to music education names the power of race and racism while highlighting opportunities to create more equitable educational experiences for students. Hess (2022) acknowledged that race is ever-present in music education, from the demographics of the predominantly White teaching staff to the music curriculum and the policies that structure educational systems. Liu (2022) asserted that idealized notions of music as an artform transcending language and culture can lead to faculty, staff, and students being “oblivious to the imperialistic history of how Western classical music came to dominate conservatories and university music programs across the globe” (p. 26). Koza (2008) recommended discussing race as a vehicle to investigate the explicit and implicit purposes of music programs, to identify reasons behind the inertia stifling change, and to find new opportunities for progress.

## National Association of Schools of Music Categories for Racial Identity

One of the first challenges to acknowledging the impact of race and racism within the field of music education is addressing the way in which institutions represent the identities of the students, faculty, and staff present in the community. Institutions accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) submit statistical data related to enrollment, degrees offered, operational budgets, faculty salaries, demographic information for faculty and students, and more as part of Higher Education Arts Data Services summaries (HEADS, n.d.). Within these data summaries, NASM defined race and ethnicity as:

Category used to describe groups to which individuals belong, identify with, or belong in the eyes of the community. The categories do not denote scientific definitions of anthropological origins. A person may be counted in only one group. The groups used to categorize U.S. citizens, resident aliens, and other eligible non-citizens are: Black, non-Hispanic; American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian or Pacific Islander; Hispanic; and White, non-Hispanic. (n.d.-b)

NASM (n.d.-b) also noted that institutions who are unable to classify students or employees in one of the specified racial/ethnic categories can be assigned to the category “race/ethnicity unknown.” NASM specified that this category should also be used in cases when the institution does not have information surrounding an international student’s race or ethnicity. These instructions for *institutions* to classify students’ racial identities, rather than guidance for institutions to have humanizing conversations with students about how they see themselves, were particularly telling. By leaving a determination of racial identity up to an institution rather than the individual student, NASM is opening the door for potential racial miscategorization, which could have

negative psychological implications, particularly for multiracial individuals (Does et al., 2023).

Given my experiences as a biracial individual, I was especially sensitive to the limitations created by NASM's approach to defining racial groups and requiring that individuals be represented only by one group. Prewitt (2018) recognized that America's historical assimilation patterns and census processes have resulted in the erasure of multiracial individuals from the statistical data. Maxim et al. (2023) reported that in the 2020 census, 88% of Black Americans, 87% of White Americans, and 83% of Asian Americans were classified as one race alone; however, 61% of the individuals identifying as American Indian or Alaska Native American and 57% of the individuals selecting Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander selected multiple racial identities in the census. Allen et al. (2019) also highlighted some of these challenges when discussing racial demographic information in higher education settings: groups with a small sample can be statistically erased, greater aggregation of data can misrepresent trends, and larger groupings of racial identities can flatten intragroup differences. In particular, Hayes (2020) critiqued the NASM categories for racial identity with particular attention to the "Hispanic" category: "If I have learned one thing in the course of my interviews with colleagues and compiling of data, it is that Latinx/Hispanic cannot be regarded as a single homogenizing category" (p. 40).

Because students of color often constitute a smaller percentage of overall enrollment at NASM-accredited institutions, these practices of shoe-horning students into racial categories reveal the shortcomings of representing the diversity within undergraduate music study in ways that honor the identities of the students themselves.



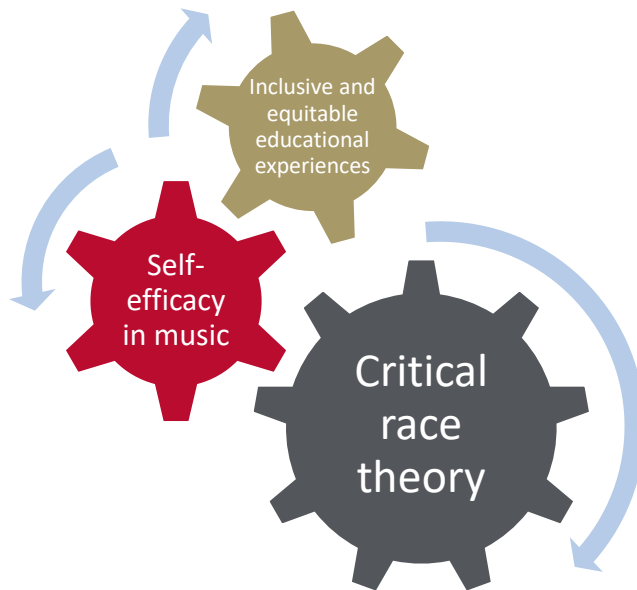
Chochinov (2022) advocated for interactions with others to be guided not by the golden rule (i.e., “Treat others as you would want to be treated in similar circumstances”) but rather by the platinum rule: treat others as they themselves want to be treated. Additional research surrounding racialized experiences in undergraduate music education can push for change in ways that music executives and accreditation agencies consider racial identity, while also drawing attention to the experiences of people of color in those contexts.

### **Visualization of the Interaction of Frameworks**

Within my research, the conceptual and theoretical frameworks interacted so that self-efficacy was viewed through a CRT lens, centering students’ voices surrounding their racialized experiences in education. By applying the theoretical framework of critical race theory, I interrogated why consideration of racial identity was not represented within the existing peer-reviewed research exploring musical self-efficacy for undergraduate music majors. The results of my study can advance current practices to support self-efficacy and create inclusive, equitable educational experiences for students of color. I created Figure 1.1 as a visual depiction of the interaction of these frameworks.

**Figure 2.1**

*Self-Created Interaction of Frameworks*



**Previous Literature Review**

I located only one meta-analysis exploring musical self-efficacy from the last decade (Hendricks, 2016). In this literature review, Hendricks (2016) described the four sources of self-efficacy and identified nuances within the existing peer-reviewed research, starting with McCormick and McPherson’s (2003) first study demonstrating self-efficacy as a predictor of music performance. Hendricks (2016) identified studies that focused on self-regulation or student choice in selecting repertoire as elements of enactive mastery experiences impacting their self-efficacy (McPherson & McCormick, 2006; Renwick & McPherson, 2002, as cited in Hendricks, 2016). The power of vicarious experience was found to be a double-edged sword in competitive musical environments, as not all students thrive in learning environments with constant competition or rankings against their peers (Hendricks, 2014; O’Neill & McPherson, 2002, as cited in Hendricks,

2016). Verbal persuasion in musical settings demanded specificity and authenticity (Duke & Henninger, 2002; Pitts et al., 2000, as cited in Hendricks, 2016). Hendricks's (2016) exploration of emotional and physiological states within musical settings focused on the negative impact of Music Performance Anxiety on self-efficacy (Kenny, 2011, as cited in Hendricks, 2016; McGrath, 2012, as cited in Hendricks, 2016; Wilson & Roland, 2002, as cited in Hendricks, 2016).

Hendricks's (2016) analysis of the existing research did not specifically highlight studies exploring differences in musical self-efficacy across students' identities. Only two studies, Nielsen (2004) and Hendricks's own 2014 study, specifically identified outcomes by gender. While Hendricks (2016) cited Usher and Pajares (2008) in acknowledging that factors such as gender, dis/ability, culture, ethnicity, values, and domain can impact the influence of each of the sources of self-efficacy, the meta-analysis identified only four studies exploring relationships across some of these identities: Usher and Pajares's (2006, as cited in Hendricks, 2016) comparison of female African American students and White male students; Klassen's (2004a) comparison of Indo-Canadian students and Anglo-Canadian students; Asian (Salili et al., 2001, as cited in Hendricks, 2016) or Asian American (Eaton & Dembo, 1997, as cited in Hendricks, 2016) compared to Western cultures. None of these studies specifically explored musical self-efficacy across racial identity. My study helped fill this gap by exploring self-efficacy in music for undergraduate music majors of different racial identities.

## **Current Literature Review**

### **Literature Review Purpose**

In alignment with the theoretical framework of critical race theory, the initial purpose of this literature review was to explore the intersection of self-efficacy, undergraduate music major experiences, and racial identity. Preliminary searches within electronic databases for articles with the broader terms of “self-efficacy,” “race,” and “music” in the full-text of the article yielded an abundance of studies exploring the impact of music or music therapy as a health intervention, which was beyond the scope of my study. To focus more specifically on the experiences of undergraduate music majors, I conducted a search in May 2023 of the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) and PsycINFO electronic databases with the following search terms within the abstracts of peer-reviewed journal articles: (“self-efficacy” OR “self efficacy”) and (“higher education” OR “college” OR “conservatory” OR “undergraduate” OR “post-secondary” OR “baccalaureate” OR “bachelor\*”) and (“music”) and (“race” OR “racial” OR “ethnicity”). These searches returned zero results in May 2023.

To identify any new articles exploring the musical self-efficacy of undergraduate music majors from different racial identities within the past year, I conducted an additional review of ERIC and PsycINFO databases in April 2024. This review searched for linked full-text, peer-reviewed journal articles with slightly adjusted criteria from the above search terms: (a) I added “university” as an alternate search term alongside “higher education” or “college” and so on; (b) I modified the search term “music” to become “music\*” to also capture results discussing *musical* self-efficacy; and (c) I searched for these terms anywhere within the articles, rather than only within the abstract. ERIC

returned two search results (Fisher et al., 2021; Shaw, 2022); however, neither of these studies centered racial identity as part of their research protocol. Fisher et al. (2021) mentioned racial identity only as a passing reference to types of demographic information collected within a survey exploring factors influencing the self-efficacy of future music educators. Shaw's (2022) study focused on the impact of choral or instrumental music participation on social-emotional outcomes for high school students, such as math self-efficacy or science self-efficacy; the study did not focus specifically on musical self-efficacy or undergraduate music majors. PsycINFO returned one result: Young and Goldstein's (2024) study explored perceptions of inclusion and well-being for folks from minoritized racial or ethnic groups who participated in marching arts, such as outdoor marching band, drum and bugle corps, indoor drumline and more; however, their research participants' ages ranged from 18 to 41 years and they were not restricted to students currently enrolled as music majors in a bachelor's degree program.

With this in mind, the adjusted purpose for this literature review was to explore the existing peer-reviewed research in self-efficacy for undergraduate music majors, while paying particular attention to the ways that the studies considered identity or demographic information among the research participants.

## **Literature Review Method**

### ***Inclusion Criteria***

This literature review consisted of an electronic database search, a hand search, and an ancestral review. To attempt to capture as broad an understanding as possible of the limited research exploring self-efficacy for undergraduate music majors, I established these criteria for inclusion:

1. The study examined self-efficacy in music.
2. The study participants were undergraduate students pursuing a major in music.
3. The study was peer-reviewed and published in English.

Because some of validated instruments used to identify relationships between self-efficacy and musical performance were from research studies completed in the United Kingdom, I chose not to restrict my search parameters to only studies conducted in the United States. This inclusion of studies conducted in international settings enriched my understanding of how self-efficacy currently was explored around the globe.

### ***Exclusion Criteria***

I further refined the search results by excluding studies that met the following criteria:

1. The study sample included individuals not specifically pursuing an undergraduate major in music, such as non-music majors participating in ensembles, elementary education majors infusing music into the general classroom, professional musicians, amateur musicians not pursuing a degree in music, or current teachers who had previously completed an undergraduate degree in music.
2. The study focused primarily on another conceptual framework rather than self-efficacy, such as self-esteem, broader aspects of self-regulation, career identity, or creative identity.
3. While the study may have been conducted with music education majors, the study measured teaching self-efficacy, without the instrument focusing on self-efficacy in music specifically.

4. The study focused on the use of music or music therapy as a health intervention.

### ***Electronic Database Search***

To identify relevant articles, I used Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) and PsycINFO for the electronic database search. After finding an additional article in March 2024 that explored self-efficacy for undergraduate music majors whose abstract included the term *musical* rather than *music* (Lewis & Hendricks, 2022), I conducted my search of ERIC and PsycINFO again, using these search terms anywhere within the article to review full-text, peer-reviewed journal articles: (“self-efficacy” OR “self efficacy”) and (“higher education” OR “college” OR “university” OR “conservatory” OR “undergraduate” OR “post-secondary” OR “baccalaureate” OR “bachelor\*”) and (“music\*”). A search of both databases yielded a total of 208 articles, four of which were excluded due to database duplication. An additional 185 were excluded based on abstract review. After a full text review, 18 studies met the inclusion criteria during the electronic database search (Afacan & Kaya, 2022; Akgül, 2021; Ciftcibasi, 2021; Eğilmez, 2015; Kurtuldu & Bulut, 2017; Lewis & Hendricks, 2022; Lubert & Gröpel, 2022; Miksza & Tan, 2015; Nielsen, 2004; Otacioğlu, 2020; Papageorgi et al., 2010; Prichard, 2017; Regier, 2021; Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a; Ritchie & Williamon, 2012; Üstün & Ozer, 2020; Weimar et al., 2019; Xu, 2023).

### ***Hand Search and Ancestral Review***

After completing the electronic database search, I conducted a hand search of articles from 2020-2024 within five relevant journals: *The International Journal of Music Education*, *The Journal of Research in Music Education*, *Music Education Research*, *Psychology of Music*, and *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*. One

additional article was identified through the hand review (Lewis et al., 2022). An ancestral review of Hendricks (2016) identified additional studies exploring broader cultural differences in self-efficacy without considering music specifically (Klassen, 2004a; Oettingen & Zosuls, 2006), but no additional studies exploring musical self-efficacy were identified through the ancestral review process.

### **Literature Review Results**

The literature review search results provide a range of research in the international music education community. Of the 19 studies identified through the literature review process, seven were conducted in the United States (Lewis & Hendricks, 2022; Lewis et al., 2022; Miksza & Tan, 2015; Prichard, 2017; Regier, 2021; Weimer et al., 2019; Xu, 2023), seven were conducted in Turkey (Afacan & Kaya, 2022; Akgül, 2021; Ciftcibasi, 2021; Eğilmez, 2015; Kurtuldu & Bulut, 2017; Otacioğlu, 2020; Üstün & Ozer, 2020), three were conducted in the United Kingdom (Papageorgi et al., 2010; Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a; Ritchie & Williamon, 2012), one was conducted in Austria (Lubert & Gröpel, 2022), and one was conducted in Norway (Nielsen, 2004). This representation by country also is consistent with the range of research excluded in the literature review process: many excluded studies were conducted either in Turkey or the United Kingdom, and many of the excluded studies included discussions of additional instruments to measure dimensions of musical self-efficacy, self-esteem, or creative identity. The majority of the studies (12 out of 19) used quantitative methodologies (Afacan & Kaya, 2022; Akgül, 2021; Ciftcibasi, 2021; Eğilmez, 2015; Kurtuldu & Bulut, 2017; Otacioğlu, 2020; Nielsen, 2004; Üstün & Ozer, 2020; Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a; Ritchie & Williamon, 2012; Weimer et al., 2019; Xu, 2023), five used mixed methods (Lewis &



Hendricks, 2022; Lewis et al., 2022; Lubert & Gröpel, 2022; Miksza & Tan, 2015; Prichard, 2017), and two used qualitative methods (Papageorgi et al., 2010; Regier, 2021).

***Theme 1: Researchers Considered Demographic Characteristics Other Than Race (And Not Always in Helpful Ways)***

Existing peer-reviewed research exploring musical self-efficacy for undergraduate music majors typically provided very limited information regarding the demographic characteristics represented within the research sample. Over three-quarters of the studies (15 out of 19) reported results by gender, with gender represented as a binary classification of either male or female (Afacan & Kaya, 2022; Akgül, 2021; Ciftcibasi, 2021; Eğılmez, 2015; Lewis & Hendricks, 2022; Lewis et al., 2022; Lubert & Gröpel, 2022; Nielsen, 2004; Otacioğlu, 2020; Papageorgi et al., 2010; Prichard, 2017; Regier, 2021; Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a; Ritchie & Williamon, 2012; Weimer et al., 2019), and three did not discuss the gender identity of research participants (Kurtuldu & Bulut, 2017; Miksza & Tan, 2015; Üstün & Ozer, 2020). Only Xu (2023) included research participants' self-reported gender identities, which included responses of female, male, nonbinary, and gender fluid. While the Higher Education Arts Data Services (HEADS, 2020) also collected gender information according to the gender binary, these practices can be dehumanizing for students who are nonbinary or gender fluid.

The studies included additional descriptive information about the demographic characteristics in their research samples. Many of the research studies conducted in music education programs in Turkey explored whether students who attended fine arts high schools would have higher self-efficacy in music than students attending non-fine arts

high schools (Afacan & Kaya, 2022; Akgül, 2021; Ciftcibasi, 2021; Eğılmez, 2015; Otacioğlu, 2020; Üstün & Ozer, 2020). All studies reported the research participants' year of study and/or age, as well as information about their program of study in school through some combination of research participants' degree, major, and/or performance area. Papageorgi et al. (2010) specifically highlighted genre differences across the sample.

***Theme 2: Research in Self-Efficacy for Undergraduate Music Majors Needs to Explore Additional Demographic Characteristics***

Of the 19 studies included in this literature review, only three studies specifically mentioned the racial identities represented within the research sample (Lewis et al., 2022; Weimer et al., 2019; Xu, 2023). Weimer et al.'s (2019) study focused exclusively on the experiences of Mexican American music education majors who were enrolled at a Hispanic Serving Institution in South Texas. Xu's (2023) sample from 30 music education programs across the United States was 75.3% White. Lewis et al.'s (2022) sample from four highly competitive music programs was 90% White, and the researchers addressed additional elements of privilege in the sample: 69% of the research participants had at least one parent with a graduate degree. Lewis et al. (2022) included this statement to address this representation in the sample: "This racially and economically skewed sample is reflective of the music student populations of the sample institutions and highlights the need to address broad issues of equity and access within music education at large" (p. 882).

All three studies called for additional research into the experiences of students with minoritized identities. Xu (2023) specifically highlighted the impact of gender

differences, and Lewis et al. (2022) called for additional studies exploring students with different racial demographics. Weimer et al. (2019) called for additional studies amplifying the experiences of Mexican American college students to determine how their needs are similar to or different from students with other cultural backgrounds.

### ***Theme 3: Variety of Self-Efficacy Instruments***

Because self-efficacy beliefs are discipline-specific and task-specific (Bandura, 1997), it was not surprising that the peer-reviewed research identified through the systematic literature review utilized a broad range of instruments to measure self-efficacy in different contexts. Many of the studies using quantitative methodologies focused on measuring self-efficacy in musical performance broadly (Afacan & Kaya, 2022; Ciftcibasi, 2021; Lewis & Hendricks, 2022; Üstün & Ozer, 2020). Some were specifically focused on piano self-efficacy (Akgül, 2021; Eğilmez, 2015; Kurtuldu & Bulut, 2017). Other studies focused on self-efficacy for music teaching within a sample of music education majors (Prichard, 2017; Xu, 2023).

Given the different purposes and research settings represented within the studies identified by the literature review, very few of the researchers were using the same instruments. Only Afacan and Kaya (2022) and Üstün and Ozer (2020) used the same existing self-efficacy instrument without adaptations, which was Girgin's (2015, as cited in Afacan & Kaya, 2022) Instrument Performance Self-Efficacy Belief Scale. Girgin's (2015, as cited in Afacan & Kaya, 2022) instrument was only available in Turkish, so I was unable to review this measurement further. Xu (2023) adapted Prichard's (2017) Preservice Music Teacher Efficacy Scale. Akgül (2021) used Kurtuldu and Bulut's (2017) Piano Lesson Self-Efficacy Scale. The rest of the researchers were either

developing their own instruments from scratch (Kurtuldu & Bulut, 2017; Lewis et al., 2022; Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a; Ritchie & Williamon, 2012) or adapting more general measurements of self-efficacy for a music-specific setting (Lubert & Gröpel, 2022; Miksza & Tan, 2015; Nielsen, 2004; Otacioğlu, 2020; Prichard, 2017; Regier, 2021).

### **Summary of Literature Review Themes**

The systematic literature review highlighted gaps in the types of demographic data represented within peer-reviewed research exploring self-efficacy for undergraduate music majors, amplified the need for additional research focusing on different demographics, and acknowledged the great variety of instruments used to measure musical self-efficacy. These themes called for closer investigation of race, gender, socio-economic class, and other identities for future studies on musical self-efficacy for undergraduate music majors. Additional studies utilizing the same instruments to measure musical self-efficacy would be valuable in exploring broader themes for undergraduate music majors across different institutions and countries.

### **Discussion of Literature Review**

#### **Summary of Findings**

The peer-reviewed literature exploring self-efficacy for undergraduate music majors can inform best practices for faculty and staff supporting student success. Whether considering trends across instrument/performance area, musical genre, major, year of study, or gender, research into self-efficacy provides the opportunity to consider where students are receiving messaging about their potential for success and how their self-efficacy beliefs translate into different outcomes. There was a noticeable gap in the literature specifically focusing on the racial identities represented within undergraduate

music programs and ways that racialized educational experiences could impact musical self-efficacy.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

My study provided an important contribution to meet the research gap in studies exploring self-efficacy for undergraduate music majors of different racial identities. Although Lewis et al. (2022) did not make exploration of race a stated priority within the study, their naming the level of Whiteness and privilege included in their sample asked music education researchers to confront issues of access and equity by investing in research that can inform change, creating inclusive educational experiences for all students.

My convergent mixed methods approach advanced research in musical self-efficacy by combining themes from quantitative data from the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a), demographic characteristics, and grade point averages with themes emerging from qualitative interviews with students of color. Given the number of studies identified in the literature review that utilized quantitative methodologies to identify trends in self-efficacy, the qualitative data from my convergent mixed methods approach enriched the literature by digging deeper into the educational experiences of students of color.

Although the stated theoretical framework guiding the literature review was critical race theory, my methodological choices may have limited the search results in identifying musical self-efficacy studies exploring racial identity for undergraduate music majors. Because race occupies a unique space within each societal and cultural context, my decision to include research studies conducted outside of the United States may have

had unforeseen consequences in the results. Perhaps other countries prioritize research exploring cultural differences rather than racial differences. Future research should continue to contextualize explorations of identity and self-efficacy within their research setting and consider what the findings mean for the global community.

### **Chapter Two Summary**

Within the conceptual framework of self-efficacy and theoretical framework of critical race theory, this systematic literature review identified no search results that specifically focused on self-efficacy for undergraduate music majors with racial identity as a stated priority within the study. The 19 studies identified through the literature review considered demographic characteristics other than racial identity, and Lewis et al. (2022) specifically called for additional research exploring self-efficacy across racial identities. The existing research exploring self-efficacy for undergraduate music majors in the international community highlighted the range of instruments for measuring musical self-efficacy, the need for research deliberately centering racial identity, and opportunities for future research.

### **Chapter Three: Methodology**

The purpose of this convergent mixed methods study was to explore perceptions of self-efficacy by undergraduate music majors of different racial identities. Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as defined as one's confidence in their ability to succeed in producing a desired outcome. Self-efficacy is informed by feedback from four sources: (a) mastery experience gained through past achievements; (b) vicarious experience from observing others; (c) verbal and social persuasion in the form of positive feedback and encouragement from others; and (d) emotional and physiological states, such as mood, stress, and anxiety (Usher & Pajares, 2008). Self-efficacy is both discipline-specific and task-specific (Bandura, 1997). This study investigated self-efficacy in musical learning and performance.

#### **Research Questions**

The central research question for this study was, "How do undergraduate music majors' self-perceptions influence their self-efficacy?" Sub-questions included:

1. What are undergraduate music majors' self-perceptions of self-efficacy?
  - a. For students of color?
  - b. For students who identify as White?
2. What relationships exist between self-efficacy and grade point average (GPA)?
  - a. For students of color?
  - b. For students who identify as White?

3. How do music majors perceive their racial identity within undergraduate music education?
4. How do educational experiences support self-efficacy?
5. How do educational experiences create barriers to self-efficacy?

These research questions were explored through a convergent mixed methods approach. Research Sub-Questions 1 and 2 were explored through quantitative data collection and analysis, and Research Sub-Questions 3, 4, and 5 were explored through qualitative data collection and analysis. The quantitative and qualitative themes were merged, and the results were interpreted through the creation of metainferences (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

### **Setting**

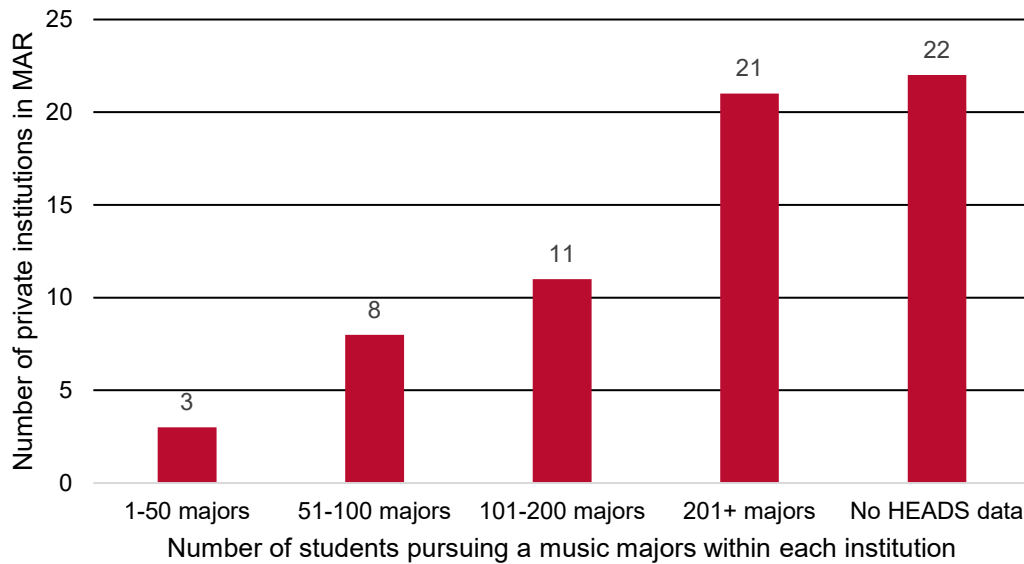
My research was conducted within the college and conservatory music programs in the United States granting baccalaureate degrees that were affiliated with the Music Admissions Roundtable (MAR, see Appendix B). MAR was established in 2011 as a professional networking group representing over 120 institutions in the United States and Canada (Music Admissions Roundtable, n.d.). Through college fairs, conferences, and conversations about best practices, this organization promotes professionalism, mentorship, and collaboration among music administrators (Music Admissions Roundtable, n.d.). In 2023, over three-quarters of the bachelor's degree-granting colleges in the United States affiliated with MAR were accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM); the institutions within MAR that were not NASM-accredited represented some of the most high-profile colleges and conservatories in the nation: Juilliard, New England Conservatory, Oberlin, and the Manhattan School of Music



(NASM, n.d.-a). Because MAR does not collect its own demographic data on enrolled students, I utilized the Higher Education Arts Data Services (HEADS, 2020) data summary as a reference point for demographic characteristics within the overall sample. Figures 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 describe the variety of types of bachelor's degree-granting institutions in the United States represented within MAR, to contextualize the learning environments in which research participants were studying at the time this research was conducted (HEADS, 2020; MAR, n.d.). The institutions that were not accredited by NASM and thus did not report HEADS (2020) data included 19 private institutions and 6 public institutions. As of 2020, half of the MAR institutions in the sample had over 200 students enrolled ( $n = 58$ ; HEADS, 2020; MAR, n.d.). While MAR institutions were distributed throughout the continental United States, the majority of these college and conservatory music programs were located within the Southeast, Midwest, or Northeast; outside of these regions, the greatest number of MAR institutions were located in Texas and California (MAR, n.d.).

**Figure 3.1**

*Number of Private Bachelor's Degree-Granting Institutions in MAR, by Size (HEADS, 2020; MAR, n.d.)*

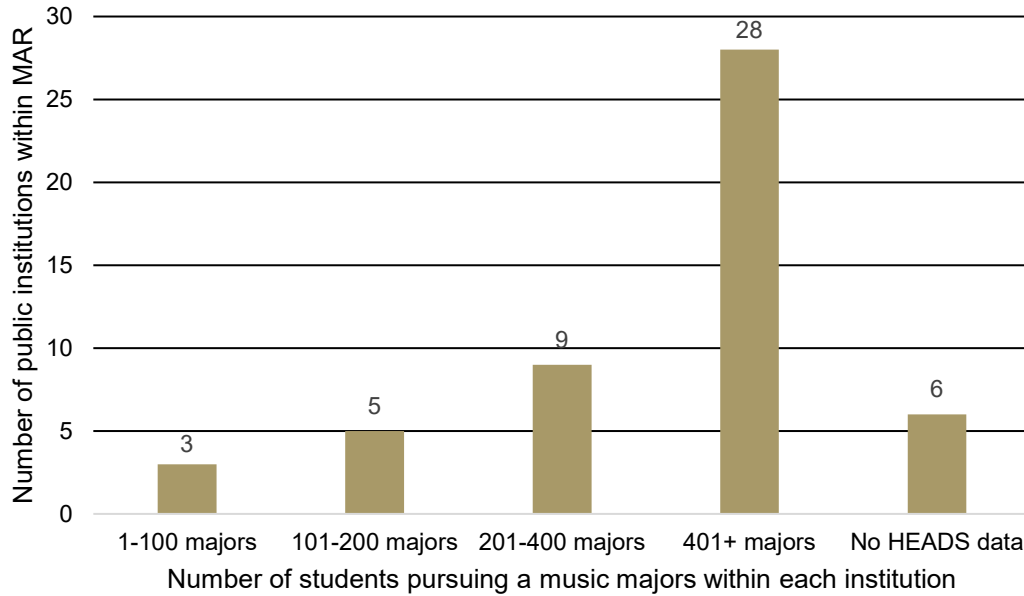


*Note.* Three private NASM-accredited institutions did not report HEADS data in 2020 and thus are included with the 19 private institutions not accredited by NASM under the “No HEADS data” category (HEADS, 2020).

In 2023, there were more private institutions affiliated with the Music Admissions Roundtable ( $n = 65$ ) than public institutions ( $n = 51$ ). Almost 30% of the private institutions within MAR were not accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music ( $n = 19$ ). Figure 3.2 reports 22 private institutions without HEADS (2020) data because three private institutions within MAR were NASM-accredited but did not have information submitted as part of the HEADS (2020) data. Out of the NASM-accredited institutions affiliated with MAR, nearly half of the private institutions ( $n = 21$ ) represented the largest category of enrollment, reporting over 201 music majors enrolled in 2020.

**Figure 3.2**

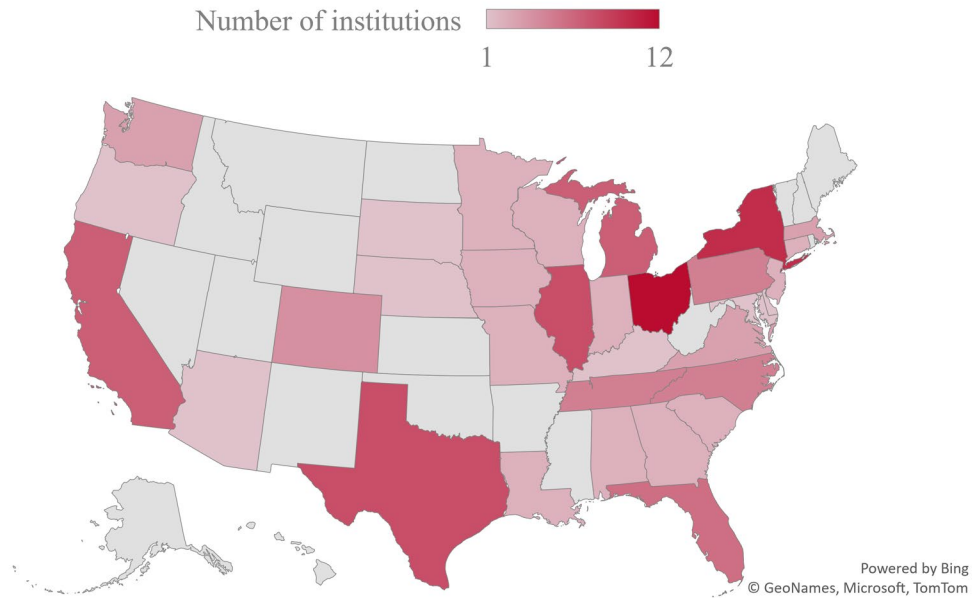
*Number of Public Bachelor's Degree-Granting Institutions in MAR, by Size (HEADS, 2020; MAR, n.d.)*



Because over 88% of the public institutions within MAR in 2023 were accredited by NASM, Figure 3.2 reports a much more detailed snapshot of the number of music majors enrolled at public MAR institutions. Given the different enrollment numbers found within public institutions, HEADS (2020) utilized a different scale for categorizing enrollment: (a) 1-100 music majors enrolled; (b) 101-200 music majors enrolled; (c) 201-400 music majors enrolled; and (d) more than 401 music majors enrolled. Over 62% of the NASM-accredited public institutions within MAR had more than 401 music majors enrolled in 2020.

**Figure 3.3**

*Number of Bachelor's Degree-Granting MAR Institutions in the U.S., by State (MAR, n.d.)*



Bachelor's degree-awarding institutions within the Music Admissions Roundtable in 2023 represented a broad range of geographic locations across the nation. The greatest number of MAR-affiliated institutions in 2023 were within the Midwest, Northeast, and Southeast. Despite this coverage across the nation, 17 states were not represented within MAR: Alaska, Arkansas, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Maine, Mississippi, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming. Half of the total number of MAR institutions were located in seven states: Ohio ( $n = 12$ ), New York ( $n = 10$ ), Illinois ( $n = 8$ ), Texas ( $n = 8$ ), California ( $n = 7$ ), Michigan ( $n = 7$ ), and Florida ( $n = 6$ ).

## **Community Partner Role**

Music administrators at institutions affiliated with the Music Admissions Roundtable play integral roles in institutional recruitment and retention efforts. This group of professionals is deeply invested in the experiences of students and their success within the institution (S. Campbell, personal communication, May 8, 2023). To create a mutually beneficial relationship with this community partner, I met with a representative from MAR multiple times to discuss the nature of the research project, recruitment strategies, and planned distribution of study findings upon the successful defense of the dissertation in practice.

The community partner distributed initial recruitment emails for research participants via the MAR listserv, along with the request to forward the email invitation to research to undergraduate students. Extensive targeted outreach in the form of email communication and phone calls to faculty and staff at MAR-affiliated institutions helped collect the minimum 30 participants per sample ( $n = 30$  students of color,  $n = 40$  White students) recommended to run statistical analyses (Gliner et al., 2009). The recruitment process spanned September 15, 2023, to March 14, 2024.

Faculty and staff affiliated with Music Admissions Roundtable institutions will have a few different opportunities to review my findings. The MAR representative serving as my community partner attended the dissertation in practice defense in May 2024. I will present my findings via Zoom following my graduation.

## **Role and Positionality of the Researcher**

Creswell and Creswell (2023) noted the way that a researcher's background, culture, and experiences can influence their interpretation of data; with this in mind, I

used reflexivity as a tool to identify ways that these factors could impact data collection and analysis. I am a biracial (half-Indonesian, half-White) woman with two degrees in music, and I have spent most of my professional career in collegiate music programs. This made my exploration of the racialized experiences of students navigating undergraduate studies in music a deeply personal process. Although these experiences provided empathy and insight in my interactions with research participants, they were tempered by my use of a research journal containing field notes and memos to minimize undue influence of my prior experience upon my analysis (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

My understanding of undergraduate music experiences and curricula certainly have been shaped by my professional roles in recruitment, retention, and academic advising in schools of music. However, some professional distance from the research setting provided a bit more objectivity and also minimized potential pressure on students to provide socially desirable responses (Zerbe & Paulhus, 1987). Because my professional roles have not been housed within a school of music since 2021, I did not engage in current “backyard research” (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, as cited in Creswell & Creswell, 2023). None of the research participants were my current advisees, further reducing the potential risk of students feeling pressure to participate in the research based on perceived power differentials based on professional roles.

## **Research Design**

### **Rationale for Research Design**

In alignment with my selected theoretical framework of critical race theory, my convergent mixed methods approach centered racial identity, starting with the literature review and pilot study, then carrying through in both the quantitative and qualitative

phases of data collection and analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). None of the studies identified by my systematic literature review (Afacan & Kaya, 2022; Akgül, 2021; Ciftcibasi, 2021; Eğilmez, 2015; Kurtuldu & Bulut, 2017; Lewis & Hendricks, 2022; Lewis et al., 2022; Lubert & Gröpel, 2022; Miksza & Tan, 2015; Nielsen, 2004; Otacioğlu, 2020; Papageorgi et al., 2010; Prichard, 2017; Regier, 2021; Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a; Ritchie & Williamon, 2012; Üstün & Ozer, 2020; Weimar et al., 2019; Xu, 2023) made racial identity the focus of data collection and analysis. Only Lewis et al. (2022), Weimar et al. (2019), and Xu (2023) directly discussed the racial identities represented within their samples. Lewis et al. (2022) specifically acknowledged racial composition of their sample as a limitation and a challenge for conducting research in college and conservatory music programs.

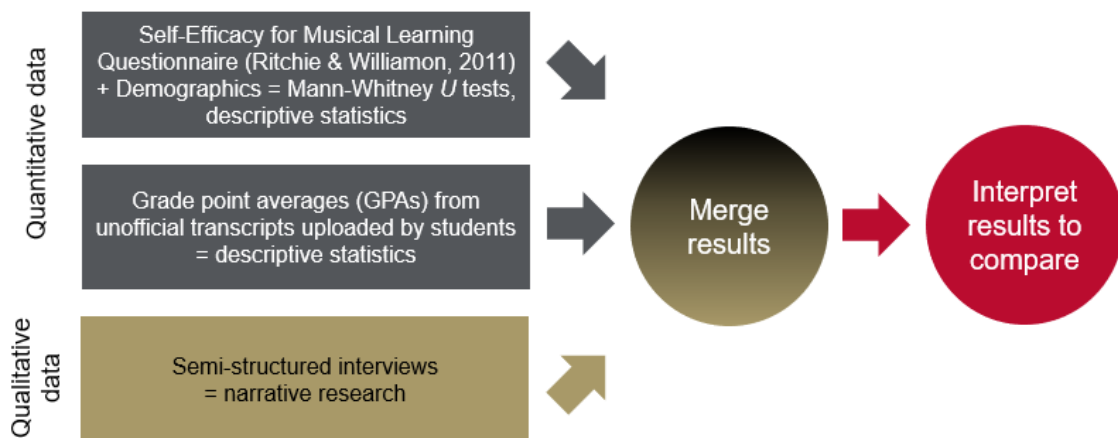
### **Rationale for Convergent Mixed Methods**

To address this dearth of research surrounding racial identity and self-efficacy for undergraduate music majors, my convergent mixed methods research directly asked students to share their racial identity, as well as other intersecting identities (Crenshaw, 1995). Although a research design focusing solely on either quantitative or qualitative approaches would have been valuable, the convergent mixed methods methodology best supported my research goals by developing “a complete understanding of changes needed for a marginalized group through the combination of qualitative and quantitative data,” (Creswell & Creswell, 2023, p. 232). The decision to collect quantitative data measuring self-efficacy and academic outcomes while centering racial identity was a new approach not represented in my systemic literature review of existing peer-reviewed research. Acknowledging the racial demographics of students pursuing an undergraduate degree in

music at institutions accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music (HEADS, 2020), I chose to disrupt the status quo of Whiteness by selecting students of color to complete qualitative interviews analyzed through narrative inquiry. Figure 3.4 visually represents how these approaches to quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis result in merged data and the creation of metainferences (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

**Figure 3.4**

*Convergent Mixed Methods Research Design (Adapted from Creswell & Creswell, 2023)*



By utilizing a research approach that merged quantitative and qualitative results rather than focusing on one single approach, my study provided a richer exploration of self-efficacy and educational experiences for students of color. This celebration of students of color amplified their counter-stories and challenged majoritarian narratives dominating many college and conservatory music programs in the United States (Cumberledge & Williams, 2023; Ewell, 2020; Liu, 2022; Lucia, 2007).



## **Rationale for Pilot Interviews**

My pilot interviews continued to center identity and principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ). I used my professional network to recruit three recent graduates from MAR institutions who identified as people of color. These individuals described their respective racial identities as Southeast Asian, Hispanic, and Black. As graduates of MAR institutions in 2022 or 2023, these individuals shared some common experiences and perspectives with potential research participants, allowing me to receive feedback from folks very close to my sample population without risking potential overlap with the actual research sample. The purposes of the pilot interviews were threefold: (a) to solicit open, honest feedback on the overall research process; (b) to identify questions that should be rephrased to improve clarity or to be more inclusive; and (c) to ensure that potential research participants would be humanized throughout the process.

Another factor motivating my selection of recent graduates for the pilot interviews was my desire to reduce some of the impact of the power dynamics between my role as a researcher and their relationship to the college and conservatory music programs they attended. Because these individuals had already earned their degrees, the personal risk for these individuals offering critical feedback was lower than it would have been for currently enrolled students. Currently enrolled students might have felt more pressure to temper critical feedback based on potential concerns for how that could impact their future interactions in their undergraduate journeys, so the stakes were lowered for folks who had already completed their undergraduate degrees. Two of the individuals were referrals from a former work colleague, and my first interactions with

them were in the form of the Zoom pilot interviews. Although I did have a pre-existing advising relationship with the third pilot interview participant, I waited until after their degree had been awarded to conduct the pilot interview to emphasize that any perceived institutional power I might have would not unduly motivate their participation in the pilot and their feedback in this process.

The feedback provided during the pilot interviews informed some fine-tuning adjustments in each phase of the research, starting with the consent documents, carrying through to the Qualtrics surveys used to collect quantitative data, and also shaping the qualitative interview protocol. While most adjustments focused on providing additional examples or prompts to clarify the intent behind a question, some adjustments made the overall process more inclusive. For example, the initial wording in the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) asked individuals to describe the music *played* in a recent performance, which was flagged by one of the pilot interview participants as potentially othering for vocalists who, strictly speaking, do not play an instrument. Based on their feedback, the question was rephrased as, “What music was performed?”

### **Rationale for Quantitative Phases of Research**

After adjustments based on the pilot interview feedback were approved by the University of Denver’s Institutional Review Board (IRB), I proceeded with the first quantitative phase of research. Consistent with my selected theoretical framework of critical race theory, racial identities and intersectional identities were a key fixture in the research (Bernal, 2002; Crenshaw, 1995; Gillborn, 2015; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Nardo, 2022; Patton, 2016; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). I incorporated demographic

questions exploring racial identity, gender identity, and socioeconomic status into a Qualtrics survey that also administered the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a). The HEADS (2020) data surrounding students' racial and gender identities collected from NASM-accredited institutions utilized narrowly defined, single-option responses. I recognized that, while there is value to comparing data from my research with national trends for NASM institutions, these limited categories risked perpetuating racial erasure and reinforcing the concept of gender as a binary construct. To mitigate these limitations and employ humanizing approaches in my research, I also provided open-ended text boxes where research participants described their racial and gender identities in their own words.

The survey also collected characteristics related to socio-economic status, to explore whether racial identity influenced students' levels of privilege or access to opportunity (Lewis et al., 2022). Survey items included questions related to the level of education completed by parents and/or guardians (United States Census Bureau, 2021), receipt of state or federal need-based financial aid (Federal Student Aid, n.d.), and access to pre-collegiate music lessons.

The Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) was selected to measure self-efficacy of undergraduate music majors within my research. With an internal reliability of  $\alpha = .82$  and demonstrated consistency in a two-week to one-month retest, this instrument had demonstrated its reliability and validity (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a). Other instruments measuring musical self-efficacy were available in APA PsycTESTS, a database of psychological instruments intended for use in research within social and behavioral sciences. These other options included Ritchie

and Williamon's (2012) Self-Efficacy for Musical *Performing* Questionnaire; however, the Self-Efficacy for Musical Performing Questionnaire had a slightly lower internal reliability of  $\alpha = .76$ . My preference of the Self-Efficacy for Musical *Learning* Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) was influenced by both the higher internal reliability and the emphasis upon the overall learning experience, rather than focusing only on a single performance.

The first phase of quantitative research collected self-efficacy scores and demographic characteristics to explore Research Sub-Question 1: What are undergraduate music majors' self-perceptions of self-efficacy, for students of color and for students who identify as White? A combination of descriptive statistics (i.e., total count, range, mean, mean rank, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis) and Mann-Whitney *U* tests analyzed self-efficacy scores for students of color and White students. The Mann-Whitney *U* test was selected as an analytical tool that could be used for comparing ordinal data, such as self-efficacy scores captured on the Likert-type scale utilized by the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a), for two independent samples (Naghshpour, 2016; Wall Emerson, 2023; West, 2021). The Mann-Whitney *U* test was identified as a good non-parametric alternative to *t*-tests in cases when the data was not normally distributed (Naghshpour, 2016; Wall Emerson, 2023; West, 2021).

This approach to research design in quantitative phase 1 was motivated by (a) the lack of existing research exploring these relationships and (b) the desire to have concrete data to share with the higher education music community, as a starting place for future research. Because the existing peer-reviewed research identified in my literature review

(Afacan & Kaya, 2022; Akgül, 2021; Ciftcibasi, 2021; Eğılmez, 2015; Kurtuldu & Bulut, 2017; Lewis & Hendricks, 2022; Lewis et al., 2022; Lubert & Gröpel, 2022; Miksza & Tan, 2015; Nielsen, 2004; Otacioğlu, 2020; Papageorgi et al., 2010; Prichard, 2017; Regier, 2021; Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a; Ritchie & Williamon, 2012; Üstün & Ozer, 2020; Weimar et al., 2019; Xu, 2023) did not foreground racial identity, my findings provided an important step in considering the role of racial identity within self-efficacy and educational experiences for undergraduate music majors.

After collection of self-efficacy scores and demographic information for quantitative phase 1 began in September 2023, the second phase of my quantitative research commenced in mid-December 2023. Research participants who completed the first phase received an email to upload screenshots or PDFs of unofficial transcripts via a second Qualtrics link. My intent was to use grade point averages (GPAs) as a marker of student success and to run correlation and regression analyses to explore relationships between students' self-efficacy, racial identity, and GPA; however, given lower response rates between the two quantitative phases, only descriptive statistics (i.e., total count, range, mean, and standard deviation) could be considered for the grade point averages. While 30 students of color and 40 White students completed the first quantitative phase, only 20 students of color and 22 White students completed the second quantitative phase. Future research will be needed to further explore Research Sub-Question 2 (i.e., "What relationships exist between self-efficacy and grade point average [GPA]: for students of color and for students who identify as White?").

## **Rationale for Qualitative Phase of Research**

With the quantitative data painting a broad landscape of self-efficacy for undergraduate music majors of any racial identity, the qualitative phase of research zoomed in close for a detailed exploration of the lived experiences of ten students of color. Through narrative analysis of semi-structured interviews, I identified critical events, distilled common themes, highlighted areas where research participants agreed or disagreed with one another, and constructed portraits of the individual research participants within their learning environments (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Mertova & Webster, 2019). Narrative inquiry provided a specific emphasis upon considering the lived experiences of students of color within the metaphorical three-dimensional narrative space of interaction, continuity, and situation (Clandinin, 2006). Within my narrative research, social and personal interactions were contextualized within the timeline and place for each student, creating a frame for the stories shared (Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

This infusion of nuanced details from student experiences enriched my research in ways that were absent from the studies identified in my systematic literature review, which focused primarily on quantitative data alone (Afacan & Kaya, 2022; Akgül, 2021; Ciftcibasi, 2021; Eğılmez, 2015; Kurtuldu & Bulut, 2017; Otacioğlu, 2020; Nielsen, 2004; Üstün & Ozer, 2020; Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a; Ritchie & Williamon, 2012; Weimer et al., 2019; Xu, 2023). The qualitative data collected addressed my final three research sub-questions: (a) how do music majors perceive their racial identity within undergraduate music education; (b) how do educational experiences support self-efficacy; and (c) how do educational experiences create barriers to self-efficacy?

## **Participant Selection Procedures**

My community partner shared the recruitment email with the Music Admissions Roundtable listserv, with the request that they distribute the call for participants with their undergraduate music major email list. Prospective research participants were directed to Qualtrics, where they provided informed consent and answered screening questions to determine their eligibility to participate in the study (see Appendix C and Appendix E). To address some of the challenges of skew in the 90% White sample in the research participants of Lewis et al. (2022), I recruited a sample for quantitative phase 1 with a more evenly matched number of students of color ( $n = 30$ ) and White students ( $n = 40$ ) and collected demographic information regarding a few potential variables impacted by socio-economic class, such as the level of educational attainment of a student's parents or guardians, whether or not the student was eligible for need-based financial aid, and access to music lessons before enrolling in college.

At the end of the Qualtrics survey in quantitative phase 1, participants were asked if they identified as a student of color and were interested in participating in the qualitative phase of the study. Of the 30 students who shared that they identified as students of color, six indicated that they were not interested in an interview. Of the 24 students who indicated that they were interested in participating in an interview, 18 students of color were invited to participate in an interview and 10 students completed interviews. To capture greater diversity of experiences among research participants, I used purposeful sampling (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Creswell & Poth, 2018) to identify students representing five different types of institutions affiliated with the Music Admissions Roundtable, based on the institution's accreditation with the National

Association of Schools of Music, type of institution (i.e., public vs. private), and the number of music majors enrolled. Table 3.1 describes the types of MAR-affiliated institutions represented by research participants identifying as students of color throughout each phase of the sampling process between quantitative phase 1 and the qualitative phase of research.

**Table 3.1**

*Number of Students of Color Throughout the Study, by MAR Institution Type*

Size of MAR institution, in number of music majors	Number of students of color who...			
	Completed quantitative phase 1	Expressed interest in an interview	Were invited to interview	Completed an interview
Overall total	30	24	18	10
Public, NASM-accredited institutions				
1-100 students	0	0	0	0
101-200 students	1	1	1	1
201-400 students	3	3	2	2
401+ students	10	8	6	4
Total	14	12	9	7
Private, NASM-accredited institutions				
1-50 students	0	0	0	0
51-100 students	2	2	2	1
101-200 students	0	0	0	0
201+ students	10	7	4	2
Total	12	9	6	3
Institutions not accredited by NASM				
Public	3	2	2	0
Private	1	1	1	0
Total	4	3	3	0

The students of color who completed the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) represented nearly every type of MAR institution identified in Figures 3.1 and 3.2, including both public and private institutions, institutions that were accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music and institutions that were not accredited, and different sizes of institutions. There were only



three out of the ten types of institutions absent in the quantitative phase 1 sample: (a) public, NASM-accredited institutions with 1-100 music majors; (b) private, NASM-accredited institutions with 1-50 music majors; and (c) private, NASM-accredited institutions with 101-200 students. I invited 18 students of color representing all seven types of MAR institutions where research participants were enrolled to participate in interviews. The ten students who completed interviews represented just five different types of MAR institutions.

### **Response Rate Limitations**

Decisions that were intended to minimize barriers for students accessing the quantitative phase 1 survey unintentionally created complications in calculating the response rate for the survey. Recruitment emails were distributed to MAR institutions directly with the request to forward the message to their undergraduate music major listservs, without the individual institutions confirming that they were doing so. It may be that some institutions forwarded recruitment emails to their undergraduate music majors, but no students enrolled at the institutions chose to participate in research. Through my phone and email outreach to faculty and staff at MAR-affiliated institutions, I learned of at least two scenarios where this was the case.

Not every institution explained their rationale when they determined that they would not be sharing the recruitment email with their undergraduate music majors, but my phone and email outreach to faculty and staff at MAR-affiliated institutions revealed three different types of responses from these institutions. One institution forwarded the recruitment email to faculty and then left the decision to individual faculty members whether to share the recruitment email with students enrolled in their individual courses.

One institution communicated to me that their policy was not to circulate research recruitment materials from outside of their own institution. Individuals from two institutions shared that they had concerns about sharing my recruitment email because they were located in states with anti-DEIJ legislation.

Timing during the academic year may have also influenced response rates. Staff members employed in music admissions roles frequently travel to recruit prospective music majors during the fall term, which means that an email invitation for students at their institution to participate in research may have seemed like a lower priority when it was initially distributed. My community partner representative recommended a slightly delayed distribution of the reminder recruitment email in October 2023, based on email saturation related to other planned outreach for college fair events. Additional email and phone outreach to MAR-affiliated institutions to encourage sharing the recruitment email with students occurred toward the end of the fall 2023 term, when the combination of holidays and the rush of end-of-term activities might have made students less likely to pay close attention to their email.

Survey fatigue also appeared to be a factor for students who initially consented to participate in the Qualtrics survey comprising the first phase of my quantitative research. The consent information on the first page of the Qualtrics survey provided an estimate that the survey would take between 10 and 15 minutes to complete; however, 102 individuals began the survey who did not complete all the items. Within that group of partial respondents, 46 individuals spent less than one minute with the survey open and 69 individuals completed less than half of the survey items. Another 30 individuals made

it three-quarters of the way through the survey items, and three even completed 94% of the survey before abandoning it just shy of the 10-minute mark.

My decisions for structuring the order of items within the survey also limited my ability to follow up with students who had partially completed the survey. Although I had carefully considered the order of items to intentionally prioritize demographic questions and then progress through the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a), I placed the question asking for participants' email addresses toward the end of the survey. This meant that I had no means for encouraging individuals with partially completed surveys to finish their responses, beyond the already-planned outreach to faculty and staff contacts at MAR-affiliated institutions requesting that they distribute a reminder email to all their undergraduate music majors.

### **Participants**

Participants within the sampling frame shared these characteristics at the time when they completed the survey: students who were pursuing a bachelor's degree with a major in music that required lessons in a principal performance area (an instrument or voice, rather than composition or audio engineering alone); who were enrolled at MAR institutions located within the United States; who were age 18 or older; who enrolled at their institution as a first-time first-year undergraduate student (not a transfer student); and who were domestic students.

Students who were transfer students, who were not pursuing a bachelor's degree, who were pursuing a second bachelor's degree, who were not pursuing a major in music, who were not pursuing a major that requires lessons in a principal performance area, who were enrolled in MAR institutions located in Canada, who were 17 or younger, or who

were international students were not eligible to participate in the study. These exclusion criteria were selected to maximize the potential for shared experiences across the sample population. Because two of my research questions explored ways that educational experiences supported or created barriers to self-efficacy, selecting music majors who enrolled as first-time, first-year students rather than transfer students was my attempt to focus students' responses on their more recent educational experiences within undergraduate music education, rather than risking creating comparisons between learning environments at different institutions. My decision to limit the study to students pursuing majors requiring lessons in a principal performance area was motivated by the design of the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a); because this instrument asked individuals to recall a recent performance and imagine a similar upcoming performing opportunity, this instrument could not meaningfully speak to the experiences of students pursuing a type of degree that might not require performance area lessons, such as audio production, music theory, music history, or conducting.

I excluded international students from this study because of the nuances of racialized experiences within different countries and cultures and because of the unique ways that international students' experiences could impact their self-efficacy during undergraduate education. At the time of this research, my scholarly and personal understanding of race and racism in education was contextualized within the United States, rather than accounting for cultural, scientific, and social manifestations of racism around the world and in non-Western countries (Haeny et al., 2021). The processes of academic acculturation and navigating pedagogical differences between U.S. educational

institutions and an international student's country of origin could also shape international students' self-efficacy beliefs and how they perceive racial dynamics in higher education (Bastien et al., 2018). Because of these reasons, I did not include international students in the research sample for this study; however, researching the musical self-efficacy of international students studying in the United States would be a valuable future project.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

Data collection occurred virtually, through administration of a Qualtrics survey with the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a), student-uploaded unofficial transcripts, and 45-60-minute, video recorded semi-structured interviews conducted via Zoom (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell & Creswell, 2023). All data was password-protected and stored on either the University of Denver's Microsoft OneDrive, a web-based cloud storage platform, or MediaSpace, a web-based cloud storage platform for Zoom recordings.

#### **Quantitative Phase 1: Demographic Information and Self-Efficacy Scores**

##### **(Exploring Research Sub-Question 1)**

I used Qualtrics to obtain informed consent, collect demographic information, confirm students' eligibility to participate in the study, and administer the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a). The quantitative phase 1 survey (see Appendix C) included 15 questions collecting demographic information, 15 questions from the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a), one question to collect an email address for reminders about uploading a transcript at the end of the term (i.e., quantitative phase 2), and one

question to ask if students who identified as students of color were interested in completing one interviews via Zoom, which would last 45-60 minutes.

Because the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a; see Appendix C) was developed in the United Kingdom, some small adjustments were made to improve functionality for undergraduate students enrolled in college and conservatory music programs at institutions within the United States:

1. To ensure that vocalists saw themselves represented in this survey, I modified the instructions to ask the research participants to imagine a performance of a *song/sonata/concerto* (rather than just *sonata/concerto*), and I changed the phrase “If I can’t play the music” to “If I can’t *perform* the music”).
2. To adapt the survey for speakers who are more familiar with American English than British English, I opted for American spellings (i.e., changing the spelling of *practising* to *practicing*).
3. To ensure that instructions and examples are clear, I substituted uses of *i.e.* and *e.g.* with additional text for more precise instructions that do not rely on the research participant understanding what the abbreviations *i.e.* and *e.g.* mean.

### **Quantitative Phase 2: Adding the Layer of Grade Point Averages (Exploring Research Sub-Question 2)**

At the conclusion of the fall 2023 academic term, research participants received an email requesting that they upload unofficial transcripts via Qualtrics, for the purpose of exploring relationships between self-efficacy, racial identity, and grade point averages (GPAs). In compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 (U.S. Department of Education, 2021), students uploaded their own records, to

ensure that they consented to this sharing of their academic record. I did not examine any students' transcripts without their first providing consent to participate in the study.

Additionally, students were requested to upload unofficial transcripts rather than official transcripts to ensure that participation in the research study did not create an undue burden of time or financial cost in requesting official transcripts.

Because self-efficacy has been linked to positive academic outcomes such as grade point average, persistence, and retention (Feldman & Kubota, 2015; Gore, 2006; Kahn & Nauta, 2001; Komarraju & Nadler, 2013; Multon et al., 1991), this collection of unofficial transcripts was intended to be analyzed alongside the results of the Self-Efficacy in Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) and demographic characteristics collected in quantitative phase 1 to determine possible statistical relationships between self-efficacy, racial identity, and GPAs for undergraduate music majors. However, given lower response rates between the two quantitative phases, only descriptive statistics (i.e., total count, range, mean, and standard deviation) were able to be considered for the grade point averages. While 30 students of color and 40 White students completed the first quantitative phase, only 20 students of color and 22 White students completed the second quantitative phase. Future research will be needed to further explore Research Sub-Question 2: What relationships exist between self-efficacy and grade point average (GPA): for students of color and for students who identify as White?

### **Qualitative Phase: Zoom Interviews (Exploring Research Sub-Questions 3, 4, and 5)**

As part of the Qualtrics survey in quantitative phase 1 (see Appendix C), research participants indicated if they were interested in participating in the qualitative interview phase. I used purposeful sampling (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Creswell & Poth, 2018) to identify ten students of color representing at least five of the different categories of MAR member institutions in Figures 3.1 and 3.2 for narrative interviews. Although narrative research can explore the lived experiences of as few as one or two individuals (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Mertova & Webster, 2019), my decision to increase the sample size was based on a desire to increase the likelihood of capturing a broader range of perspectives in the data. Expanding the sample size also was an attempt to speak to the range of nuanced differences within a sweeping category of “students of color” (Allen et al. 2019; Grady, 2020). In alignment with my chosen theoretical framework of critical race theory, I centered the voices of students of color in the qualitative phase of research in order to disrupt the status quo of the racial demographics for undergraduate students pursuing a baccalaureate degree in music at NASM-accredited institutions (HEADS, 2020).

For the qualitative phase of this research, I conducted one individual interview lasting 45-60 minutes for each of the ten undergraduate music majors selected from the nested sample of students of color who completed the quantitative phase 1 survey. From November 2023 through March 2024, the selected participants provided informed consent (see Appendix G) and completed the interviews via Zoom, which were recorded and transcribed. Research participants also completed member checking to ensure



accuracy of both transcripts and themes in the analysis (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Creswell & Poth, 2018). The interview protocol, rationale, and alignment with research sub-questions can be found in Appendix D.

## **Ethical Considerations**

### **Honoring Research Participants' Voice and Anonymity**

My top priority when sharing the stories of my qualitative research participants was balancing ways to honor their voice while also protecting their anonymity. Because research participants sometimes shared that they were an “only” at their institution (e.g., disclosing that they were the only Black student participating in a well-known ensemble with a national profile), all participants selected a pseudonym for themselves.

Pseudonyms were also used for any individuals mentioned during their interviews and for their higher education institutions. To ensure that the research participants felt safe sharing their stories with me, each interview participant completed member checking of transcripts from their individual Zoom interview via email, reviewed themes from their interview via email, and had the opportunity to redact or remove some or all material from the interview until March 2024.

### **Centering Strengths**

In alignment with my selected theoretical framework of critical race theory, my study both amplified the voices of students of color and critiqued the status quo in undergraduate music education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Because of this, I critically examined each phase of the research for bias, deficit-based thinking, or assumptions that could unintentionally create harm for research participants. Recruitment materials, interview questions, analysis, and writing strategies were crafted from a

strengths-based, humanizing perspective to avoid serving up racialized suffering under the guise of research (Tuck & Yang, 2014, as cited in Washington, 2019). As part of these efforts, my collection of demographic data via Qualtrics included questions about racial and gender identity that provided options for students to self-describe their identities, while also naming the limitations of the reductive ways that NASM (n.d.-b) and HEADS (2020) currently collect demographic data.

### **Referrals for Support**

Because any discussion of racialized experiences could lead to possible emotional or psychological discomfort, I familiarized myself with support resources available to interview participants at their own institutions. I had information available from each institution regarding opportunities to find community or identity-based support, in case the student expressed a desire to receive social, mental health, or other types of support. The informed consent procedures for students participating in qualitative interviews (see Appendix G) included a summary of potential risks and a sample question so that students could decide whether or not to participate in the research study, based on the potential risk for emotional or psychological discomfort.

### **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974**

To explore possible connections between students' self-efficacy in music and their academic outcomes, I requested that students participating in the quantitative phases of research upload unofficial transcripts after the completion of the fall 2023 academic term. This request was in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 (U.S. Department of Education, 2021). No personally identifiable

information about the students' records was shared with others, and the descriptive statistics were conducted with aggregated data.

### **Chapter Three Summary**

This chapter provided an overview of the research setting, research sub-questions, participants, and design alongside ethical considerations for discussing racialized experiences in music education. The theoretical framework of critical race theory guided each step of the research process, from the literature review and pilot interviews through the quantitative and qualitative phases of research. By employing a convergent mixed methods design, this study contributed to the research gap exploring self-efficacy for undergraduate music majors of different racial identities by providing quantitative data from the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) and statistical analyses of self-efficacy scores with GPAs, alongside narrative interviews amplifying the voices of students of color.

## **Chapter Four: Findings**

### **Introduction**

Creswell and Creswell (2023) identified mixed methods approaches as methodologies for developing “a complete understanding of changes needed for a marginalized group through the combination of qualitative and quantitative data,” which was a key motivation for conducting this research (p. 232). This mixed methods study used a convergent design to capture a broader understanding of both quantitative data surrounding self-efficacy beliefs and nuanced, detailed exploration of the lived experiences of students of color through qualitative interviews (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). To amplify the voices of students of color who often are less represented within collegiate music programs (HEADS, 2020), I used purposeful sampling to identify a nested sample of ten students of color who participated in the quantitative phase of research to also complete semi-structured interviews analyzed with narrative inquiry (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Mertova & Webster, 2019). This approach was grounded in the theoretical framework of critical race theory (Bernal, 2002; Crenshaw, 1995; Gillborn, 2015; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Nardo, 2022; Patton, 2016; Reynolds & Mayweather, 2017; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), with the intent to disrupt the status quo and critique existing efforts for reform as means of working toward more equitable educational experiences for all.

## **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this convergent mixed methods study was to explore self-perceptions of self-efficacy by undergraduate music majors of different racial identities. Self-efficacy was defined as one's confidence in their ability to succeed in producing a desired outcome (Bandura, 1997).

## **Research Questions**

The central research question for this study was, "How do undergraduate music majors' self-perceptions influence their self-efficacy?" Sub-questions included:

1. What are undergraduate music majors' self-perceptions of self-efficacy?
  - a. For students of color?
  - b. For White students?
2. What relationships exist between self-efficacy and grade point average (GPA)?
  - a. For students of color?
  - b. For White students?
3. How do music majors perceive their racial identity within undergraduate music education?
4. How do educational experiences support self-efficacy?
5. How do educational experiences create barriers to self-efficacy?

Throughout the investigation of these questions, the theoretical framework of critical race theory centered race and racism, which amplified the experiences of students of color and created a call for meaningful change in college and conservatory music programs (Bernal, 2002; Gillborn, 2015; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Patton, 2016; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

## **Theoretical Framework of Critical Race Theory**

Beyond merely exposing racism, the framework of critical race theory (CRT) amplifies the counter-stories of individuals in ways that challenge the status quo and disrupt racist structures (Bernal, 2002; Gillborn, 2015; Nardo, 2022; Reynolds & Mayweather, 2017; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). The lens of critical race theory was especially valuable when considering educational experiences at college and conservatory music programs, given that many programs consist of predominantly White faculty teaching predominantly White students (HEADS, 2020; Hoffman & Carter, 2013) about music written by predominantly White European composers (Ewell, 2020; Liu, 2022; Lucia, 2007). A close examination of the ways that race is present in educational settings each day will continue to be required to understand the lived experiences of students of color, challenge deficit-based narratives, and dismantle systems of oppression within the field (Hess, 2022; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

## **Quantitative Analyses**

The quantitative phases of my research study addressed the first two research sub-questions: (a) what are undergraduate music majors' self-perceptions of self-efficacy, for students of color and for students who identify as White and (b) what relationships exist between self-efficacy and grade point average (GPA), for students of color and for students who identify as White? After administering online surveys to collect demographic data, responses to the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a), and unofficial transcripts, I used Mann-Whitney *U* tests and descriptive statistics to analyze the responses. By centering racial identity within the quantitative analyses, this research contributed new data beyond those represented in the

peer-reviewed research on self-efficacy for undergraduate music majors (Afacan & Kaya, 2022; Akgül, 2021; Ciftcibasi, 2021; Eğilmez, 2015; Kurtuldu & Bulut, 2017; Otacioğlu, 2020; Nielsen, 2004; Üstün & Ozer, 2020; Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a; Ritchie & Williamon, 2012; Weimer et al., 2019; Xu, 2023). My quantitative phases of research were conducted from September 2023 through March 2024.

### **Demographic Characteristics of Research Participants**

All research participants were undergraduate students who met the following inclusion criteria at the time of the study: they were pursuing a bachelor's degree with a major in music at an institution that is part of the Music Admissions Roundtable (MAR); they were pursuing a major in music that required lessons in a principal performance area (lessons in an instrument or voice, rather than pursuing a major such as composition or audio engineering that did not require lessons); they were age 18 or older; they had enrolled at their institution as a first-time first-year undergraduate student rather than as a transfer student; and they were domestic students. These characteristics were selected to maximize the potential for students' shared experiences across the sample population.

Table 4.1 highlights the different types of college and conservatory music programs where the 70 research participants from the first quantitative phase were enrolled. The institutions affiliated with the Music Admissions Roundtable (MAR) were categorized by variables within three criteria: (a) whether the institution was public or private; (b) whether the institution was accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music or not; and (c) for NASM-accredited institutions, the number of music majors enrolled at the institution, based on data submitted to the Higher Education Arts Data Services (HEADS, 2020).

**Table 4.1***Research Participants' Educational Settings, Across NASM's Racial Identities*

Size of MAR institution, in number of music majors	NASM categories for racial identity				Total
	Asian or Pacific Islander	Black, non-Hispanic	Hispanic	White, non-Hispanic	
Overall total	8	12	9	41	70
Public, NASM-accredited institutions					
1-100 students	0	0	0	0	0
101-200 students	0	1	0	3	4
201-400 students	0	2	1	2	5
401+ students	2	6	1	21	30
Total	2	9	2	26	39
Private, NASM-accredited institutions					
1-50 students	0	0	0	0	0
51-100 students	0	2	0	3	5
101-200 students	0	0	0	5	5
201+ students	3	1	5	6	15
Total	3	3	5	14	25
Institutions not accredited by NASM					
Public	2	0	1	0	3
Private	1	0	1	1	3
Total	3	0	2	1	6

*Note.* No research participants selected the racial identity of American Indian or Alaska Native, so this category has been omitted from this table and all others discussing the NASM (n.d.-b) categories for racial identity.

The overall research sample included students from public and private institutions, NASM-accredited and non-accredited institutions, and different sizes of institutions. The only types of MAR institution described in Figures 3.1 and 3.2 that were not included in the sample were the smallest sizes of NASM-accredited institutions: public institutions with 1-100 music majors and private institutions with 1-50 music majors. The majority of research participants were enrolled at larger, NASM-accredited public or private institutions. This might be expected, since half of the total number of MAR institutions were NASM-accredited institutions with over 201 music majors



enrolled. However, an even greater percentage of my research participants were enrolled at schools with 201 or more music majors: 71% of the research participants who completed the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) were enrolled at NASM-accredited public or private institutions of this size. Only 10% of the students of color in the sample were enrolled in NASM-accredited institutions with 200 or fewer music majors.

Table 4.2 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the overall research participants participating in the first qualitative phase/completing the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a). This table aggregates data by racial categories that the National Association of Schools of Music (n.d.-b) and Higher Education Arts Data Services (HEADS, 2020) use as single-select options. Please note that while I counted 30 students who identified their identities as people of color, two female biracial, mixed race, or multiracial research participants selected their one NASM-based racial identity as “White,” while self-describing their racial identities as “mixed White and Asian” and “Middle Eastern” respectively. Another female research participant identified her racial identity from NASM categories as “Hispanic” and self-described her racial identity as “primarily Mexican,” but she did not identify as a student of color.

Within Table 4.2, two types of data were aggregated to find areas of commonality that could protect student anonymity while also remaining true to the unique experiences of the research participants: types of music major pursued and the performance area “family.” Research participants provided detailed descriptions of the type of music major they were pursuing. For example, students indicated the nuanced differences between the

type of teaching license they would earn through their music education degree, such as an instrumental music education certification, a vocal/choral music education certification, or a general music certification. For the purposes of group comparison, majors were grouped into broader categories, such as classical performance, as opposed to breaking down the category into flute performance, piano performance, or trombone performance. An exhaustive list of each instrument (e.g., flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, etc.) and *fach*, or voice type (e.g., soprano vs. tenor), risked disclosing information that could potentially identify research participants. Instead, students' performance areas were grouped into categories, such as classical piano, commercial music voice, and jazz brass. To further avoid unintentional disclosure of research participants' identities, information surrounding majors and performance areas were presented in Table 4.2 separately.

**Table 4.2***Number of Research Participants in Quantitative Phase 1, Across NASM's Racial Identities*

	Asian or Pacific Islander	Black, non-Hispanic	Hispanic	White, non-Hispanic	Total
Gender identity					
Female	7	7	7 (see note)	29 (see note)	50
Male	1	5	2	12	20
Total	8	12	9	41	70
Age					
18	1	2	3	10	16
19	1	2	2	6	11
20	1	1	2	4	8
21	3	4	0	13	20
22	1	3	1	6	11
23	1	0	0	2	3
24	0	0	1	0	1
Total	8	12	9	41	70

	Asian or Pacific Islander	Black, non-Hispanic	Hispanic	White, non-Hispanic	Total
Year of study					
First-year	1	2	4	12	19
Sophomore	1	2	1	4	8
Junior	2	1	2	7	12
Senior	3	7	1	15	26
Fifth-year senior	1	0	1	3	5
Total	8	12	9	41	70
Major					
Classical performance	7	4	7	26	44
Music education	0	5	1	8	14
Commercial music	0	1	0	2	3
Composition	0	1	0	2	3
General music	0	1	0	1	2
Sacred music	1	0	0	0	1
Contemporary music	0	0	1	0	1
Jazz performance	0	0	0	1	1
Music technology	0	0	0	1	1
Total	8	12	9	41	70

	Asian or Pacific Islander	Black, non- Hispanic	Hispanic	White, non-Hispanic	Total
Performance area family					
Classical woodwinds	2	0	1	12	15
Classical brass	1	4	3	5	13
Jazz brass	0	0	0	1	1
Classical percussion	2	0	0	0	2
Commercial drum set	0	1	0	0	1
Classical piano	1	0	0	3	4
Commercial music piano	0	0	0	1	1
Classical voice (any <i>fach</i> )	1	5	4	9	19
Commercial music voice	0	0	0	1	1
Classical strings	1	2	0	9	12
Irish fiddle	0	0	1	0	1
Total	8	12	9	41	70
∞ Years of pre-college lessons					
0	0	1	1	4	6
1-3	1	6	5	10	22
4-6	3	3	2	11	19
7-10	1	2	0	15	18
11 or more	3	0	1	1	5
Total	8	12	9	41	70

	Asian or Pacific Islander	Black, non- Hispanic	Hispanic	White, non-Hispanic	Total
Eligibility for need-based financial aid					
Yes	2	9	7	16	34
No	6	3	2	25	36
Total	8	12	9	41	70
Parent/guardian educational attainment					
Both hold bachelor's degrees or higher	5	6	4	26	41
At least one holds a master's degree or higher	4	5	4	22	35
Both hold master's degrees or higher	2	2	2	10	16

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*Note.* Two women selected the NASM racial identity option of “White, non-Hispanic” but identified as students of color, self-describing their racial identities as “mixed White and Asian” and “Middle Eastern.” Another woman selected the “Hispanic” NASM racial identity and self-described her racial identity a “primarily Mexican,” but she did not identify herself as a student of color.

### ***Racial Identity***

College and conservatory music programs accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) submit compositional data for enrolled students to the Higher Education Arts Data Services (HEADS, 2020). Within these data summaries, NASM (n.d.-b) defined race or ethnicity as

Category used to describe groups to which individuals belong, identify with, or belong in the eyes of the community. The categories do not denote scientific definitions or anthropological origins. A person may be counted only in one group. The groups used to categorize U.S. citizens, resident aliens, and other eligible non-citizens are: Black, non-Hispanic; American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian or Pacific Islander; Hispanic; and White, non-Hispanic. (Race/Ethnicity)

NASM (n.d.-b) also noted that institutions unable to classify students or employees in one of the specified racial/ethnic categories can assign those individuals to the category “race/ethnicity unknown.” This category should also be used in cases when the institution does not have information surrounding an international student’s race or ethnicity. NASM’s instructions to institutions were notably different from the guidance provided by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, n.d.) since 2010, that students and staff must be given the opportunity to identify their racial identity by selecting one *or more* [emphasis mine] of the following races: American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, or White. Not only does the NCES guidance allow for students and staff to select multiple racial identities, but it also emphasizes the role of these individuals in selecting their own descriptors, rather than having the institution decide on their behalf.

Restrictive categories utilized by NASM and HEADS create challenges for describing an increasingly diverse, multiracial student body. The U.S. Census Bureau (Jones et al., 2021) reported that the 2020 census saw a 276% increase in the number of individuals who selected “two or more races.” While this approach to the institution aggregating different groups of multiracial individuals runs the risk of erasing nuances within the diversity of respondents (Allen et al., 2019; Grady, 2020), the NASM practice of asking students to select a single identity or having institutions instead group them into “race/ethnicity unknown” is not a humanizing alternative. With the majority of faculty of any rank at NASM-accredited institutions being White (HEADS, 2020), chances are high that a White music administrator would be in a position to erase the complex racial identities of students of color through enforcement of NASM’s single-select racial categories. Being guided by critical race theory, faculty, staff, and students can gain power by naming this reality and challenge the status quo through telling counter-stories and working toward meaningful change (Patton, 2016).

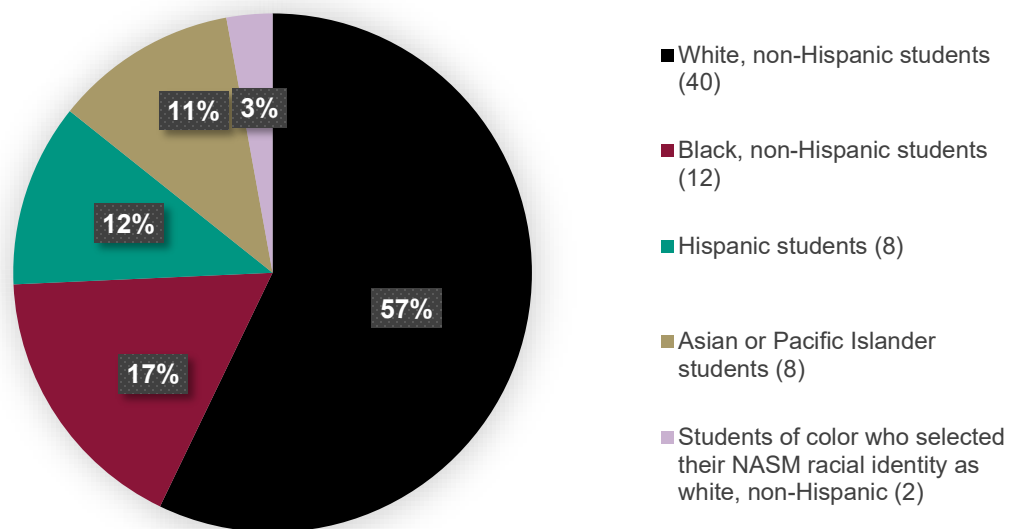
To hold space for the broad range of racial identities of students participating in this research, my survey offered participants the opportunity to select a single-category racial identity used by NASM (n.d.-b) and HEADS (2020) as well as the option to self-report their racial identity in their own words. Out of the 70 research participants of across all racial identities, 30 chose to self-describe their racial identities in ways that were different from their selection from the NASM options of racial identity, including 12 students who identified as biracial, mixed, or multiracial. Students who described their racial identities as biracial, mixed, or multiracial typically provided greater detail about



their parents’ racial identities, such as “half Portuguese, half African American” or “half Hispanic (Peruvian), half White (Poland).” Only five students of color chose the same NASM racial category for their self-description: three Asian students and two Black students. This means that 83% of the students of color participating in my research found the NASM single-choice options for racial identity to be inadequate to describe their identities. In contrast, only three students who identified as White described their own racial identities differently, with two students self-describing their race as “Caucasian” and one describing their racial identity as “White (Scottish/Irish).” Figure 4.1 summarizes the racial identities of all 70 research participants from quantitative phase 1, using the categories established by NASM (n.d.-b) and HEADS (2020). Figure 4.2 summarizes the differences between the racial identities of students of color when selecting one NASM category and self-describing their racial identities.

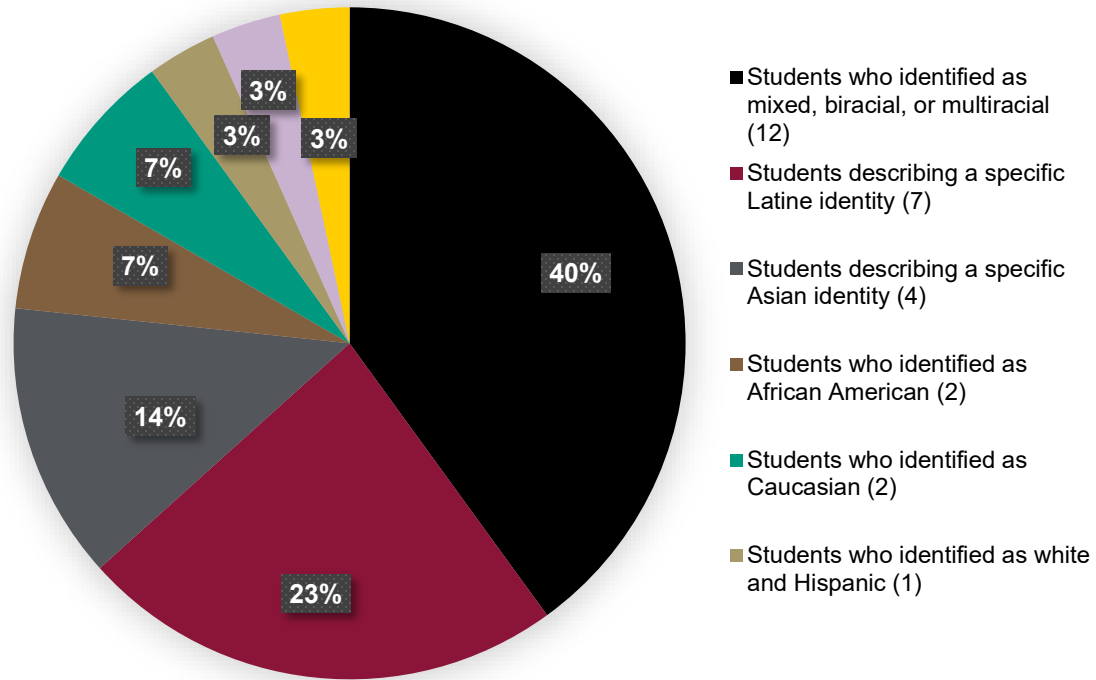
**Figure 4.1**

*Total Quantitative Phase 1 Research Participants, by NASM-Based Racial Identities*



**Figure 4.2**

*Research Participants' Self-Described Racial Identities, When Different From NASM-Based Identities*



### ***Gender Identity***

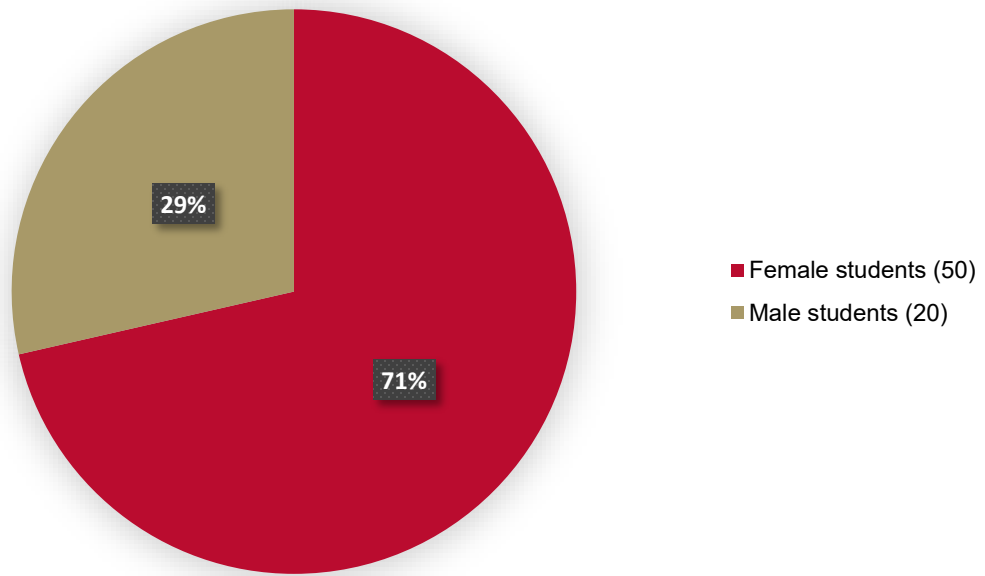
Although my research centered racial identity, the framework of critical race theory also allows for holding space for the role that intersectionality (Bernal, 2002; Crenshaw, 1995; Gillborn, 2015; Nardo, 2022) plays in shaping the lived experiences of individuals. With this in mind, my research challenged NASM/HEADS's (2020) use of gender binary in their data summary. Although examining gender as a binary construct was a practice consistent with the literature exploring self-efficacy for music students in higher education settings (Afacan & Kaya, 2022; Akgül, 2021; Ciftcibasi, 2021; Eğılmez, 2015; Lewis & Hendricks, 2022; Lewis et al., 2022; Lubert & Gröpel, 2022; Nielsen, 2004; Otacioğlu, 2020; Papageorgi et al., 2010; Prichard, 2017; Regier, 2021; Ritchie &

Williamon, 2011a; Ritchie & Williamon, 2012; Weimer et al., 2019), students who identify as gender fluid or nonbinary may find these restrictive categories dehumanizing. To honor the identities of my research participants, students had the opportunity to self-report gender identity as part of the quantitative phase 1 Qualtrics survey.

Out of the 70 research participants of all racial identities, 19 research participants (27%) self-described their gender identity in a different way than the gender binary options presented by NASM (n.d.-b) and HEADS (2020). Within these 19 research participants, 11 of them (15.7% of the overall research participants) self-described their gender identity as agender, transgender, gender fluid, nonbinary, or gender non-conforming. The remaining eight research participants who self-described their gender identity differently from the binary categories used by NASM (n.d.-b) and HEADS (2020) offered self-descriptions that fit within three categories of difference: (a) indicating a preference for “woman” rather than “female” to describe gender identity; (b) providing greater detail in their self-described gender identity (e.g., “cisgender woman”); or (c) using this field in the survey to share information about their sexuality (e.g., “heterosexual male”). Figure 4.3 summarizes the gender identities selected from the binary categories utilized by NASM (n.d.-b) and HEADS (2020) and Figure 4.4 critiques this reliance upon the gender binary by describing ways in which 19 research participants self-described their gender identity in different terms from those used by NASM and HEADS.

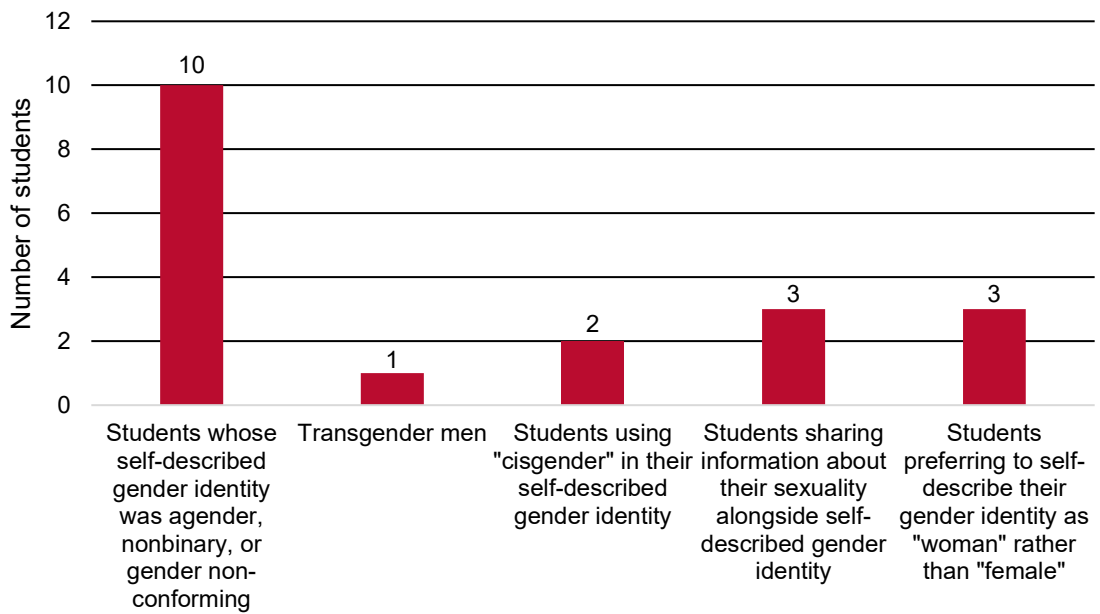
**Figure 4.3**

*Research Participants' Gender Identities, Using the NASM-Based Binary Construct*



**Figure 4.4**

*Research Participants' Different Types of Self-Described Gender Identities*



### *Socio-Economic Status*

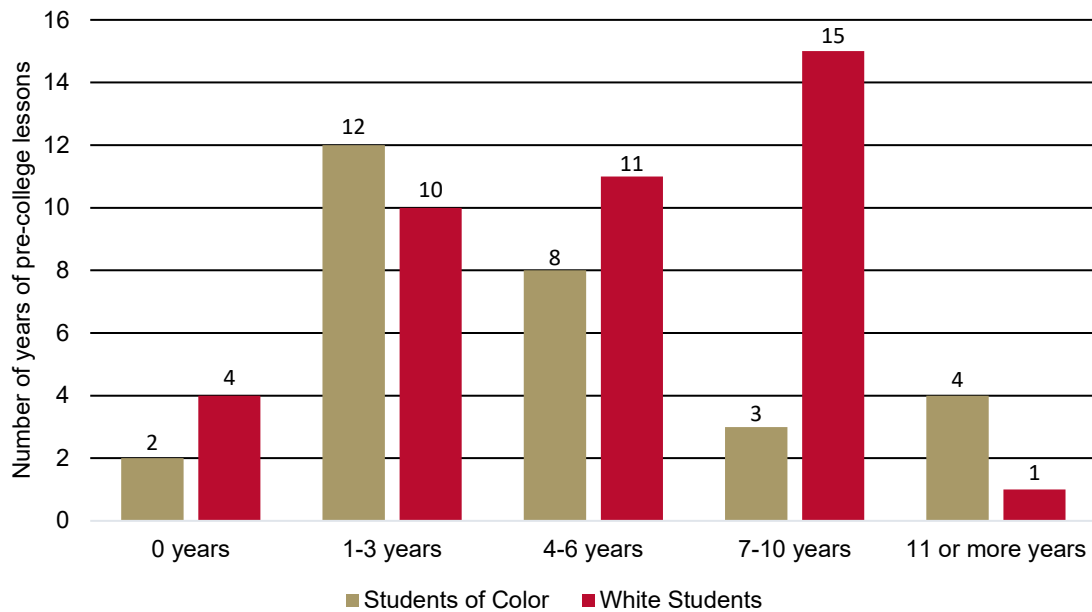
Scholars have recognized that being able to study music within a college or conservatory music program requires a certain amount of privilege and access to opportunity (Koza, 2008; Hess, 2022; Lewis et al., 2022). Lewis et al. (2022) specifically called out the level of privilege within their research sample, acknowledging that 69% of the research participants had at least one parent or guardian who had earned a master's degree or higher. The research team also considered access to pre-college lessons as a marker of privilege; the mean age of their research participants was 22.6 years old, and the average age when they began taking lessons was 11.2 years old (Lewis et al., 2022). To explore socio-economic class alongside racial identity, my Qualtrics survey collected data for markers of socio-economic status, including the level of education completed by parents or guardians and the number of years of pre-collegiate lessons in voice or an instrument. I also asked research participants if they were eligible to receive need-based financial aid from their educational institution.

Although the demographic characteristic of my research participants indicated levels of privilege in the form of access to pre-college lessons and parent or guardian educational attainment, my research sample was not as dramatically skewed as that of Lewis et al. (2022). Out of all 70 research participants across all racial identities, 27 students (15 students of color and 26 White students) completed four or more years of lessons in voice or an instrument prior to enrolling in their college or conservatory music program. However, a closer analysis of this data revealed that the number of students of color who completed pre-college lessons peaked in the one-to-three-year range at 12. The

number of students of color completing additional years of lessons dropped off after three years of study. In contrast, more White students ( $n = 15$ , or 37.5% of White students) completed seven-to-ten years of lessons than any other category of lessons. Figure 4.5 depicts these trends for years of pre-college lessons completed by research participants who identified as students of color compared to research participants who identified as White.

**Figure 4.5**

*Years of Pre-College Lessons Completed by Students of Color and White Students*

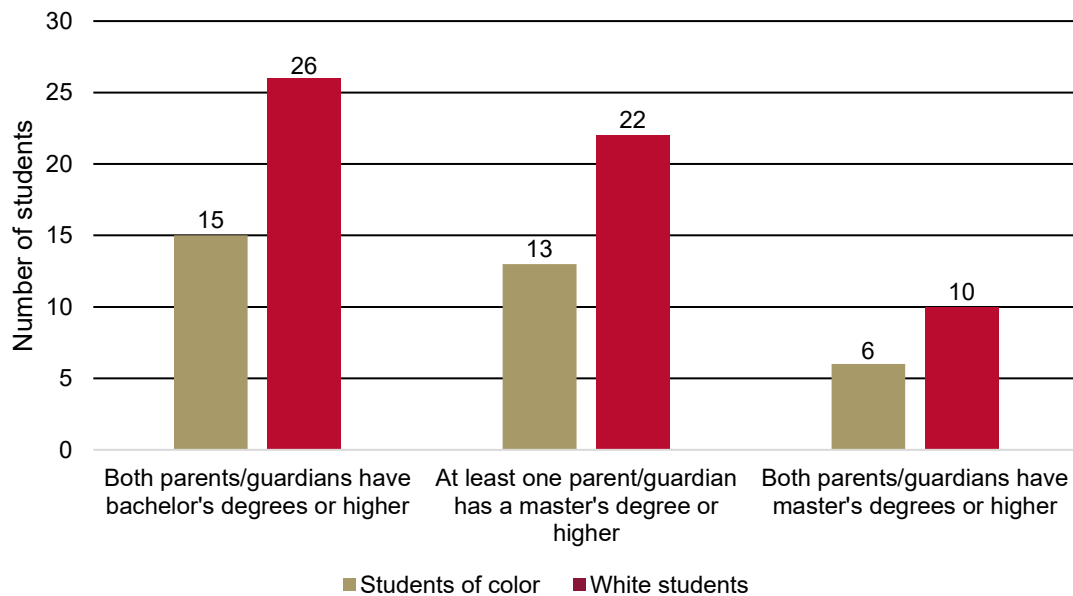


Half of all research participants had at least one parent or guardian who had earned a master’s degree, professional degree, or doctoral degree; this included 43.3% of the students of color and 55% of White students. Across the overall sample of 70 students of all racial identities, 16 students (22.8% of the overall sample) indicated that both parents or guardians had earned master’s, professional, or doctoral degrees; 20% of the

students of color and 25% of the White students came from this subset of very highly-educated families. Figure 4.6 describes the level of educational attainment for parents and guardians of students of color, compared to White students.

**Figure 4.6**

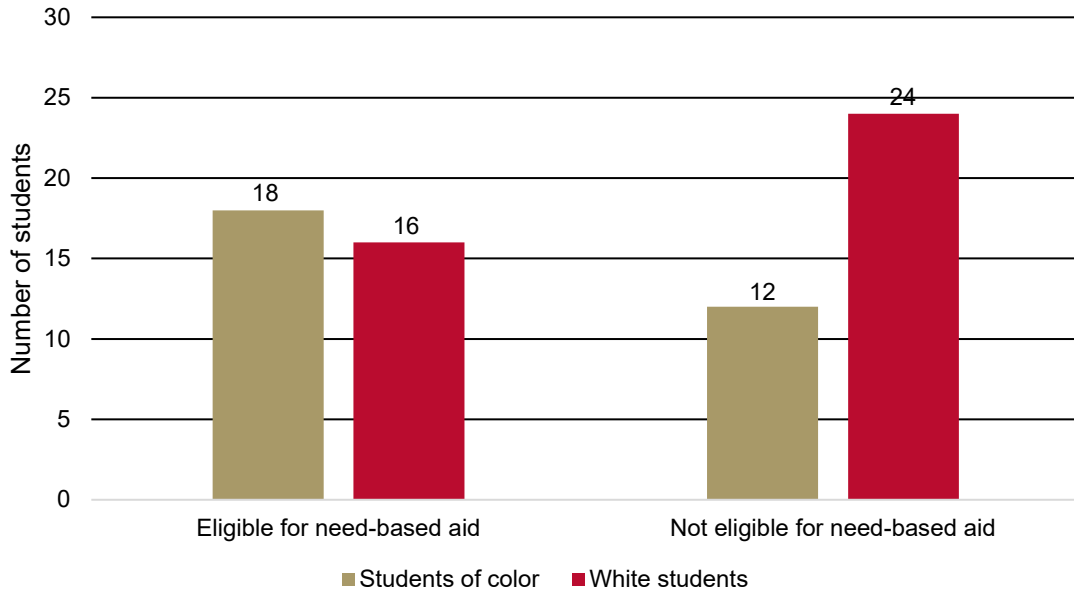
*Parent/Guardian Educational Attainment for Students of Color and White Students*



Nearly half of all research participants (34 out of 70, or 48.5%) qualified for need-based financial aid. More students of color ( $n = 18$ , or 60% of students of color) qualified for need-based aid than White students ( $n = 16$ , or 40% of White students). Figure 4.7 captures data surrounding eligibility for need-based financial aid for research participants, grouped by students of color and White students. While my study did not delve deeper into the types of need-based financial aid that research participants received, such as Federal Pell Grants compared to Federal Work Study, this would be an area to explore in future research projects.

**Figure 4.7**

*Eligibility for Need-Based Financial Aid for Students of Color and White Students*



**Research Sub-Question 1: Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire  
(Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) Results**

The Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) measured students' self-efficacy beliefs across 11 items by using a Likert-type scale of 1 to 7. I analyzed the data using IBM SPSS Statistics 29. The raw mean score across Ritchie and Williamon's (2011a) sample of 250 participants was 61.48 ( $SD = 9.18$ ,  $SE = .60$ ), with a maximum total score of 77 on the instrument. To focus research participants' self-efficacy beliefs on concepts of music learning, Ritchie and Williamon (2011a) directed them to recall a recent performance and envision their preparations to perform a piece of music of comparable difficulty for a similar setting in the future. The researchers established the instrument's internal reliability of  $\alpha = .82$  and consistency



over time, suggesting that, unless a direct intervention were to take place, research participants' self-efficacy beliefs were a stable construct, at least within their re-testing time frame of two weeks to one month after the initial questionnaire was completed (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a).

Prior to analyzing my data in a similar fashion, items 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, and 11 were reverse coded, so that students' responses that demonstrated higher self-efficacy corresponded to the higher range of the Likert-type scale (7). Across my entire research sample, the raw mean score was 61.48 ( $SD = 8.59$ ,  $SE = 1.03$ ). The raw mean for students of color was 62.48 ( $SD = 9.21$ ,  $SE = 1.71$ ), and the raw mean for White students was 60.75 ( $SD = 8.15$ ,  $SE = 1.28$ ). Table 4.3 reports the descriptive statistics for the research participants who completed the first quantitative phase of my research. Please note that one student of color did not complete Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) Items 10 and 11; their responses were excluded from overall calculations of means but included for analyses of individual questionnaire items.

**Table 4.3**

*Descriptive Statistics from Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) Sums*

Research participants	<i>n</i>	Range	<i>M</i>	SD
Students of color	29	33-74	62.48	9.21
White students	40	42-76	60.75	8.15
All research participants	69	33-76	61.48	8.59

*Note.* One student of color did not respond to items 10 and 11 in the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a), so their responses have been excluded from overall calculations but included for individual questionnaire items.

Table 4.4 reports means for students of color and for White students for each item within the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a).

**Table 4.4**

*Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) Items, for Students of Color and White Students*

Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire items (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a)	Students of color				White students			
	<i>n</i>	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. I am confident that I can successfully learn the music for this performance.	30	2-7	5.87	1.25	40	3-7	5.82	1.20
2. One of my problems is that I cannot get down to practicing or rehearsing for this specific performance when I should.**	30	1-7	4.30	1.91	40	1-7	4.38	1.94
3. If I can't perform the music for this performance at first, I will keep practicing until I can.	30	3-7	6.43	0.90	40	3-7	6.00	1.06
4. When I set importance learning goals leading up to this performance, I can rarely achieve them.**	30	1-7	5.47	1.63	40	1-7	5.35	1.56
5. I can give up preparing for this performance before completing it.**	30	3-7	6.03	1.27	40	1-7	5.98	1.37
6. When I have something unpleasant to do in preparation for this performance, I can stick to it until I finish it.	30	2-7	5.43	1.52	40	2-7	5.10	1.26
7. When I decide to do this performance, I go right to work on the music.	30	2-7	5.47	1.76	40	1-7	5.05	1.52

Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire items (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a)	Students of color				White students			
	<i>n</i>	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
8. When first performing the music for this performance, I soon give up if I am not initially successful.**	30	2-7	6.03	1.45	40	2-7	5.83	1.17
9. The prospects of failure in this performance can just make me work harder in preparation.	30	1-7	5.93	1.44	40	2-7	5.33	1.38
10. I can give up working toward this performance easily.**	29	3-7	6.10	1.21	40	1-7	6.08	1.29
11. I am not capable of dealing with most problems that may come up when working towards this performance.**	29	1-7	5.72	1.81	40	2-7	5.85	1.29

Note. Items 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, and 11 have been marked with a double asterisk (\*\*) to indicate that they were reverse coded, so that all responses that reflect higher self-efficacy beliefs correspond to higher numbers on the Likert-type scale of 1 to 7. One student of color did not respond to Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) Items 10 and 11.

The means for students of color were higher than the means for White students on 10 out of the 11 items on the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a). Only Item 2, “One of my problems is that I cannot get down to practicing or rehearsing for this specific performance when I should,” has a higher mean for White students. To compare whether the differences between these means were statistically significant, I used the Mann-Whitney *U* test (Naghshpour, 2016; Wall Emerson, 2023; West, 2021).

### ***Mann-Whitney U Tests***

Although responses from students of color and White students for each item in the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) were within acceptable ranges for skewness and kurtosis, they did not pass the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality. The Shapiro-Wilk test of normality was an appropriate tool for testing assumptions of normal distribution for independent sample sizes smaller than 50 per group (Naghshpour, 2016). Table 4.5 reports the skewness, kurtosis, and results from the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality for each questionnaire item. As noted previously, one student of color did not respond to Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) Items 10 and 11.

**Table 4.5***Skewness, Kurtosis, and Shapiro-Wilk Results for Questionnaire Items*

Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) items	Students of color			White students		
	Skewness	Kurtosis	Shapiro- Wilk	Skewness	Kurtosis	Shapiro- Wilk
1. I am confident that I can successfully learn the music for this performance.	-0.97	0.32	<.001	-1.20	1.54	<.001
2. One of my problems is that I cannot get down to practicing or rehearsing for this specific performance when I should.**	-0.39	-1.20	.001	-0.33	-1.12	.020
3. If I can't perform the music for this performance at first, I will keep practicing until I can.	-0.95	0.33	<.001	-2.24	6.44	<.001
4. When I set importance learning goals leading up to this performance, I can rarely achieve them.**	-1.00	0.62	<.001	-1.13	0.74	<.001
5. I can give up preparing for this performance before completing it.**	-1.54	2.89	<.001	-1.25	0.48	<.001
6. When I have something unpleasant to do in preparation for this performance, I can stick to it until I finish it.	-0.52	-0.35	.005	-0.55	-0.76	<.002
7. When I decide to do this performance, I go right to work on the music.	-0.60	-0.03	.007	-0.98	-0.26	<.001
8. When first performing the music for this performance, I soon give up if I am not initially successful.**	-1.14	1.43	<.001	-1.81	2.73	<.001

Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) items	Students of color			White students		
	Skewness	Kurtosis	Shapiro- Wilk	Skewness	Kurtosis	Shapiro- Wilk
9. The prospects of failure in this performance can just make me work harder in preparation.	-0.38	-0.65	.002	-1.74	3.68	<.001
10. I can give up working toward this performance easily.**	-2.27	6.09	<.001	-1.13	0.17	<.001
11. I am not capable of dealing with most problems that may come up when working towards this performance.**	-1.36	1.31	<.001	-1.34	0.57	<.001

*Note.* Items 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, and 11 have been marked with a double asterisk (\*\*) to indicate that they were reverse coded, so that all responses that reflect higher self-efficacy beliefs correspond to higher numbers on the Likert-type scale of 1 to 7. One student of color did not respond to Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) Items 10 and 11.

Because responses to each item from the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) did not pass the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality, Welch's *t*-tests were not an ideal statistic to compare the means for students of color and White students (Naghshpour, 2016; Wall Emerson, 2023; West, 2021). Instead, the Mann-Whitney *U* test was selected as a non-parametric alternative to determine if the differences in mean ranks for students of color and for White students were statistically significant (Naghshpour, 2016; Wall Emerson, 2023; West, 2021). The Mann-Whitney *U* test was used to compare mean ranks for two independent samples when data was not normally distributed (Naghshpour, 2016). Lin et al. (2021) described the process of calculating mean ranks by placing observations from two independent samples in rank order and taking the mean of those ranks to find a measure of central tendency. I also preferred analyzing the data with Mann-Whitney *U* tests because mean rank as a measure of central tendency seemed like a more authentic way of comparing a measure of central tendency, since the Likert-type scales used within the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) could be considered ordinal data rather than interval data. A post hoc calculation of power using G\*Power for a two-tailed Mann-Whitney *U* test with two independent samples of 29 and 40 students respectively found that the sample sizes were sufficient for a large effect size of .80 (Cohen, 1988). Table 4.6 reports the results of the Mann-Whitney *U* tests.

**Table 4.6***Comparing Differences in Self-Efficacy Mean Ranks for Each Questionnaire Item, Using Mann-Whitney U Tests*

Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) items	Students of color		White students		<i>p</i>
	<i>n</i>	Mean rank	<i>n</i>	Mean rank	
1. I am confident that I can successfully learn the music for this performance.	30	36.10	40	35.05	.823
2. One of my problems is that I cannot get down to practicing or rehearsing for this specific performance when I should.**	30	34.94	40	35.93	.837
3. If I can't perform the music for this performance at first, I will keep practicing until I can.	30	40.47	40	31.78	.055
4. When I set important learning goals leading up to this performance, I can rarely achieve them.**	30	36.78	40	34.54	.638
5. I can give up preparing for this performance before completing it.**	30	35.57	40	35.45	.979
6. When I have something unpleasant to do in preparation for this performance, I can stick to it until I finish it.	30	38.72	40	33.09	.241
7. When I decide to do this performance, I go right to work on the music.	30	39.48	40	32.51	.146
8. When first performing the music for this performance, I soon give up if I am not initially successful.**	30	39.18	40	32.74	.166



Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) items	Students of color		White students		<i>p</i>
	<i>n</i>	Mean rank	<i>n</i>	Mean rank	
9. The prospects of failure in this performance can just make me work harder in preparation.	30	41.18	40	31.24	.035*
10. I can give up working toward this performance easily.**	29	35.67	40	34.51	.798
11. I am not capable of dealing with most problems that may come up when working towards this performance.**	29	36.53	40	33.89	.566

*Notes.* Items 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, and 11 have been marked with a double asterisk (\*\*) to indicate that they were reverse coded, so that all responses that reflect higher self-efficacy beliefs correspond to higher numbers on the Likert-type scale of 1 to 7. One student of color did not respond to Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) Items 10 and 11.

The mean ranks for students of color were higher than mean ranks for White students in each item from the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) except for Item 2, “One of my problems is that I cannot get down to practicing or rehearsing for this specific performance when I should.” However, the difference in mean ranks was statistically significant for only one item. In Item 9, “The prospects of failure in this performance can just make me work harder in preparation,” the difference in the mean ranks for students of color and for White students was statistically significant ( $p = .035$ ). The difference in mean ranks for Item 3, “If I can’t perform the music for this performance at first, I will keep practicing until I can,” was approaching statistical significance ( $p = .055$ ).

### **Research Sub-Question 2: Self-Efficacy and GPA Results**

Self-efficacy has been linked to positive academic outcomes such as grade point average (GPA), persistence, and retention (Feldman & Kubota, 2015; Gore, 2006; Kahn & Nauta, 2001; Komarraju & Nadler, 2013; Multon et al., 1991), and Ritchie and Williamon (2011a) cited additional studies specifically within music to establish self-efficacy as a predictor of musical achievement (Schunk, 1984, as cited in Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a; Zimmerman et al., 1992, as cited in Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a; McPherson & McCormick, 2006). To explore possible relationships between self-efficacy beliefs, academic outcomes, and racial identity for undergraduate music majors, the research participants who completed quantitative phase 1 received an email requesting that they continue into quantitative phase 2 by uploading their unofficial transcripts, with grades through the fall 2023 term. Given the timeline of September 2023

through March 2024 for research participants to have completed the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) as part of the first quantitative phase, I requested that students upload unofficial transcripts with grades through the fall 2023 academic term. This checkpoint in their academic career was selected to maintain proximity to the time in which their self-efficacy beliefs had been assessed and to account for potential differences between educational institutions that might report grades in academic semesters compared to academic quarters. The Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) also had proven to consistently measure self-efficacy in a two-week to one-month retest.

My research planned to explore relationships between self-efficacy beliefs, GPA, and racial identity for undergraduate music majors, using correlation and regression analyses. The intent was to examine not only the relationships between these three main variables but also to investigate whether other variables, such as the number of years of pre-college lessons, might account for variance in self-efficacy scores and academic outcomes for students of color when compared with White students. Unfortunately, because the initial total number of students participating in the first phase of my quantitative research only barely met the minimum recommended to run statistical analyses comparing differences in means between two independent samples (Gliner et al., 2009; Naghshpour, 2016), any drop-off in the number of research participants continuing to upload their unofficial transcripts in phase 2 meant that I did not have enough data to conduct inferential statistical analyses.

### *Descriptive Statistics for GPAs*

The drop-off in research participant engagement for uploading unofficial transcripts meant that I could not conduct inferential statistical analyses for grades and grade point averages (Gliner et al., 2009); however, I was able to report the descriptive statistics for the grades students received in lessons during the fall 2023 term, student GPAs on a 4.00 scale for the fall 2023 term alone, and overall or cumulative GPAs within the institution on a 4.00 scale. Table 4.7 reports the overall count, range, mean, and standard deviation for the 42 students across all racial identities who uploaded their unofficial transcripts, and Table 4.8 reports these descriptive statistics for students of color and for White students.

**Table 4.7**

*Lessons, Fall 2023 Term GPA, and Overall GPA for All Uploaded Transcripts*

Type of GPA	<i>n</i>	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Lessons in fall 2023	41	3.00-4.00	3.94	0.19
Fall 2023 term GPA	42	2.95-4.00	3.82	0.27
Overall GPA	42	3.00-4.00	3.79	0.24

*Note.* One student who identified as White was enrolled in a major that required lessons, but not in every term, so they were not enrolled in lessons during fall 2023. All grades and GPAs are on a 4.00 scale.

**Table 4.8***Academic Outcomes for Students of Color and White Students*

Type of GPA	Students of color				White students			
	<i>n</i>	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Fall 2023 lessons	19	3.30-4.00	3.95	0.17	22	3.00-4.00	3.94	0.22
Fall 2023 term GPA	19	2.95-4.00	3.76	0.31	23	3.08-4.00	3.89	0.22
Overall GPA	19	3.00-4.00	3.72	0.29	23	3.43-4.00	3.86	0.17

*Note.* One student who identified as White was enrolled in a major that required lessons, but not in every term, so they were not enrolled in lessons during fall 2023. All grades and GPAs are on a 4.00 scale.

The research participants who uploaded their unofficial transcripts had considerable academic strengths. Out of the 41 students of any racial identity who completed performance area lessons during the fall 2023 term, 37 research participants (90.2%) earned a grade of A or A+ in their lessons. The discrepancy between the number of students taking lessons in a performance area and the number of unofficial transcripts uploaded was the result of one student’s enrollment in a music education program that required lessons in some but not all terms of enrollment. All 42 research participants who submitted unofficial transcripts earned a cumulative GPA of 3.00 (the equivalent of a B average) or higher. The mean cumulative GPA for students of color who submitted unofficial transcripts was 3.72, and the mean cumulative GPA for White students who submitted unofficial transcripts was 3.86.

To calculate lesson GPAs, letter grades reported on individual student transcripts were converted into a 4-point grade point average scale used within each institution, which typically meant that grades of A corresponded to 4.00, A- to 3.70, B+ to 3.30, B to

3.00, and so on. One institution assigned A- grades to 3.75 and grades of B+ to 3.25 for GPA purposes, and another assigned A- grades to 3.67 and B+ grades to 3.33; these variations were unaltered in my descriptive statistics since the overall scale was still from 0.00 to 4.00. Four institutions represented within the research sample had an institutional grading scale that included an A+ option; however, three out of the four assigned both grades of A+ and A to 4.00 for GPA purposes, and the one institution assigned a grade of A+ to 4.30 for GPA purposes. For consistency and to allow for comparison across institutions, I recalculated the GPAs for the students attending the institution that awarded A+ grades a 4.30 GPA to follow the same practice by the other three institutions that awarded both A+ and A grades 4.00 in GPAs; this practice impacted the GPAs of three students, who identified as White. Future research exploring GPA should consider how to account for institutional differences in grading policies when comparing GPAs.

For this initial exploration of possible relationships between self-efficacy, GPAs, and racial identity, I did not dig deeper into value statements communicated by the number of credit hours of lessons that students pursuing different majors would earn. For example, some institutions might determine that students pursuing a major in performance would have 3- or 4-credit hour lessons each term, while students pursuing a major such as music education or general music might only have a 1- or 2-credit hour lesson. Some of these differences could reflect the types of degree (e.g., Bachelor of Arts vs. Bachelor of Music) offered by an institution accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music; the NASM (2023) handbook dictates that music coursework should comprise 50-65% or more of the credit hours required within a Bachelor of Music degree,

which is considered the professional bachelor's degree in the field of music. This emphasis upon performance lessons has potential implications not only for a student's grade point average at their institution but also for GPA-driven considerations for scholarship and fellowship awards, whether at the undergraduate institution or beyond.

Similarly, I observed on the unofficial transcripts that some institutions calculated cumulative GPA that included grades earned at another institution while most calculated cumulative GPA solely as institutional GPA. This is not to say that research participants earned credits while enrolled as degree-seeking students at another institution in a way that would have classified them as transfer students and thus made them ineligible to participate in my research; rather, the grades from other institutions that sometimes were factored into cumulative GPA came from coursework completed for dual enrollment or concurrent enrollment while the research participant was in high school. In some cases, students' transcripts reflected their earning college credit through dual enrollment at the same institution where they later matriculated as a degree-seeking student, which impacted their cumulative GPA in a different way than students who earned dual enrollment credit at a different institution than their college or conservatory music program. For the purposes of these descriptive statistics, I considered the GPA for coursework completed at the institution itself for standard letter grades at any point in time, whether the student had been enrolled as a dual enrollment/concurrent enrollment student or a degree-seeking undergraduate student; I did not factor in grades from other institutions as part of the cumulative or overall GPA.

Having reviewed student GPAs with descriptive statistics, I then calculated the raw means from the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) for the students who uploaded unofficial transcripts. Table 4.9 reports raw means for students of color and White students from the overall sample alongside the subsets of students who submitted unofficial transcripts. Compared with the self-efficacy raw mean for the overall research sample ( $n = 69$ ,  $M = 61.48$ ), the self-efficacy raw mean for the subset of students who submitted their unofficial transcripts was lower ( $n = 41$ ,  $M = 61.37$ ). Although the differences were not very large, the self-efficacy raw means for both students of color ( $n = 18$ ,  $M = 62.22$ ) and White students ( $n = 23$ ,  $M = 60.70$ ) who submitted their unofficial transcripts were also lower than the overall sample for students of color ( $n = 29$ ,  $M = 62.48$ ) and White students ( $n = 40$ ,  $M = 60.75$ ), respectively.

**Table 4.9**

*Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Raw Means, With Subsets of Students Who Uploaded Unofficial Transcripts*

Research participants	<i>n</i>	Range	<i>M</i>	SD
Quantitative phase 1 sample				
Students of color	29	33-74	62.48	9.21
White students	40	42-76	60.75	8.15
All research participants	69	33-76	61.48	8.59
Quantitative phase 2 sample (students who uploaded unofficial transcripts)				
Students of color (subset)	18	33-74	62.22	10.60
White students (subset)	23	48-76	60.70	8.08
All subset participants	41	33-76	61.37	9.18

*Note.* One of the students of color who uploaded her unofficial transcript as the same participant who did not respond to Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) Items 10 and 11. Her response has been excluded in both the overall sample raw means and the subset raw means.



Despite the subjectivity and complexity associated with the grade point averages, GPA still could be a valuable measurement of academic success to consider in future research, as it remains one of the standard measures of academic outcomes for college students (Feldman & Kubota, 2015; Gore, 2006; Kahn & Nauta, 2001; Komarraju & Nadler, 2013; Multon et al., 1991).

### **Summary of Quantitative Results**

The numbers of students of color and White students participating in my research were relatively close, but a closer examination of the demographic characteristics of the research participants yielded interesting findings. The overwhelming majority of students of color (83%) preferred to self-describe their racial identities in different ways than the single-choice options for racial identity used by NASM (n.d.-b). Research participants had some level of economic privilege, with half the total number of participants of any racial identity having at least one parent or guardian who had earned a master's degree or higher. Half of the students of color completed at least four years of lessons before enrolling in college, compared to 67% of White students. In addition to these markers of socio-economic class, nearly half of the research participants of any racial identity qualified for need-based financial aid. These demographic characteristics painted a picture of students whose complex, intersecting identities cannot be reduced to just one statistic.

When comparing the mean ranks for each item of the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) for students of color and White students, the self-efficacy scores for students of color was higher for 10 out of 11 items;

however, only the difference in mean ranks for Item 9, “The prospects of failure in this performance can just make me work harder in preparation,” was statistically significant ( $p = .035$ ). Although the number of research participants uploading unofficial transcripts ( $n = 42$ ) was not large enough to conduct correlation and regression analyses, descriptive statistics revealed that the sample had considerable academic strengths. Additional research is needed to further explore potential relationships between self-efficacy, grade point average, and racial identity within a larger sample of undergraduate music majors.

### **Qualitative Analysis**

With the quantitative data establishing an initial context for undergraduate music majors’ self-efficacy, racial identities, and academic outcomes, the qualitative phase of research explored the lived experiences of ten students of color in much greater detail. In alignment with the theoretical framework of critical race theory (Bernal, 2002; Crenshaw, 1995; Gillborn, 2015; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Nardo, 2022; Patton, 2016; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), the decision to interview only students of color was made deliberately to disrupt the status quo of racial demographics represented within institutions accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music (HEADS, 2020). In these individual, semi-structured interviews, the students of color shared stories of their undergraduate music education experiences, which I then analyzed using narrative inquiry to identify critical events, common themes, and areas where participants agreed or disagreed with one another (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Mertova & Webster, 2019).

Using the interview questions from Table 4.10, these interviews explored my final three research sub-questions: (a) how do music majors perceive their racial identity

within undergraduate music education, (b) how do educational experiences support self-efficacy, and (c) how do educational experiences create barriers to self-efficacy? The findings enriched the quantitative data in ways not previously captured by the existing peer-reviewed research on self-efficacy for undergraduate music majors (Afacan & Kaya, 2022; Akgül, 2021; Ciftcibasi, 2021; Eğilmez, 2015; Kurtuldu & Bulut, 2017; Lewis & Hendricks, 2022; Lewis et al., 2022; Lubert & Gröpel, 2022; Miksza & Tan, 2015; Nielsen, 2004; Otacioğlu, 2020; Papageorgi et al., 2010; Prichard, 2017; Regier, 2021; Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a; Ritchie & Williamon, 2012; Üstün & Ozer, 2020; Weimar et al., 2019; Xu, 2023).

**Table 4.10**

*Qualitative Interview Questions, Aligned with Research Sub-Questions*

Primary interview question	Supplementary questions (if needed)	Rationale	Alignment to research sub-questions	Citation(s)
1. How would you describe your racial identity?	Is this identity consistent with how NASM defines racial identity? How does that make you feel?	Honor the research participant's identity and understand perception of racial identity	Research Sub-Question 3	(Crenshaw, 1995; Ewell, 2020; Gillborn, 2015; HEADS, 2020; Lewis et al., 2022; NASM, n.d.-b)

Primary interview question	Supplementary questions (if needed)	Rationale	Alignment to research sub-questions	Citation(s)
2. Where do you see your racial identity represented in your undergraduate music experiences?	How have you seen your racial identity represented in your faculty, fellow students, the music you study, or other aspects of your major in music?	Identify student's awareness of racialized experiences in undergraduate music education and interest in challenging the status quo	Research Sub-Question 3	(R. Deemer & Meers, 2022; Ewell, 2020; Hess, 2022; Koza, 2008; Liu, 2022; Lucia, 2007)
3. Describe a time in your undergraduate music education when you accomplished a goal. What happened, and how did it make you feel?	Probe	Explore mastery experience as a source of self-efficacy	Research Sub-Question 4	(Bandura, 1997; Gavin, 2016; Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a)
4. Describe a time in your undergraduate music education when you weren't quite able to accomplish a goal. What happened, and how did it make you feel?	Probe	Explore mastery experience as a source of self-efficacy	Research Sub-Question 5	(Bandura, 1997; Gavin, 2016)

Primary interview question	Supplementary questions (if needed)	Rationale	Alignment to research sub-questions	Citation(s)
5. Describe a time in your undergraduate music education when you witnessed someone like you achieve a goal. What happened, and how did it make you feel?	Tell me more about the identities of this individual. How do their identities relate to yours?	Explore vicarious experience as a source of self-efficacy	Research Sub-Question 4	(Bandura, 1997; R. Deemer & Meers, 2022; Gavin, 2016; Hendricks, 2014)
6. Describe a time in your undergraduate music education when you witnessed someone like you fail in a task. What happened, and how did it make you feel?	Tell me more about the identities of this individual. How do their identities relate to yours?	Explore vicarious experience as a source of self-efficacy	Research Sub-Question 5	(Bandura, 1997; Gavin, 2016; Hendricks, 2014; Koza, 2008)
7. Describe a time in your undergraduate music education when you received encouragement from someone else. What happened, and how did it make you feel?	What were the identities of the person who encouraged you? How do their identities relate to yours?	Explore verbal and social persuasion as a source of self-efficacy	Research Sub-Question 4	(Bandura, 1997; Burwell, 2019; Duke & Henninger, 2002; Gavin, 2016)

Primary interview question	Supplementary questions (if needed)	Rationale	Alignment to research sub-questions	Citation(s)
8. Describe a time in your undergraduate music education when someone else said something that discouraged you. What happened, and how did it make you feel?	What were the identities of the person who discouraged you? How do their identities relate to yours?	Explore verbal and social persuasion as a source of self-efficacy	Research Sub-Question 5	(Bandura, 1997; Burwell, 2019; Duke & Henninger, 2002)
9. Describe a time in your undergraduate music education when you felt your mood or your awareness of your body contributed to your success. What happened, and how did it make you feel?	Probe	Explore emotional and physiological states as a source of self-efficacy	Research Sub-Question 4	(Bandura, 1997; Gavin, 2016; Lubert & Gröpel, 2022; Schneider & Chesky, 2011)
10. Describe a time in your undergraduate music education when you felt your mood or your awareness of your body negatively impacted your results. What happened, and how did it make you feel?	Probe	Explore emotional and physiological states as a source of self-efficacy	Research Sub-Question 5	(Bandura, 1997; Gavin, 2016; Lubert & Gröpel, 2022; Schneider & Chesky, 2011)

Primary interview question	Supplementary questions (if needed)	Rationale	Alignment to research sub-questions	Citation(s)
11. What other identities would you use to describe yourself?	How do you see your identities relating to race?	Honor the research participant's identities and understand their perceptions of identities	Research Sub-Questions 1 and 3	(Crenshaw, 1995; Gillborn, 2015)

The individual interviews were conducted via Zoom Video Communications software and were video recorded for the purposes of creating an accurate transcript for analysis. I reviewed each recorded interview twice to correct the initial audio transcript generated by Zoom. These transcripts were saved in Microsoft Word documents, where I highlighted initial themes, describing key ideas that emerged using the interview participants' own words. These transcripts with initial themes were distributed to the interview participants via email for member checking, so that the students of color could confirm that I had accurately understood the words spoken in the interview as well as the themes emerging from their interview (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Through the member checking processes, all interview participants were given the opportunity to clarify statements, remove sections of the interview, or withdraw from the study entirely.

When interview transcripts and initial themes were approved by the research participants, I saved their transcripts in NVivo, a qualitative data analysis computer software package, to delve deeper in analyzing individual stories and to draw broader connections for themes present across the interview participants. If interview participants

referenced specific stories multiple times throughout the interview, I noted the importance of these elements by making that portion of the interview transcript bold. Critical events or change experiences impacting the interview participants were italicized, so that my research could describe the context for the event, recount the actions of the incident, and discuss the result (Mertova & Webster, 2019). In alignment with my chosen theoretical framework of critical race theory, the coding process prioritized stories shared by the interview participants where they indicated that their racial identity impacted their educational experiences (Bernal, 2002; Crenshaw, 1995; Gillborn, 2015; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Nardo, 2022; Patton, 2016; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) and/or feedback from one of the sources of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). I used NVivo to identify overarching themes with color coding and notes to connect areas of agreement or disagreement between specific interview participants.

My research journal of field notes also was a valuable space for processing the ideas, contradictions, and wonderings emerging from the data analysis, while also serving as a space for considering ways that my own background experience as a biracial woman with degrees and professional experience in higher education music programs might influence my interpretation. In this way, I sought to center the lived experiences of my interview participants, rather than focusing on my interpretation of their stories.

### **Sampling for Interview Participants**

To represent a broader range of experiences across music programs affiliated with the Music Admissions Roundtable, my sampling for the qualitative interview phase of research identified a nested sample from the quantitative phase of ten students of color



who were enrolled at five different types of MAR institutions: (a) public, NASM-accredited institutions enrolling over 401 music majors ( $n = 4$ ); (b) public, NASM-accredited institutions enrolling 201-400 music majors ( $n = 2$ ); (c) public, NASM-accredited institutions enrolling 101-200 music majors ( $n = 1$ ); (d) private, NASM-accredited institutions enrolling over 201 music majors ( $n = 2$ ); and (e) private, NASM-accredited institutions enrolling 51-100 music majors ( $n = 1$ ).

### **Demographic Information for Research Participants**

The students who completed interviews represented a variety of racial identities, gender identities, years of study, majors, and performance areas. Six out of the ten interview participants self-described their racial identities as biracial, mixed race, or multiracial; eight total participants self-described their racial identities to include Black or African American. In their self-described gender identities, five students identified as female, four students identified as male, and one student identified as nonbinary. I found the perspectives across the undergraduate journey to be compelling, from the insightful early observations from first-year students to the detailed counter-stories of seniors. Reflecting some of the overall trends for majors in my quantitative sample, four out of ten interview participants were pursuing a major in classical performance, and three out of ten students were pursuing a major in music education. The remaining three students were pursuing majors in composition, general music, and commercial music. The interview participants' performance areas included four classical brass students, three classical woodwind students, two classical voice students, and one drum set student. Table 4.11 summarizes the demographic information of the interview participants.

**Table 4.11***Demographics Characteristics of Interview Participants*

Pseudonym	Area of study	Year of study	Age	Self-reported race	Self-reported gender	Type of institution
Jim	BM in Composition, Voice (Baritone)	First-year	18	Mixed race (Black and White)	Male	Public, NASM-accredited, 201-400 students
Natika	BM in Performance (Flute)	First-year	18	Mixed race (Native American, White, and Black; ethnically as Latina)	Female	Public, NASM-accredited, 401+ students
X	BA in Music (Tuba)	Sophomore	19	African American	Male	Public, NASM-accredited, 401+ students
May	BM in Performance (Bassoon)	Junior	21	East Asian	Female	Private, NASM-accredited, 201+ students
Denise	BM in Performance (Trombone)	Senior	21	Biracial (White and Black)	Female	Public, NASM-accredited, 401+ students
Drew	BME in Instrumental Music Education (Euphonium)	Senior	21	Biracial (Black and White)	Nonbinary	Public, NASM-accredited, 201-400 students
Marie	BME in Choral Music Education (Soprano)	Senior	22	Black	Female	Public, NASM-accredited, 401+ students

Pseudonym	Area of study	Year of study	Age	Self-reported race	Self-reported gender	Type of institution
Midnight	BA in Commercial Music (Drum Set)	Senior	21	Multiracial (German, Black, and Native American)	Male	Private, NASM-accredited, 51-100 students
RJ	BA in Instrumental Music Education (Trumpet)	Senior	22	Black/African American	Male	Public, NASM-accredited, 101-200 students
Rose	BM in Performance (Flute)	Senior	21	Mixed race (White and Asian)	Female	Private, NASM-accredited, 201+ students

*Note.* BA degrees are Bachelor of Arts degrees, BM degrees are Bachelor of Music degrees, and BME degrees are Bachelor of Music Education degrees. All interview participants were enrolled in Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs).

The students of color who completed semi-structured interviews represented a broad range of racial identities, years of study, majors, and performance areas; however, even within this diverse sample of students, a few notable groups were underrepresented or missing altogether. No students selected either their NASM (n.d.-b) single-choice racial identity as American Indian or Alaska Native or solely identified their own racial identity as Indigenous; two students who self-described their racial identities as multiracial or mixed race included that they were Native Americans as part of their more detailed descriptions. Only one participant included Latinx as part of her self-described racial identity. All interview participants were enrolled at NASM-accredited institutions, and nine out of the ten students had a classical performance area. No students played a string instrument or piano. This type of representation or lack thereof in the sample is a limitation, and future research should focus on the lived experiences of the individuals beyond those represented in this specific interview sample.

### **Interview Participant Profiles**

#### ***Jim***

Jim, an 18-year-old mixed race (Black and White) first-year composition major, described his racial identity as having a quality of “in-between-ness:”

So my mom is mixed, Black and White, basically. And my dad, but I haven’t had a ton of contact with, is White. So Irish, Scottish, all of that. My mom was adopted, though, in a small town in the Midwest, and so our family is very culturally White. Like, I didn’t grow up in the hood, but at the same time, I do

have a weird relationship with other Black and White people because of that in-between-ness of this situation.

Although Jim experienced a type of erasure of his Black identity within his family unit, he also felt hyperaware of his Blackness within his predominantly White collegiate music program. Jim's stories highlighted tensions between his feelings of belonging within the predominantly White institution, pressures of stereotype threat, and a desire to defy racist expectations of others. He shared this story of grappling with these forces after seeing the only other Black student in his introductory music theory class provide a wrong answer during an in-class exercise:

There is one other Black person in that theory class. They are super proficient at theory generally, but what our professor will have us do is go to the board and write in notes as you do in a first-level theory class: spelling chords and everything. And there was one time when we were writing in figured bass stuff and that other student made a silly little mistake. Obviously, they know their theory, right? But there's always this lingering anxiety in the back of my mind as a person of color, right, that if one of us makes a mistake, then oh no! All the White people are gonna think people of color are bad at theory... There's that idea that if we aren't giving 100%, 100% of the time, it's gonna fall short. And even if you are giving 100%, 100% of the time, it can still sometimes feel like you're falling short. And so I feel that collective sense that on one hand, there's this sense of like – I don't want to say embarrassment – but there's also a sense of like

camaraderie and togetherness like, “Let’s be proficient in this class because we’re expected not to be.”

Given the pressures of stereotype threat that Jim experienced as a biracial man within the field of classical music, his stories of finding encouragement and validation at the beginning of his first term of college were beacons of hope and belonging. On his first day of college, Jim completed diagnostic exams in music theory and aural skills that placed him into higher level courses to begin his music major coursework. After the diagnostic exams concluded, Jim was approached by one of the string department faculty members who had administered the diagnostics. He did not have an established relationship with this professor, but they went out of their way to offer congratulations on Jim’s outstanding placement. The faculty member provided words of encouragement, saying how much Jim would enjoy being in the more advanced class. Receiving this feedback from someone who was a virtual stranger affirmed Jim’s place within the school of music: “Just having a faculty member confirm this and be like, ‘Yeah, you’re good at this thing!’ It was really nice, and I’m not sure if they understood how much that meant to me, but it has sort of helped propel me through.”

In addition to his classroom experiences, Jim also described another test of his sense of belonging in the field of music when he interviewed for an on-campus position working within the music department. On just his second day of school, Jim had to balance additional sources of pressure: pressure to land a job to meet financial needs, pressure to find a part-time job that aligned with his academic and professional goals, and pressure to find out whether he could belong in a field where his identities were not

perceived as the norm. Being hired for that position again provided validation during a pivotal time in his undergraduate journey:

This was my first job, and I was incredibly nervous and I had no idea what I was going to do. I was kind of a wreck, because here I am, on the second day of my undergrad, and I'm like, "Please give me a job in this field that I'm interested in." And I feel like that high tension. You know, the stress just carried me through... On the one hand, there was sort of this anxiety that... when we think about the traditional Western musical scholar, it's White male composers from the European canon. And so I was a bit nervous that in this environment that I wouldn't be the sort of person they were looking for.

And that was a significant amount of stress for me, because, for one thing, I knew I was gonna need this job, because for other reasons, money has been sort of tight lately, and we are trying to get things together. And it was something I was passionate about. And I was like, "Wow, the opportunity to do a job related to something that I really enjoy! That's awesome!" And so I feel like that was another really early on validating moment for me like, "Oh yes, I do belong here. I am capable of doing things in this environment."

Jim's stories highlighted the challenges associated with navigating identities within a new educational setting, but they also were marked by Jim's contagious joy, enthusiasm, and vision for a world where more diverse voices will be part of conversations surrounding musical traditions. When disclosing his identity as a gay man, Jim shared the positive and negative impact that educators had on his journey throughout

his musical studies, along with the hope that at some point in the future, his own story might be able to help other members of the LGBTQIA community. Jim's stories demonstrated the importance of validation and belonging, the power of first impressions within the school of music, and a desire for greater inclusion within college music study.

### *Natika*

Natika, an 18-year-old first-year flute performance major, described her racial identities as Native American, White, and Black, while identifying ethnically as Latina. When reflecting upon the different facets of her multiracial identity, Natika's word choice revealed a sense of isolation from her peers. Although I would describe her as one of the most energetic and outgoing interview participants, her tone and facial expressions shifted to be dramatically much more introspective when she was asked to think about someone like her. Natika paused and replied in a subdued tone, "It's just really upsetting to realize that you're the only person like you in a program, because some minorities could say that they have more people to look up to, in America at least." She elaborated on this feeling, sharing that she doesn't have anyone else in the flute studio to speak Spanish with and that there are only two other Black students in the flute studio. Natika shared that she often has more in common with international students, who she can relate to as they navigate life in America and speaking English as a second language.

One of Natika's most powerful examples of finding racial connection within the musical community came from a story about working with a flutist from her own Indigenous community, from when she was living outside of the United States. While it can be common for any musician to receive feedback about their embouchure, or the



shape of their lips on the mouthpiece of the instrument, this type of feedback can sometimes seem racially-coded, with White European facial structures are depicted as the exemplar and any differences are labeled as obstacles for musicians to generate a good tone quality. However, because Natika received feedback from an “in-group” source, this influenced her reaction in this interaction.

Natika: I did actually hear it [feedback on my lips and embouchure] from a teacher before: we were the same race! We were from the same Native American community... and he came up to me and was like, “Hey, listen, you have a wonderful sound but I think if you do this with your embouchure, it will work better, because the way that they teach flute in France or Europe is not going to work for us, because we’re just not meant to play flute like that.” And I was like, “Okay, right, sure, that works.”

Rachel: And how did you feel, hearing that feedback?

Natika: From him? I didn’t care. I was happy!

Rachel: Okay! I ask because I was told all my life, “Oh, your lip structure is wrong. You won’t be able to play this way.” And I was like, “Well, I think I’m doing all right.”

Natika: Yeah, exactly! That’s how I feel when people in America say it to me, but when people in my country say it to home, I was fine with it, with them. For some reason, when it’s said in this context [in America], it just doesn’t hit well.

Although Natika did not find many other students with whom she identified based on shared racial identity, she did share that, as a pansexual, she found a sense of belonging within the school of music's LGBTQIA community. In response to an interview question asking her to think of a time when she saw someone like her achieve a goal, Natika initially withdrew into herself and reflected on a feeling of being alone in her racial representation in the school of music. However, when she was invited to think more broadly about other identities she might share with fellow classmates, Natika almost instantly exclaimed with joy, "The school of music is very queer! And I'm always happy to see them [other LGBTQIA students] achieve stuff, because it's like, 'Yes! We got it!'"

*X*

X, a 19-year-old sophomore African American music major enrolled at a large, public university, had the quickest response to interview questions related to seeing his identities represented within his music education experiences. In contrast to Jim and Natika's reflections on the lack of racial diversity within their respective schools of music, X celebrated the racial representation at his institution as a source of inspiration for future achievements and reassurance of belonging within the arts. X specifically highlighted Dr. Jones [a pseudonym], a Black male faculty member who conducted ensembles at his school of music:

Dr. Jones is one of the few Black doctoral faculty here. He is an amazing conductor and he conducted one of our ensembles. He helps out with the marching band. So seeing him being able to achieve that level of not just status

but being a great person and being liked among the community was really cool. I felt that like, “Wow, maybe I could do this.” And just seeing his drive in a unique way while also embracing all of his identities was just really inspiring. That’s what I’ve gotten a lot of, being at my university.

Although he expressed a sense of pride in the level of representation and diversity within the music community at his institution, X also shared that his sense of self and identity often were more broadly tied to his studies as a music major and his ability to find common ground with others based on shared interests and passions. The overwhelming theme across X’s stories was that his love of learning and his passion for music shaped how he navigated the world around him, often in ways that felt more central to him than his racial identity:

I really resonate with my identity as being a music major, and a lot of the people who I associate with or make friends with have similar interests to me. It’s great to have people who are the same racial identity, but a lot of my friends just have similar interests, like they practice all the time or they want to teach and they want to become better at their instrument. I’m personally interested in learning about music theory. I love music theory, as much as it can be painful all the time, I like the concept itself. Just learning new things. So yeah, I guess the most important thing about someone’s identity is their character or their interest in sharing that. But I feel like at my school, as a Black person, I still feel like I belong and I can relate to other people because a lot of times, like I just said, it’s not like the main thing that I see in myself.

Across all my interviews, X's stories were distinguished by his intellectual approach to the mental game of music performance. Inspired by a previous faculty member's recommendation to explore self-help books related to understanding self and building habits, X incorporated readings into his daily routine. He applied concepts from his readings by naming the power of emotions without letting them overwhelm him, by focusing on process and progress over time, and by clarifying values that guide his approach to music and life in general:

One of the things that really helped me with my mood and my body awareness was that he [the previous tuba professor] talked about reading books about self-help in general, or being a musician, and he kind of gave us the suggested books. And ever since then, I try to make it so that every semester, I read one of those, and it's life-changing... I feel so much older and wiser every time I finish one of those books, and I try to go back and read some of it every day to just help myself out.

This level of self-reflection played a huge role in his response to a critical event from early in his second year of music major study: ensemble auditions. X's first year of college was marked by early success in terms of ensemble placement and demonstrated improvement in the private studio. At the start of year two, he was assigned to lessons with the faculty member rather than one of the graduate teaching assistants within the studio, which was a real achievement for such an early stage in undergraduate studies. Despite these tangible examples of accomplishment, the ensemble audition results for fall of year 2 were a step back: X's chair placement within the ensemble was lower than it

had been the year before. This feeling of his hard work not paying off impacted motivation and took a toll on his self-confidence. Although seeing some of his same-year peers in the studio experience similar audition results helped normalize the idea that improvement wasn't a linear process, it still took a long time to recover from self-doubt. X's reflection and alignment with his values allowed him to hold onto these words of wisdom from his reading: "Don't get hung up about the outcome. Get passionate about the process."

*May*

May, a 21-year-old junior East Asian bassoon performance major pursuing an optional minor, was the only interview participant who specifically discussed participation with a student affinity group. While the affinity group had been a source of support and belonging, it took May a little bit of time to initially connect with this community. May initially did not learn about the affinity group until nearly halfway through her first term in college. She described feelings of isolation resulting from not having a community of folks with a shared racial identity:

My first weeks as a first-year were really difficult because I didn't know that the student affinity group existed, and so I felt really out of place... Getting to college and not being able to know where to find people like that – it was very difficult.

May also expressed concerns about ways that the time demands for ensemble rehearsals, solo practice time, and academic courses went beyond the typical formulations of credit hours and contact time often found in other fields in a liberal arts college, which then impacted her ability to remain connected with the student affinity

group. Beyond the already intense demands of the sequential course work required for music performance majors in the first two years of study, May also incorporated an extra class every term for her optional minor. Although the optional minor was a rewarding program with both academic and co-curricular opportunities, the academic and time requirements for the minor created additional stress for May.

In addition to going above and beyond within her academic requirements, May also sought out enrichment opportunities in musical performance by applying to summer music festivals. She demonstrated considerable initiative in researching summer programs, preparing the audition repertoire on her own, and making audition recordings. Without direct guidance from faculty, these processes formed a hidden curriculum of unvoiced expectations for emerging professionals. At the beginning of her junior year, May shared that a combination of student-driven and faculty-driven changes in the private studio led to some additional opportunities for learning orchestral excerpts and playing mock auditions to help meet the needs of the students. May explained her perception of the reasoning behind these changes by saying:

I think that also probably has to do with there being three freshmen and just more undergrads in the studio. That's just something that we need to start working on, and applying to all these summer things, it's a given that you're gonna have to learn this.

Although she was grateful for an increased number of opportunities to grow her confidence by performing in performance classes, mock auditions, and master classes, May also recognized that the increased volume of opportunities alone did not improve

her self-efficacy, because her perfectionism hindered her self-efficacy development. She identified herself as the source of her high expectations for her bassoon playing, rather than outside sources such as her bassoon professor, her peers, or her family. May knew that this was not a healthy or realistic perspective for tracking her progress in her playing and spoke candidly about these challenges:

I guess a lot of it is just my own pressure to have a really “perfect” performance and stuff like that. And so if there’s one thing that goes wrong, then I’m like, “That shouldn’t have happened.” It tends to demerit like the rest of the performance. And so every single performance class, like standing on stage, I get pretty upset. And that came from my own need of having to have everything so well-prepared. And like one note was wrong. It’s like, “Oh, the whole thing was bad.”

And so I guess having to – and I’m still like trying to – grow past the mentality that everything has to work perfectly, but I guess that gets in the way a lot of the time in hearing and seeing growth. Because I’m like, “Oh, but last year, I like played this without having a lot of mistakes, and this year I’m playing this piece, which is entirely different.” So you can’t really compare it on the same plane. I’m like, “Oh, this year, I’m playing these pieces, but I can’t hear progress at all, even though I put in so many hours.” And so internally, it’s been hard to look past that...

When prompted, I can’t say anything good about performances, which I think is a thing that I do need to move past... I talk to my professor about it. I’ve

talked to other people about it, like my housemates and just especially during the mock audition, having a professional bassoonist come in, he was like, “All right everyone, list three things that they really liked about their performance.” Not being able to say anything in studio for that, he was giving me positives, that he was like, “You have to be able to find positives holistically if you think so negatively about performance, because otherwise it’ll be really hard to feel like you work on things and be better at them.”

Despite her incredible academic strengths, musical goals, and social support systems, May’s stories of combatting maladaptive perfectionism revealed a level of vulnerability. This barrier to self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) was surprisingly unique among the stories shared by interview participants, and although May was quick to indicate that this self-criticism was not rooted in cultural pressure, it would be worth exploration in future research projects.

### *Denise*

Denise, a 21-year-old senior biracial (White and Black) trombone performance major, was keenly aware of her intersecting identities while navigating the power dynamics at play in her low brass studio and her music school more broadly, which she found to be spaces typically dominated by White men. Despite these challenges of finding community given the homogeneity of her music program, Denise was fortunate to develop a strong friendship with a Black female tubist at her university. The power of this type of connection across shared identities shone through in the multiple stories that



Denise shared, ranging from creating a type of motivational FOMO (fear of missing out) to solidarity and even shared fear when her friend was intimidated by the faculty.

Denise glowed when sharing the story of her friend winning an orchestral audition, while also candidly sharing her own concerns about what a peer's success meant for raising expectations for her own playing. For Denise, individual and public perceptions of success were clearly contextualized within the Whiteness of the school of music and the broader orchestral world. In many ways, her words echoed Jim's observation about feeling pressure to always give 100% and even then feeling as though it might not be enough:

At first, I was so excited for her! I was like, "Wow, that's so exciting! This is such a hard thing to do!" And then I was like, "Oh crap! I should be doing that too!" or, "What am I doing? Am I doing enough?" It just all washed over me, and I feel like I would have felt that way, regardless of my identity, but at the same time, it all goes back to that "You've got to be very exceptional to be considered good at what you do if you're *other*."

However, Denise recognized that her friend's professional success did not protect her from intimidation tactics from faculty members, which Denise acknowledged could have been influenced by systems of power and privilege based on racial identity. Denise shared a story about when the same friend had considered transferring to another institution. This news elicited very negative responses from faculty, and because Denise interpreted their reactions as potentially being racially-coded, she experienced fear for both her friend and for herself, given their shared identities:

It was very toxic... The faculty were reacting kind of viciously to this and kind of threatening her – not dangerously, but as in “Your career is in jeopardy if you make this choice. We’re gonna reach out to all these people and let them know that you are not professional...”

And I just remember thinking, “Oh my goodness, this is kind of absurd!” I mean, I’ve had friends transfer with no backlash. And I’m not suggesting anything, but that’s how it looks to me: As a Black person, especially as a Black woman who – I feel like Black women are the most villainized, I can’t help but see it that way, because that’s who I am and that’s how I would feel. And I remember being afraid for her, and then I remember being afraid for myself, like if I ever wanted to make a decision that I felt was absolutely right for me, how are these people going to react? Am I safe? Do I have to please these people to make ends meet, essentially?

In contrast to the power imbalances represented within her friend’s stories, Denise shared additional examples of times when key interactions with faculty made an overwhelmingly positive impact on both her trajectory in her undergraduate journey and her confidence about her place within the broader field of music. In one of Denise’s required music history classes, her professor leveraged the very broadly-defined scope for the course to incorporate Black music in ways that validated her musical identity:

The class topic is so broad: it’s about music after the 1900s, so that could mean anything. So he spent a good bit of time talking about Black musicians and how they’ve contributed to classical music, and that actually prompted me to take a

class that he was teaching, an ethnomusicology course on Black music traditions. And I had no idea that the school had that. I thought that the only time that I would be able to see Black people presented in an “academic” way was in jazz.

And this course validated my identity and my need to be in academic spaces, because I love school, and I love learning. And it kind of felt like learning about my family and people I grew up with, like people who enjoy this music and consider it valid and appropriate music that adds so much to our culture. It was really nice to see that in an academic setting and people taking it seriously.

Like Jim, Denise also received feedback from a faculty member at a key point in her studies that conferred belonging in an especially meaningful way, even though the faculty member may not have realized the significance of their words at the time. Denise described playing for a faculty member who teaches another instrument when she was preparing for graduate school auditions:

I was telling him that I was applying to grad school, and I was feeling really nervous. And I kind of felt like I wasn't really ready, and maybe I needed to be a better trombone player before I could go on and whatever. And I remember he was telling me just plainly, he was telling me that I was smart. I was capable, and that people like me, and that I'm going to make it super far, and there's no doubt about it. And he even said, “You're going to face some challenges that aren't fair to you.” And I was like kind of in tears at that point... He was just so like matter-of-fact, like he's been alive for a long time, and he's just getting to the point. And he said this to me, and I was like, literally snot [gestures to her face and mimes

crying]. And he was like, “Oh yeah, absolutely. Well good luck in your performance tomorrow!” Just like super nonchalant.

It was that easy and the way he just delivered it to me, I was like, “Wow, he naturally feels this way about me! Someone believes in me!” This person who has played, who has taught at major institutions better than the one – no offense – better than my institution and has played in major orchestras and ensembles and chamber groups, who is revered as one of the best performances and pedagogues in the world just told me that I am capable and that he has always believed in me. And he’s not Black; he’s White. And I guess in some ways, it was more validating because he’s in a position of power, and I won’t get into that, but it was just like, “Wow! You see me for who I really am! And do you even know I’m Black?” [laughter] Does that cross your mind at all?”

Despite being hyperaware of the challenges of navigating the power dynamics within her music program and the role that systemic racism plays within those systems of power, Denise’s hope for the future remained undimmed. Her incredibly strong interpersonal skills, talents in leadership, and advocacy for herself were bolstered by an impressive network of support. After connecting with professional female musicians from different racial backgrounds, Denise embraced her sage advice to “find your kinfolk, stick together, and keep pushing through.”

## *Drew*

Drew, a 21-year-old senior biracial (Black and White) nonbinary music education major, shared multiple stories that demonstrated both their keen awareness of power dynamics in educational settings and their courage in challenging the status quo. One example occurred when they were having conversations with fellow students following a faculty member's lecture recital on Black composers. Drew's critique of the choices for the literature performed and their desire for greater authenticity were not particularly well received by their peers at first:

The framing [for the recital] was like "raising up Black music," but it was these Black composers that had written Western art music that sounds just very White... There's nothing wrong with a Black person writing in a European style, but I take issue with the idea of it being Black music. Because it's kind of like – I think in Korea, the national anthem is a march, but you wouldn't call that Korean music, though, would you? Because marches are very staunchly European. And so is it as much lifting up Black voices, or is it a testament to the hold that European music has and European culture has on other cultures in the art world? And that is not a thing a lot of people wanted to hear.

Although Drew did not find a great amount of diversity within ensemble repertoire or course content, they used their private lessons as a vehicle to infuse new voices into their curriculum. Drew's face came alive with excitement when describing their autonomy in selecting solo repertoire, yet even within these individual victories,

they acknowledged some of the systemic challenges to presenting successful performances of newer or lesser-known works by diverse composers:

I work really hard to have a lot of different repertoire spanning a lot of different backgrounds with my solo programming and stuff like that. And I'm really lucky my tuba professor lets me do that! And sometimes, it kind of bites me in the butt a little bit, because then I find really obscure things that don't have recordings... But independently, I get to find representation where I institutionally don't get to see it otherwise.

(Please note that while Drew's principal performance area was euphonium, their interview excerpts refer to their tuba professor; in this case, their school of music employed one faculty member who played tuba but taught private lessons for both tuba and euphonium students.)

Like the other seniors interviewed, Drew was especially attuned to the power dynamics within the school of music and the challenges of speaking up to advocate for themselves. In addition to naming the power that tenured faculty have upon the educational experiences of students, Drew identified the power of their curriculum's sequential course requirements and the potential ripple effects that could result across multiple courses when a student experiences chronic illness or injury. Drew shared that during their undergraduate journey, they also were navigating the effects from a traumatic brain injury, tendonitis, and chronic illnesses, which impacted much more than just their private euphonium lessons. The interconnected nature of the curriculum seemed like a house of cards, which threatened to collapse when Drew encountered these health

complications. Drew's internal monologue called out these systems of power, but they did not raise these issues with school of music leadership:

I've struggled a lot with health things since I started my undergrad. I've been in the ER like six times. And I've failed one class ever, and it freaked me out, because in music ed, it's a five-year degree crammed into four years. And so, like a lot of times, you fail one class and it's like, "Congrats! That's it! You get to take a victory lap." And I was not for that. And I did manage, like I'm going to graduate in four years, so it's all good, but it was awful.

I failed Keyboard Skills II because I got a concussion the previous semester, like right at the end. And really, it was a TBI; it was a traumatic brain injury... I've had tendonitis since I was 16, and my sophomore year of college, I got carpal tunnel and cubital tunnel in both of my arms. And I got surgery like the Monday after finals of my spring semester... I got a semester behind in Keyboard Skills because of my concussion. And so if I had been on track, I would have finished Keyboard Skills IV my sophomore year.

But I was in Keyboard Skills III at the end of my sophomore year. And I had done all the coursework except my final jury [the final exam for performance lessons], because my hands didn't work right. Also, clarinet – it was the clarinet 100%... Clarinet definitely was a big part of my carpal tunnel and everything and the specific type of tendonitis in my thumb. And so it kept me from doing my Keyboard Skills III jury. And I had an agreement with the GTA [Graduate Teaching Assistant] running my class and one of the piano professors that I would

just do my jury at the beginning of the next fall semester. So I could take an incomplete and rest up and just have all my jury material ready in August or September. And we have this in writing and everything. I had a myriad of doctor's notes being like, "Don't do anything."

And so then August and September roll around, and I email the piano professor like, "Hey, we should figure out my jury 'cause I'm already enrolled in Keyboard Skills IV. So we should really figure this out."

And she was like, "Yeah, send me your availability." And we both send each other our availability. And it was a whole back-and-forth in our emails and her just being like, "I'm not in the building. I'm not usually in the building on Monday or Wednesday."

And I'm like, "That's so cool because you have tenure. So you're like paid to be here in the building on Monday and Wednesday. So that's awesome that you get paid tenure salary for being in the building the same number of days as my tuba professor is paid to be in the building, who is only a lecturer and very much does not have tenure."

So I'm trying to figure out a time. And I finally, I just asked my tuba professor if we could move my lesson back so I could do this jury, which he was not happy about, but he was like, "Yeah." He wasn't mad at me, but he was frustrated. And so I go to my jury. It was just gonna be in this professor's office and I knocked on the door, and I didn't get an answer, so I just sat outside, 'cause



I figured she might just be at something, like a meeting or something. And then I sat for like 45 minutes...

And so I emailed her like, “Hey, what happened? My jury was supposed to be yesterday. What’s up?”

And she was like, “Oh my gosh, I’m so sorry! I was busy and I forgot.”

And I’m kind of sitting there like, “That’s so cool, because when normal juries happen, which is during finals week and everybody’s super busy, if someone forgets you just like fail your jury and there’s no makeup. So I’m really loving the double standard here right now.” I didn’t say that. I just like thought it really, really hard. But so she ended up telling me like, “Maybe you should just drop Keyboard Skills IV, and then we can do your Keyboard Skills III jury at the end of the semester when I have more time.”

This is another instance when I really should have emailed the dean. So I ended up skipping a rehearsal to do my jury, and it was fine. I got an A on it.

Whatever. But I was not happy. There are tenured professors who are great, but I’ve learned the power that tenure gives you, and it really sucks. Like it drives me insane that you can just get away with that. It’s interactions like that that help me remember that higher ed is not purely meritocracy. And it’s really frustrating, but I’m just like, “Okay. Whatever. It’s done.”

In this story, not only did Drew have to overcome the obstacles of their physical health and recovery from surgery, but they also had to make multiple adjustments to their commitments for lessons and rehearsals to accommodate a tenured professor’s

availability to hear their Keyboard Skills III jury. The professor's recommendation that Drew change their registration for Keyboard Skills IV based on convenience for scheduling a make-up jury was especially disconnected from the reality of the demands of the sequential courses required in a music education degree. The fact that Drew's injury could have derailed their path toward graduation not through their applied lessons in euphonium, not through the woodwind methods classes required for music education majors, but through the completion of a Keyboard Skills course illustrated the interconnected nature of physical health and success in the music curriculum. In this case, Drew's injury could have impacted at eight out of the 14 courses they were registered for in that term, and the arrangements for an incomplete grade alone did not provide enough protection or support to ensure that Drew would be able to progress in their curriculum. What additional systems or structures at the school level or institutional level could have benefitted Drew and other students who find themselves in similar circumstances?

*Marie*

Marie, a 22-year-old senior choral music education major, described her racial identity as Black. Although her university is known for having a larger music education program, she observed that nearly all her fellow classmates identified as White. Marie counted only one other Black student and only two or three other students of color in her year who were pursuing a major in choral music education. Although the racial composition of the student body was not a key feature within the music education program, Marie shared a few stories that highlighted the importance of culturally

responsive pedagogy within the curriculum and the variety of compositions performed by choral ensembles:

My professor met an African teacher when he traveled to Kenya, and we recently went to tour and performed at a state music education conference, and we performed some... African text songs, and he had that teacher from Africa teach us the words and the meaning. So it's more authentic that way. Even though the professor made a point, saying that he felt comfortable teaching that music, but he felt like it would be more meaningful to have someone of that culture teach it.

Marie found the experience of learning the song from the Kenyan teacher to be particularly rewarding, but she noticed that not all her fellow students had similar reactions. She recognized that learning both text and pitches together in a call-and-response approach was markedly different from the typical, sheet music-dependent approach of learning pitches first and very gradually working toward incorporating the text of the music. Marie acknowledged that while other students might feel uncomfortable adapting to a different teaching style and a different musical style for the song, she found great value in the learning experience and saw applications to her professional practice as a music educator. She described the teaching approach and resulting product by saying:

He [the music teacher from Kenya] did it basically call-and-response the whole time. I think he only like used the piano for the first pitch. And he can sing every part, so that was really cool. There was music written, but since you're doing it call-and-response, we didn't really look at the music a lot. I know some people

need that music as a guiding place, but you really didn't need the music, whereas with those languages and different music, I think we focus on pitches first. We will read through it, but maybe on a nonsense syllable and then we don't even touch the language until maybe like two or three weeks before the performance. So the way he taught it, we learned the text, what it meant, and the pitches all in one rehearsal, whereas the other common languages, it takes like a longer process to get everything.

When asked whether she felt the call-and-response process of learning the African text song was more challenging than the ensemble's typical approach to learning a song in French or German, Marie shared her perspective and again rooted her ensemble learning experiences within her professional practice as a music educator:

I think in a way, it was harder, because I'm used to looking at the music as a guiding place, but he also had this presence about himself that just drew you in. Like you didn't want to miss what he was doing by looking in the music. Because I know like a lot of our curriculum, they want us to be able to know every part, sing every part. It was good to see someone from a completely different culture do that same concept with us, and so that was really cool...

When you do a song in a different language, and there's the written English translation, but it's not completely correct, having someone explain like, "This is what it actually means and it's rewritten this way," I think it's more meaningful and more correct in a way. I guess I'm not sure if I have ancestors directly from Africa, but I think it resonated with me since I am kinda of that race.

To have it like represented correctly is really nice to see, especially doing that music anyway.

Because I know, I have observed around in our ensembles, a lot of people don't particularly like that kind of music. They love that classical way usually and don't want to venture out. But I know we talk about this a lot in my curriculum: culturally responsive teaching. You want to try to reach all of your students at some point, especially if they're different races. I just really liked having that variety, and especially when it's taught right. I think someone, even if you're not of that race, I think you'll find something that you'll relate to in those songs.

Given Marie's insights into culturally responsive pedagogy, diversity in ensemble repertoire, and authenticity when learning music from different cultures, it was no surprise that she also stated that she wished she had learned about Black composers and Black women composers earlier in her musical studies. Marie shared that she sought out music written by Black women for her private voice lessons and was grateful for the flexibility that her voice professor provided in selecting her repertoire, but she acknowledges that these efforts to include works by diverse composers are not the norm for all voice students at her university:

I make a point to do – in my individual voice lessons, my teacher doesn't really assign me songs. Like he'll suggest things, but it's ultimately up to me and what I want to do, to pick those songs that I like. So I'll pick composers, Black female composers. I'm actually doing a recital next month. I'm doing primarily female

composers, including minority composers. There's a couple of male composers, but that's because I just really like the songs.

I guess realizing that with women, people of color, we made all of these things, but we are still kind of misrepresented, not really given as examples until higher education. I just try to make that part of my curriculum, even though it's not as present in the curriculum as I'd like it to be. So it's present because I make it present.

When asked about how this level of freedom in selecting lesson repertoire compared to the experiences of other voice students, Marie shared some insights into her music program's approach to voice lessons for students pursuing different majors within music. Marie described a setting where voice performance majors were held to more rigid, more specific requirements for their juries, while music education majors did not have the same requirements or receive feedback as frequently from the entire voice faculty. Although Marie seemed to characterize these differences as flexibility that allowed her to select recital repertoire based on her own preferences and goals, I wondered how other students might interpret this as a lack of structural support and a lack of clear expectations for students who are pursuing majors other than performance. Marie's word choice when describing her recital music selection and her sophomore jury reflected some awareness of these separate requirements for music education vs. performance majors, as well as perhaps a bit of an acknowledgement that this hasn't always been to her benefit:

I'm actually doing my recital for funsies. I'm doing like a research project for my degree. So I don't have to do juries, which means I don't get everything up to the voice faculty standards. So I'm not really looking for specific time periods [represented in the songs chosen for the recital]. My goal when I was selecting my music was that they were female and that they resonated with me in some way. My professor wouldn't really say no. He would just be like, "Do whatever you want." It doesn't have to be up to any standards except for his, but he doesn't really care about the songs that I pick, just as long as it is something that I'm comfortable with and really enjoy singing those songs.

Marie's story about feedback from her sophomore jury also revealed challenges created by a lack of exposure to the broader voice faculty, beyond her private lessons with her specific voice professor. As a music education major, Marie did not perform as regularly for other voice professors. Not only did this mean that she had less context for interpreting their feedback, but it also meant that she was not performing for additional faculty who possibly could have identified an underlying vocal health issue earlier. Although negative feedback and health issues can be difficult for any music major to process, critiques of a student's voice can feel deeply personal and lead to crises of confidence surrounding personal and professional identity. Marie described these experiences, saying:

I had to do my sophomore jury again because I didn't pass it. And a lot of the comments were like, "You might have a thyroid issue."

And I was like, “What?” And I guess in the moment, I guess I felt kind of discriminated against and I also was kind of upset with my teacher too, because he’s very particular. So I don’t think he heard all of my songs before my jury yet. So kind of anger towards him and the faculty. And he said that maybe I should get my thyroid checked out, and I did, and they found a small cyst on my thyroid.

And I went to like a bunch of doctors to see if it was actually affecting my voice. And the doctors were basically like, “It’s not cancerous, so you’re fine.”

And I told my teacher that, and he said, “Well, they’re gonna look at you as an average person and not a classical singer.” And basically he thinks that’s what affects my voice... I had this idea that I was gonna pass and then I didn’t. And I guess I also felt that I wasn’t good enough to still continue to be in the university.

Over the course of the six months following her sophomore jury, Marie practiced more and continued to develop her voice. Although the feedback from her previous jury made her nervous, she persevered, ultimately viewing her overall progress as a vocalist and work on her recital as both a source of pride and potentially an inspiration to her future students:

I ended up passing the second time. But then, some of the comments weren’t that encouraging. Because my professor made sure to tell them [the voice faculty] like, “She has this going on with her voice.”



And a lot of them were like, “Well, she has that going on. Maybe she shouldn’t sing,” and things like that. Yeah. I guess those comments... Maybe like this year, like two years ago, I wouldn’t have imagined myself doing a recital.

But I kind of went through this thing, where I can’t live for their comments. And I don’t study with them, so they don’t really know what my lessons are like, how hard I work. It’s kind of like they only see me once a year. I don’t even think they remember what I sounded like beforehand. But I guess I realize that I made all this progress, and I think it should be celebrated.

So that’s when I decided to do a recital with my really close friend. I’m really excited about it! Nervous, but I think this will just be a way for me to have that experience, in case I have a student who is nervous about doing a recital. And I’ll be like, “Well, this is me a couple of years ago.” So I guess I do it for my future students and also for me.

### ***Midnight***

Midnight, a 21-year-old senior commercial music major, described the challenges of navigating his predominantly White institution as a multiracial individual, since other students, faculty, and staff were likely to assume his racial identity was just Black. When in the company of his biracial (German and Black) father and biracial mother (Black and Native American), he shared that others might be more likely to pause and avoid making assumptions about his identity. For Midnight, selecting one category for racial identity for demographic purposes when applying for college admission and scholarship

consideration seemed too restrictive, even when it was intended to support members of the African American community:

When I get into ethnicity, I feel like they're [colleges] really trying to peg you to one specific race. And it feels like sometimes for scholarships, it's like, "Okay, this is what you are with this scholarship. You can't really be anything else." If I was a mix, I would not get the Black scholarship. But since I identified just as Black, then I would get the Black scholarship. But I'm like, "Is there really anybody with really just one race?" I sincerely doubt it. I sincerely doubt that anybody on this campus is just 100% that race and nothing else.

Midnight shared stories highlighting the importance of faculty members teaching about Black music and musicians in an authentic way. Although he attended a private institution that was the least racially diverse among the interview participants (Deloitte & Datawheel, n.d.), Midnight identified three White faculty members and one Black faculty member in the school of music who incorporated the works of diverse composers into their classes in meaningful ways. Surprisingly, this meant that Midnight's exposure to work beyond the western European art music canon in his classes exceeded the number of classes described by all other interview participants. He shared how the professors' approaches to these classes were received:

There are some teachers at my college that do know African American music and teach African American studies throughout the semester, even when it's not Black History Month. And it's only like four professors that I really know of off the top of my head that are able to do it, but they do it really good. I have taken classes

with all three of the professors, and I do appreciate how they teach, what their teaching style is, and how knowledgeable of it that they are. It's not like they're just reading out of a textbook. Because I know some people, they read off a script, read out of a textbook, or you go to a museum and they usually read out of the pamphlet. They [these specific faculty] know more, because you can see they're not reading off the pamphlet, they're not reading off the textbook, and they're actually getting into the piece. They're actually getting into the artist.

Midnight also shared that he saw his racial identity represented in his performances on drum set. To highlight this, he described one specific example of an opportunity to arrange a Michael Jackson medley for a school ensemble. Midnight worked with the only other Black commercial music student at the time to co-write a mash-up of different Michael Jackson tunes that was sure to be a crowd favorite. Midnight shared the arduous process of collaborating on the arrangement and getting everything notated for the band:

It took us at least a month and a half, staying up until 3:00 a.m. almost every night. I'm writing out this drum part, he's [the other Black student co-writing the medley] writing out the piano part, I'm helping him write it out because I've just got an ear for like when stuff should be mixed in, so I'm like, "Okay, you should cut off the lyrics here, you should go into this, you should pause for like a second and then go into this music." And I mean, it took us forever to do it... And then, three days before my concert, I got a concussion.

This concussion meant that Midnight was not only sidelined for the concert but also that he had to rethink his academic progress in his degree. University administrators recommended that he withdraw for the semester for medical reasons, but Midnight was reluctant to pursue that option because he had been succeeding in his classes with all A grades up to that point. Midnight's description of what transpired in the aftermath of his concussion depicted a lack of empathy and a lack of open communication from faculty, staff, and fellow students about both the short-term progress for the concert and his longer-term academic options.

I came to find out days later that I can't play on my own music that I wrote. I asked my doctor, and he's like, "No, you can't play. I'm sorry, but you cannot. You cannot play. You just had a concussion a couple of days ago. You cannot play, even with noise-cancelling headphones on. It's really just too much." And I can't play with noise-cancelling headphones, because I need to hear the music, and it's too loud. They don't want me to damage my hearing or anything further. I need to lay down, I need to rest.

They said unfortunately, I cannot play, but then I come to find out that I was already replaced. I'd already been replaced... They just assumed that I'm going to be out, and I didn't even tell you guys that I would be out yet. You just assumed that I was going to be out for the entire thing, and you didn't say, "Hey man, hope you're feeling better. If you can't play your song, I'll play your song for you. I'll make sure to shout you out, because this is your music." I didn't get a shout out, I didn't get any of that.

And then as the semester moves on, I finally get better. The school did not want me to come back. They wanted me to stay out. They thought I should do a medical withdrawal, and that was a whole battle within itself, because I hadn't even sent them any doctors' paperwork or anything yet, and they're already assuming that I'm gonna drop out of school, assuming that I'm not gonna come back. And then my disability advisor said, "You can't send a medical withdrawal to a student who's been out for two weeks. It's not like he's been out for eight months. It's not like he's not turned in any homework, or that he's used up all his absences." I had all As. It's not like I'm messing up all my classes.

You can't just send this person into medical withdrawal at the school, like you're telling him not just, "Oh, maybe you should take a rest and come back another semester. You're saying this kid should drop out of college." And then if you came back, I'll have to restart paying, get scholarships, like that's a whole hard thing to do, so I didn't drop out. I'm going back next semester. I really don't care what you guys say. So they loaded me with homework, I mean, I was taking more than 21 credits the next semester, because they wanted me to finish all the classes that I didn't finish. And then they wanted me to start all the classes that I needed to start. So I was taking like Theory I and Theory II at the same time.

...But the worst part that hurt me was that my song, the Michael Jackson medley is still getting played, and I still have never played it once. And I'm like, "I made this music." And so I'm talking to the commercial music director, and we've had a falling out a lot of times, and it's been hard with him. I went to the

commercial music director, and I'm like, "Hey, can I play my music? Can I be in the band?"

He's like, "You have to try out." I was literally in the band [when the program was brand new] before you even named it anything. I was in the band already playing. I was playing on four people's songs already. I just got sick and I couldn't play on it, but I'm better now, and I can play on it. So why is it that now I can't do this and I have to try out and everybody's listening to me again.

You have to think, "Did the band complain about me? What the heck is going on? ... This is my song. This is literally my song. I wrote the drum part for that. It doesn't make sense why you can't let me play my music." And technically, I can't copyright it, you're telling me, because it was Michael Jackson's music originally, so like I can't copyright it. You're telling me I can't play it because I don't own the rights of the music, so if *they* wanted to play it, they can change like one note and say it's their medley or arrangement now.

And so they used that song for at least two years. And it was the fans' most favorite song! The concerts went from being like 20 people to being over 1,000 kids. Outside, the university was using it on Parents' Weekend, on Football Weekend, on tailgating. They were all using my song and playing it again and again, and I never was able to play for it. Never.

Midnight's story revealed feelings of betrayal and a lack of support from the commercial music program, the school of music, and the university in general. In a time when he most needed an advocate to look out for his musical and academic interests, he

felt pressured to pursue a medical withdrawal. Based on his description of the events, it sounded like Midnight did not receive adequate guidance from the university about the medical withdrawal process and his options for re-enrolling at a later date, without having to reapply for admission or scholarship funding. Instead of characterizing the university as providing him with options to focus on recovery and well-being, Midnight used the words, “The school did not want me to come back.”

Although I was concerned that Midnight’s medical recovery and academic path toward graduation might be a bigger factor in his overall journey, that was not the case; instead, the disappointment of not being able to perform the Michael Jackson medley carried through into several other aspects of our interview. It seemed as though the director of the commercial music program kept moving the goalposts in ways that prevented Midnight from ever performing his own arrangement. Meanwhile, the university benefited from his work by showcasing it at public-facing events.

Between the lack of support surrounding his medical recovery and the exploitative nature of the commercial music program continuing to perform the Michael Jackson medley he co-wrote, it would be easy to think that Midnight might be hesitant about how he viewed his opportunities at the university. Despite this, his outlook remained optimistic. Midnight’s faculty members, particularly his professor teaching his private lessons in drum set, recognized not just the musical skills that he has developed but also celebrated his interpersonal skills that would support his success within a band setting. Midnight described this type of validation from his faculty:

And so what has been told to me by my drum set teaching and my other professors is, “We think you are really going somewhere... We school as really honestly the only thing that’s holding you back.” Like I would have been on the road [touring with a band], I would have been in an internship, I would have been doing something, but I have school, so that’s like been the most biggest thing that’s been holding me back. And they’re like, “If you could just graduate, it doesn’t matter what GPA you make, it doesn’t matter what grades you get, especially in the music industry. If you failed a music theory final, they won’t care.” In the music industry, it matters with how you are around them. What’s the hang? Do you hang well? You could be the best drummer of all time, but what they don’t teach you in college is like being a nice person, hanging out with people, how to be cool, how to not be awkward... That’s me all day... My drum teachers are just like, “You are a good drummer. You just need time performing.”

***RJ***

RJ, a 22-year-old senior music education major, described his racial identity as African American. Although he estimated that the student body within his school of music was about 60% White and 40% Black, that type of racial representation was not equally reflected within his music major course requirements or the racial demographics of the faculty teaching those classes. RJ identified one African American faculty member who taught both the elective music classes that focused on African American musical traditions. This specific faculty member was one of RJ’s only African American teachers throughout his entire educational journey, so RJ placed additional value on the feedback



he received from this professor. As a music education major, RJ completed courses in woodwind methods where he learned to play and teach beginning levels of woodwind instruments, including the clarinet. When his playing test for clarinet did not go well, RJ described how his frustration with the instrument spilled over into self-doubt. He shared how receiving critical feedback from his one African American professor carried even more weight, perhaps beyond what the professor even intended:

Me and the clarinet just didn't agree. No matter how hard I tried, covering the holes was not gonna happen. So I just remember getting through the end of the exam and him [the African American professor] being like, "RJ, I have to ask you, do you take what you do seriously?"

And I just remember walking away from that conversation like, "I... uh... eeesh..." For a while, I really almost resented him because of that. Because he was someone that I deeply looked up to as a role model, because he's one of the only African American faculty members on the faculty period and one of the only African American teachers I've had *ever*. So him saying that really hurt me for a while.

I now realize that what he was trying to say and what he meant in his heart was not what came across. I'm sure if I told him, he would apologize profusely and say, "That's not at all what I meant."

But at the time, that bruised me pretty bad. I remember leaving that exam and being like, "Well, what's the point of this again?"

Rather than processing that critical feedback as a source of motivation, RJ seemed to give the feedback from his African American professor additional weight. This critique came from one of the only teachers RJ had ever had who was also African American, from a man RJ viewed as a role model. I found it noteworthy that while other stories that RJ shared fit within a theme of lessons learned while overcoming obstacles, our conversation about the clarinet playing exam stopped there, without an attempt to find a silver lining.

One of RJ's stories of working through initial roadblocks to find success was the trumpet jury at the end of his sophomore year, which was required to progress on to the next level of lessons. RJ described factors that contributed to his feeling that his background in music put him a bit behind his peers, including his pre-college trumpet experiences and the COVID safety protocols in place in his early years of college. As one of 40 trumpet players in his large high school band, RJ's primary focus was on being a good player within a large section, rather than building up his chops as a solo musician. RJ had only one year of lessons prior to enrolling in college, so compared to his music major peers, he did not have the same foundation of playing fundamentals. When he got to college, RJ's first few years of music major study were disrupted by COVID safety protocols. He described how the approach to alternating weeks between virtual lessons and in-person lessons with social distancing allowed for some technique issues to slip by unaddressed. While RJ described feeling as though he was at a disadvantage in terms of physical playing ability, he also acknowledged the mental game involved in music making, particularly when he had encountered obstacles previously:

I was put in a situation to where my musical development, I started a little bit farther behind than the rest of my peers. So especially being that our trumpet studio at that time was on the steeper side in terms of competition, it kind of felt like I was putting myself at a disadvantage. Basically, it took me, in total, three successive attempts to finally “jury up” to the next level of lessons, which is... one of the biggest musical turning points I had in my undergraduate career. Before then, or the two previous times that ended in technical “failure,” I just felt like there were giant pitfalls that I couldn’t imagine how I was going to get over. It felt like honestly, the second one, felt like just a big stab to the back. Because you spend all the time working on it and hoping that things are gonna go your way, and then they don’t.

...Preparing [for the jury] was – as I’m sure a lot of music majors learned – a majority of preparation is not only just physical. A lot of it’s mental. So you have to in a way, prepare yourself to, or just get to a point to where you’re so mentally prepared that doing whatever it is physically is almost second nature to you, so you can just let your mind be free in the moment and concentration on what you’re actually doing. And then, when it came to achieving the goal, it felt... It felt kind of just like a giant weight off my shoulders or like, “Okay, I can finally relax.”

Because it was getting to the point where I was just having extreme self-doubt problems, because if I failed a third time, I don’t know what I would have done at that point. Because then it would’ve been a question of, “Okay, what’s

going on here? Am I doing the right thing at this point?” Which is not something you want to think, because, as I’m sure, many musicians have been there with self-doubt. It’s a hard feeling to overcome if you let it fester for too long.

RJ shared another example of how he confronted his self-doubt and overcame his challenges to reach his goal of becoming drum major for his college marching band. Being drum major was something he had aspired to throughout his high school and college years, but this leadership role remained elusive until his senior year of college. Finally, all the elements of musicianship, preparation, initiative, openness to feedback, and confidence were firing on all cylinders. RJ described the rewarding experience of achieving this long-term goal, saying:

I was the kid who had tried out for drum major every year of high school and didn’t make it. And then that year, that first year of college, I tried out again with my best friend. And she made it, and I didn’t. And I was like, “This is starting to become a little bit tedious.” So I tried out again, and I remember telling myself, “I’m giving this one more shot, and if it doesn’t work, I’m not gonna do it to myself again.”

Well, I tried out and... I got cut after the first round again and was very beside myself, because I immediately started to compare myself to the other candidates afterwards being like, “How in the world did I...? Okay...” At that point, my mind started asking the question of, “Is this something that you’re just not capable of, or is this just not for you?”

...It was really just a large sense of frustration. Just because it's like, "Okay, if it's not an effort thing, then what then? What is it?" I was just really confused, because I didn't know what I could be doing wrong. In hindsight, looking back on it, I can see obviously where the pitfalls were in technique or timing-wise. Also I now remember, this was the one time I specifically made it a point to where I met with both of the directors afterwards to ask them like, "What did I do wrong? What did you see that I can do better for next year?" Which I think definitely impacted my chances next year, because, long story short, I tried out this past year and made it!

...And going back in, I think that honestly might have been what really did it for me. I'm confident that he remembered me sitting in his office being like, "What can I do to fix this?"

And when I came back and was not just better fundamentally, but I was also probably just a billion times more confident, he probably was like, "Okay, yep, you're fine."

RJ's resilience in overcoming his own self-doubt and obstacles served him well in his undergraduate journey, but he recognized that the additional feeling of pressure to perform because of stereotype threat came from sources beyond himself. RJ shared a story of one of the other students in his trumpet studio who struggled with music theory classes. As Drew identified through their own navigation of sequential music major curricula with no margin for error that would not delay graduation, RJ's friend was automatically a year behind because of failing the first term of music theory. RJ described

how his community tried to rally around this friend to provide support, even while they also felt the weight of stereotype threat:

One of my fellow studio mates, he transferred in from a local community college, but we started our time at the university basically at the same time. He had a really hard go of it with his studies in music theory. So just watching him come to different people and be like, “Can you please help me out? I’m having a hard time with this.” And all of us did our best to try and help him out, without breaching our own academic integrity. We all tried our best to make time to help him, but he unfortunately ended up failing theory. There’s a long string of things, he’s had a really tough time of things. But he failed Theory I his first semester, and that automatically put him a year behind.

So just seeing this was, at first, really... I was going to say discouraging, but it wasn’t discouraging for me. I just felt deeply for him, because we could all relate to him and the fact that we all care a lot about this music and take what we do very seriously. So to see someone who you know is putting in a lot of effort fail at something, it hurts, but it means a little bit more to me when it’s someone I personally can relate to from a racial standpoint. In my past experience in other academic instances, it’s very easy for that to become “the norm,” or people will start to put a pattern together. Like, “Why is it all of these students?”

And where it’s like, “Yeah, that could just be chance.” But also people – and it’s not necessarily their fault – but people love to make patterns out of situations. So that’s just one I didn’t want to see start to be formed.

When I asked RJ if he had felt the need to speak up to defend himself or if he felt that he had to play the role of spokesperson on behalf of his racial identity to contradict those deficit narratives, RJ shared that he found the overall learning environment of his college to be supportive. He appreciated that some of his classes had included opportunities for open conversation about confronting racial bias and stereotyping, and he had experienced the power of allyship from folks within other racial communities:

Fortunately, no, I've never been in a situation where I feel like I had to say something to defend the cause of my community. I feel like in most situations I've been in, there have been good outspoken parts from both members of my community and members of other communities who don't directly align with mine, who speak positively of the African American community or any minority community, for that matter.

RJ's dedication to work tirelessly in pursuit of his goals, his skills in reframing setbacks as part of the learning process, and his connection to the African American community have supported his success in college and will continue to do so in the future. His insightful reflections about the mental preparations required in musical performance were valuable tools to complement his technique. RJ's experiences bringing his whole, authentic self into learning environments will inspire his future students to do likewise.

### ***Rose***

Rose, a 21-year-old senior flute performance major, described her racial identity as mixed race (White and Asian). Like Natika, Rose spent several years of her childhood

living in another country. She similarly highlighted the importance of shared language in finding community with other students:

I think there's only two other people that I have come across that can even speak Japanese around me... It's easier for me to connect with somebody who's a complete exchange student from Japan than it is to connect with somebody who was born and raised here.

Despite these challenges finding community based upon shared racial identities, Rose's bonds with her fellow musicians were very strong. Rose shared multiple stories centered around her support system of same-year peers, other members of the flute studio, and other musicians in her chamber ensembles. Her keen powers of observation and empathy for the lived experiences of others informed her critique of the normalized expectations for the level of financial privilege often associated with studying music at the collegiate level:

My professor made a comment once that said, "Oh yeah, buy your flutes, buy your music while you still have your parents' support." And not all of us do. So I bought my flute with all my savings... It hurts to try and afford like \$500 worth of sheet music every year, and I can do it, but I know people who can't, because it's like it's either that or groceries, or it's that or medical bills.

Although Rose was aware of these disparities, she also observed the power dynamics at play within the school of music that made speaking up or pushing back a calculated risk with potentially far-reaching effects on her career. When she did convey her concerns with her flute professor and administrators in the school of music earlier in



her undergraduate journey, she experienced a break in trust with her flute professor that required years to rebuild:

It's a music school thing in general to not say anything, because this professor is going to be the one that's writing all your letters of recommendation when you want to go to grad school, when you want to go into the professional world. Your name is going to be attached to this teacher, and if this teacher didn't like you, trying to find a job after that is going to be very difficult.

I will say that the flute studio did come together my first year, I believe, and try to talk to her [the flute professor] and bring in an administrator and have a talk about it, and it didn't go well. It took until now, like this year basically, for me to fix that. And it's basically rebuilding your reputation with your professor again.

So it's very difficult to try and say something, even if there's something that's an issue, even through course evaluations, if there's only a small number of people in the flute studio, if you say a specific thing that's happened in a lesson or a specific comment that was made, it's very easy to figure out who said that.

So most people don't say anything, and even myself, I don't say anything really when it comes to that anymore. I've just kind of brushed it off as "It's them being them." And if it doesn't actually hurt me or hurt someone else physically, I guess I usually don't say anything, unless I feel so far away removed from it that speaking up won't affect my career.

Rose's perception of power dynamics, the risks of challenging a status quo, and the futility of trying to advocate for herself extended into other settings outside of her private lessons. She acknowledged that other students are speaking up about the harm created in within these power imbalances, but she expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of meaningful change resulting from those dialogues: "I know quite a few people who are speaking up about it. Not that anything's getting done, but at least it's getting heard now."

These power dynamics stifling Rose's agency and her ability to advocate for herself not only took a toll mentally, but her sense of a lack of power also contributed to overuse injury from playing in too many ensembles in her junior year. Because of low enrollment in the flute studio, Rose was assigned to multiple large ensembles and chamber ensembles in the same term when she was presenting her junior recital. This led to days when Rose would be playing for eight or nine hours in rehearsals only, without even including time for practicing solo repertoire for her recital. Again, Rose shared that she felt she could not speak up about the physical impact of her ensemble assignments because of the power dynamics at play:

I never fully complained about it to anybody, because I saw the outcome of the people around me. There was a violinist who mentioned that opera rehearsals were just way too much... The violinist mentioned that he had work on one day and that it was going to be difficult for him to try to get that rescheduled. He needs to pay his bills. And they told him that he wasn't allowed to miss any of the rehearsals, any of the concerts, nothing. He wasn't allowed to miss it. It's

expected of him. It's part of his degree; it's part of his grade. There was no flexibility on that.

But also, you're not going to miss one violin player who's sitting in the back row, like it's not going to hurt everyone for one person to be missing. If it was me who had missed, who's playing the principal part, yeah, that does make a difference. So I saw that reaction come when someone who was in a full section, then compared to a small studio of flutes and then me having to play the only part that's provided, I knew I couldn't say anything.

When it came to the chamber group situation, I knew I couldn't say anything because there were no other flutes that could cover for me. And if I had dropped, then that would have hurt my group, and that's not fair to them... And it's like you can only do so much, and they're [the school of music] not willing to hire musicians either. I know it's a money thing, but also if you're going to program these concerts for full sections, you have to have the sections to start with...

And you cannot say you don't want to do both [large] ensembles, or else they threaten your scholarship. It's messed up. And I work in the school of music office; I know they're not allowed to do that. I know they're not supposed to, but they still do. And then, you also don't want to have a bad reputation with them, because once again, if you want to go look for a job and someone says, "Oh, do you know this person?" And you know that if they say something bad, then you

know you're not going to find any gigs around here, especially if you want to stay within this area. It's going to be hard.

### **Interview Themes Related to Research Sub-Questions**

Although no two interview participants shared exactly the same combination of characteristics, some common themes emerged across their interviews. To analyze these themes, I transcribed the Zoom recorded interviews and hand-coded them before sending them to the research participants for member checking. The approved interview transcripts and initial themes were then entered into NVivo, a qualitative data analysis computer software package, for ease of comparison of themes across multiple interviews. Themes were grouped according to Research Sub-Questions 3, 4, and 5: (a) how do music majors perceive their racial identity within undergraduate music education; (b) how do educational experiences support self-efficacy; and (c) how do educational experiences create barriers to self-efficacy?

#### ***Research Sub-Question 3: Perceived Racial Identity Within Undergraduate Music Education***

Throughout the interview process, students shared stories of representation (or the lack thereof) within their educational experiences that served as either windows or mirrors: too often, students from minoritized racial groups were presented with curricula and learning experiences that served as windows through which to view a world different from their own, as opposed to those educational experiences being mirrors that reflected their own identities, cultures, and lived experiences (Style, 1988). Recognizing the power of representation as a form of vicarious experience (Bandura, 1997), I asked students

where they saw their racial identity represented in their undergraduate music education experiences. Their responses touched broadly on demographics of the faculty and students surrounding them, their music major course content, their ensemble repertoire, and their literature for private lessons.

### *Fellow Students*

When asked to reflect on ways that they saw their racial identity represented in their undergraduate music education experiences, almost every student immediately described the mostly White demographics of the student body within their music program. Natika's somber reflection, "It's just really upsetting to realize that you're the only person like you in a program," captured the essence of feeling othered and separated from their peers at predominantly White institutions. Jim's reaction was more matter of fact: "The general make-up of the student body is majority of White... And that's just the state [where the school is located]. It's to be expected." Midnight seemed shocked to learn halfway through the academic year that another Black student was enrolled in his commercial music program within a predominantly White institution: "I found out yesterday that there is another Black person in commercial music, and I'm like, 'Since when?'" X's comments celebrating the racial diversity within his institution were the notable exception; however, because he was enrolled at the largest music program within the sample of interview participants, it would stand to reason that the number of students from different racial groups would be higher at that institution.

While this description of Whiteness was consistent with the broader racial demographics found among bachelor's degree-seeking students at NASM-accredited

institutions (HEADS, 2020), students' immediate awareness and readiness to count out the limited number of students of color within their music programs painted a harsh reality. That being said, stories of hope and meaningful connection across shared identities also offered hope for the positive impact that even a gradual increase in racial diversity in a recruitment class of new first-year students could have over time. This was seen in Drew's cautious optimism: "I make up I think 25% of the Black student body at the school of music I'm at right now. It went up by one [this year]!" Denise's powerful friendship with another Black female low brass player seemed to be a real source of comfort, strength, and belonging. Although connections across shared racial identities generally were few, the ones that existed were very meaningful.

### *Faculty*

Students often reflected on the racial representation of their faculty within the same breath as they considered the racial representation within their fellow students. X, Denise, Drew, and RJ immediately shared stories of important connections with a faculty member of color, illustrating the lasting impact that these interactions can have to support students of color. X described how Dr. Jones served as an inspiration, as a talented Black man well-respected by the community: "Seeing him be able to achieve that level of not just status but being a great person and being liked among the community was really cool. I felt like, 'Wow, maybe I could do this.'" Denise described a Black faculty member who leveraged curricular ambiguity to infuse diversity into a music history class: "It's about music after the 1900s, so that could mean anything. So he spent a good bit of time talking about Black musicians and how they've contributed to classical music."

Drew's words illustrated how students of color might appreciate learning from faculty of color as they navigate racialized experiences within higher education: "My one Black professor ever, he said, 'I don't hate White people. If I hated White people, I wouldn't live in this midwestern state.'"

While X, Denise, and Drew described positive interactions with a faculty member of color at their own college and conservatory music programs, RJ's story about one of the only African American professors in his music program was more complex. What does it mean to a student if they have a falling out with one of the only faculty members of color at their music program? As an African American man, RJ recognized not only the importance of having a collegiate faculty member who shared his racial identity, but he also contextualized this within his overall educational experiences. RJ shared that did not have many African American teachers at any grade level, from elementary school through to college. RJ even described this professor as a respected role model, which made receiving critical feedback from this professor carry additional emotional weight. Describing feeling "bruised" after this interaction, RJ talked about a level of distance and disconnect he felt after receiving that harsh feedback:

For a while, I really almost resented him because of that. Because he was someone that I deeply looked up to as a role model, because he's one of the only African American faculty members on the faculty period and one of the only African American teachers I've had *ever*. So him saying that really hurt me for a while. I now realize that what he was trying to say and what he meant in his heart was not what came across. I'm sure if I told him, he would apologize profusely

and say, “That’s not at all what I meant.” But at the time, that bruised me pretty bad.

While some students identified one or two faculty members sharing their racial identity who were mentors or role models, other students described a desire to work more closely with the few faculty of color in their music programs. May described her limited contact with a faculty member who taught lessons in another performance area: “I know Dr. Xu [a pseudonym] is Asian, but I don’t really get a chance to interact with her that often.” Jim wished for faculty of color to have teaching assignments that could infuse greater authenticity in his learning environment. He acknowledged that some of this is made more complex by the broad scope of survey classes for undergraduate students:

When classical musicians who are White faculty are lecturing about [jazz], there’s just a little bit of cognitive dissonance... And that’s not to say that White faculty aren’t capable of communicating these ideas and aren’t super well-educated and taking the time to familiarize themselves. But I do just wonder what we could gain by making more people of color part of the conversation. It’s the same thing when we talked about world music in that same [introductory music history] class. I do wonder, “How much can I learn about gamelan music from somebody who only studied it for two weeks in their undergrad?”

### *Classes*

Each interview participant named the centering of the western European art music canon as a key fixture of their undergraduate music education experiences, often while also critiquing this approach. This narrowing of perspective was obvious, even to first-



year students who had completed only one term of college at the time of their interviews. Natika expressed a desire for a broader perspective by saying, “I would like to have more classes or a bigger focus on non-classical music, non-European classical music.” As a sophomore, X balanced his hopes to eventually see his racial identity represented in jazz music theory with criticism of the limited focus of his studies at this point in time: “It’s very much European-focused. And I feel like it makes people with my racial identity or even in general, just question like, ‘Hmm, this wasn’t the only music going on around in the world at this time.’”

Many of the senior music majors shared perspectives that demonstrated the potential impact of institutional paths to either continuing to promote the western European art music canon or to disrupt this narrative. Drew considered how these curricular decisions signal belonging for students of color and could be factors in their decisions to either transfer or drop out from college:

A lot of what we’re learning right off the bat freshman and sophomore year is super oriented to White European people... A lot of it is not all that culturally significant if you’re not European. So I would not be surprised if that was a factor for some people [to transfer or drop out]. Like, “Oh, I thought I liked music, but this sucks,” which also is not a unique experience between different groups, but I think especially for students of color, it’s probably a consideration.

Denise had the unique opportunity to contribute to institutional change as part of her institution’s committee exploring diversity, equity, inclusion, and access. While many college and conservatory music programs teach their music history classes from

textbooks organized chronologically, starting with the music of ancient Greece and Gregorian chant (Burkholder et al., 2019), Denise's school of music restructured their curriculum to begin with a world music class: "...before you even talk about church music, chants, like all that stuff, we're talking about Balinese gamelan, Japanese koto, taiko drumming, all of that, and ways that other cultures use music in their culture, essentially." While this elevating of ethnomusicology is a breath of fresh air, Denise also acknowledged the gaps in this curricular approach: "In that class [the introductory music history class centering world music], we didn't really talk about Black music."

Midnight identified four faculty members who incorporated the work of diverse composers throughout the music curriculum in authentic ways that were unexpected within his predominantly White institution. He characterized their understanding of the contributions of Black artists to go much deeper than just the surface level and appreciated their efforts to draw attention to Black musicians throughout the entire year. While acknowledging that he sometimes felt pressured to represent his community in Black History Month concerts and events, Midnight recognized that these four professors avoided tokenism in their approaches to highlighting Black artists across their classes:

Some people, they read off a script, read out of a textbook, or you go to a museum and they usually read out of the pamphlet. They [these specific faculty] know more, because you can see they're not reading off the pamphlet, they're not reading off the textbook, and they're actually getting into the piece. They're actually getting into the artist.

### *Ensemble Repertoire*

Although some interview participants shared that their ensemble conductors made more attempts to represent diverse racial identities within their ensemble repertoire compared to their academic courses, this was not necessarily an overwhelmingly positive experience for all interview participants. Natika voiced a desire for greater authenticity and connection with the pieces her ensemble performed. Although she shared a positive example of an orchestral piece written by a Mexican composer that was conducted by a Mexican graduate student, Natika's other example from her ensemble repertoire revealed the struggle of trying to find any elements of representation at all. She identified Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story* overture as the next closest thing to racial representation in ensemble literature at her institution: "I wouldn't really call it a piece of South American music at all, but it's fun to listen to and it's inspired by [South American music], so I will take it always."

Marie described an authentic, meaningful music-making experience that so many of the other students were craving in their own studies: her ensemble conductor invited a guest teacher from Kenya to teach a song that used an African language text. Rather than relying on the ensemble's customary approach to learn the music by starting with pitches on nonsense syllables and later adding the text, the guest teacher taught both the pitches and text together, in a call-and-response format. Although Marie recognized that some of her classmates were less comfortable with this method of learning a piece of music, she identified this as an example of culturally responsive pedagogy and celebrated this approach. It is also worth noting that this particular song was not just a novelty

experience, where the ensemble might spend one rehearsal working with a guest conductor on a piece of music they would not perform in a future concert; this ensemble was selected for the honor of performing at a state music education conference and included the piece as part of their concert.

In addition to sharing that his band conductor programming pieces written by composers from diverse racial backgrounds, RJ described how some of the ensembles offered within the school of music were centered around African American history and musical traditions. This racial representation was reflected in jazz ensembles, gospel ensembles, modern ensembles, and more. RJ described the way that his music program highlighted the contributions of African American musicians by saying:

It [racial representation] comes out most often in music groups that have a musical genre that is deeply rooted in African American history. For example, our jazz ensemble and our jazz combos, they're obviously going to play mostly music by African American composers and arrangers, because that's where most of the music stems from. And this is also another course I forgot to mention, but it just came to my brain, which I don't know how I forgot it: there are actually two! We have a gospel choir and a modern music ensemble that specializes in music from roughly the 1960s and onward, so R&B, Motown, stuff like that. So those are two more courses, just to piggyback off earlier. Also, that bleeds into music being represented by groups and marginalized communities. From a traditional band and choir standpoint, I'd like to say that, at least from the band standpoint, both

our directors do a decent job trying to program music that is diverse in nature, whether it be from a racial or gender standpoint.

...This is my third year being in our wind ensemble, and every time we get a new piece that's by someone who's a living composer – because our conductor loves to program new music by living composers – he generally gives a brief bio of who the person is... More often than not, it's someone not of a majority background.

X's example of racial representation in ensemble repertoire was drawn from a high school All-State Band experience rather than his college years, demonstrating the enduring power of this type of experience. With new energy in our conversation, X described how meaningful it was to perform a composition written by Omar Thomas, a living American composer born to Guyanese parents (Thomas, n.d.):

We played a piece by Omar Thomas, and just hearing about being a Black composer and him also writing about transgender people and their fight throughout society – the conductor explained it to us. And he [Omar Thomas] also visited, which was really cool.

In contrast to the rich, meaningful memories that X had of playing music by a composer sharing his identities, May described her ensemble conductors' attempts at infusing diversity into concert programming as sometimes feeling tokenizing or “too forced on the theme.” Although she sometimes questioned the overall effect of the programming choices, she observed that different conductors' approaches to

contextualizing the work and educating the musicians about the background of the composer made an impact for her:

Dr. Jenkins [a pseudonym for the band conductor] made sure to bring in people that *knew* to talk about those pieces, which was very insightful and really nice to have someone else and not just like a White man trying to explain like what Spanish music is. But in orchestra... there's not really a full explanation and there's not too many inclusivity points, more so than like, "This woman, female composer, used to go this school, and so we're playing her piece." And so it feels more like it happens to be inclusive and not like a made effort to find these well-orchestrated pieces by lesser-known composers.

Rather than focusing primarily on the types of ensemble repertoire she played, Rose analyzed the availability of world music ensembles in her school of music. Although her institution offered some South Asian musical ensembles, East Asian music was not represented within the ensembles offered. This shift was made even more jarring to Rose because she spent many years in Japan with easy access to her cultural musical traditions: "I have that experience being around such music and growing up and going to festivals when it came to traditional drumming and guitar and all that. And I have never once experienced that here or heard of it, really." Even while explicitly naming her goal of becoming an orchestral flutist with a classical symphony, Rose still felt this dichotomy between her racial identity and ensemble opportunities at her institution.

### *Solo Repertoire*

For many interview participants, the prominence of the western European art music canon extended from their classes and ensemble repertoire into the repertoire for their private lessons. Fewer students seemed to interrogate the lack of representation in solo repertoire, though. X instinctually identified his tuba repertoire as having a narrower focus than his ensemble literature, without necessarily being able to point to a specific rationale for this difference:

I feel like I've played a lot more pieces by diverse composers in band than in my solo rep. I don't know why that's been the case, but it's [my solo tuba repertoire] been pretty strictly by certain composers who may be White or European, and maybe it seems a little less diverse of a field when I'm playing solo rep than my concert band music.

RJ similarly expressed frustration with a lack of diversity in the solo trumpet literature for his private lessons. Although he acknowledged the value of learning “standards” such as the trumpet concertos written by Austrian composer Josef Haydn or German composer Johann Hummel at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Burkholder et al., 2019), RJ was ready to perform pieces from outside of the western European art music canon. RJ conveyed his surprise and joy at finding a resource from Juilliard promoting the music of African American composers:

Rachel: Do you find that you have diversity represented in the types of solo music that you're playing in your lessons?

RJ: [with no pause before responding] No. [laughs]

Rachel: That was quick! [laughs]

RJ: This has been on my brain for a hot minute recently, because I just came across, as I'm getting to the later part of my undergrad journey, I was like... There's not a lot of repertoire out there by African Americans, especially getting to hear them get played, it's like picking needles out of a haystack. Not too long ago, I did a search for just trumpet music by African American composers, and I came back with, maybe there's like one... I'm thankful for this institution, because it's not the institution I was expecting to have this database, but they do – Juilliard has a database of music by African American composers. I was like, “Okay! Good on y'all for doing that!”

In contrast to this narrowing of the funnel of representation that X and RJ described, Drew celebrated their freedom to select their own solo euphonium repertoire written by diverse composers. While they characterized the experiences of their peers who were studying other performance areas as having more limited or prescribed repertoire lists, Drew described their own circumstances as being very fortunate, but not without challenges for executing a successful performance:

I think compared to my classmates, I get to exercise a lot of autonomy when it comes to choosing my own repertoire... And I noticed, especially with my vocalist major colleagues, I've been to a few of their senior recitals this semester. And it's all very like, “Yeah, that's about right.” Like, you know, just pretty standard Western art music, just all the standards. “Cool, and you did it really well, but it's a little cookie cutter. Not a lot of representation.”



And I work really hard to have a lot of different repertoire spanning a lot of different backgrounds with my solo programming and stuff like that. And I'm really lucky my tuba professor lets me do that! And sometimes it kind of bites me in the butt a little bit, because then I find really obscure things that don't have recordings. And I'm like, "That sounds fine, probably." And then it's not. But I think, independently, I get to find representation where I institutionally don't get to see it otherwise.

Drew's story highlighted that even with their stated value of disrupting the status quo of the western European art music canon within their solo repertoire, they still encountered barriers imposed by the power structures of the music industry. Drew identified the importance of having access to professional recordings of newer compositions written by diverse composers as part of the learning journey, since recordings often informed aspects of their own musical interpretation. Without these resources, students like Drew may feel less confident in their ability to execute a successful performance of newer compositions written by diverse composers.

Like Drew, Marie enjoyed the freedom to select solo literature written by women composers and by people of color. Rather than being forced into a cookie cutter approach to selecting voice recital repertoire from a predetermined menu of compositions, historical era, or musical styles, Marie's voice professor gave her the flexibility to select music written by composers with many diverse identities. Marie recognized the value of seeing her identity reflected in the music she performed. Although her stories highlighted her gratitude for her voice professor's somewhat *laissez-faire* approach to lesson

repertoire, Marie also used the word “upset” to describe how she felt about having not encountered these composers prior to college:

If I knew of the composers that I grew to love now, I would have probably incorporated that into my audition into my university. I would have had more background knowledge about those composers, instead of learning them in my sophomore and junior year. I don't know.

I guess it is kind of surprising, because my high school teacher was a Black woman. So I thought she would have made a point to introduce those composers to us, especially since there was like a couple of us looking into going to college for music. It wasn't a lot of us, but there was a good four or five people. I think that would have been really helpful for us to know that we were represented, instead of going to a prestigious White institution, where I am right now, where I would see those composers but not know about them beforehand. I guess I feel like I would have loved to hear about them more when I was in high school.

While Drew and Marie were actively responsible for the infusion of works by diverse composers in their private lessons, Midnight's experience was the standout, with his commercial music drum set instructor intentionally incorporating Black drummers into their private lessons. Midnight described a sense of surprise when his instructor, who has performed most recently with country bands, introduced him to Black musicians and techniques that he had not previously encountered:

My drum set lesson teacher, he definitely includes it [information about Black artists] every time we're learning lessons or anything, he's telling me about Black drummers and things I've never even known of before, and he always talks to me about them and includes the way they play in the music. He tells me like how they play, a certain way they play, what they were famous for, about their whole band, about James Brown... That's why I really appreciate his knowledge with all the Black musicians that he's told me about.

### ***Summary of Research Sub-Question 3***

Interview participants largely did not see their racial identities represented in their music education experiences. Students of color frequently described feeling as one of the only folks in their music program of their racial identity, and they described their faculty as being predominantly White as well. While some students found racial representation in a limited number of classes or ensembles, these opportunities were primarily electives rather than required elements of the curriculum. Representation within ensemble repertoire was moderately well-received by students, but many found it to be tokenizing or inauthentic. Two students had the power to select music from composers with diverse identities within their solo lesson repertoire. Across all these elements within students' learning experiences, there was an overwhelming desire for greater racial representation.

### ***Research Sub-Question 4: Educational Experiences Supporting Self-Efficacy***

Despite the challenges of finding racial representation within their peers, their faculty, and many aspects of their music education, the interview participants shared many inspirational stories of hope and success that strengthened their self-efficacy

beliefs. Students of color carved their own paths toward their individual goals, built their own communities of belonging, embraced encouragement from faculty, and developed their repertoire of coping mechanisms to support effective musical performance.

### *Mastery Experience*

As expected for the strongest source of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), the students' evidence of past success played a critical role in supporting their self-efficacy beliefs. The interview participants shared a broad range of stories of their reaching goals related to solo performance, graduate school applications, and professional development. The most poignant examples were connected by the common thread of the students' own initiative and their willingness to persevere as they pursued their goals.

Students' stories of personal triumph showcased the possibilities for reaching their goals if given the freedom for their own initiative to blossom. Natika, Drew, and Denise shared meaningful examples of times when their past performance served as a motivator for future efforts. These stories illustrated the impact of having a clear vision for their goals and the energy to pursue those goals tirelessly.

Although Natika's pre-college flute instructor was a specialist in historical flute playing and provided a solid foundation in this area, her current professor at her college did not share this focus. Consequently, her lessons leading up to a recent recital did not include a lot of guidance on how to execute the musical idioms associated with Baroque era flute music. However, when it came time to perform, Natika drew from the well of her past knowledge to support a successful performance and infuse joy into the experience:

I hadn't played Baroque in a long time. It was really funny because I hadn't written in any of the ornaments, but I know how to ornament music, so I used kind of improvised ornaments for the entire thing and it made me really happy!

Drew's achievement in creating a portfolio of their music to apply to graduate composition programs similarly showcased a drive to succeed on their own, outside of the structures and supports of their college faculty and coursework. Although Drew was pursuing a major in music education, they developed a love of composition that first emerged when they were a high school senior, channeling their free time during the COVID-19 pandemic into writing music. When they arrived at college, Drew found that an academic class in composition was not the best fit for what they wanted to accomplish. Instead, they sought out private composition lessons conducted via Zoom that were not part of their registered credit hour load with the university. Drew described their accomplishments in not only writing music within their private lessons but also seeking out opportunities for their works to be read, rehearsed, recorded, and ultimately included in a concert program for their school's wind ensemble:

With the wind ensemble at my school, there's like a reading session at the end of the semester, and so we've been reading my stuff since sophomore year, I think. One of the pieces we read last year, the wind ensemble took time out of rehearsal to record it for me for my portfolio. And then our directed asked me if – her wording was, “Are you okay if we perform this next semester?”

Denise's individual drive resulted in her landing a prestigious internship with a prominent arts organization, which empowered her to confront imposter syndrome in

other areas of her life. Fairly early in her undergraduate career, she took the initiative to research and apply for the position, beating out the competition to be selected for her role with the organization. Although she had an impressive resume of performance experience and leadership roles as a school of music admissions ambassador working with prospective students and their families, this internship opportunity was a powerful first leap for Denise into the arts administration world. She overcame imposter syndrome and found her own paths forward in this journey:

It was like so early on in my career too, my “collegiate career.” So I kind of felt like I didn’t deserve it. And then, at the same time, I was like, “No, but I really want this!” And like, “Why else would they pick me? Obviously they love my resume and my interview and da da da,” but I was super excited, and I guess sometimes that imposter syndrome is like, “Did you really earn that?”

Natika’s Baroque flute performance, Drew’s composition portfolio, and Denise’s internship painted the picture of students of color going above and beyond to find their pathways toward success. By drawing from previous experience and bravely challenging self-doubt, these students demonstrated not only their potential to reach one goal, but their accomplishments also served as evidence that inspired their future pursuits.

#### *Vicarious Experience*

Although many of the interview participants voiced their frustration with the lack of racial diversity within their music program, students found belonging by exploring other dimensions of identity and interest. This shift among their intersecting identities

(Crenshaw, 1995) supported their sense of pride within their communities as they developed personal and professional relationships with their classmates.

Three interview participants (Jim, Natika, and Drew) shared that they were part of the LGBTQIA community, and each of them reflected on ways that this identity impacted how they navigated the world around them. Jim identified his opportunities to participate in music and the arts as pivotal in the development of his confidence and his interests as early as late elementary school. Despite having a negative experience with another teacher who he felt pathologized aspects of his identities, Jim described the importance of his early experiences in music:

I had one particular teacher that was – you know, there’s just some really bad teachers, right? – who I didn’t feel like had my best interests at heart per se. And there was a constant dialogue with my mom about this as well. And I don’t want to misrepresent this teacher, but it felt, based on the rest of the makeup of students at that school and the rest of everything that was going on, that it could have been racially motivated, and that this teacher thought that I had certain mental issues that simply weren’t in existence. And it made about one and a half years of my life really unpleasant.

Fortunately, I proceeded to have another teacher that was incredibly supportive, and helped me recover from that, and like, “Oh, I actually am good at school. Oh I actually can be good at music.” That was another thing: I had a very influential music teacher in elementary school who always made me feel like I was good at accomplishing things, and I feel like that definitely steered me toward

the field of music. And she also was just the most inclusive, kind person, regardless of people's backgrounds. She was always trying to make people feel wanted. And I really did appreciate that... I also did a bit of theater when I was younger and she was in contact with a lot of theater people in the area.

And so I feel like from a very early age, music was a place where I could feel safe and where I could express myself honestly. A place where really, most of all, I could be successful... I feel like my unique perspective is – you know, if it can help somebody else maybe that's going through a hard time in a similar situation to me, it's a story that hopefully can help other people get through that.

Natika acknowledged that, as someone enrolled in a music school at a predominantly White institution, there were not that many students of color compared with the overall student body. However, when asked to think more broadly about identity and other students she could identify with, she joyfully described the LGBTQIA community, celebrating a victory for one member of the community as a victory for all:

The school of music is very queer, I will admit! And I'm always happy to see them achieve stuff, because it's like, "YES! We got it!" One of the other chamber players, she's an education major/music education, but she's always been asked to play for everything and she's always been asked to collaborate with the chamber ensembles because she's so good. And it's great to see, because (1) she's Black, (2) she's queer, and (3) I love her, she's super nice!

Drew shared different examples of stories navigating the spaces around them as a nonbinary individual, including the music school community at their university, K-12



schools for their music education practica, and the broader geographical setting within the midwestern United States. Drew's insights into power dynamics and interpersonal relationships yielded powerful insights about the vulnerability required to show up authentically in each of these arenas compared with practical concerns for safety and school policies:

I'm nonbinary, and I didn't come out publicly until 2021, right before my second semester of college, and I was really anxious. Some people were really great about it, and some people were awful about it. And it was hard, because I do have gender dysphoria, and so having people be like, "Are you sure? This seems like kind of a quick decision."

[My response was] Like, "Oh, that's so cute!" I was really bad about advocating about my pronouns being they/them. I skill kind of am. I'm better about it, I'm more up front about it, but it's not a thing I bring up, particularly in the Midwest, unless someone asks me. Because I also figure if someone asks your pronouns, they're probably not gonna hate crime you for it or complain to someone about it...

I've also had kids in my practicum ask me my pronouns, which is always like really, really sweet, but especially in the district that I'm going to be student teaching in, you're not supposed to ask kids their pronouns, and you're supposed to like report it and stuff if they do tell you, "I go by a different name," or like, "I don't use these pronouns," or, "I'm gay." And it's awful. So it's been really weird navigating that...

But also, my classmates and my friends are really good about using they/them pronouns and stuff and really chill about it. And so like, it's this back-and-forth between like, "This is what I have to put up with right now" and then also like, "If this person in my life matters, then they're gonna use they/them pronouns."

Rose and X described strong bonds with other students in their same year of college music major study that transcended racial identity. With a social circle confounding the stereotypical divide between jazz-emphasis and classical-emphasis musicians or convention silos of instrument studios, Rose shared examples of times when she and her friends showed up to support one another in pursuit of their goals:

Seeing my friends reach their goals and what they want to do in music, when it comes to competitions or summer festivals, it's really nice to see their efforts come across as well, and I usually end up proofreading or helping with listening to tapes and such before they submit. I will say that it's nice to see everyone around me just kind of getting to where they want to be as well.

X found camaraderie with other students in his same year of study to be particularly reassuring when an ensemble audition in his second year did not turn out as well as he had hoped. In direct contrast to the weight of stereotype threat sometimes experienced by Jim, RJ, and Denise, who shared that they felt pressure to be exceptional to avoid perpetuating negative stereotypes about their racial identity, X's navigation of his identity as a music major and shared similarities with other members of the sophomore class supported an important shift in perspective for him. By seeing the

broader trends of how other tubists performed in their auditions and the changes made over time, X instead focused more on his overall progress rather than the results of a single audition. In this way, he was not alone in processing the results of a disappointing audition and through this solidarity, he found ways to reframe his thinking about his overall musical journey:

There are times when I do identify as African American and that does affect certain things, but I guess one experience is that ensemble audition, I was telling you I moved down but also a lot of people within my class moved down. Sure, it wasn't the best way to feel good or better about me moving down, but it did make me feel better when I was seeing like how I wasn't the only one who was struggling at the time but it was also people within my class that were as well.

When students of color were not able to find community with others sharing their same racial identity, they instead formed connections with students based on other shared characteristics, such as membership within the LGBTQIA community or within the same year of music major study. The networks that the interview participants described showcased the interdependence of social groups within schools of music, providing opportunities for students of color to both be supported and provide support to others.

#### *Verbal and Social Persuasion*

Although Bandura (1997) identified verbal and social persuasion as being less powerful as a source of self-efficacy when compared with mastery experience and vicarious experience, undergraduate music majors of color frequently cited encouragement from others as a lifeline. Kind words and well-phrased feedback validated

their presence in the field of music. Surprisingly, feedback from faculty members other than their applied lesson faculty seemed to create the most positive impact on students' confidence in their ability to succeed. Jim, Midnight, Denise, and Rose shared examples of when another faculty member's words made a difference in their undergraduate journeys. RJ shared an example of receiving encouragement from a fellow student.

Jim received important validation on his first day of college that affirmed his belonging in the field of music. While many students may experience some stress and anxiety surrounding their music theory and aural skills courses, these were areas where Jim had considerable strengths. The placements completed on the first day of his first term of college meant that he would be assigned to a more advanced section, and the faculty member administering the placement went out of his way to offer encouragement:

Just having a faculty member confirm this and be like, "Yeah, you're good at this thing!" It was really nice, and I'm not sure if they understood how much that meant to me, but it has sort of helped propel me through.

Midnight developed a particularly meaningful relationship with an adjunct faculty member who was teaching for just one term within his commercial music program. As part of a course related to professional development and career exploration within commercial music, Midnight had opportunities to dialogue with this faculty member about his own interests and goals. He commented on how this seemed like a deeper level of investment than what he was accustomed to seeing with faculty who had taught multiple courses across his undergraduate curriculum. This adjunct faculty member was committed to working with these students each week, either virtually or by traveling from

out-of-state to meet in person. Midnight described how meaningful this investment was, saying, “He’s talked to us, and he’s actually time to get to know each one of us personally.”

During Denise’s preparations for graduate school auditions, she performed for a faculty member who taught another instrument at her institution. In a moment of vulnerability, she shared her concerns about not being ready. The faculty member responded by delivering encouragement in the form of factual observations he had made about her:

He was telling me that I was smart. I was capable, and that people like me, and that I’m going to make it super far, and there’s no doubt about it... He was just so like matter-of-fact... Just like super nonchalant. It was that easy and the way he just delivered it to me, I was like, “Wow, he naturally feels this way about me! Someone believes in me!” ...it was just like, “Wow! You see me for who I really am! And do you even know I’m Black? [laughter] Does that cross your mind at all?”

Although Rose acknowledged the influence and impact that her flute professor has had on her educational journey, her interview devoted almost equal time to describing the encouragement she received from another woodwind faculty member. Her previous work with this professor in chamber ensembles and woodwind performance classes created a supportive foundation that played an unexpectedly large role in her preparations for summer programs and graduate school auditions. Rose described the outstanding support she received from this faculty member, saying:

I've known him [Prof. Fritz, a pseudonym] since I first came here, so he's sat in on every single one of my performance classes, as well as juries once a quarter for every quarter that I've been here. He was my chamber coach for my second year... It was like about an hour to an hour and a half every week. I will say he's much more generous when it comes to lessons and chamber coaching times than most professors should be, I guess, or expected to be.

Between my second and third year, that summer I went to a summer program and I had two pieces that I was going to play there that I wasn't quite confident on. And after I played it in performance class, it was probably midway through the term, he told me, "Yeah, I'm actually really familiar with the pieces. I've taught lessons in those pieces before. I know exactly what those pieces ask for. Please come to me for a lesson, I'll give you a lesson." And it ended up being like a two-hour lesson for free. And he had great information when it came to that...

When I went to go audition [for a graduate program], I left right after juries. So the woodwind faculty were aware that I was leaving for an audition. That's why I had to get the first jury slot; I was on a plane right after. So seeing all the jury forms come back and reading them, they all encouraged me like, "Yeah, you're going to do great! Break a leg! Have a great audition! Have a great time over there!" I will say it's really encouraging, seeing that from professors directly, because in most schools you don't really get that, but because my school is so small, everyone gets to know your name and see your growth.

But I got a separate email from Prof. Fritz, who wrote one of my recommendation letters, and it specifically said, “Don’t take no for an answer. You deserve to be there. You deserve to go to school there, and you’re going to great in your audition.”

Encouragement from faculty played such a significant role in bolstering a sense of belonging for Jim, Denise, and Rose. Their stories highlighted how meaningful these interactions can be, even if the faculty member providing that feedback is not someone with whom they have regular contact. Perhaps feeling seen and validated by folks who were not primary teachers or mentors was more unexpected and thus made these interactions stand out more in their memories. Even relatively small interactions were still able to make such a positive impact upon the lives of these students.

RJ shared a story about receiving encouragement from a fellow member of his trumpet studio who graduated from a rival high school in his hometown. He described how elements of their high school band experiences were similar, including feeling like just one small part of a large section in an even larger band. In a moment of vulnerable relatability, this same-year peer acknowledged the difficulty associated with music major study, particularly early in their undergraduate lessons and then inspired RJ to stick with it and trust the process:

Early on, when I was struggling with just finding a good fundamental ground or getting over the hump of progressing with my playing, she [RJ’s friend in the trumpet studio] was a really good anchor I had and was always a good voice of encouragement, in just being like, “What we do is hard. It’s going to suck for a

while, and it's okay to not always be at the top of your game. It takes time to get there.”

### *Emotional and Physiological States*

Bandura (1997) recognized the impact that stress, anxiety, and awareness of the body can have upon one's confidence in their ability to succeed in performing a task. It is imperative that musicians develop coping mechanisms to navigate levels of Music Performance Anxiety (MPA) associated with performing concerts and recitals (Herman & T. Clark, 2023). Many of the interview participants discussed ways that they were able to leverage their mind-body connection to positively impact their performance, both in day-to-day practice sessions and in the concert setting itself.

X described how reading psychology and self-help books enhanced his awareness of his mood and his body when he played tuba. Through his reading, X was able to develop skills for reflecting on both emotions and the physical processes at work when making music. He gave himself the space to name any feelings of nervousness or fear, but after this acknowledgement, he did not dwell on these emotions and give them additional power. Instead, X shifted his focus to areas he could control within his musical performance:

A common misconception that people have is that fear, which is a natural response, impairs the performance. And yes it can, if you let it overtake you. But fear evolved to help us out. And so through all of these exercises and diffusion and most importantly not fighting those thoughts of fear, that really helps you separate your feelings from how you perform.



Drew described how a quick chat with their tuba professor during intermission for their recital provided a much-needed mental and physical reset. The physical and mental demands of tackling some challenging recital repertoire were taking their toll on Drew; however, a few words from their professor were all it took for Drew to be reminded of the importance of good posture and breath support. By breaking down the physical components that contributed to a successful performance, Drew was able to implement key adjustments to improve their playing:

My tuba professor was like, “I bet your chops are hurting right now too, right?”

And it’s like, “Yeah.”

He’s like, “Yeah, because your posture sucks and you’re not breathing.”

...It was really wild, because you could hear, like there were high notes that I wasn’t hitting super well in the first half, and I was worried about the second half, just like, “Man, my face is already tired. This isn’t gonna go well.”

And it’s amazing what posture and breathing can do, because I’m not like curled over my euphonium like a little shrimp. And all of the sudden, I can just play C5s [the C one octave above middle C, which is in the higher range for the euphonium] casually, and so it was just amazing how immediate, intangible the differences were. It was crazy.

RJ shared how breathing strategies and mentally confronting his nerves soothed his anxieties in conducting and trumpet playing scenarios. His trumpet professor recommended intentionally moving air through the instrument without actually playing notes as a way to diffuse some of the nervous tension when playing. By being attuned to

his breath and employing some metacognitive strategies, RJ was able to transfer this skill into his conducting practice as well:

I was walking up to start conducting the class, and my hand was shaking so bad, I couldn't hold onto my baton. So I had to take a second and stop myself [demonstrates holding hand still] and go, "Okay. It's okay. Calm down. Just do the thing." And we got through it, but that's one of the very specific moments where I felt the direct correlation between being... It's almost like me being aware that I was shaking made it 20 times worse. I had to tell myself, "Stop, let it happen. You'll be okay."

...This connects back to my trumpet playing, because similar effects happen when I'm nervous. I start shaking the horn, not nearly as bad as when I'm holding the baton, because the baton's much lighter. But still, there are times where, if you shake your trumpet, you can tell, because it's like, "That's not vibrato; that's you shaking." [laughs]

So one of the exercises my teacher has been using, before I go to play a phrase, he's like, "If you feel yourself getting nervous, just breathe in, blow air through your horn, like not viciously, but enough to where you feel like you're actively exhausting air. No one's gonna be able to hear it, and you just pretend you're blowing out whatever it is you have to. But whatever nervous energy you have, just get rid of it. Breathe in again, and then just play."

Rose described how a shift in the terminology used to describe breath support changed her thinking and ultimately impacted her performance. While studying abroad,

Rose encountered new perspectives and approaches to music making that challenged her previously-held beliefs about playing the flute. Rose characterized American approaches to playing flute as being very strict, with very exact instructions on how to hold the instrument and how to shape the lips. Her flute instructor abroad took a different approach, reframing concepts such as “don’t hold tension” to “be loose.” Rose found this approach to be incredibly liberating for her playing:

My biggest moment that I had in my playing from like my physical self, that improved a lot when I went abroad and heard a different perspective when it came to playing. Like here in the U.S. in general, whenever people are teaching how to play flute, they always say, “Support! Support!” And that’s all they use.

And it’s like, “Great, what does that mean?”

And they’ll always say, “Loosen up! No tension!” But then they’ll also say, “Your arms have to be at this angle, your flute has to be at this angle, and your embouchure has to be like this.” And it’s very strict.

While studying abroad, I studied with someone who didn’t use the word “support” at all. So basically, it was very different, very new. She was all about being loose. And it wasn’t always saying, “Lose the tension.” It was, “Be loose.” And hearing that, it’s not that big of a difference, but it’s a difference when you’re playing.

#### ***Summary of Research Sub-Question 4***

Students of color described inspiring educational experiences from all four sources of self-efficacy: (a) mastery experience; (b) vicarious experience; (c) verbal and

social persuasion; and (d) emotional and physiological states (Bandura, 1997). Mastery experiences were driven by students' own initiative and often occurred without the student having received specific institutional support to reach their goals. When they did not find fellow students who shared their racial identities, students of color drew from their intersecting identities to find connection amongst members of the LGBTQIA community and same-year peers. Words of encouragement from faculty outside of the students' primary performance area were especially meaningful. Mental strategies and breathing exercises shaped students' emotional and physiological states to contribute to successful performances.

***Research Sub-Question 5: Educational Experiences Creating Barriers to Self-Efficacy***

Although my goal for my interviews was to utilize a strengths-based lens to celebrate the achievements of students of color and identify aspects of their educational experiences to support their success, it is also imperative that I acknowledge the reality of systemic barriers to their self-efficacy. In this way, I can honor the stories of the students who completed interviews, challenge the status quo, and critique attempted reforms that may not be living up to their stated intent (Bernal, 2002; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

***Mastery Experience***

Bandura (1997) identified previous success as the biggest influence upon an individual's self-efficacy beliefs; however, institutions may inadvertently be creating roadblocks for students to have those mastery experiences. University-wide and program-

specific policies and practices could function as gatekeeping, reserving access to certain opportunities for different student populations.

As a first-year student, Natika described a few structures in her school of music program that appeared to be the product of curricular design: while juniors, seniors, and graduate-level students were rotated among three different ensembles, first-year and sophomore students typically were relegated to a band. This stratification of ensemble assignments could mean that a student might not have exposure to orchestral repertoire until more than halfway through their undergraduate journey. Natika shared how her ensemble assignment meant that she wasn't finding the music to be very fulfilling or supportive of her goal of becoming a professional orchestral flutist: "I got a lot of not important parts... It didn't really have much to do with what I was studying at the time."

Midnight also described how changes in audition processes for membership in ensembles felt like the goalposts were constantly moving. To Midnight, it seemed as though institutional policies were creating barriers preventing him from performing the Michael Jackson medley that he had arranged with another student. The rationale for these differences in audition requirements or practices was not explained in a satisfactory way to Midnight, since years later, he was still baffled by this turn of events:

I'm like, "Hey, can I play my music? Can I be in the band?"

He's like, "You have to try out." I was literally in the band [when the program was brand new] before you even named it anything. I was in the band already playing. I was playing on four people's songs already. I just got sick and I

couldn't play on it, but I'm better now, and I can play on it. So why is it that now I can't do this and I have to try out and everybody's listening to me again.

May expressed a sense that the graduate-level students in her bassoon studio took precedence, compared with the undergraduate-level students. May shared that she felt that the graduate students were receiving a different type of repertoire, different feedback, and different opportunities than the undergraduate students in the bassoon studio. A later shift in the distribution of undergraduate- and graduate-level students in the studio meant that approaches to studio classes were adapted to better meet the needs of undergraduate students. Although May valued these changes, she also described how the initial focus prioritizing solo repertoire and feedback for graduate students meant she received less support earlier in her studies for learning orchestral excerpts typically included in auditions for summer festivals and professional orchestras:

I felt like in my first two years [of college], a lot of the focus landed more on solo repertoire. And it was kind of like excerpts and those, I guess, more traditional orchestral things got left behind at least for me because I wasn't well prepared... I think the studio vibe tends to be more master-classy sometimes where there's not much studio input and there's a lot more professor-to-one-person input, which is really helpful to watch sometimes, but sometimes you need to practice critique and talk within your studio.

And so I think there's so much more of that this year... There were plenty of mock auditions and just a lot more focus [on excerpts], and I think that also probably has to do with there being three freshman and just more undergrads in

the studio. And that's something that we needed to start working on and applying to all these summer things. It's a given that you're going to have to learn all this.

May also described some curricular inequalities within her music program, since some but not all instruments had required courses on orchestral excerpts. Without orchestral excerpts being a stated priority within the curriculum, May observed that not all performance majors were being equally prepared to head out into professional auditions. She acknowledged that some faculty tried to meet these needs through studio classes and performance classes, but these approaches were subject to individual faculty preferences:

I think for woodwinds, there's not an excerpts class. I know the clarinet studio... tends to have certain studio classes designated for excerpts. My studio too, we have studios where it's a mock audition and then we focus on excerpts after. And I know brass has an excerpt class, like as a separate class you could take. But I feel like there's not too much in the sense of a specific excerpts for orchestral auditions class [for woodwinds].

It is unclear to what extent music faculty, staff, and administrators solicit student feedback and examine curricular disconnects, where students like Natika and May have identified that their needs are not being met. While they recognized that performance opportunities in an orchestra and participation in summer festivals were critical to developing skills necessary to launch their professional careers, they did not have access to opportunities that would further their progress toward their goals, particularly in their earlier years of study. Without access to these types of mastery experiences (Bandura,

1997), students would not have the same level of confidence in their ability to succeed in the field of music.

Although students like Drew and Denise shared stories of personal triumph in pursuit of their own goals, it was notable that both these students reflected on their successes despite gaps in support from their institutions. Drew applied to graduate programs in composition but wasn't taking composition lessons through their school of music. Denise secured a prestigious internship without any guidance from the university's career services office. In both examples, faculty and staff can learn lessons about ways that college and conservatory music programs can better meet the needs of its students.

Drew described the trade-offs of seeking composition study outside of the boundaries of lessons for registered credit and their school of music. The flexibility of being able to move at their own pace was a real advantage, but Drew also recognized that by working in private Zoom lessons with a composition instructor who was not affiliated with the university, they did not enjoy the same access to resources as students studying composition at the school. Drew shared some of their rationale behind the decision to seek out instruction beyond the school:

Pretty much everything I do is like independent with composition, and I kind of prefer it honestly, because the one composition class that I had for credit was pretty awful. It also wasn't taught by one of the composition faculty; it was a music education professor who it kind of felt like he gave up. So that wasn't



great, but I am very self-motivated in composition, and so I don't need to take it for credit to get a lot done.

Despite this initial mismatch in finding a composition instructor, Drew's motivation as a self-starter meant they were actively seeking out opportunities to have their works read by the university wind ensemble to build their portfolio. They shared that even though the chance to have the wind ensemble read through student compositions wasn't a widely known opportunity initially, they have had pieces read by the group in five terms and even included in regular concerts. If Drew hadn't possessed such incredible initiative to take the risks of having their compositions read by the wind ensemble, they might not have developed the confidence to apply to graduate programs for composition, and other students might not have viewed the reading sessions as something accessible that they might one day participate in as a student composer.

Denise's achievement of earning an internship with a prestigious arts organization was entirely self-motivated and self-supported. Although she recognized the value of the professional network of her performance faculty in creating connections for graduate programs and professional orchestral work, Denise did not have similar contacts on the arts administration side to help grease the wheels of her pursuit of this internship. She described her frustrations when trying to seek out support from the university's career services office:

I go to a major university, and the career center does not understand the significant differences in the music industry and career fair, stuff like that. And I remember going to a career fair, and I was like, "None of these apply to me. This

is a performing arts career fair, and none of these are related to music.” I think there was one that was related to music, it was a major orchestra in my area, and I joined the Zoom call and nobody was there. And I just... Yeah. It was just like, “Wow, I’m really on my own here. There’s no one to help me.”

And the career center people didn’t really know what the difference was between a music resume and a resume for an English major. That’s so different. I hadn’t asked my [trombone] teacher what my resume should look like as a performer versus like arts admin until my junior year of college. I was like, “I guess I should just know this. It seems like everybody else knows it.” That wasn’t true.

Denise’s story not only highlighted the importance of having career support specifically designed for the broad range of vocations within the field of music, but it also identified a level of vulnerability required in asking for any level of help. Without faculty mentors modeling what professionalism looks like and unpacking the hidden curriculum of expectations, students cannot have positive experiences in their professional development and career exploration. Feelings of “I guess I should just know this” are influenced by shame for not having had previous mastery experiences (Bandura, 1997). Transparent conversations around professional expectations and accessible, nuanced support from a career services team are critical to promote students’ confidence in their ability to succeed in the field of music.

Although Denise was able to complete a prestigious internship while also pursuing full-time music major study, Midnight described school itself as an obstacle to

the types of experiential learning through internships or touring opportunities with a band that would further his career aspirations. Midnight's word choice when sharing this story revealed that not only did he feel as though school was holding him back but that these were perspectives that his faculty had shared with him as well:

And so what has been told to me by my drum set teaching and my other professors is, "We think you are really going somewhere... We school as really honestly the only thing that's holding you back." Like I would have been on the road [touring with a band], I would have been in an internship, I would have been doing something, but I have school, so that's like been the most biggest thing that's been holding me back.

When students of color feel that their institutions lack the resources to support their success or that the institution itself is a barrier to their success, what messages are they also internalizing about their overall potential for success? If higher education is not actively promoting opportunities to further the pursuit of their personal and professional goals, it is likely that students will not see the value of the institution. They may also infer that their institution does not value them as well.

#### *Vicarious Experience*

Students' responses to Research Sub-Question 3 revealed their challenges finding their racial identity represented in their curriculum, their fellow music students, and/or their music faculty. While there were individual examples that the interview participants highlighted, their descriptions frequently characterized the inclusion of diversity as an exception rather than the rule. Conversations about racial representation for faculty and

students were peppered with the words “only” and “few.” Examples of racial inclusion from the curriculum or from ensembles typically identified only one or two classes, rather than an intentional effort woven throughout the curriculum. The flexibility to select solo performance repertoire to represent diverse composers was something that two students championed, while readily acknowledging that their peers did not have the same luxuries of choice. Faculty and staff at college and conservatory music programs should carefully examine how diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts are received by students of color and solicit feedback for ways to make this work more effective and more authentic. In addition to the challenges already discussed related to Research Sub-Question 3, three new themes emerged related to barriers to strengthening self-efficacy beliefs from vicarious experience (Bandura, 1997): stereotype threat, the lack of visibility of affinity groups or identity-based student organizations, and a longing for community based on a shared heritage language.

Du Bois (1903, as cited by Dahan et al., 2019), described double consciousness as “a sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity” (p. 3). Jim and RJ shared stories of feeling scrutinized for their racial identities and their struggle to defy others’ negative stereotypes. Both interview participants expressed concerns that mistakes made by a peer might reflect negatively upon their racial group and that they felt additional pressure to perform at their peak abilities to avoid this risk. Jim described how he felt when the only other Black student in his music theory class made a small mistake in front of the class:

But there's always this lingering anxiety in the back of my mind as a person of color, right, that if one of us makes a mistake, then oh no! All the White people are gonna think people of color are bad at theory... There's that idea that if we aren't giving 100%, 100% of the time, it's gonna fall short. And even if you are giving 100%, 100% of the time, it can still sometimes feel like you're falling short.

RJ shared a story about an African American classmate who really struggled in music theory classes. While RJ and other peers had tried to offer assistance and help strengthen this classmate's understanding of the content, the student ultimately did not pass the class. RJ described not only the individual sadness associated with seeing a classmate not achieve his goals but also the broader impact upon the African American community of students in the school of music:

So just seeing this was, at first, really... I was going to say discouraging, but it wasn't discouraging for me. I just felt deeply for him, because we could all relate to him and the fact that we all care a lot about this music and take what we do very seriously. So to see someone who you know is putting in a lot of effort fail at something, it hurts, but it means a little bit more to me when it's someone I personally can relate to from a racial standpoint. In my past experience in other academic instances, it's very easy for that to become "the norm," or people will start to put a pattern together. Like, "Why is it all of these students?"

And where it's like, "Yeah, that could just be chance." But also people – and it's not necessarily their fault – but people love to make patterns out of situations. So that's just one I didn't want to see start to be formed.

May was the only interview participant who discussed the role of her institution's affinity groups in finding community and fostering belonging. Her stories highlighted the challenges of first discovering that the affinity group even existed and then being able to attend meetings and events, due to the demanding schedule of ensemble rehearsals, practicing for her lessons, and academic commitments associated with her courses. May summarized these challenges, saying:

My first weeks as a first-year were really difficult because I didn't know that the student affinity group existed, and so I felt really out of place... Getting to college and not being able to know where to find people like that – it was very difficult...

I'm still in it. I just have been so busy and I haven't been able to make any of the meetings recently, but I have a group of friends over there and I've made a bunch of friends through that organization, and so I've been able to find an Asian community within my university, which has been really nice... I'd say it's [the obstacle to attending more affinity group meetings] probably just finding like a good balance between ensemble rehearsals, my own practice time, and then like classes.

In my preparations for conducting interviews with my research participants, I reviewed institutional websites to identify campus multicultural centers or student organizations supporting racial identity. Each student's school had an online presence for

some type of service or club related to racial identity, yet only May discussed participation in an affinity group. Faculty and staff within college and conservatory music programs should examine how identity-based support systems are shared with students of color and whether these offices and organizations are accessible to music majors, given their unique time constraints.

Rose and Natika prioritized having a shared language as a key element for identifying with their fellow students. Both students recounted how having a shared language allowed them to find community with international students at their institutions, whether within the school of music or in the overall university. While they valued these connections and the cultural similarities that a shared language often signaled, Rose and Natika's word choice revealed a level of frustration in finding common ground with Americans. Natika expressed this by saying:

I don't really have anyone to talk in Spanish to or any one of the same race that I can look up to... But it's cool because some students are from other countries, like another student – graduate student, and she always talks to me like, “Oh, how are you liking America? How are you doing? How's English going for you?”

I'm like, “Yeah, I can relate to that.”

Similarly to Natika, as someone who spent part of her childhood outside of the United States, Rose shared her frustrations in trying to find other students who spoke a common language. However, because Rose's mother is Okinawan, this created another layer of complexity in her ability to find community based on shared language. Rose's heritage language is Hogen, a dialect of Japanese found within the island of Okinawa:

I think there's only two other people that I have come across that can even speak Japanese around me. It's different though, because they both grew up within the States, so they don't really have that cultural, I guess, side to it either. So I will say, for me especially, I find it difficult to connect with people. It's easier for me to connect with somebody who's a complete exchange student from Japan than it is to connect with somebody who's born and raised here...

I actually found out recently that most of the Japanese that I know is actually Okinawan, and it's Hogen. So most people don't understand what I'm saying. It's a completely different language and different dialect.

#### *Verbal and Social Persuasion*

Whether in settings of private lessons, master classes, ensemble auditions, or public concerts, music majors experience almost constant scrutiny and evaluation. Although one might assume that the volume of feedback might lessen the strength of verbal and social persuasion as a source of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), the student interviews revealed that they are still very aware of the power that others' words carry, the power associated with the person providing that feedback, and the power of how they are delivering that feedback.

Marie shared a story that highlighted the importance of considering context and existing relationship dynamics when providing feedback. As a music education major, Marie performed for the full voice faculty typically just once per year, in an end-of-year jury. Marie did not pass her sophomore year jury, and in the feedback that she received, she noted that multiple faculty members expressed concerns that she might have a thyroid



issue impacting her vocal health. It seemed as though she did not have established relationships with these faculty or the context to understand the intent behind sharing this feedback. In Marie's description of the scenario, the feedback seemed more like an attack that potentially jeopardized her future as a music educator rather than something she understood as grounded in vocal health and pedagogy:

I had to do my sophomore jury again because I didn't pass it. And a lot of the comments were like, "You might have a thyroid issue."

And I was like, "What?"

And I guess in the moment, I guess I felt kind of discriminated against and I also was kind of upset with my teacher too... The problem with my voice is like my lower range is not as present as my higher range. And they'll be like, "You have to be able to model for the altos and things like that in the classroom."

...I guess I also felt that I wasn't good enough to still continue to be in the university... I guess I felt like I wouldn't be a good teacher because my voice wasn't up to par... I think what was nerve-wracking is that I had to do it again and having those comments beforehand.

So I ended up passing the second time. But then, some of the comments weren't that encouraging. Because my professor made sure to tell them like, "She has this going on with her voice."

And a lot of them were like, "Well, she has that going on. Maybe she shouldn't sing," and things like that... I kind of went through this thing, where I can't live for their comments. And I don't study with them, so they don't really

know what my lessons are like, how hard I work. It's kind of like they only see me once a year. I don't even think they remember what I sounded like beforehand...

I guess in the moment, hearing them tell me that I had something wrong with my voice, I was just like, "How can you guys know that just by hearing me?" And I remember in that jury I messed up the words, but I don't think... well, I guess they are more experienced, so maybe they would know what a natural voice issue would sound like, I guess, and like hearing that I didn't pass my jury, I guess my judgement was clouded. So yeah, when my professor told me that, I was kind of like, "How would they know that?"

Jim shared an example of what happened when his composition professor refused to provide feedback in a lesson setting. When working on a project that stretched him by writing for a new group of instruments and in a different style than he was accustomed to from his previous compositions, Jim encountered writer's block. In an attempt to generate some new creative ideas, Jim returned to an area of strength and arranged a folk song for choir. He described what happened when he shared the choral arrangement with his composition professor by saying:

I had a really bad case of writer's block one week in September when I wasn't making very good progress on it and I wasn't sure what to do. So what I did was I arranged a folk song instead and went to my composition teacher and was like, "Hey, I have had writer's block on this project. I arranged this folk song. Let me know what you think of it."

And my composition teacher was like, “Well, you have just procrastinated.” That’s one of his favorite phrases. You know, you have to focus on a project and get that project done. Do a little bit of work on that project, so you’re actually productive instead of sort of being all over the place.

And he was like, “You can show this to the choral teacher, but I’m not gonna be able to give you a lot of feedback on this.” So basically we had a shorter lesson that day too, like, “You gotta get some work done.”

I was not feeling so great about that, because I was like, “Well, I tried to do a creative thing as an alternative, and that creative thing wasn’t the desired creative thing.” So you know, this is the nature of when you’re doing something artistic professionally, but I guess just moving through that, I realize it’s important to delegate time for multiple things.

Time management: that’s the number one thing in college, I feel like. You have to be able to chunk out your times so that you have enough time to get everything done that needs to be done. And then with your leftover time, that’s when you can do the fun stuff. But yeah, I suppose that just working through that composition was a good lesson in perseverance, because eventually it did come together, and as we see now, it’s about to be performed, so hopefully it’s not too bad.

Jim’s takeaway from this scenario was to develop additional strategies for time management; however, his description of what happened also revealed some interesting power dynamics at play. Based on our conversation, it seemed that Jim’s composition

professor had not previously discussed strategies for overcoming writer's block or necessarily outlined his expectations for a somewhat linear creative process. When Jim tried to find an alternative way to generate new compositional ideas, his faculty member essentially put him in a time out and cut that week's lesson short. Because of Jim's resilience, insights, and dedication, he was able to recover from this interaction and reframe it as a learning opportunity about time management, but I wonder what a student without Jim's level of self-awareness and general kindness would have taken away from this interaction with a faculty member so central to their area of study within music.

Many of the seniors shared stories that reflected the power dynamics between faculty and students in college and conservatory music programs. While they recognized potential abuses of power in the form of intimidation and double standards, Midnight, Drew, Rose, and Denise were reluctant to advocate for themselves or other students. For these students, the cost of speaking out was too high to risk alienating a faculty member who could alter the path of their career as a professional musician, or they recognized that they lacked the power to enact meaningful change.

Midnight's recovery from a concussion prevented his playing on the initial performance of the Michael Jackson medley he had co-arranged with another student. The decision to have another student substitute on drum set for him during the concert was very poorly communicated, and the subsequent barriers to his performing his own arrangement in future concerts seemed counterintuitive to him. Midnight was baffled by decisions that prevented him from performing the arrangement, saying, "This is literally

my song. I wrote the drum part for that. It doesn't make sense why you can't let me play my music."

To make matters worse, Midnight not only was prevented from performing his arrangement, but he also felt he had no recourse as the commercial music program and the university continued using his arrangement in future concerts and campus-wide events. I was surprised to hear him share how the arrangement was basically taken out of his hands and that his program had not provided better general guidance about musical copyright practices for covers and arrangements of other musicians' work. At best, this gap in his education seemed negligent for preparing students to work in the field of commercial music; at worst, this could be characterized as deliberately exploitative so that the program could benefit from student labor, without the students knowing any better. Midnight described what transpired by saying:

Technically, I can't copyright it, you're telling me, because it was Michael Jackson's music originally, so like I can't copyright it. You're telling me I can't play it because I don't own the rights of the music, so if *they* wanted to play it, they can change like one note and say it's their medley or arrangement now.

And so they used that song for at least two years. And it was the fans' most favorite song! The concerts went from being like 20 people to being over 1,000 kids. Outside, the university was using it on Parents' Weekend, on Football Weekend, on tailgating. They were all using my song and playing it again and again, and I never was able to play for it. Never.

Drew specifically named the role that tenure played in their interactions with their Keyboard Skills III professor when asked to reschedule their make-up jury. Drew described that professor's relationship with time and apparent double standards when compared to the expectations established for students as the result of tenure:

And so then August and September roll around, and I email the piano professor like, "Hey, we should figure out my jury, because I'm already enrolled in Keyboard Skills IV. So we should really figure this out."

And she was like, "Yeah, send me your availability." And we both send each other our availability. And it was a whole back-and-forth in our emails and her just being like, "I'm not in the building. I'm not usually in the building on Monday or Wednesday."

And I'm like, "That's so cool because you have tenure. So you're like paid to be here in the building on Monday and Wednesday. So that's awesome that you get paid tenure salary for being in the building the same number of days as my tuba professor is paid to be in the building, who is only a lecturer and very much does not have tenure."

When the professor then missed their appointment for the make-up jury, Drew felt frustrated by the apparent double standard surrounding time commitments and expectations within the school of music:

I sat there for like 45 minutes... I emailed her like, "Hey, what happened? My jury was supposed to be yesterday. What's up?"

And she was like, "Oh my gosh, I'm so sorry. I was busy, and I forgot."

And I'm kind of sitting there like, "That's so cool, because when normal juries happen, which is during finals week and everybody's super busy, if someone forgets, you just like fail your jury and there's no makeup. So I'm really loving the double standard here right now." I didn't say that. I just like thought it really hard.

For Drew, the last straw was the professor's suggestion in response to having not kept their appointment time for their make-up jury: "Maybe you should just drop Keyboard Skills IV, and then we can do your Keyboard Skills III jury at the end of the semester when I have more time." Drew had prepared for the make-up jury at a level to earn an A, yet the professor's time and convenience seemed to be a higher priority. The professor's casual recommendation that Drew change their registration in a way that would have delayed their graduation term seemed insensitive and completely out-of-touch with the very real financial costs associated with the interconnected nature of music major requirements. In hindsight, Drew acknowledged that they should have taken this incident to the dean of the school of music; however, they felt powerless to do so at the time: "I've learned the power that tenure gives you, and it really sucks. Like it drives me insane that you can just get away with that."

Similarly, Rose also described the lack of power that music students have to voice their concerns with faculty, especially given the power of having a specific professor's name associated with you when seeking out a career in performance. Rose characterized existing methods for sharing concerns or feedback, such as meeting with music program

administrators or submitting course evaluations, essentially as paper tigers, which give the appearance of having importance but in reality have little power to enact change:

It's a music school thing in general to not say anything, because this professor is going to be the one that's writing all your letters of recommendation when you want to go to grad school, when you want to go into the professional world. Your name is going to be attached to this teacher, and if this teacher didn't like you, trying to find a job after that is going to be very difficult.

I will say that the flute studio did come together my first year, I believe, and try to talk to her [the flute professor] and bring in an administrator and have a talk about it, and it didn't go well. It took until now, like this year basically, for me to fix that. And it's basically rebuilding your reputation with your professor again.

So it's very difficult to try and say something, even if there's something that's an issue, even through course evaluations, if there's only a small number of people in the flute studio, if you say a specific thing that's happened in a lesson or a specific comment that was made, it's very easy to figure out who said that. So most people don't say anything, and even myself, I don't say anything really when it comes to that anymore. I've just kind of brushed it off as "It's them being them." And if it doesn't actually hurt me or hurt someone else physically, I guess I usually don't say anything, unless I feel so far away removed from it that speaking up won't affect my career.



Rose's last sentence highlighting the stakes of speaking up made me do a double take. She felt that she would have to be experiencing physical harm to be able to speak up against a faculty member in her music program. Yet when Rose actually did experience physical injury in the form of an overuse injury associated with being assigned to too many ensembles in her junior year, she still felt that both the power held by faculty and the likelihood that nothing would change prevented her from advocating for her well-being. When reflecting on power dynamics in general in her school of music, Rose said, "I know quite a few people who are speaking up about it. Not that anything's getting done, but at least it's getting heard now."

Denise also acknowledged the pressure of maintaining relationships with faculty members who could make or break professional careers. When one of her friends, who also was a Black female student, was considering transferring to another school, Denise was taken aback by the reactions of multiple professors in the school of music. Rather than engaging in an open, honest dialogue about ways that her current learning environment was or wasn't supporting her progress toward her goals, Denise's friend instead found faculty resorting to intimidation tactics to try to convince her to not transfer to another school:

It was very toxic... The faculty were reacting kind of viciously to this and kind of threatening her – not dangerously, but as in "Your career is in jeopardy if you make this choice. We're gonna reach out to all these people and let them know that you are not professional..."

And I just remember thinking, “Oh my goodness, this is kind of absurd!” I mean, I’ve had friends transfer with no backlash. And I’m not suggesting anything, but that’s how it looks to me: As a Black person, especially as a Black woman who – I feel like Black women are the most villainized, I can’t help but see it that way, because that’s who I am and that’s how I would feel. And I remember being afraid for her, and then I remember being afraid for myself, like if I ever wanted to make a decision that I felt was absolutely right for me, how are these people going to react? Am I safe? Do I have to please these people to make ends meet, essentially?

Denise observed White students making the decision to transfer who were not met with such dramatic resistance, but when she saw another Black female receive completely different treatment, she interpreted the faculty response as being influenced by racism. The power dynamics between students and faculty in college and conservatory music programs are challenging for any student to navigate. When power and privilege associated with racial identity (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) are factored in as well, students are effectively silenced.

#### *Emotional and Physiological States*

While I expected students to share stories about managing stress as part of their emotional and physiological states influencing self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), I could not have anticipated the powerful insights that Midnight, Rose, Marie, and Drew shared how their physical injuries created ripple effects across their educational experiences and perceptions of self-efficacy. Aspects of power dynamics with faculty shaded each of their

stories, often in ways that made me question how distant faculty seemed to be from the lived experiences of their students. Without a full understanding of the interconnected nature of the curricular and career demands these students were facing, faculty were unable to respond with empathy and support.

When Midnight was recovering from his concussion, he described feeling as though the school was pushing him out through their medical withdrawal policies. In a situation when university faculty and staff should have prioritized how they communicated with him about his academic options and the support systems available to him, Midnight instead received inadequate information about short-term and long-term options. My own research into guidance on the university website about medical withdrawal processes did not return definitive guidance contextualized within a community of care; instead, the student handbook referenced policies for involuntary medical withdrawal, which focused primarily on instances when the university determined that a student's behavior or mental health challenges posed a threat to the health and safety of the student or others. I found that the wording in the student handbook seemed defensive and somewhat threatening, conveying none of the empathy or support for students navigating challenging circumstances. Neither the student handbook nor other resources on the university website provided clear guidance connecting medical withdrawal procedures to options for partial tuition refunds, readmission/re-entry procedures, or how taking time off from coursework would impact a student's eligibility for scholarships and financial aid in the future. This level of

uncertainty shaped how Midnight interpreted the institution's recommendation that he pursue a medical withdrawal:

As the semester moves on, I finally get better. The school did not want me to come back. They wanted me to stay out. They thought I should do a medical withdrawal, and that was a whole battle within itself, because I hadn't even sent them any doctors' paperwork or anything yet, and they're already assuming that I'm gonna drop out of school, assuming that I'm not gonna come back. And then my disability advisor said, "You can't send a medical withdrawal to a student who's been out for two weeks. It's not like he's been out for eight months. It's not like he's not turned in any homework, or that he's used up all his absences." I had all As. It's not like I'm messing up all my classes.

You can't just send this person into medical withdrawal at the school, like you're telling him not just, "Oh, maybe you should take a rest and come back another semester. You're saying this kid should drop out of college." And then if you came back, I'll have to restart paying, get scholarships, like that's a whole hard thing to do, so I didn't drop out. I'm going back next semester. I really don't care what you guys say.

Because information about policies surrounding medical withdrawal, partial tuition refunds, readmission, and the potential impact on his scholarship support was not clearly communicated to Midnight, he interpreted the recommendations of university representatives as adversarial. The institution was pushing him toward one specific path, even without him having provided medical documentation or having expressed an

interest in that option. The institution's faculty and staff promoting the medical withdrawal policy seemed to be contradicting guidance from the school's own disability services office. Because he felt that the university was not demonstrating care and concern for him, he felt more isolated as the institution created additional barriers to his progress in his degree.

Rose described how being assigned to too many ensembles ultimately led to overuse injury, burnout, and a less successful junior recital. In addition to the sheer volume of time spent each day in rehearsals for large ensembles and chamber groups, Rose observed how the physical rehearsal and concert spaces worsened her physical symptoms as well. She astutely observed that although her institution offered Alexander technique lessons to support strategies to reduce tension, prevent injuries, strengthen breath support, and more, the faculty experts in this approach were not consulted when new chairs were purchased for the performing arts center:

It got to the point where I could not play for more than an hour at a time, because my wrists started hurting, my shoulders started hurting, and then, on top of that – side note: they got new chairs in the performing arts center that are awful. So sitting in these rehearsals was awful, because these chairs are not meant for short people. They are meant for people who are like 5'8" to 5'11" or so. That's the height range that they're built for. And so with these chairs, I have to use my flute case under my feet because I'm so short that I can't touch the floor on these chairs...

I'm in Alexander technique lessons, and a lot of people complained about it as well. And you know, even the Alexander technique professors were shocked that they weren't asked before these new chairs were bought. So even physically sitting in those chairs for a while hurt my back, especially right after all these long rehearsals. It was like eight or nine hours a day of playing... and that was just rehearsals, like it wasn't even my own practicing.

Rose shared that her ensemble assignments were the result of lower enrollment in the flute studio, rather than being a "reward" of additional opportunities given her performance ability. Because there were not enough flute majors to separately staff both a band and an orchestra, students were having to perform in both large ensembles. Rose felt that she could not advocate for herself because there simply was no one else in the studio who could take on additional work if she wasn't playing in her groups:

The flute studio has always been pretty small, but that [junior year] was the smallest it was... When it came to the chamber group situation, I knew I couldn't say anything because there were no other flutes that could cover for me. And if I had dropped, then that would have hurt my group, and that's not fair to them... And it's like you can only do so much, and they're [the school of music] not willing to hire musicians either...

We did a band piece that required seven separate flute parts. We did not have seven flute majors. We were told to go recruit flutes... We ended up finding the players, but if you tell them [the ensemble conductors] that you don't want to double up in ensembles – and for example, with the oboes right now, there's only

three of them or maybe four – they can't say they don't want to double up and play in multiple large ensembles. It's not allowed even with the French horns right now. They're all doubling ensembles. You cannot say you don't want to do both ensembles, or else they'll threaten your scholarship. It's messed up.

Marie's thyroid health impacted her performance in her sophomore jury and her confidence in her ability to continue as a music major and future music educator. After the shock of the initial feedback and health diagnosis, Marie processed the feedback from the voice faculty as their questioning her potential to be an effective music educator. Although her solo performance as a soprano was acceptable, the cyst on her thyroid impacted the lower range of her voice, which meant that she would have additional challenges serving as a vocal model for altos in a choral setting. In this way, Marie's injury could have derailed not only her path forward in her private lessons but her career trajectory as a choral director:

I had to do my sophomore jury again because I didn't pass it. And a lot of the comments were like, "You might have a thyroid issue." ...I went to like a bunch of doctors to see if it was actually affecting my voice.

And the doctors were basically like, "It's not cancerous, so you're fine."

And I told my teacher that, and he said, "Well, they're gonna look at you as an average person and not a classical singer."

...I guess I also felt that I wasn't good enough to still continue to be in the university. The problem with my voice is like my lower range is not as present as my higher range. And they'll be like, "You have to be able to model for the altos

and things like that in the classroom.” I guess I felt like I wouldn’t be a good teacher because my voice wasn’t up to par.

Beyond considerations about the impact of physiological states on student self-efficacy, Marie’s story highlights the broader importance of normalizing conversations about neuromusculoskeletal and vocal health in college and conservatory music programs. While some music programs offer free vocal screenings to voice students (Thomason, 2017), not every school of music has partnerships with health programs to provide this resource. Additionally, the curricular timing for students to complete courses in vocal pedagogy and vocal health may offer too little too late: if a class in vocal pedagogy and vocal health is not taken until junior or senior year, voice students potentially would have had multiple years in which their health conditions could have worsened.

Drew described the challenges of juggling the overwhelming volume of sequential course requirements included in their music education degree: “In music ed, it’s like a five-year degree crammed into four years. And so, like a lot of times, you fail one class and it’s like, ‘Congratulations! That’s it! You get to take a victory lap!’” Drew worried that their path toward graduation would have been delayed when they experienced a traumatic brain injury at the end of their first year of college. Because they did not know their options for seeking academic accommodations through the university’s disability services office and because their faculty did not make a referral for accommodations or respond with empathy to Drew’s circumstances, Drew failed



Keyboard Skills II and tried to power through the end of the term in ways that jeopardized their health:

It was a traumatic brain injury. And I couldn't read sheet music. I couldn't read like anything. The end of that semester, I still did my jury, and I did a lecture recital, and I had all my music memorized by just listening to it, because I couldn't read. And I had told the professor like, "Hey, I might be able to talk, but I don't know if I can like play."

And he told me, "If you can speak, you can play."

And my concussed little freshman brain was like, "That sounds legit." So I did my lecture recital, and then like 30 minutes later, I was in the ER.

Drew's stories included a second example of how a faculty member's response to their injuries and chronic health conditions reflected a lack of understanding of the high-stakes nature of the sequential curriculum. After retaking Keyboard Skills II, Drew's tendonitis, carpal tunnel, and cubital tunnel impacted their ability to complete Keyboard Skills III. This time, Drew worked with their professor to take an incomplete grade and made plans to complete the jury for the course at the beginning of the next term. Due to a scheduling oversight, the professor missed the time that they had agreed upon to meet for the make-up jury. Drew interpreted the professor's response as one that prioritized the faculty member's convenience over the work that Drew had completed and their progress toward graduation:

And so I go to my jury. It was just gonna be in this professor's office and I knocked on the door, and I didn't get an answer, so I just sat outside, 'cause I

figured she might just be at something, like a meeting or something. And then I sat for like 45 minutes... And so I emailed her like, "Hey, what happened? My jury was supposed to be yesterday. What's up?"

And she was like, "Oh my gosh, I'm so sorry! I was busy and I forgot."

And I'm kind of sitting there like, "That's so cool, because when normal juries happen, which is during finals week and everybody's super busy, if someone forgets you just like fail your jury and there's no makeup. So I'm really loving the double standard here right now." I didn't say that. I just like thought it really, really hard.

But so she ended up telling me like, "Maybe you should just drop Keyboard Skills IV, and then we can do your Keyboard Skills III jury at the end of the semester when I have more time." This is another instance when I really should have emailed the dean. So I ended up skipping a rehearsal to do my jury, and it was fine. I got an A on it. Whatever. But I was not happy.

In most academic departments within a liberal arts university, a physical injury would not threaten a student's ability to progress in the curriculum, but within music, injury could impede their progress in their coursework that term, their overall progress in their degree, and ultimately their pursuit of a career in the field of music. It is no wonder that injuries could dramatically impact a musician's self-efficacy beliefs. For Midnight, Rose, Marie, and Drew, the responses they received from their faculty revealed a lack of empathy and understanding that created additional challenges during their recovery. Faculty and staff supporting music majors need clear guidance regarding short-term and

long-term academic options for their students, and they need to be coached on how to humanize their students when discussing a potentially career-ending injury or illness.

### ***Summary of Research Sub-Question 5***

The self-efficacy beliefs of students of color were strong, in spite of the systemic barriers in place within their college and conservatory music programs. Interview participants shared concerns about lack of access to opportunities to have mastery experiences and a lack of institutional support for their goals. With so few peers who shared their racial identities, some students described experiences of grappling with stereotype threat, feeling frustrated at having not discovered student affinity groups earlier in their studies, and longing for opportunities to speak their heritage languages. Students were keenly aware of the role of relationship and power dynamics when receiving verbal feedback, especially when they perceived that faculty were misusing their position of power. Physical injuries were a major barrier to short-term and long-term success, especially given the interconnected nature of music major curricula, with sequential courses typically offered only once per academic year.

### **Summary of Qualitative Results**

Although students of color did not often see their racial identities represented in their curricula, their fellow students, or their faculty, they were still strengthening their self-efficacy beliefs through feedback from mastery experiences, vicarious experience, verbal and social persuasion, and emotional and physiological states (Bandura, 1997). Self-motivation and initiative, connections to communities based on other intersecting identities (Gillborn, 2015; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), encouragement from faculty,

and coping mechanisms for performance supported their confidence in their ability to succeed. Lack of access to opportunity, lack of racial representation, misuses of faculty power, and physical injury created barriers to self-efficacy.

### **Synthesis of Quantitative and Qualitative Results**

Students of color demonstrated strong self-efficacy beliefs and shared stories of overcoming systemic barriers in pursuit of their goals. The Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) scores for students of color were higher than those of White students for 10 out of the 11 items, and the difference in mean ranks for Item 9, which identified the possibility of failure as a motivating factor, was statistically significant. During the qualitative interviews, students of color described a general lack of racial representation in their learning experiences, achievements driven by their individual initiative rather than institutional support, troubling examples of misuses of power, and the potentially devastating impact of physical injury on a student's progress through a very rigid, sequential curriculum. Table 4.12 integrates these quantitative and qualitative themes within a joint display (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

**Table 4.12**

*Joint Display of Themes (Adapted from Creswell & Creswell, 2023)*

	Quantitative themes			Qualitative themes			Metainferences
	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4	Theme 5	Theme 6	
Students of color	Self-efficacy scores generally were higher, with the difference in Item 9 being statistically significant.	Single-select racial identity categories did not adequately represent students.	Authentic representation in the curriculum generally was lacking.	Achievements were the result of individual drive, rather than supported by the institution.	Students felt powerless to confront faculty misuses of power.	Physical injury threatened progress toward graduation.	Students of color had strong self-efficacy beliefs and achievement, but systemic barriers threatened overall success.
White students	Self-efficacy scores were generally lower.	Single-select racial identity categories generally were sufficient.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Whiteness should not be the ruler against which the success of students of color is measured.
Metainferences	Challenging negative stereotypes and deficit-based narratives	Erasure	Tokenism	Disconnect between curriculum and student goals	Silencing	Ableism in the curricular house of cards	The collective experience of othering threatened student success.

### **Metainferences from Quantitative Themes**

The two quantitative themes organized within the columns of Table 4.12 highlighted the strong self-efficacy beliefs of students of color and the flattening of racial identity occurring when using the single-select categories employed by the National Association of Schools of Music (HEADS, 2020; NASM, n.d.-b). Students of color had strong self-efficacy beliefs, as measured in Ritchie and Williamon's (2011a) Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire. These results challenged deficit-based narratives surrounding the success of students of color. The discussion of the statistically significant difference in mean ranks for Item 9 (i.e., "The prospects of failure in this performance can just make me work harder in preparation") in Chapter Five expands upon the potential impact of stereotype threat (Steele & Aronson, 1995) and stereotype management (McGee & Martin, 2011) upon this finding.

With 83% of the students of color within my research sample self-describing their racial identities in a different way than the single-select options used by the National Association of Schools of Music (HEADS, 2020; NASM, n.d.-b), the existing practices for categorizing racial identity by NASM were inadequate for accurately representing the identities of students within my sample. Particularly given the number of students within my research sample who identified as biracial, mixed, or multiracial, the single-choice options used by NASM created an erasure of racial identity for students of color.

### **Metainferences from Qualitative Themes**

The qualitative interviews with ten students of color identified four themes: (a) the lack of authentic representation of their racial identities within their educational

experiences; (b) the lack of institutional support to further students' progress toward their goals; (c) a sense of powerlessness to confront faculty misuses of power; and (d) physical injury as a threat to progress toward degree completion. Students' stories highlighted examples of limited racial representation perceived as tokenism, rather than a meaningful, authentic reflection of diversity in their classes, lessons, and ensembles. Although students shared examples of incredible accomplishments in their undergraduate music experiences, these efforts largely were driven by student initiative rather than supported by institutional resources for student professional development. When students encountered instances of faculty misusing their power, students described feeling powerless to confront these abuses and to advocate for themselves. The power imbalance and the risk of damaging relationships with faculty who could make or break their careers silenced students. Students who experienced physical injuries grappled with challenges on two fronts: their physical recovery and how their injury impacted their ability to progress within a very structured, sequential music curriculum. In many ways, the interconnected nature of music major requirements made student's progress toward graduation seem like a house of cards; given the assumption that all students were able-bodied, any physical injury could very easily lead to the collapse of the entire structure.

### **Collective Impact of Metainferences**

The metainferences across all themes revealed three key ideas: (a) students of color had strong self-efficacy beliefs and achievement, but systemic barriers threatened overall success; (b) Whiteness should not be the ruler against which the success of students of color is measured; and (c) the collective experience of othering threatened

student success. Although only one of the differences was statistically significant, students of color scored higher than White students on 10 of 11 items on the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a). These results are in stark contrast to deficit-based narratives characterizing students of color as “at risk” (Gillborn, 2015; Patton, 2016). Music faculty and staff should broaden their perspectives to identify systemic barriers to student success, such as curricula and support systems that are not aligned with student goals. Music programs should stretch beyond upholding the western European art music canon as the only ideal to which all students should aspire; students of color should not be judged against a standard of Whiteness when they are working toward transformational goals beyond the scope of traditional classical curricula (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Music faculty and staff should consider how the collective burden of being othered within various aspects of students’ education add up to a collective whole, and then they should work together with students to dismantle these systemic barriers.

### **Revisiting the Theoretical Framework of Critical Race Theory**

Critical race theory provides tools for music faculty, staff, and students to work toward meaningful change in pursuit of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (Bernal, 2002; Gillborn, 2015; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Patton, 2016; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). College and conservatory music programs can gain much by utilizing CRT’s emphasis on naming race and racism to challenge Eurocentric lenses and work toward more than single-course or “one shot” approaches to diversifying the curriculum (Patton, 2016). While racial representation within music faculty, staff, and students is an important step in creating spaces that support minoritized students, DEIJ is more than just



a pipeline problem or a numbers game; instead, the very systems and learning environments should be interrogated and reconstructed to better serve students (Nardo, 2022; Patton, 2016). It is not enough to simply understand the racialized experiences of students of color within college and conservatory music programs, but faculty, staff, and students must be empowered to create meaningful change (Gillborn, 2015).

#### **Chapter Four Summary**

Quantitative and qualitative data described the lived experiences of music majors of color in ways that identified student strengths and systemic barriers to success. Students of color had higher mean scores than White students on ten out of eleven items on the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a), and the difference for Item 9, which identified the possibility of failure as a motivating factor, was statistically significant. Further research is needed to explore relationships between self-efficacy, grade point averages (GPAs), and racial identity, but the academic achievements of the students who submitted unofficial transcripts were impressive. Students of color who completed semi-structured interviews shared that they did not see their racial identities represented in their educational experiences, yet they still had strong self-efficacy beliefs despite these systemic barriers. This data can drive future investigations of ways that college and conservatory programs discuss race and racism, work toward authentic inclusion of diversity within the curriculum, and replace institutional barriers with support systems that foster student success.

## **Chapter Five: Discussion and Implications**

### **Introduction**

#### **Problem of Practice**

Undergraduate music programs in the United States often are spaces where predominantly White faculty (HEADS, 2020) teach predominantly White students (HEADS, 2020) about predominantly White musicians and composers (Ewell, 2020; Liu, 2022; Lucia, 2007). Since students of color and White students experience campus climate and learning environments in different ways (Harper & Hurtado, 2007), it is important to consider ways that racial identity connects to educational experiences and self-efficacy. My study explored self-perceptions of self-efficacy by undergraduate music students of different racial identities.

#### **Purpose Statement and Research Questions**

The purpose of this convergent mixed methods study was to explore perceptions of self-efficacy by undergraduate music majors of different racial identities. Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as one's confidence in their ability to succeed in producing a desired outcome. Self-efficacy is informed by feedback from four sources: (a) mastery experience gained through past achievements; (b) vicarious experience from observing others; (c) verbal and social persuasion in the form of positive feedback and encouragement from others; and (d) emotional and physiological states, such as mood, stress, and anxiety (Usher & Pajares, 2008). Self-efficacy is both discipline-specific and

task-specific (Bandura, 1997). This study investigated self-efficacy in musical learning and performance.

The central research question for this study was, “How do undergraduate music majors’ self-perceptions influence their self-efficacy?” Sub-questions included:

1. What are undergraduate music majors’ self-perceptions of self-efficacy?
  - a. For students of color?
  - b. For White students?
2. What relationships exist between self-efficacy and grade point average (GPA)?
  - a. For students of color?
  - b. For White students?
3. How do music majors perceive their racial identity within undergraduate music education?
4. How do educational experiences support self-efficacy?
5. How do educational experiences create barriers to self-efficacy?

### **Methodology Revisited**

Creswell and Creswell (2023) highlighted mixed methods approaches as one possible way to develop “a complete understanding of changes needed for a marginalized group through the combination of qualitative and quantitative data,” which was a key motivation for conducting this research (p. 232). By administering the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) while centering race and valuing students’ other intersecting identities, my research provided new forms of data that was not represented within the existing peer-reviewed literature exploring musical

self-efficacy for undergraduate music majors (Afacan & Kaya, 2022; Akgül, 2021; Ciftcibasi, 2021; Eğilmez, 2015; Kurtuldu & Bulut, 2017; Lewis & Hendricks, 2022; Lewis et al., 2022; Lubert & Gröpel, 2022; Miksza & Tan, 2015; Nielsen, 2004; Otacioğlu, 2020; Papageorgi et al., 2010; Prichard, 2017; Regier, 2021; Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a; Ritchie & Williamon, 2012; Üstün & Ozer, 2020; Weimar et al., 2019; Xu, 2023). Interviews analyzed through narrative inquiry provided a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of color while naming the realities of race and racism within college and conservatory music programs, amplifying counter-stories, and calling for meaningful change (Bernal, 2002; Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Gillborn, 2015; Mertova & Webster, 2019; Patton, 2016).

### **Theoretical Framework Revisited**

Critical race theory provided the lens through which my research amplified the racialized experiences of students of color and called for meaningful change in college and conservatory music programs (Bernal, 2002; Gillborn, 2015; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Patton, 2016; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Drawing from CRT's elevation of the lived experiences of minoritized people, I employed narrative inquiry to tell counter-stories of ten students of undergraduate music majors of color (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). In the interviews, the research participants named how the contributions of musicians of color were relegated to the fringes of the curriculum, while Eurocentric narratives were promoted (Ewell, 2020; Lucia, 2007; Patton, 2016; Wang & Humphreys, 2009). Research participants longed for authentic inclusion of the contributions of diverse artists in their classes, ensembles, and solo repertoire in ways that avoided tokenism.

When contributions from racially diverse composers were lumped into a single elective class or a Black History Month concert, the special and unusual emphasis on these newer opportunities also highlighted the centrality of Eurocentric perspectives in music major experiences. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) described this normalizing of Whiteness by saying, “Whether told by people of color or Whites, majoritarian stories are not often questioned because people do not see them as stories but as ‘natural’ parts of everyday life” (p. 28).

## **Findings, Conclusion, and Response to Research Questions**

### **Research Sub-Question 1: Self-Efficacy Scores**

Although Usher and Pajares (2008) acknowledged that gender, dis/ability, culture, ethnicity, values, and domain can influence self-efficacy, previous peer-reviewed journal articles exploring self-efficacy for undergraduate music majors did not center racial identity (Afacan & Kaya, 2022; Akgül, 2021; Ciftibasi, 2021; Eğılmez, 2015; Kurtuldu & Bulut, 2017; Lewis & Hendricks, 2022; Lewis et al., 2022; Lubert & Gröpel, 2022; Miksza & Tan, 2015; Nielsen, 2004; Otacioğlu, 2020; Papageorgi et al., 2010; Prichard, 2017; Regier, 2021; Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a; Ritchie & Williamon, 2012; Üstün & Ozer, 2020; Weimar et al., 2019; Xu, 2023). This may be because of reality of the racial demographics for college and conservatory music programs. In 2020, approximately 63% of students at NASM-accredited music programs pursuing a bachelor’s degree with a major in music identified as White, and 83% of faculty of any rank identified as White (HEADS, 2020). Because of this skew within undergraduate music programs, it is

valuable to consider the lived experiences of students of color and how their educational experiences support or create barriers to their self-efficacy.

To address this gap in the literature, my study began with an exploration of Research Sub-Question 1: What are undergraduate music majors' self-perceptions of self-efficacy, for students of color and for students who identify as White? My analysis of Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) found that for 10 out of 11 items, the mean rank of students of color was higher than the mean rank of White students. The difference in mean ranks for Item 9, "The prospects of failure in this performance can just make me work harder in preparation," was statistically significant ( $p = .035$ ). To answer Research Sub-Question 1, the self-perceptions of self-efficacy for students of color were generally higher than those of White students, with the higher score for students of color on Item 9 being statistically significant.

The Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) did not include follow-up questions to probe deeper into students' rationales for selecting their levels of agreement or disagreement with the survey items; however, one possible explanation behind the statistically significant difference in Item 9 could be the impact of stereotype management (McGee & Martin, 2011) in response to stereotype threat (Steele & Aronson, 1995). The higher mean rank for students of color on Item 9 diverged from existing research that established stereotype threat as having a negative impact on self-efficacy and performance (Cromley et al., 2013; Steele, 1997; Steele & Aronson, 1995). It may be that purely by measuring *self-efficacy* rather than connecting

stereotype threat directly with performance, my findings more closely resembled the findings of Crocker and Major (1989), who found that the self-esteem of individuals from stigmatized groups was as high as those from non-stigmatized groups.

However, not all studies found that stereotype threat resulted in lower self-efficacy for students. In their longitudinal study exploring stereotype threat for minoritized students in STEM fields, Totonchi et al. (2021) did not find significant relationships between self-efficacy and ethnic stereotype threat, which they also noted as an unexpected result, given the existing literature connecting stereotype threat with negative outcome expectancies (Cadinu et al., 2003, as cited in Totonchi et al., 2021; Eccles et al., 1990, as cited in Totonchi et al., 2021; Irving & Hudley, 2008, as cited in Totonchi et al., 2021; Steele & Aronson, 1995). Schweinle and Mims (2009) found that mathematics self-efficacy scores for fifth-grade African American students were not lower than White students, in contrast to expectations for lower scores due to the impact of stereotype threat. E. Deemer et al. (2024) found that university context, such as being enrolled at a Historically Black College/University (HBCU), could lessen the impact of stereotype threat.

Rather than focusing on potential negative implications of stereotype threat, McGee and Martin (2011) interviewed Black college students who had demonstrated success in the fields of math and engineering to explore ways that they were able to achieve, despite the ever-present forms of racism and racialized experiences within education. McGee and Martin (2011) described stereotype management as positive strategies motivating minoritized students to achieve, such as the desire to prove negative

stereotypes wrong or the desire to become a role model for other students of color. The researchers recognized that Black students navigating microaggressions and racist incidents in their educational experiences required both security in their Black identities as well as their sense of belonging within the fields of math and engineering (McGee & Martin, 2011). Future research could explore these concepts within the field of music and their connection to musical self-efficacy for students of color.

Although only the differences in mean ranks for Item 9 from the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) were statistically significant, the higher mean ranks for students of color on 10 out of the 11 items was worth noting. Even without statistical significance, these findings indicated that the research participants who identified as students of color held slightly stronger self-efficacy beliefs than White students. One possible explanation for these results could be the level of resilience and strengths demonstrated by students of color; however, Hess (2019) critiqued the prevalence of themes of grit and resilience in music education as a way of shifting attention to uplifting stories of students overcoming their personal challenge rather than addressing systemic barriers. Cheng (2018) called out the ways that resilience myths and the stereotype of the Strong Black Woman risk creating additional harm: “Obviously, Black people are resilient. It’s just that, historically speaking, bad things happen when White people overeagerly celebrate, fetishize, or exploit the obviousness of this notion” (p. 118).

Another possible explanation for the higher scores on the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) was that socio-economic



class, rather than racial identity alone, supported higher mean ranks for students of color. Although my research participants were more racially diverse when compared to the sample used by Lewis et al. (2022), my research sample still showed a considerable amount of privilege. In 2021, the U.S. Census Bureau (2022) found that only 14.4% of the population age 25 or older had earned a master's degree, professional degree, or doctoral degree. In contrast, 69% of Lewis et al.'s (2022) sample and 50% of my research sample had at least one parent or guardian with a master's degree, professional degree, or doctoral degree.

The average age when music majors began studying music and taking lessons could be another way of considering the level of socioeconomic privilege represented within a research sample. Both Lewis et al. (2022) and Miksza and Tan (2015) reported the average age when their research participants began studying music compared to their current ages. Miksza and Tan's (2015) participants, who had a mean age of 20.97 years, were 11.31 years old when beginning to study music. Lewis et al. (2022) reported their participants, whose mean age was 22.6 years old, were 11.2 years old when they began studying music. While Miksza and Tan (2015) further described their research participants as having begun private study on average at age 13.83, Lewis et al. (2022) did not provide this additional layer of demographic information. My research participants had a mean age of 20 years old, were on average 10 years old when they began music study and had a mean age of 13 when they began to take lessons in their performance area. This comparison revealed that my research sample displayed similar

levels of socioeconomic privilege in terms of pre-college experience in studying music and taking lessons.

Given that the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) consists of closed-ended questions, research participants did not have the opportunity to provide details about their rationale for their choices on the Likert-type scale. Because the timing of data collection for my convergent mixed methods study meant that the quantitative and qualitative data was collected during the same September 2023 to March 2024 window, I was unable to gain more specific insights about this through the qualitative interviews. Further research exploring self-efficacy for undergraduate music majors and their intersectional identities through an application of CRT frameworks is needed to continue exploring these possible relationships.

### **Research Sub-Question 2: Self-Efficacy and GPA**

Because previous studies established the connection between self-efficacy and positive academic outcomes, such as grade point average, retention, and persistence (Feldman & Kubota, 2015; Gore, 2006; Kahn & Nauta, 2001; Komarraju & Nadler, 2013; Multon et al., 1991), I sought to explore this connection through Research Sub-Question 2: What relationships exist between self-efficacy and grade point average (GPA), for students of color and for White students? With some research participants completing the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) as early as September 2023, there was a necessary passage of time between when the first students rated their self-efficacy and when they would have grades reported from the fall 2023 academic term. I determined that this wait time was acceptable, since asking

for grades from a previous term such as spring 2023 would have excluded new first-year students from the study and since the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) had proven to measure self-efficacy consistently over a two-week to one-month retest. It would be valuable to continue determining the consistency of this instrument in measuring self-efficacy over longer periods of time in future research projects.

The drop-off in research participant engagement between the time when they completed the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) and the time when they uploaded their unofficial transcripts was more than expected. Given the small sample size for the overall study, I did not have an adequate sample to conduct inferential statistics (Gliner et al., 2009). Instead, I reported descriptive statistics from the data received surrounding fall 2023 grades in performance area lessons, fall 2023 term grade point average, and cumulative GPA.

The research participants who uploaded their unofficial transcripts had considerable academic strengths. The mean GPA for all 42 students of all racial identities was 3.79, which was higher than the mean GPA of 3.64 within Lewis et al.'s (2022) sample. Within my research sample, no student's cumulative GPA was below 3.00. Fall 2023 grades in performance lessons were also very high: 37 out of the 41 students who completed lessons that term (90.2%) earned grades of A or A+ in their lessons. The self-efficacy raw mean for the subset of students who had uploaded their unofficial transcripts was 61.37. These descriptive statistics are consistent with Komarraju and Nadler's (2013) finding that students with higher self-efficacy had higher levels of academic achievement,

which were supported by their skills in self-regulation and help-seeking behaviors. Feldman and Kubota (2015) also found that academic self-efficacy predicted GPA. Further research is needed to explore relationships between self-efficacy, racial identity, and grade point average.

### **Research Sub-Question 3: Perceived Racial Identity Within Undergraduate**

#### **Music Education**

Qualitative interviews with ten students of color addressed Research Sub-Question 3: How do music majors perceive their racial identity within undergraduate music education? I used narrative inquiry to analyze their responses for critical events, common themes, and areas of disagreement or agreement (Clandinin, 2006; Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Mertova & Webster, 2019). In most cases, the research participants indicated that they rarely, if ever, saw their racial identity reflected in their fellow students, their faculty, their classes, their ensemble repertoire, and their solo lesson repertoire. These themes reflected how the western European art music canon remains centered in college and conservatory music programs, with the contributions of racially diverse musicians being relegated to the margins (Ewell, 2020; Grissom-Broughton, 2021; Hayes, 2020; Hess, 2022; Koza, 2008; Lucia, 2022).

#### ***Fellow Students***

Interview participants' discussion of the lack of racial diversity within their music programs was consistent with the demographic information provided for NASM-accredited institutions (HEADS, 2020): bachelor's degree-granting institutions accredited

by the National Association of Schools of Music were predominantly White spaces, with 63% of students enrolled in 2020 identifying as White. These demographic statistics could be viewed an extension of Elpus and Abril's (2011) demographic profile of high school seniors from the Education Longitudinal Study of 2004 who were participating in music programs: 65.7% of the students identified as White.

When surrounded by Whiteness, students of color found other ways to build their community, often drawing upon their intersecting identities. For example, three interview participants identified as members of the LGBTQIA community and two, Jim and Natika, specifically commented on music as a space of belonging and welcome related to that identity. Although Panetta (2021) described LGBTQ+ students as an “invisible minority” in music classrooms, they also cited Roseth's (2019, as cited in Panetta, 2021) finding that the 2013-2015 National Survey of Student Engagement found that music and art students were more likely to “perceive better support for their well-being by their institutions' environments than their non-music/art LGBTQ peers” (p. 171). Jim's and Natika's stories align with Roseth's (2019, as cited in Panetta, 2021) findings.

### ***Faculty***

Through the qualitative interviews, research participants named the limited number of faculty of color in their music programs as a rare but critical part of their music education experience. The lack of racial representation observed by the research participants was consistent with the demographic realities of music faculty specifically and higher education faculty more broadly (HEADS, 2020; Patton, 2016). Hayes (2020) provided this illustration to demonstrate how underrepresented Latinx faculty are within

tenure-track positions at NASM-accredited music programs: “We find 344 tenure-track Hispanic faculty at NASM-accredited institutions in the U.S. – enough to attend, in a medium size hall, a concert of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Gustavo Dudamel conducting” (p.38).

My research participants’ perspectives echoed those of the students in Fitzpatrick et al.’s (2014) research sample, who longed for teachers to serve as mentors and role models who shared their racial and gender identities. Further research is needed to explore the impact of faculty mentors who have shared identities with their students and self-efficacy. Additional studies could build on related studies exploring racial identity and faculty mentors in STEM fields. For example, Kuchynka et al. (2023) found that faculty mentorship for students from underrepresented groups who were pursuing a major in STEM had a positive impact on their self-efficacy, and Blake-Beard et al. (2011) found that STEM students perceived that they received more career support and psychosocial support when their faculty mentors were of the same racial identity and gender identity. While the current racial realities of faculty composition data within NASM-accredited schools might make it challenging to replicate these studies, these findings are worth considering within music program contexts.

### *Classes*

My research participants found that their courses primarily centered contributions of European male composers, with few elective course offerings focused on the musical traditions of people of color, which were often taught by one of the few faculty members of color. These findings resonated with Ewell’s (2020) critique music theory’s White

racial frame and Niknafs's (2017) commentary on music from non-European cultures being additives rather than essential components of the music curriculum. Patton (2016) characterized higher education's tendency to lump together contributions of people of color into a single course within a diversity requirement as an incremental concession while the rest of the curriculum belonged to Whiteness.

Critical race theorists call for counter-storytelling as a way to challenge the normalization of White, majoritarian stories (Bernal, 2002; Hess; 2019; Patton, 2016; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Although Spelman College, a Historically Black College/University (HBCU) for women, was not part of my research sample within the Music Admissions Roundtable, their revised music theory and composition curriculum provides hope for ways that other NASM-accredited institutions can become more inclusive. Grissom-Broughton (2021) described this infusion of the works of Black women composers as models alongside music's great "Three B" composers:

At Spelman, music theory and composition courses are taught through the repertoire of not only J. S. Bach, Ludwig van Beethoven, and Johannes Brahms but also through women composers such as Clara Wieck Schumann, Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel, and Amy Beach. Students study the music of Black women composers such as Florence Price and Margaret Bonds, jazz composer Mary Lou Williams, and Cuban-born composer Tania León. The inclusion of these women composers into theory and composition courses is through a conscious effort by the music faculty. If we want more diversity in the next generation of music theorists and composers, it is important that we show our students examples of theorists and composers who look like them and reflect their interests and work. (pp. 11–12)

The students of color who completed interviews longed for greater racial representation in their required coursework, and institutions like Spelman demonstrated that this type of change can be possible.

### *Ensemble Repertoire*

Although interview participants Marie and RJ described examples of their ensemble conductors infusing works by composers from diverse racial identities into their concert programs, Natika and May found their conductors' inclusion of diversity in ensemble repertoire to be more of a stretch and less authentic. My interview participants wished they had opportunities to see their racial identities reflected in the composers whose works they performed in their bands, choirs, and orchestras. This finding was consistent with not only Cumberledge and Williams's (2023) survey about diversity within college ensemble repertoire, but it also reflects the normalization of Eurocentric, White, male perspectives within the curriculum (Ewell, 2020; Liu, 2022; Lucia, 2007; Patton, 2016; Wang & Humphreys, 2009). Cumberledge and Williams (2023) found that in their survey of undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in band, choir, and orchestra, research participants expressed a desire for their ensemble repertoire to include more works by underrepresented composers. More White students than students of color in their sample indicated that their current repertoire was representative of their racial identity, and more male students than female and nonbinary students rated composer gender identity as a lower priority for selecting repertoire (Cumberledge & Williams, 2023); these findings revealed the privilege of majoritarian groups, who enjoyed the luxury of seeing their identities represented as the default to the extent that they could consider composers' gender identities as a lower priority.



### *Solo Repertoire*

Except for Midnight, Drew, and Marie, my research participants did not see their racial identities reflected in the composers of their solo repertoire for their principal performance area. Midnight described how his drum set professor incorporated the contributions of African American drummers into his lessons. Drew and Marie celebrated the level of autonomy that they enjoyed when choosing the pieces for their lessons and described going out of their way to select works written by diverse composers. In contrast to Midnight, both Drew and Marie noted that this infusion of diversity was driven by their own interests, rather than a stated value of their faculty or their music program.

With private lesson literature focusing primarily on compositions from the western European art music canon, this was yet another facet of students' educational experiences that centered Eurocentric, White works (Ewell, 2020; Liu, 2022; Lucia, 2007; Patton, 2016; Wang & Humphreys, 2009). I had hoped that more interview participants would have described institutional initiatives to support programming solo works written by diverse composers, particularly given the time that had passed since the College Music Society's (CMS, 2014) report, *Transforming Music Study from its Foundations: A Manifesto for Progressive Change in the Undergraduate Preparation of Music Majors*. In this report, the College Music Society called for music programs to draw curricula from three pillars of creativity, diversity, and integration (Myers, 2016). Rather than focusing solely on performing music of the western European art music canon from 1600-1900, the College Music Society (2014) charged music programs to emphasize improvisation and composition, connection with diverse cultures, and

integration of the curriculum rather than fragmentation into separate silos. Ten years ago, CMS (2014) identified this disconnect between the Eurocentric curriculum, contemporary musical life, and the diversity priorities espoused by leaders of higher education institutions:

Large numbers of music majors graduate with little or no hands-on engagement in music beyond European classical repertory, let alone the cultivation of a genuine global artistic identity that TFUMM [Task Force on the Undergraduate Music Major] believes is a central facet of contemporary musical life and responsible citizenship. The fact that music majors commonly spend many years on campus without even a nod to surrounding multicultural communities, and that practitioners from these communities are rarely invited to engage with university students of music, underscores the extent to which this problem manifests itself locally and practically as well as more philosophically. Moreover, this ethnocentric lapse occurs on campuses where deans, chancellors, and presidents regularly articulate their universities' commitments to diversity and equality of opportunity, and where robust discourse pervades the broader humanities and social sciences. This dichotomy between administrative rhetoric and curricular reality underscores the egregious institutional nature of the problem. (pp. 19–20)

Although it sounded as though their music programs had not embraced the call-to-action of the CMS (2014) *Manifesto*, Drew and Marie took it upon themselves to infuse works by diverse composers into their solo lesson repertoire. RJ shared a story about his own efforts to expand his knowledge of works by African American composers, even though he did not experience the same level of freedom in selecting his trumpet repertoire as Drew and Marie enjoyed in their private lessons. RJ described discovering Juilliard's (n.d.) online database called *Music by Black Composers: An Introductory Resource*. Somewhat surprisingly, RJ was the only interview participant to mention online resources for finding literature from composers of diverse racial identities. Possible explanations for other interview participants not mentioning similar online resources could include performance faculty assigning repertoire rather than engaging students in dialogue about

choosing compositions and students' lack of exposure to professional organizations within music that prioritize diversity.

In addition to Juilliard's (n.d.) Music by Black Composers database, many other online resources amplify the compositions of diverse composers, including:

- The Institute for Composer Diversity's (n.d.) Composer Database, which filters results through a range of composer identities and composition genres;
- The Kassia Database: A Database of Art Song by Women Composers, which was part of Logan Contreras's (n.d.) doctoral degree;
- Musical Representations of Disability, which was created by Blake Howe (n.d.) as part of the Society for Music Theory's Music and Disability Interest Group and the American Musicological Society's Disability Study Group;
- The Music by Women Composers database from the Orange County Women's Chorus (n.d.); and
- The Yale Library's (n.d.) Music Resources on Diversity and Underrepresentation.

#### **Research Sub-Questions 4 and 5: Educational Experiences Supporting Self-Efficacy or Creating Barriers to Self-Efficacy**

To answer Research Sub-Questions 4 and 5, I conducted qualitative interviews with ten students of color, which were analyzed using narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2006; Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Mertova & Webster, 2019). Interview participants identified a range of educational experiences that supported self-efficacy or created barriers to self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). These supports and barriers were categorized into each of the four sources of self-

efficacy: a) mastery experience, or previous accomplishments; (b) vicarious experience from observing others; (c) verbal and social persuasion, or encouragement from others; and (d) emotional and physiological states, such as stress, anxiety, or mood (Usher & Pajares, 2008).

For mastery experience (Bandura, 1997), students of color were driven to pursue their individual goals, but these pursuits were often disconnected to or unsupported by their curriculum and campus resources. Within the area of vicarious experience (Bandura, 1997), some students described the importance of having peer or adult role models and mentors who shared their racial identity, but many more described being one of only a few students of their race within their music program. Three students described experiencing stereotype threat (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Surprisingly, only one student described connecting with racial affinity groups or multicultural centers. Students' stories surrounding verbal and social persuasion (Bandura, 1997) highlighted the importance of relationships and communication of feedback, particularly when considering the power dynamics existing between faculty and students and the potential for misuses of power. Students shared stories of how their emotional and physiological states (Bandura, 1997) impacted their self-efficacy, specifically naming coping mechanisms to address Music Performance Anxiety (MPA) and the impact of physical injury across the music curriculum.

### *Mastery Experience*

The students of color who completed qualitative interviews found their prior achievements to be a source of inspiration and encouragement as they pursued their

goals; however, their stories of success often revealed that their accomplishments were primarily supported by their own drive and commitment rather than through faculty, staff, or departmental resources from their music program. Natika improvised Baroque ornamentation in a recital despite not having received direct instruction on this at her institution. Denise was hired for a prestigious arts administration internship without any music-specific guidance from her university's career services office. Drew developed a composition portfolio to submit for graduate school applications through Zoom lessons rather than lessons for academic credit and their school of music. Is it asking too much that students find support for their recital requirements, professional development, and exploration of potential graduate school areas of study within their music program?

There seems to be a disconnect between student goals and their curricular and departmental support in pursuit of those goals. Faculty have acknowledged that even if a music major is preparing for a career in classical music performance, they will need more than just technical and musical skills to succeed (Jarvin & Subotnik, 2010). The College Music Society (2014) challenged music programs to reexamine the connections between curriculum and professional goals for students: "Careful rethinking of coursework that is typically presumed to provide the basic aural and analytical tools required by musicians regardless of career aspiration may be a fertile gateway that opens up to the new vision we propose" (p. 36). In Branscome's (2013) interviews with 17 university music department leaders, all interview participants valued business skills for musicians, yet 12 of the schools (70.1%) did not offer or require classes in either business or music business. It seems that faculty and administrators of music programs have acknowledged

that their programs are not serving all their students, yet change is not happening quickly enough to make a difference for many students.

### *Vicarious Experience*

#### *Multicultural Centers*

My interview participants generally described a lack of opportunities to strengthen their self-efficacy through vicarious experience (Bandura, 1997), as they frequently described being one of a small number of students of color in their music programs and named various barriers to accessing identity-related coursework, ensembles, or student organizations. Many colleges have multicultural centers as dedicated space on campus with staff to support belonging and provide resources for students of color and others whose identities are historically underrepresented in higher education (McShay, 2011; Reid & Ebde, 2018). However, only May specifically named connection with a racial affinity group as a source of support, and she noted the challenges of being as involved as she would have wanted to be with this organization, given the time commitments associated with music major study. Researchers noted how demands on music majors' time created obstacles for students to relax, build their social networks, and find community (Schneider & Chesky, 2011; Sternbach, 2008); this stress was felt more keenly by students of color when the racial demographics of the students and faculty surrounding them do not reflect their home communities (HEADS, 2020).

#### *Identity-Based Coursework*

In addition to the difficulty May experienced accessing a community of support from other East Asian students in social settings, other interview participants shared

stories that hinted at systemic barriers for accessing academic classes and ensembles within their music programs that affirmed their identities. Denise, RJ, and May were happy to describe how their music programs offered elective academic courses or ensembles that focused on the musical traditions of specific cultures, yet RJ, May, Drew, and Midnight also called out how rigid their music major curriculum was or how many credit hours they were required to take every term. When identity-based courses and ensembles are categorized as elective add-ons rather than requirements (Niknafs, 2017), students have to overcome additional barriers to find academic experiences that resonate with their identities. It doesn't matter if the music program offers a gospel choir if music majors can't take it to fulfill major ensemble requirements. It doesn't matter if there is a class on Black music history if students don't have the credit hour space to enroll. These barriers echoed Fiorentino's (2020) findings from interviewing two students of color who found that their music major requirements hindered their ability to pursue identity-based courses.

### *Stereotype Threat*

Within the context of predominantly White institutions, Jim and RJ described experiencing stereotype threat, or feeling as though their behavior was scrutinized to potentially confirm negative stereotypes associated with their racial identities (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Denise described feeling additional pressure to be performing at 100% to validate her place within her music program. Experiencing this additional layer of scrutiny amounted to hypervisibility for the few students of color in their music programs, while the interview participants also struggled with feelings of invisibility due

to the lack of racial representation (Dahan et al., 2019; Fiorentino, 2020). Although my quantitative findings did not directly support stereotype threat as a negative influence upon the self-efficacy of students of color, the qualitative interviews revealed the impact of this additional cognitive burden faced by students of color in ways that resonated with the existing literature (Cadinu et al., 2003, as cited in Totonchi et al., 2021; Cromley et al., 2013; Eccles et al., 1990, as cited in Totonchi et al., 2021; Irving & Hudley, 2008, as cited in Totonchi et al., 2021; Steele, 1997; Steele & Aronson, 1995).

### *Intersectionality*

When finding few peers who shared their racial identities, students of color who completed qualitative interviews found community across some of their other intersecting identities (Crenshaw, 1995; Gillborn, 2015). This included the LGBTQIA community (Panetta, 2021) and same-year peers. Mortensen (2016) observed that, contrary to assumptions that practicing and rehearsing music with others would naturally build a strong community bond, this is not always the case. As Schneider and Chesky (2011) also observed, the level of isolation from individual practice can leave music students feeling disconnected. Rose and X's connections with fellow music majors in their same year of study stood out as having overcome the challenges of isolation and solitude associated with music major study (Mortensen, 2016; Schneider & Chesky, 2011).

### *Verbal and Social Persuasion*

Throughout the stories that interview participants shared surrounding receiving positive or negative feedback, the real underlying theme was faculty power and the possibility for misuse of that power. Denise's sense of awe when receiving



encouragement from a faculty member with a national profile as a performer demonstrated the level of reverence that many music students feel toward faculty leaders in the field (Gavin, 2016). Drew and Rose were so keenly attuned to the level of power that faculty held that they felt powerless to advocate for themselves if it meant risking being seen as critical of their professors (Burwell, 2019). When Marie received feedback in her sophomore jury recommending that she consult a healthcare provider about a potential thyroid issue impacting her singing, Marie's lack of relationship with the faculty and lack of trust made her less ready to listen to the content of the feedback (Gaunt, 2011). In these cases, the position of power that the faculty members occupied shaded how feedback was received by the students. Many times, the power dynamics and feedback received resulted in students being silenced (Howard, 2022; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

### *Emotional and Physiological States*

As interview participants discussed times when their mood or awareness of their body impacted their confidence in their ability to succeed in positive and negative ways (Bandura, 1997), they shared coping mechanisms that counteracted the impact of Music Performance Anxiety (MPA). X and Rose described seeking new perspectives through books or feedback from additional teachers that allowed for a shift in perspective that improved their performance (Herman & T. Clark, 2023). RJ and Drew shared how breathing exercises created a greater sense of calm and focus for a successful performance (Paese & Egermann, 2024). X, Rose, RJ, and Drew's examples of the positive impact of emotional and physiological states on their self-efficacy (Bandura,

1997) were relatively quick mentions in the context of their interviews; in contrast, Midnight, Drew, Marie, and Rose shared extended stories about physical injuries that jeopardized their progress toward on-time graduation.

The neuromusculoskeletal and vocal health guidelines from the National Association of Schools of Music and the Performing Arts Medicine Association (PAMA, n.d.) included recommendations for musicians to properly warm up, take breaks, and to not perform while experiencing pain; however, these very general suggestions were inadequate to encompass the level of injury, recovery timeline, and longer-term implications experienced by Midnight, Drew, Marie, and Rose. Schneider and Chesky's (2011) comparison of music majors and student athletes would be an appropriate perspective to guide future considerations of the healthcare professionals and faculty members supporting students who have chronic health conditions, disabilities, and injuries. Chaffin and Lemieux (2004, as cited in Ginsborg et al., 2009) characterized some type of injury as almost an expectation for college students training to be professional musicians, given the amount of time invested in music study from very early ages.

Rickert et al.'s (2015) exploration of health awareness and attitudes in college-level cellists in Australia found that students lacked adequate knowledge surrounding strategies to prevent injury and that health education should be incorporated into the curriculum. Beyond policy alone, Rickert et al. (2015) described the need for faculty and staff to endorse healthy behaviors that would shift the culture surrounding music performance and injury. This discussion of health education, culture shift, and faculty and

staff alignment with a shared mission injury prevention was admirable, but what was absent from this discussion was an acknowledgement of the interconnected nature of music major requirements and how the curricular house of cards could come crashing to the ground when a student experiences an injury.

Multiple interview participants named concerns about how having to retake a single course could result in a delayed path toward graduation. Drew's carpal tunnel and cubital tunnel impacted not only their ability to perform in solo lessons, but physical injury had ripple effects across eight out of their 14 classes in that term, including multiple ensembles, a piano class, and a woodwind methods class. While any student's injury or health condition would be unique, college and conservatory music programs owe it to their students to proactively implement systems of support addressing the practical concerns at the intersection of musician health and curricular requirements, rather than responding reactively.

Additional research should explore the role that emotional and physiological states play within a music major's overall self-efficacy beliefs, with particular attention to whether there are differences in how voice students and instrumentalists interpret this source of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Although Bandura (1997) considers emotional and physiological states to be the source of self-efficacy that has the least influence, Lewis and Hendricks (2022) found that this was the most powerful source of self-efficacy for voice students: eight out of nine college vocalists in their research sample reported that emotional and physiological states had the greatest impact upon their vocal performance self-efficacy. Because vocalists themselves are their instruments, students'

emotions surrounding learning and performing music may be more complex than those of instrumentalists (Serra-Dawa, 2015, as cited by Lewis & Hendricks, 2022). Serra-Dawa (2015, as cited by Lewis & Hendricks, 2022) further stated that, given this interconnected nature of the body-instrument, students may be more likely to internalize correction in ways that could negatively impact the student's sense of self.

### **Central Research Question**

The central research question guiding this research was, "How do undergraduate music majors' self-perceptions influence their self-efficacy?" Students of color reported generally higher self-efficacy scores on the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) when compared to White students. This finding challenged deficit-based stereotypes characterizing students of color as "at risk" in higher education institution settings (Gillborn, 2015; Patton, 2016). Narrative research into the lived experiences of ten students of color revealed that, despite a lack of racial representation and despite systemic barriers to self-efficacy, students of color were experiencing success and were confident in their ability to succeed in the field of music. Music faculty and staff should broaden their perspectives to identify systemic barriers to student success, such as curricula and support systems that are not aligned with student goals. Music programs should stretch beyond upholding the western European art music canon as the only ideal to which all students should aspire; students of color should not be judged against a standard of Whiteness when they are working toward transformational goals beyond the scope of traditional classical curricula (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Music faculty and staff should consider how the collective burden of being

othered within various aspects of students' education add up to a collective whole, and then they should work together with students to dismantle these systemic barriers.

## **Limitations**

### **Challenges in Recruitment**

Although my data collection spanned seven months (September 2023 through March 2024), I struggled to collect the minimum number of responses required to analyze the data in meaningful ways. A drop-off in research participant engagement between the first quantitative phase, which was completing Ritchie and Williamon's (2011a) Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire, and the second quantitative phase, which was uploading unofficial transcripts, meant that it was only appropriate to explore Research Sub-Question 2 with descriptive statistics. I hypothesized that some of the challenges in recruiting research participants were influenced by the timing of recruitment, the current climate in the United States for research centering racial identity, and the racial realities of enrollment at college and conservatory music programs. Although I did not set out to conduct research primarily with students who were pursuing classical music study, the research participants almost exclusively shared that they were studying lessons in a classical performance area. Out of the 70 research participants, only 5 of them (7.14%) were taking lessons in a jazz, contemporary, or commercial music performance area. This created some obstacles for considering the generalizability of my findings for music programs with a strong emphasis on jazz, contemporary, or commercial music programs. Lastly, some challenges navigating research design created some additional limitations within the study.

### *Timing of Recruitment*

I remain grateful to my community partner, the Music Admissions Roundtable, for distributing my initial call for research participants as well as subsequent reminder emails to encourage students to consider participating in the study. None of the work would have been possible without their amplification within their music program communities. I recognized that the beginning of my research coincided with a particularly challenging time, given that the majority of the faculty and staff in music admission roles are traveling throughout the fall to recruit at college fairs, high school visits, and other events to meet with prospective students.

The process of scheduling and completing the qualitative interviews also was plagued by challenges with timing during the academic calendar and the myriad of time commitments that undergraduate music majors juggle every day. May described how her daily schedule of classes, lessons, rehearsals, practice time, and studying impacted her ability to maintain friendships and connection with the Asian student affinity group. These types of regular time commitments are nothing compared with the rush of end-of-term performances from ensembles, juries, final exams, holiday season gigs, pep band performances at basketball games, and more. While seven of the qualitative interviews were completed between the roughly one-month period between Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, I recognized that asking students to take an hour out of their busy lives during that particularly busy time was no small feat.

### ***Current National Climate Surrounding DEIJ***

In 2023 and 2024, United States educational institutions faced new challenges to educational initiatives centering diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ). The Supreme Court had just overturned race-conscious admission practices for colleges (Flaherty, 2023), presidential candidates were touting their record of book bans and anti-CRT legislation (DeSantis, 2024), and more and more state legislatures were passing anti-DEI bills (Applebaum, 2022). Applebaum (2022) set the stage for the type of panic induced by state legislatures passing laws limiting discussions of race and racism: “The laws are rationalized by the erroneous belief that talking about race and racism exacerbates difference, when we know from time-honored studies that *not* talking about race and racism obscures the real effects of systemic racial injustice” (p. 693). For at least some faculty and staff at institutions within my research sample, this impacted their ability to share my recruitment email with students.

### ***Racial Compositional Data Within the Sample***

I am very grateful that the Music Admissions Roundtable (MAR) served as my community partner and distributed recruitment emails to potential research participants pursuing undergraduate music major study at their bachelor’s degree-granting institutions within the United States. This professional organization offered the opportunity to take a broader examination of the lived experiences of students of color across the nation than I could have if I had conducted research at a single institution. It was only through connections with faculty and staff at many different colleges and conservatories that I was able to collect enough Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie &

Williamon, 2011a) responses from a diverse racial sample to conduct inferential statistics. Relying upon a single research site would have risked replicating the level of racial skew and privilege within the sample noted by Lewis et al. (2022).

In alignment with my theoretical framework of critical race theory, I must give myself space to both name my gratitude for this partnership and critique the racial reality present within college and conservatory music programs in the United States. Because MAR does not collect its own compositional data, I frequently referenced demographic information surrounding racial identity for institutions accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), which found that 63% of students enrolled in NASM-accredited bachelor's degree programs in 2020 identified as White (HEADS, 2020). Not every institution affiliated with the Music Admissions Roundtable is accredited by NASM, but in 2023, over 75% of the MAR institutions in the U.S. that awarded bachelor's degrees were NASM-accredited institutions.

While I could not make an exact comparison of the racial demographics of undergraduate students enrolled at MAR-affiliated institutions with those of the students enrolled at NASM-accredited institutions, I was able to consider the representation of Minority Serving Institutions across both NASM and MAR (see Table 1.1). In 2020, NASM-accredited institutions included 68 Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), 29 Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs), 24 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), six Native American Serving Nontribal Institutions (NASNTIs), five Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs), and zero Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) (HEADS, 2020; Rutgers Graduate School of



Education, 2021). In contrast, MAR-affiliated institutions included only six HSIs, 4 AANAPISIs, and one HBCU (MAR, n.d.; Rutgers Graduate School of Education, 2021). It would appear that at least when considering the types of MSIs connected with these organizations, MAR in 2023 was less diverse than NASM was in 2020.

Given these racial realities and the broader complexities of aggregating data across broader categories such as “students of color” (Allen et al. 2019; Grady, 2020), my research cannot speak to the rich diversity of experience of all students from minoritized racial groups who are pursuing music major study at colleges and conservatories in the United States. It is my hope that my study serves as a next step within research dedicated to amplifying the voices of students of color and working toward meaningful change for equitable learning experiences in music programs across the nation.

### ***Performance Areas of Research Participants***

Although many of the institutions affiliated with the Music Admissions Roundtable have well-known programs in jazz, contemporary, or commercial music, these students were not evenly represented within my research sample. Over 92% of my research participants indicated that they were taking lessons in a classical performance area. Even within the same institution, students pursuing different genres of study could have completely different curricular requirements and learning environments. Because jazz, contemporary, and commercial music approaches were underrepresented within my research sample, this limited the generalizability of my findings to college and conservatory music programs that are not primarily focused on classical performance.

## **Challenges of Research Design**

Some of the research design decisions that I made to remove potential barriers for participation unintentionally created additional complications in the research process. Out of sympathy for my colleagues working in music admissions roles at their various institutions, I worked with my community partner to distribute an email via the Music Admissions Roundtable listserv that requested that each institution forward the message on to their undergraduate music major email list. I did not want to add another layer of work by asking music admissions colleagues to first indicate their institution's interest in participating in the research by completing a separate interest form, but by not doing this, I lost the ability to calculate response rate. I was unable to distinguish between scenarios where students at an institution received my recruitment email but decided individually not to participate in the research study and scenarios where the faculty/staff at the institution opted to not to distribute the research recruitment email.

To try to affirm student agency in the research process and avoid putting pressure on students to participate, I structured the Qualtrics survey to collect demographic data and administer the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) to collect the data first and then collect email addresses and potential interest for students of color to participate in an interview at the very end of the survey. This meant that I had no way to follow up with individuals who consented to participate in the research study but stopped completing the survey before the final screen of the 10-to-15-minute-long survey. Although I had planned far enough in advance to craft email outreach to research participants who had started but not submitted their surveys to

include these in my recruitment materials for approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), I underestimated how many individuals would close the survey after just two minutes. Instead, the planned reminder correspondence I asked Music Admissions Roundtable institutions to send out to their undergraduate music major email lists became the only avenue to encourage participation, rather than part of a two-prong approach.

Challenges surrounding the lengthy data collection timeline from September 2023 through March 2024 also resulted in a shift in research design from explanatory sequential mixed methods to convergent mixed methods. If I had the luxury of time to conduct the qualitative interviews after all the quantitative data had been collected and analyzed, I would have loved to ask the interview participants questions informed by the findings from the quantitative phases of my study. This, too, is another piece of wood on the fire of opportunities for future research.

## **Implications**

### **Implications for Practice**

My research participants called for music faculty and staff to create better support systems for students of color by increasing the advertisement/visibility of organizations for students of color, investing in professional development resources, and incorporating additional ensemble repertoire from composers with diverse identities in authentic, meaningful ways. These areas are opportunities to foster belonging for students of color as they pursue their goals while also enhancing learning experiences for students across all racial identities. Although these implications are not particularly groundbreaking or

cutting-edge, they are a reminder that diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) work must be a consistent journey of annual progress, rather than a destination to be reached.

### ***Amplifying Availability of Affinity Groups and Multicultural Centers***

Although I researched each institution's student organizations and campus multicultural centers in preparation for interviews with the ten students of color, May was the only interview participant who discussed the role of a racial affinity group in building community and supporting belonging on campus. I expected many more students to name the power of identity-based student organizations as a form of vicarious experience supporting their self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). One possible explanation for interview participants not connecting with organizations or multicultural centers could have been the time constraints that May described, which resonate with Schneider and Chesky's (2011) description of the action-packed schedules that music majors keep. Another possible explanation may also be timing-related: if new undergraduate students are learning about these types of campus support systems during new student orientation or welcome week events right before the beginning of the fall term, some music majors may be participating in marching band camps, choir camps, or other types of orientations within their academic programs that are held during the same time frame. It is important that students have multiple introductions and reintroductions to identity-based resources throughout the academic year.

### ***Professional Development for Students***

Denise's story about applying for her arts administration internship highlighted the need for music-specific career and professional development resources. The processes

of developing a musical resume, marketing and maintaining a professional presence as a performing musician, preparing for interviews and auditions, or applying for graduate programs demand support beyond the level of what one faculty mentor could provide and beyond what an undergraduate student would intuitively know to request. College and conservatory music programs should make professional development a more transparent process, with multiple opportunities for engagement and refinement at each level of study. Whether these are incorporated into classes or offered as extracurricular workshops, faculty and staff should dedicate time to explaining the value of these opportunities and make them more accessible to undergraduate music majors. Professional development resources could create opportunities for mastery experiences strengthening students' self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) as they prepare for their next steps after graduation.

### *Authenticity in Concert Programming*

The students of color in my interviews described a range of times when their ensemble conductors taught pieces written by diverse composers in effective, authentic ways and times when intentions fell flat and resulted in tokenizing experiences. To create space for meaningful learning experiences, conductors should start by considering their own positionality and by interrogating the underlying value statements that are made when selecting music for a concert. An audit of concert programs from the past few years could be a good way to determine which identities are most frequently and least frequently represented within the ensemble repertoire. Collaborative conversations about concert programming with other faculty, students, and community members can create

more transparency in the process and help ensure that the impact of the work matches the intention of the conductor. Guest experts can share with students more about the context of the composer's background, discuss the types of musical traditions explored within a piece, and offer resources for deeper learning. Ensemble conversations with living composers can not only create a more meaningful learning experience for students, but these dialogues could be a form of vicarious experience that would strengthen self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997).

### **Implications for Policy**

My research findings ask music faculty and staff to consider opportunities to leverage policy to create meaningful change in support of students of color, starting with acknowledging and mitigating the risks often associated with teaching DEIJ-related courses. Without adequate protection and support for faculty who already are doing this work, it would be difficult to gain additional buy-in for DEIJ efforts. Music programs should also examine how the curricular divide between required courses and ensembles and elective options further reifies the western European art music canon and devalues the musical traditions of minoritized communities. Beyond designating a single diversity course requirement, performance faculty should invite student voice and choice as part of the process of diversifying repertoire for performance area lessons. Lastly, additional supports are required to address faculty-student power dynamics and protect students from potential misuses of power.

### ***Mitigating Risks Associated With Teaching DEIJ-Related Courses***

Denise described a faculty member's interpretation of the broad scope of a class exploring music after the 1900s to infuse diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) into a required class. This was a bold, inspired decision, but it was also a risky decision, particularly since Denise shared that this faculty member held marginalized identities. College and conservatory music programs should name these risks and provide protections for faculty to support their infusion of DEIJ throughout the music curriculum.

Ahluwalia et al. (2019) found that psychology faculty teaching courses in multicultural competence often are from marginalized groups, and the typically lower course evaluations from those courses can impact not only the faculty member's prospects for tenure but also their perception as an effective educator within their department. While considerations of how these findings might be applicable within the field of music perhaps most immediately focus on areas such as music education or ethnomusicology, these findings are important considerations across the entire curriculum, including general education courses taught to non-music majors within liberal arts universities. In this way, music programs should ensure that faculty efforts to strengthen students' self-efficacy through representation and vicarious experience (Bandura, 1997) does not create a further "cultural tax" (Ahluwalia et al., 2019) on the faculty doing DEIJ work.

### ***Value Statements for Required vs. Elective Courses and Ensembles***

The students of color participating in my interviews were so excited to tell me about the one elective class offered by their institution on African American musical

history or to talk about an elective gospel choir. While I was thrilled to hear their passion for finding these pockets of the curriculum that reflected their identities, the institution's decision to label these elements of the curriculum as optional sent a strong message about the role of this work within the music program. In an action-packed, sequential music major curriculum, students of color must go out of their way to take extra classes where their identities can be affirmed. Labeling ensembles "minor ensembles" that cannot count toward music major requirements creates barriers to student participation. These practices of curricular marginalization further signal to students of color that their cultural traditions are not valued within their institution's music program and the field of music in general. If musical traditions from outside of the western European art music canon are to be valued, institutions must put their credit hours where their mouths are and grant students actual progress toward major requirements for this valuable work. Otherwise, the power of this form of vicarious experience cannot have its intended impact in strengthening self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997).

### ***Diversity Within Solo Repertoire***

Solo repertoire for performance lessons would be an ideal setting for infusing diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice in intentional touchpoints woven throughout a student's undergraduate journey. Diversifying the solo repertoire offers a valuable intersection at two sources of self-efficacy: mastery experience and vicarious experience (Bandura, 1997). Faculty should start with an examination of audition repertoire requirements, which can signal either inclusion or exclusion to students before they even matriculate (Koza, 2008). Transparent dialogue with students about the power and



privilege associated with the western European art music canon can support a student's critical consideration of the assumptions they hold surrounding musical value and validity. Incorporating student voice and choice in selecting their repertoire would offer important learning opportunities to discuss meaningful ways to incorporate DEIJ within their individual recitals, within the overall arc of their undergraduate study, and within their future practices as a musician. The success students could experience in this sphere of their musical learning would serve as mastery experience to motivate future efforts (Bandura, 1997).

Music libraries have been a valuable resource to support students in diversifying their solo repertoire. Volioti and Williamon (2021) found that advanced music students and professional musicians utilized recordings as a source of musical knowledge and development as they learned new pieces. Input from faculty and students could shape institutional decisions about which scores and recordings to purchase for the music library, to make works by diverse composers more accessible to the college and conservatory community. In many cases, music libraries already have compiled research guides in house or linked to resources created by other institutions and organizations; faculty could include links to these guides as part of their syllabi for both lessons and classes. Since undergraduate students might not have had access to a music library collection prior to college, incorporating music library orientation sessions and tours as part of introductory courses could help students become more familiar with the resources and staff available to support their learning.

### *Addressing Power Dynamics Between Faculty and Students*

College and conservatory music programs can do more to foster healthy relationships between faculty and students and prevent possible misuses of power. This aspect of emotional and physiological states and their impact on self-efficacy beliefs for students of color needs additional attention (Bandura, 1997). Compliance with non-discrimination and Title IX regulations without examining the underlying climate of a music program and the power dynamics at play within every interaction between faculty, staff, and students does not result in meaningful change (Patton, 1996). Because the types of relationships between faculty and students within higher education typically are different from what students previously encountered in high school, students need more guidance on roles and responsibilities within college and conservatory settings. Additional training for all members of the music community would be helpful to set expectations for acceptable behaviors and to support effective cross-cultural communication.

Syllabi and scholarship agreements should be a contract between students and faculty that clearly communicate expectations and outcomes. If participation in a certain number of assigned ensembles is required for scholarship eligibility, that should be documented in a signed agreement between faculty and students each year. A student's enrollment in an undergraduate music program is not their consent to be assigned to multiple large ensembles and chamber ensembles beyond their curricular requirements in ways that could contribute to overuse injuries. Music programs must take additional steps to protect student's neuromusculoskeletal health. Potential financial stress for ensemble

assignments tied to scholarship awards, time commitments for additional ensembles, and the risk of overuse injury are interconnected factors that would impact students' emotional and physiological states and their overall self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997).

Denise's story about her friend considering transferring to another institution is an example that could be discussed with students, faculty, and staff. It is understandable that a faculty member would experience a broad range of emotions when hearing that a promising student who had received such an investment of their own time and efforts could be leaving the institution, and it is understandable that faculty would want to retain the student at the institution. Perhaps the faculty member meant to share with Denise's friend their concerns about not burning bridges and the interconnected nature of the professional world of music; however, what was received was a threatening message of, "Your career is in jeopardy if you make this choice. We're gonna reach out to all these people and let them know that you are not professional." Because this response was very different from what Denise had witnessed when other peers had discussed transferring, she wondered what role race and racism played in these interactions with her friend.

Students need spaces to process things when something has happened that could be a misuse of power, and they need additional avenues to seek resolution and paths forward that will not result in reprisals against them. Course evaluations completed at the end of the term often are too late to result in meaningful change for a time-sensitive issue, and as Rose highlighted in her interview, feedback related to certain interactions or events can very easily be traced back to specific students. An ombuds office could

provide a safe space to discuss concerns, explore conflicts, and raise broader concerns to music program leadership (International Ombuds Association, n.d.).

### **Summary of Implications**

This study's implications can impact practice and policy across the undergraduate music curriculum. By promoting the visibility of organizations for students of color, investing in professional development resources for students, and incorporating additional ensemble repertoire from composers with diverse identities in authentic ways, students can find greater representation and meaning within their educational experiences. By protecting faculty who are already leading DEIJ-related courses and ensembles and making those curricular offerings requirements rather than mere electives, college and conservatories can institute policy changes that promote more equitable educational experiences for students of color and the entire campus community. Additional protections are needed to address faculty-student power dynamics and reduce the possibility of faculty misuse of their power. Intentional efforts from college and conservatory music programs in these areas can support the self-efficacy of students of color, challenge the status quo of the western European art music canon, and eliminate some of the barriers for student success.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

As my systematic literature review returned zero search results for peer-reviewed journal articles exploring self-efficacy and racial identity for undergraduate music majors, my recommendations for future research offer suggestions for replicating and extending this inquiry with additional groups of students. Particular attention to research

that could identify relationships between grade point averages and self-efficacy while centering racial identity could continue affirming the value of self-efficacy and motivate additional investigations of learning experiences that support or create barriers to self-efficacy. Expanding future research to include students beyond the limited inclusion criteria for my research could better capture the overall experiences of music majors within U.S. college and conservatory programs. Some groups of students, such as multiracial individuals, international students, transfer students, and graduate students, could warrant entire studies on their own, since each group has unique contexts and experiences worth exploring in great detail. Lastly, explorations of the connection between self-efficacy, GPA, and racial identity could be extended beyond music programs to higher education institutions more broadly.

### **Further Exploration of Self-Efficacy and GPA**

Because of the drop-off in engagement for research participants, I was unable to adequately address Research Sub-Question 2: What relationships exist between self-efficacy and grade point average (GPA), for students of color and for White students? Future research should explore these connections to determine if self-efficacy is a predictor of academic achievement in performance lessons and across the curriculum. As part of that investigation, it would be important to consider how to account for the observed differences in institutional policies surrounding grading scales (e.g., whether some schools consider a 93 to be an A or an A- grade), grade point average scales (e.g., whether some schools award GPA points higher than 4.00 for an A+), and credit hours required in lessons for students pursuing different types of majors. While conducting

future research at a single institution might make it easier to compare GPA data, the odds of having a racially diverse sample within a single institution are not strong.

### **Additional Populations to Explore**

I selected the inclusion criteria for my research to try to maximize the possibility of shared experiences across the sample, while also recognizing specific subpopulations within college and conservatory music programs whose self-efficacy beliefs and learning experiences deserve dedicated attention in future studies. Multiracial individuals were included in my study, but given the way that institutions accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) categorize racial identity within a single-choice categories and a lack of a “two or more races” option (HEADS, 2020), I was not able to anticipate just how many students would identify as biracial, mixed, or multiracial. College and conservatory music programs should invest in research exploring multiracial students’ experiences navigating the different parts of their racial identities within music major study and how that impacts their self-efficacy. Similarly, the self-efficacy beliefs and educational experiences of international students, transfer students, and graduate students deserve attention from future studies as well.

### ***Multiracial Individuals***

With so many research participants who identified as students of color self-describing their racial identities as biracial, mixed, or multiracial, it would be valuable to explore the experiences of these students in greater detail. The single-choice categories for racial identity used by the National Association of Schools of Music (n.d.-b) and the Higher Education Arts Data Services (2020) did not adequately capture the nuanced

identities of the students of color in my research sample. This finding was consistent with Hayes's (2020) dissatisfaction with the ability of NASM's single-select racial categories to account for nuance of racial identity within the Latinx community.

Many of my interview participants who identified as biracial or multiracial described how others were likely to assume they were part of a single racial group rather than being multiracial. Do these experiences leave students with the impression that they have to choose between parts of their identity? When there are courses, ensembles, student organizations, or multicultural centers where they see one of their racial identities reflected, are these opportunities constructed broadly enough to affirm the belonging of multicultural individuals? Additional research is needed to understand the lived experiences and unique needs of multiracial students pursuing undergraduate music major study.

### ***International Students***

Because international students are adapting to teaching styles in the U.S. as well as interpreting race and racism within different cultural contexts, I chose to exclude international students from my research sample (Bastien et al., 2018; Haeny et al., 2021). That being said, these are some of the very experiences that *should* be studied in future research projects. By understanding how international students interpret their racial identity both inside the United States and abroad, faculty and staff can better support their educational experiences and promote resources for cross-cultural understanding. Rose and Natika described how much they valued being able to speak the same language as other students. How much more important is it then for international students to have

opportunities to speak a shared language with someone else while also processing their learning experiences and perceptions of race and racism within U.S. educational institutions?

### ***Transfer Students of Color***

My decision to exclude transfer students from the research study was based on an attempt to avoid research participants focusing on comparing their educational experiences at two different institutions. This was because I wanted to center students in my research, rather than their learning environments. Future research focusing on transfer students could explore whether the process of changing learning environments and navigating different educational institutions impacts transfer students' self-efficacy over time. Special consideration of factors motivating transfer decisions for students of color could offer new opportunities for their voices to be heard. In my professional experience, undergraduate students who have made the decision to transfer out of a music program did not always feel that they could complete an honest exit interview to share feedback on their learning experiences. Students of color may not wish to invest their time and energy in a conversation if it could be interpreted as burning a bridge behind them or if they do not think their input would be taken seriously or result in change. Research studies conducted by an outside research team would offer transfer students of color a chance to have their voices heard while highlighting challenges and opportunities for college and conservatory music programs.



### *Graduate Students of Color*

I found the qualitative interviews with seniors to be some of the most insightful and rewarding parts of my research. After four years of music major study, the seniors' observations and commentaries about their self-efficacy and learning experiences were so rich. Their stories felt a little bit more "lived in." Given the seniors' greater awareness of both themselves and their learning environments, graduate-level students of color could continue to offer keen insights into educational experiences that support or create barriers to self-efficacy. Perhaps a comparison of undergraduate and graduate learning environments could be a key feature of a research study, rather than a risk to try to minimize.

Some graduate students could also offer unique insights from lenses as both students and instructors. How do graduate students of color access support resources and affinity groups geared toward faculty, students, or both populations? How do graduate students support self-efficacy beliefs of their students of color if they are required to deliver Eurocentric curricula they disagree with, particularly if they cannot modify syllabi or assessments? Who trains students of color for how to handle bias and racism within course evaluations, and how does this impact their own self-efficacy? Research surrounding self-efficacy and lived experiences of graduate students of color could yield incredibly rich findings to shape strategies for supporting this unique population.

### **Extension into Higher Education**

This research study focused on the ways that racialized experiences within music education could influence the self-efficacy beliefs of students of color, and future

research could expand this exploration into other fields within higher education or examine self-efficacy more broadly across disciplines in higher education settings. Given the task-specific nature of self-efficacy, researchers would need to carefully select or design an instrument to measure self-efficacy for the intended context (Bandura, 1997). Extending this consideration of racial identity and self-efficacy could be especially valuable in liberal arts colleges and universities, where students pursuing a variety of majors are completing general education courses as well as their specialized studies in their majors. In this way, researchers could continue exploring the value statements that administration, faculty, and staff communicate to students through curricular requirements, elective course offerings, and learning environments more broadly. By utilizing the lens of critical race theory, individuals at different institutions could consider perspectives of students of color as they navigate the status quo of Whiteness within higher education in general (Bernal, 2002; Crenshaw, 1995; Gillborn, 2015; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Nardo, 2022; Patton, 2016; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

### **Chapter Five Summary**

To answer the central research question and five research sub-questions guiding the research, I analyzed quantitative and qualitative data through the lens of critical race theory. Students of color reported self-efficacy scores on the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a) that were generally higher than White students, which challenged deficit-based stereotypes characterizing students of color as “at risk” in higher education settings (Gillborn, 2015; Patton, 2016). Narrative research into the lived experiences of ten students of color revealed that despite obstacles

in finding racial representation and despite systemic barriers to self-efficacy, students of color experienced success and were confident in their ability to succeed in the field of music. Music programs should stretch beyond upholding the western European art music canon as the only ideal to which all students should aspire; students of color should not be judged against a standard of Whiteness when they are working toward transformational goals beyond the scope of traditional classical curricula (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Music faculty and staff should consider how the collective burden of being othered within various aspects of students' education add up to a collective whole, and then they should work together with students to dismantle these systemic barriers.

This chapter considered limitations to the study, implications for practice, and implications for policy before identifying areas for future research to continue centering racial identity within explorations of self-efficacy beliefs for music majors. By exploring self-perceptions of self-efficacy by undergraduate music majors of different racial identities, faculty and staff can better support student success and move toward delivering equitable, inclusive learning experiences.

### **Call to Action**

It is my hope that this research challenges the Eurocentric status quo of college and conservatory music programs, inspiring faculty and staff to partner with students of color to work toward meaningful change. To enact this type of transformation, music programs need to move beyond focusing solely on recruiting students with diverse racial identities or creating one diversity course within the curriculum. By exploring the research questions from this study within their own educational settings, faculty and staff

can understand the role of race and racism in undergraduate music programs and work to dismantle systems of oppression. When using the lens of critical race theory to center the voices of students of color, music faculty and staff can have a truer understanding of the lived experiences of students of color, promote educational experiences that support self-efficacy, and remove barriers to self-efficacy. These changes can create more inclusive, equitable experiences for students of all racial identities.

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## **Appendix A: Definitions**

**Higher Education Arts Data Services (HEADS):** A project begun in 1982 that provides comprehensive data sets for member and non-member institutions of the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD), the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST), and the National Association of Schools of Dance (NASD). Institutions accredited by these organizations are required to submit statistical information each year related to enrollment, degrees offered, operational budgets, faculty salaries, demographic information for faculty and students, and more (HEADS, n.d.).

**Music Admissions Roundtable (MAR):** A 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with over 120 member institutions across the United States and Canada. This professional networking group offers opportunities to promote professionalism, mentorship, and collaboration. While many of the institutions represented by MAR are accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), this is not a requirement for membership. Additionally, some member institutions are performing arts high school programs, summer festivals, or admission organizations (MAR, n.d.).

**National Association of Schools of Music (NASM):** The accreditation body for higher education music programs in the United States, which establishes national standards for undergraduate degrees, graduate degrees, and other credentials (NASM, n.d.-d).

**Race/ethnicity as defined by NASM:** “Category used to describe groups to which individuals belong, identify with, or belong in the eyes of the community. The categories do not denote scientific definitions of anthropological origins. A person may be counted in only one group. The groups used to categorize U.S. citizens, resident aliens, and other eligible non-citizens are: Black, non-Hispanic; American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian or Pacific Islander; Hispanic; and White, non-Hispanic” (NASM, n.d.-b).

**Self-efficacy:** The discipline-specific and task-specific belief in one’s ability to succeed (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy has four sources: (a) mastery experience, or previous accomplishments; (b) vicarious experience from observing others; (c) verbal and social persuasion, or encouragement from others; and (d) emotional and physiological states, such as stress, anxiety, or mood (Usher & Pajares, 2008).

## Appendix B: Community Partner Agreement

Rachel Lim is completing her dissertation in practice for the Doctorate of Education at the University of Denver under the supervision of Dr. Norma Lu Hafenstein. The doctorate is part of the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED). A key component of the requirements is to obtain a community partner. Researchers must disseminate their work to interested community members as defined by the nature of the research. Community partners can attend during the defense of the dissertation, which will occur in spring 2024 for approximately two hours in length, although attendance is not required. Based on feedback from the community partner, the research project may need revision to meet the practical needs of the community partner.

The partners will meet at least twice to discuss the research project and dissertation: once after IRB approval is secured during summer 2023 and again during winter 2024, following data collection. The community partner will distribute a recruitment email for research participants, pending IRB approval of recruitment materials. All student research participants and the institutions where they are enrolled will remain anonymous and will be given pseudonyms. Findings from the research will be shared in a Zoom meeting open to institutions who are members of the Music Admissions Roundtable, estimated to be scheduled for summer 2024, after successful defense of the dissertation in practice.

The purpose of this mixed methods study is to explore self-perceptions of self-efficacy by undergraduate music majors of different racial identities. The study will include a quantitative analysis of data from the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a), which is an existing validated measure of self-efficacy, and qualitative interviews with students.

The rationale for this research is:

- Research has linked self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), or one's confidence in their ability to produce a desired outcome, with positive college outcomes, such as grade point average and persistence or retention (Gore, 2006; Kahn & Nauta, 2001; Multon et al., 1991).
- College and conservatory music programs accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) often are predominantly White spaces: the majority of faculty are White (Higher Education Arts Data Services [HEADS], 2020), the majority of undergraduate students are White (HEADS), and the majority of the music studied within introductory music theory courses is written by White composers (Ewell, 2020).
- Representation in the curriculum, faculty, and peers is a form of vicarious experience, which is one of Bandura's (1997) four sources of self-efficacy.



- Research is needed to understand the impact of this lack of representation and other racialized experiences across the music curriculum upon self-efficacy beliefs for undergraduate music majors who identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. By amplifying student experiences, college and conservatory faculty and staff can better support student success and move toward delivering equitable, inclusive educational experiences.

The research questions for this study are:

- Central research question: How do undergraduate music majors' self-perceptions influence their self-efficacy?
- Sub-Questions:
  1. What are undergraduate music majors' self-perceptions of self-efficacy?
    - a. For students of color?
    - b. For students who identify as White?
  2. How do music majors perceive their racial identity within undergraduate music education?
  3. How do educational experiences support self-efficacy?
  4. How do educational experiences create barriers to self-efficacy?

As a representative of the Music Admissions Roundtable, I agree to participate in this research partnership as defined in the above agreement.

	5/09/2023		5/09/2023
Stephen Campbell	Date	Rachel Lim	Date

**Appendix C: Survey Instrument with Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning  
Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a)**

*Survey/Questionnaire Demographic Questions, Rationale, and Format*

Question	Rationale for question	Question format	Type of demographic information
1. Are you pursuing a bachelor's degree?	Confirm eligibility to participate in the study	Yes/no, select one response	Eligibility to participate in the study
2. Are you pursuing a major in music?	Confirm eligibility to participate in the study	Yes/no, select one response	Eligibility to participate in the study
3. Are you an international student?	Confirm eligibility to participate in the study	Yes/no, select one response	Eligibility to participate in the study
4. Did you transfer to this institution after being enrolled as a degree-seeking student at another school?	Confirm eligibility to participate in the study	Yes/no, select one response	Eligibility to participate in the study
5. How old are you?	Confirm eligibility to participate in the study	Text entry response	Eligibility to participate in the study
6. Which institution (college, conservatory, university, etc.) do you currently attend?	Confirm eligibility to participate in the study and collect general information about the student to determine possible trends or relationships	Text entry response	Eligibility to participate in the study, learning environment

Question	Rationale for question	Question format	Type of demographic information
7. How many years have you been enrolled at this school? (Please respond based on the number of years you have been enrolled, not according to how many credit hours you have earned.)	Collect general information about the student to determine possible trends or relationships	Closed response, select one response	Research participant profile
8. Which bachelor's degree are you pursuing? (For example: BA, BM, BME, BS, etc.)	Collect general information about the student to determine possible trends or relationships	Text entry response	Learning environment and research participant profile
9. What type of major within the field of music are you pursuing? (For example: performance, instrumental music education, music therapy, etc.)	Collect general information about the student to determine possible trends or relationships	Text entry response	Learning environment and research participant profile
10. What is your principal performance area/instrument? (This would be your voice type or your instrument for music performance lessons.)	Confirm eligibility to participate in study, collect general information about the student to determine possible trends or relationships	Text entry response	Learning environment and research participant profile

Question	Rationale for question	Question format	Type of demographic information
11. How many <b>total</b> years of experience do you have performing with this area/instrument?	Collect general information about the student to determine possible trends or relationships	Text entry response	Socio-economic status
12. How many years of lessons did you complete in this area/instrument <b>prior to graduating from high school?</b>	Collect general information about the student to determine possible trends or relationships	Text entry response	Socio-economic status
The following questions ask you to describe your racial and gender identities. These questions utilize the categories from the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), which might not fully represent how you describe yourself. You will have the opportunity to describe your identities with more nuanced detail in the next section.			
13. Which one NASM category most closely represents your racial identity?	Collect general information about the student to determine possible trends or relationships	Closed response, select one response (HEADS, 2020; NASM, n.d.-b)	Racial identity
14. Which one NASM category most closely represents your gender identity?	Collect general information about the student to determine possible trends or relationships	Closed response, select one (HEADS, 2020; NASM, n.d.-b)	Gender identity
Please use the next questions to describe your racial and gender identities in greater nuance, if applicable. You may indicate if more than one response applies to you, and you may write in your own responses, if applicable. If you feel that the NASM-determined categories accurately describe your identities, please select the same identities you selected in the previous two questions.			
15. How would you describe your racial identity?	Collect general information about the student to determine possible trends or relationships	Text entry response	Racial identity

Question	Rationale for question	Question format	Type of demographic information
16. How would you describe your gender identity?	Collect general information about the student to determine possible trends or relationships	Text entry response	Gender identity
17. Do you qualify for state or federal need-based financial aid? (For example: Pell Grant, Federal Work Study, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants/FSEOG, federal student loans, etc.)	Collection general information about the student to determine possible trends or relationships	Yes/no, select one response (Federal Student Aid, n.d.)	Socio-economic status
18. Describe the highest level of education completed by your first parent or guardian.	Collection general information about the student to determine possible trends or relationships	Closed response, select one response (United States Census Bureau, 2021)	Socio-economic status
19. Describe the highest level of education completed by a second parent or guardian, if applicable	Collection general information about the student to determine possible trends or relationships	Closed response, select one response (United States Census Bureau, 2021)	Socio-economic status

Please think of one specific performance activity in which you have recently had a prominent role, such as

- A solo performance of a particular song/sonata/concerto,
- An ensemble performance of a well-known chamber piece,
- A gig requiring improvised solos around a standard tune,
- Or another type of musical performance.

Question	Rationale for question	Question format	Type of demographic information
20. What music was performed?	Administering the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a)	Text entry response	N/A
21. How many people would you estimate were in the audience?	Administering the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a)	Text entry response	N/A
22. Where was the performance? (Please provide a general description of the venue, rather than a specific address/location. For example: College campus recital hall, public coffee shop, civic center, etc.)	Administering the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a)	Text entry response	N/A
23. Please rate how well the above performance went, on this scale of 1 to 7.	Administering the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a)	Likert-scale response, with 1 being very poorly and 7 being excellently	N/A

Imagine that you have been asked to perform a **similar activity** within the next few weeks. This similar activity would replicate your previous performance:

- You would be performing a piece of music of comparable musical and technical difficulty.
- You would be performing in a similar context.
- You would be performing with the same level of expectations and demands, and so on.

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements, specifically regarding how you would **learn and prepare** for this performance.

Question	Rationale for question	Question format	Type of demographic information
24. I am confident that I can successfully learn the music for this performance.	Administering the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a)	Likert-scale response, with 1 being not at all sure (0% confident) and 7 being completely sure (100% confident)	N/A
25. One of my problems is that I cannot get down to practicing or rehearsing for this specific performance when I should.	Administering the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a)	Likert-scale response, with 1 being not at all sure (0% confident) and 7 being completely sure (100% confident)	N/A
26. If I can't perform the music for this performance at first, I will keep practicing until I can.	Administering the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a)	Likert-scale response, with 1 being not at all sure (0% confident) and 7 being completely sure (100% confident)	N/A
27. When I set important learning goals leading up to this performance, I can rarely achieve them.	Administering the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a)	Likert-scale response, with 1 being not at all sure (0% confident) and 7 being completely sure (100% confident)	N/A

Question	Rationale for question	Question format	Type of demographic information
28. I can give up preparing for this performance before completing it.	Administering the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a)	Likert-scale response, with 1 being not at all sure (0% confident) and 7 being completely sure (100% confident)	N/A
29. When I have something unpleasant to do in preparation for this performance, I can stick to it until I finish it.	Administering the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a)	Likert-scale response, with 1 being not at all sure (0% confident) and 7 being completely sure (100% confident)	N/A
30. When I decide to do this performance, I go right to work on the music.	Administering the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a)	Likert-scale response, with 1 being not at all sure (0% confident) and 7 being completely sure (100% confident)	N/A
31. When first performing the music for this performance, I soon give up if I am not initially successful.	Administering the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a)	Likert-scale response, with 1 being not at all sure (0% confident) and 7 being completely sure (100% confident)	N/A
32. The prospects of failure in this performance can just make me work harder in preparation.	Administering the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a)	Likert-scale response, with 1 being not at all sure (0% confident) and 7 being completely sure (100% confident)	N/A



Question	Rationale for question	Question format	Type of demographic information
33. I can give up working toward this performance easily.	Administering the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a)	Likert-scale response, with 1 being not at all sure (0% confident) and 7 being completely sure (100% confident)	N/A
34. I am not capable of dealing with most problems that may come up when working towards this performance.	Administering the Self-Efficacy for Musical Learning Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a)	Likert-scale response, with 1 being not at all sure (0% confident) and 7 being completely sure (100% confident)	N/A
35. What email address can be used to reach you in mid-December to request that you upload a screenshot or PDF of your unofficial academic transcript?	Addressing Research Sub-Question 2 (What relationships exist between self-efficacy and grade point average?)	Text entry response	N/A

Question	Rationale for question	Question format	Type of demographic information
36. If you identify as a student of color, would you be interested in participating in one 45-60-minute Zoom interview about your attitude toward specific musical activities, your racial identities, and educational experiences that have strengthened your confidence in your ability to succeed?	Addressing Research Sub-Questions 3-5 (How do music majors perceive their racial identity within undergraduate music education? How do educational experiences support self-efficacy? How do educational experiences create barriers to self-efficacy?)	Yes/no response, select one response	N/A

## **Appendix D: Qualitative Interview Protocol**

### **Introduction script:**

Hello. I'm Rachel Lim, a biracial doctoral student exploring connections between attitudes toward musical performance, racial identity, and experiences in undergraduate music education. I selected you to participate in this study because you are enrolled in a bachelor's degree program with a major in music at one of the institutions that is part of the Music Admissions Roundtable, a professional networking organization of music admissions colleagues at North American education institutions and summer programs. Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research study.

I hope that our 45-60 minutes together will feel like a conversation, where you can ask for clarification, take pauses when needed, or circle back to previous questions to share new insights.

I will be sharing key highlights from our conversation with my dissertation committee, but before I do so, you will have the opportunity to review the transcript from our conversation and the main ideas I have identified to make sure that I am accurately representing what you have shared with me.

I have 11 questions related to racial identity, attitudes toward musical performance, and experiences in undergraduate music education. You are welcome to skip any question if you do not feel comfortable answering it, and you can also ask me for additional explanations for any terms or meanings within these questions.

### **Consent:**

What pseudonym would you like to use?

Please confirm that you have received and reviewed the informed consent information sheet (see Appendix G). Do you consent to participate in this study?

- If yes, continue with interview protocol.
- If no, thank the individual for their time and end the Zoom call.

## Interview Questions and Connection to Literature

Primary interview question	Supplementary questions (if needed)	Rationale	Alignment to research sub-questions	Citation(s)
1. How would you describe your racial identity?	Is this identity consistent with how NASM defines racial identity? How does that make you feel?	Honor the research participant's identity and understand perception of racial identity	Research Sub-Question 3	(Crenshaw, 1995; Ewell, 2020; Gillborn, 2015; HEADS, 2020; Lewis et al., 2022; NASM, n.d.-b)
2. Where do you see your racial identity represented in your undergraduate music experiences?	How have you seen your racial identity represented in your faculty, fellow students, the music you study, or other aspects of your major in music?	Identify student's awareness of racialized experiences in undergraduate music education and interest in challenging the status quo	Research Sub-Question 3	(R. Deemer & Meers, 2022; Ewell, 2020; Hess, 2022; Koza, 2008; Liu, 2022; Lucia, 2007)
3. Describe a time in your undergraduate music education when you accomplished a goal. What happened, and how did it make you feel?	Probe	Explore mastery experience as a source of self-efficacy	Research Sub-Question 4	(Bandura, 1997; Gavin, 2016; Ritchie & Williamon, 2011a)

Primary interview question	Supplementary questions (if needed)	Rationale	Alignment to research sub-questions	Citation(s)
4. Describe a time in your undergraduate music education when you weren't quite able to accomplish a goal. What happened, and how did it make you feel?	Probe	Explore mastery experience as a source of self-efficacy	Research Sub-Question 5	(Bandura, 1997; Gavin, 2016)
5. Describe a time in your undergraduate music education when you witnessed someone like you achieve a goal. What happened, and how did it make you feel?	Tell me more about the identities of this individual. How do their identities relate to yours?	Explore vicarious experience as a source of self-efficacy	Research Sub-Question 4	(Bandura, 1997; R. Deemer & Meers, 2022; Gavin, 2016; Hendricks, 2014)
6. Describe a time in your undergraduate music education when you witnessed someone like you fail in a task. What happened, and how did it make you feel?	Tell me more about the identities of this individual. How do their identities relate to yours?	Explore vicarious experience as a source of self-efficacy	Research Sub-Question 5	(Bandura, 1997; Gavin, 2016; Hendricks, 2014; Koza, 2008)

Primary interview question	Supplementary questions (if needed)	Rationale	Alignment to research sub-question	Citation(s)
7. Describe a time in your undergraduate music education when you received encouragement from someone else. What happened, and how did it make you feel?	What were the identities of the person who encouraged you? How do their identities relate to yours?	Explore verbal and social persuasion as a source of self-efficacy	Research Sub-Question 4	(Bandura, 1997; Burwell, 2019; Duke & Henninger, 2002; Gavin, 2016)
8. Describe a time in your undergraduate music education when someone else said something that discouraged you. What happened, and how did it make you feel?	What were the identities of the person who discouraged you? How do their identities relate to yours?	Explore verbal and social persuasion as a source of self-efficacy	Research Sub-Question 5	(Bandura, 1997; Burwell, 2019; Duke & Henninger, 2002)
9. Describe a time in your undergraduate music education when you felt your mood or your awareness of your body contributed to your success. What happened, and how did it make you feel?	Probe	Explore emotional and physiological states as a source of self-efficacy	Research Sub-Question 4	(Bandura, 1997; Gavin, 2016; Lubert & Gröpel, 2022; Schneider & Chesky, 2011)

Primary interview question	Supplementary questions (if needed)	Rationale	Alignment to research sub-question	Citation(s)
10. Describe a time in your undergraduate music education when you felt your mood or your awareness of your body negatively impacted your results. What happened, and how did it make you feel?	Probe	Explore emotional and physiological states as a source of self-efficacy	Research Sub-Question 5	(Bandura, 1997; Gavin, 2016; Lubert & Gröpel, 2022; Schneider & Chesky, 2011)
11. What other identities would you use to describe yourself?	How do you see your identities relating to race?	Honor the research participant's identities and understand their perceptions of identities	Research Sub-Questions 1 and 3	(Crenshaw, 1995; Gillborn, 2015)

## Appendix E: Implied Consent for Online Surveys

IRBNet #2086999-5  
Version Date: 02/20/2024

You are invited to participate in a research study of Self-Efficacy and Racial Identity for Undergraduate Music Majors, which is a research study of attitudes toward specific musical performance activities and racial identity. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are an undergraduate music major at an institution that is part of the Music Admissions Roundtable, a professional networking organization of music admissions colleagues at North American education institutions and summer programs.

**To be eligible** to participate in this study, you must meet **all the following criteria**:

- You are pursuing a bachelor's degree with a major in music.
- You are pursuing a major in music that requires lessons in voice or an instrument.
- You are at least 18 years old.
- You are a domestic student, rather than an international student.
- You enrolled at your institution as a first-time, first-year undergraduate student, rather than as a transfer student.
- You are enrolled at an institution within the United States that is part of the Music Admissions Roundtable.

You would **not be eligible** to participate in this study if you meet **any of the following criteria**:

- You are not pursuing a bachelor's degree with a major in music.
- You are not enrolled in a major in music that requires lessons in a principal performance area. (This study excludes students who are studying composition, conducting, audio recording and production, or other majors that do not also require lessons in voice or an instrument.)
- You are 17 years old or younger.
- You are an international student.
- You enrolled at this institution as a transfer student.
- You are not enrolled at an institution within the United States that is part of the Music Admissions Roundtable.

If you decide to participate, please understand **your participation is voluntary** and you have the **right to withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. The alternative is not to participate.** If you decide to participate, complete the following survey. Your completion of this survey indicates your consent to participate in this research study. The survey is designed to collect information about your demographic characteristics and your attitudes toward specific musical performance activities, or how confident you are in your ability



to successfully perform music. It will take about 10-15 minutes to complete. You will be asked to answer questions about your background in music, your racial identity, your gender identity, your socio-economic class, and how you feel about your ability to successfully perform music. No benefits accrue to you for answering the survey, but your responses will be used to contribute to a greater understanding of possible connections between racial identity and attitudes toward musical performance, with the goal of delivering inclusive and equitable educational experiences for all students. You may experience slight emotional discomfort or stress related to imagining a scenario where you were performing music or frustrations with the limitations of categories used to collect demographic data surrounding race and gender, but these risks are not expected to be any greater than anything you encounter in everyday life. Data will be collected using the internet; no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the internet by any third party. Confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used.

After completing this survey, you will receive an email with a link where you have the option to upload a screenshot or PDF of your unofficial transcript with your grades and grade point averages (GPAs) for all terms completed at your undergraduate institution. In compliance with the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, the researcher will only access the data that you provide directly via that upload. Your unofficial transcript will be used to identify possible connections between attitudes toward musical performance activities, grades, and demographic characteristics.

Students who complete the survey and submit their unofficial transcripts will be put into a drawing to be randomly selected to receive one of ten \$25 Amazon gift cards. Students selected to receive these gift cards will be notified via email in February 2024.

Students who identify as people of color will have the option to indicate if they would be interested in participating in one 45-60-minute individual Zoom interview about their attitudes toward specific musical activities, their racial identities, and educational experiences that have strengthened their confidence in their ability to succeed. Students invited to participate in these interviews will receive an email in November 2023-March 2024 with additional information and additional consent forms prior to participating in these interviews.

De-identified data from this study may be shared with the research community at large to advance practices in music education. After the researcher removes all identifiers, the information or samples may be used for future research or shared with other researchers without your additional informed consent. The researcher will remove or code any personal information that could identify you before files are shared with others to ensure that, by current scientific standards and known methods, no one will be able to identify you from the information the researcher shares. Despite these measures, the researcher cannot guarantee anonymity of your personal data.

Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your future relationship with your undergraduate institution, institutions that are part of the Music Admissions Roundtable, or the University of Denver. If you decide to participate, you are free to stop at any time; you may also skip questions if you don't want to answer them or you may choose not to complete the survey.

Please feel free to ask questions regarding this study. You may contact me or my dissertation in practice faculty advisor if you have additional questions:

- Rachel Lim, EdD student, University of Denver Morgridge College of Education, [Rachel.Lim@du.edu](mailto:Rachel.Lim@du.edu)
- Dr. Norma Lu Hafenstein, faculty sponsor, University of Denver Morgridge College of Education, [Norma.Hafenstein@du.edu](mailto:Norma.Hafenstein@du.edu)

If you are not satisfied with how this study is being conducted, or if you have any concerns, complaints, or general questions about the research or your rights as a participant, please contact the University of Denver (DU) Institutional Review Board to speak to someone independent of the research team at 303-871-2121, or email [IRBAdmin@du.edu](mailto:IRBAdmin@du.edu).

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Rachel Lim, EdD student  
University of Denver, Morgridge College of Education

Norma Lu Hafenstein, PhD, faculty sponsor  
University of Denver, Morgridge College of Education

## Appendix F: Consent for Uploading Unofficial Transcript

IRBNet #2086999-2  
Version Date: 9/7/2023

You previously participated in phase 1 of a research study of Self-Efficacy and Racial Identity for Undergraduate Music Majors, which is a research study of attitudes toward specific musical performance activities and racial identity. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are an undergraduate music major at an institution that is part of the Music Admissions Roundtable, a professional networking organization of music admissions colleagues at North American education institutions and summer programs.

**As a reminder, to be eligible** to participate in this study, you must meet **all the following criteria**:

- You are pursuing a bachelor's degree with a major in music.
- You are pursuing a major in music that requires lessons in voice or an instrument.
- You are at least 18 years old.
- You are a domestic student, rather than an international student.
- You enrolled at your institution as a first-time, first-year undergraduate student, rather than as a transfer student.
- You are enrolled at an institution within the United States that is part of the Music Admissions Roundtable.

You would **not be eligible** to participate in this study if you meet **any of the following criteria**:

- You are not pursuing a bachelor's degree with a major in music.
- You are not enrolled in a major in music that requires lessons in a principal performance area. (This study excludes students who are studying composition, conducting, audio recording and production, or other majors that do not also require lessons in voice or an instrument.)
- You are 17 years old or younger.
- You are an international student.
- You enrolled at this institution as a transfer student.
- You are not enrolled at an institution within the United States that is part of the Music Admissions Roundtable.

If you decide to participate, please understand **your participation is voluntary** and you have the **right to withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. The alternative is not to participate.** If you decide to participate, complete the following survey. Your completion of this survey indicates your consent to participate in this research study. This survey will take 5 minutes or less to complete. You will be asked to confirm your e-mail address and

upload either a screenshot or PDF of your unofficial transcript with your grades for all terms completed at your undergraduate institution. In compliance with the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, I will only access the data that you have provided directly to me. Your unofficial transcript will be used to identify possible connections between attitudes toward musical performance activities, grades, and demographic characteristics.

No benefits accrue to you for answering the survey, but your responses will be used to contribute to a greater understanding of possible connections between racial identity and attitudes toward musical performance, with the goal of delivering inclusive and equitable educational experiences for all students. You may experience slight emotional discomfort or stress related to reviewing your academic performance, but these risks are not expected to be any greater than anything you encounter in everyday life. Data will be collected using the internet; no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the internet by any third party. Confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used.

Students who complete both the initial survey distributed in early fall 2023 and submit their unofficial transcripts will be put into a drawing to be randomly selected to receive one of ten \$25 Amazon gift cards.

De-identified data from this study may be shared with the research community at large to advance practices in music education. After I remove all identifiers, the information or samples may be used for future research or shared with other researchers without your additional informed consent. I will remove or code any personal information that could identify you before files are shared with others to ensure that, by current scientific standards and known methods, no one will be able to identify you from the information I share. Despite these measures, I cannot guarantee anonymity of your personal data.

Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your future relationship with your undergraduate institution, institutions that are part of the Music Admissions Roundtable, or the University of Denver. If you decide to participate, you are free to stop at any time; you may also skip questions if you don't want to answer them or you may choose not to complete the survey.

Please feel free to ask questions regarding this study. You may contact me or my dissertation in practice faculty advisor if you have additional questions:

- Rachel Lim, EdD student, University of Denver Morgridge College of Education, [Rachel.Lim@du.edu](mailto:Rachel.Lim@du.edu)
- Dr. Norma Lu Hafenstein, faculty sponsor, University of Denver Morgridge College of Education, [Norma.Hafenstein@du.edu](mailto:Norma.Hafenstein@du.edu)

If you are not satisfied with how this study is being conducted, or if you have any concerns, complaints, or general questions about the research or your rights as a

participant, please contact the University of Denver (DU) Institutional Review Board to speak to someone independent of the research team at 303-871-2121, or e-mail [IRBAdmin@du.edu](mailto:IRBAdmin@du.edu).

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Rachel Lim, EdD student  
University of Denver, Morgridge College of Education

Norma Lu Hafenstein, PhD, faculty sponsor  
University of Denver, Morgridge College of Education

## Appendix G: Expedited Electronic Consent for Qualitative Interviews

**Study Title:** Self-Efficacy and Racial Identity for Undergraduate Music Majors

**IRBNet #:** 2086999-2

**Version Date:** 9/10/2023

**Principal Investigator:** Rachel Lim, EdD student, MM, BM, University of Denver, Morgridge College of Education

**Faculty Sponsor:** Norma Hafenstein, PhD, University of Denver, Morgridge College of Education

**Study Site:** Music Admission Roundtable member institutions

**You are being asked to participate in a research study.** Your participation in this research study is voluntary and you do not have to participate. This document contains important information about this study and what to expect if you decide to participate. Please consider the information carefully. Feel free to ask questions before making your decision whether or not to participate.

The purpose of this form is to provide you information that may affect your decision as to whether or not you may want to participate in this research study. The person performing the research will describe the study to you and answer all of your questions. Please read the information below and ask any questions you might have before deciding whether or not to give your permission to take part. If you decide to be involved in this study, this form will be used to record your permission.

### **Purpose**

If you participate in this research study, you will be invited to complete one 45-60-minute interview via Zoom. 11 interview questions will explore your racial identity, your attitudes toward specific musical performance activities, and your experiences in undergraduate music education. Questions will ask you to recall examples from your experiences in undergraduate music education, describe what happened, and describe how it made you feel, such as, “Describe a time in your undergraduate music education when you weren’t quite able to accomplish a goal. What happened, and how did it make you feel?”

You may refuse to answer any question or item in the interview. You will be asked to review the transcript from your interview and the themes identified from your interview via e-mail, at which point you can provide clarifications or request to exclude statements from the transcript. You may choose to withdraw from the study by e-mailing [Rachel.Lim@du.edu](mailto:Rachel.Lim@du.edu) by March 1, 2024, for any reason, without penalty.

### **Risks or Discomforts**

Potential risks, stress, and/or discomforts of participation may include anxiety related to recalling examples of success or failure in music education, feelings of doubt related to belonging within educational settings, feelings of stereotype threat (fear of confirming negative stereotypes about one's identities), or other psychological stress. However, these risks are not anticipated to be greater than what you would encounter in everyday life navigating undergraduate music education.

Contact information for campus counselors will be available, if you wish to receive that information.

### **Benefits**

No benefits accrue to you for participating in this study, but your responses will be used to contribute to a greater understanding of possible connections between racial identity, attitudes toward musical performance, and undergraduate music education experiences. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your grades in school, relationship with the University of Denver, or relationship with institutions that are part of the Music Admissions Roundtable.

### **Limits to Confidentiality**

All the information you provide will be confidential. However, if we learn that you intend to harm yourself or others, including, but not limited to child or elder abuse/neglect, suicide ideation, or threats against others, we must report that to the authorities as required by law.

You will select a pseudonym to protect your privacy, and your name will not be in the transcript or in my notes. Pseudonyms also will be used for any individuals or educational institutions mentioned in your interview. Only I will know your name, and data will be de-identified to protect your identity.

Your real name will be removed from the information or samples collected in this project. After I remove all identifiers, the information or samples may be used for future research or shared with other researchers without your additional informed consent.

With your permission, your interview will be video recorded so that I can make an accurate transcript. The recording will be erased when the final dissertation defense has been completed.

You will have the opportunity to review both the transcription of the interview and the analysis of themes or main ideas from the interview to ensure accuracy. Transcripts will be kept indefinitely for use in future possible research projects.

### **Data Sharing**

De-identified data from this study may be shared with the research community at large to advance inclusive and equitable educational experiences for undergraduate music majors. I will remove or code any personal information (e.g., your name) that could identify you before files are shared with other researchers to ensure that, by current scientific standards and known methods, no one will be able to identify you from the information or samples I share. Despite these measures, I cannot guarantee the anonymity of your personal data.

**Incentives to Participate**

The ten students selected to participate in interviews will receive one \$25 Amazon gift card. Gift cards will be sent via e-mail approximately 6-8 weeks after completion of the interview.

**Questions**

For questions, concerns, or complaints about the study, you may contact

- Rachel Lim, EdD student, University of Denver Morgridge College of Education, [Rachel.Lim@du.edu](mailto:Rachel.Lim@du.edu)
- Dr. Norma Lu Hafenstein, faculty sponsor, University of Denver Morgridge College of Education, [Norma.Hafenstein@du.edu](mailto:Norma.Hafenstein@du.edu)

If you are not satisfied with how this study is being conducted, or if you have any concerns, complaints, or general questions about the research or your rights as a participant, please contact the University of Denver (DU) Institutional Review Board to speak with someone independent of the research team at 303-871-2121 or e-mail [IRBAdmin@du.edu](mailto:IRBAdmin@du.edu).

**Signing the Consent Form**

I have read (or someone has read to me) this form, and I am aware that I am being asked to participate in a research study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. I will be given a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name of subject

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of subject

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date