A CRITICAL AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF THE FORMATION AND

DEVELOPMENT OF THE YOUTH PROGRAMS OF THE

OAKLAND PUBLIC CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC

by

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my grandparents, William Russel Baker, Sr., and Neosha F. Baker-Bibbs; my parents, Bettie Jean Wellman-Baker and Lionel Russell Wellman; my siblings Lee, Darryl, Eddie, Paul, and Lori; my uncle Edward Byron "Eddie" Baker, Sr.; my teachers who allowed themselves to SEE me; my beloved partner, Ashara Saran Ekundayo; and all of my students whose willingness to sit in Circle, be vulnerable, creative, and honest, made it possible for me to dream and design a transformative and liberatory musical path for them and those to come.

Abstract

Before the Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954) decision, African American students enjoyed access to music education during the regular school day. Following the Brown decision, co-curricular music instruction was greatly diminished for African American students (Brown, 2008; Early, 2013; Hancock, 1977). Today, nearly seven decades after the Brown decision, their participation rates have not begun to match pre-desegregation numbers (DeLorenzo & Silverman, 2016; Elpus & Abril, 2019; Johnson & Litka, 2019). Since Brown v. Board, limited studies exist that examine options for access to out-of-school music education for Black students. Of those, few investigate music education as a core component in African American students' intellectual, personal, cultural, spiritual, and social growth and development.

This dissertation critically analyzes the formation and development of the youth programs at the Oakland Public Conservatory of Music, a successful community-based music school in Oakland, California. Through critical autoethnography and case study methods, this study demonstrates how a thriving music program that recruits and retains African American students functions and thrives despite neoliberal education reforms and gentrification. Two questions guided the study: 1) How have the lived experiences of OPC's founder influenced the design of its youth programs? 2) What is the OPC Youth Program, and what concepts influenced its formation and development?

Analysis of the autoethnography revealed how my life experiences informed the design decisions of OPC's youth programs. A conceptual framework comprised of Racial Contract Theory, culturally sustaining and humanist pedagogies, and informed by Black feminist epistemology revealed attributes of OPC's curriculum and pedagogy that engender self-efficacy

and belonging for Black students at OPC: 1) seeing Black children, 2) refuge, 3) ritual, and 4) cultural congruence.

Keywords: autoethnography, Racial Contract Theory, adultification, misafropedia, out-of-school time, music education

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PRELUDE

I am a trombone-playing African American woman whose life in music has transgressed established, expected, and accepted ways of being. From the age of 6, I have been the only African American, the only woman, the only queer person, or among a small number of others who shared these identities in most music education and performance spaces in which I have taken part. I have come to understand that these identities influence my positionality and shape my decisions about navigating the music world to achieve my goals as a student, performer, teacher, advocate, scholar, and, ultimately, institution builder. These experiences are fundamental in my decisions to create spaces that supply African American children who wish to study music an environment that reflects who they are, nurtures their ideas and expressions, and cultivates a sense of belonging and self-efficacy. Historical and ongoing African diasporic influences have shaped the development of music in the Americas. This reality is of vital importance for African American youth. Studying music thwarts the trauma experienced in schools and other spaces where they are at risk of the harmful impact of racialization. Learning music is fundamental for African American children's intellectual, psychological, cultural, spiritual, and social development, and they should not be deprived of the opportunity.

From Practitioner to Researcher

How did I end up in a doctoral program in the first place? What was the road to becoming a researcher who wanted to understand how to get music education to Black kids? Why did it matter to me?

During my first year of college, I volunteered as an assistant to the music teacher in a Title 1 elementary school in my hometown. Every student had a music class twice weekly. I assisted in general music classes during the day and with her choir, which met after school.

During that experience, I began to understand the value and importance of music education as part of the daily curriculum. One incident stands out as a critical moment that spawned an interest in teaching music. In preparation for the holiday concert, the choir teacher taught a popular Ken Darby/Harry Simeone choral arrangement of "'Twas the Night Before Christmas." I was charged with creating a theatrical presentation of the libretto, with students acting out the story, complete with scenery and costumes. We held auditions; for those who did not receive an acting position, we found jobs for every student who wanted to participate. The performance was a smashing success. It was the first time I had experienced working with children in the creation of a musical production. The program had a rich music program because of the combination of a choir teacher who was excellent at working with young voices, the changing voices of adolescent boys, and eager students, and a principal who supported music programming beyond the minimum requirements. Reflecting on this experience, I remember the impression it made on me. It was the first time I began to understand what is possible when children have music during the daytime in concert with an afterschool program in which they can be further enriched.

Relationships developed while working in the Oakland music education ecosystem from 1989 to 1994 cultivated in me an understanding of the interventions that were needed for Black youth to have access to opportunities for learning music and seeing possibilities for themselves as musicians, teachers, music business entrepreneurs, supporters, and advocates of music education. My introduction to the Oakland music education ecosystem began when I accepted a long-term substitute music teacher position at Cole Performing & Visual Arts Magnet School in a historically Black West Oakland neighborhood. Cole was the quintessential neighborhood school. The student body was composed of families who had attended the school for several

generations, dating back to the 1940s, when an estimated 50,000 migrants arrived between 1942 and 1945 during the Second Great Migration and settled in West Oakland (Summers, 2021).

The following school year was pivotal in spawning my music education activism. I was awarded a three-year Artist-in-Residence grant from the California Arts Council to develop a Jazz Studies afterschool program. I was invited to work with the school's advisory board during my tenure at Cole. The president was the director of the Young Musicians Program (YMP) at the University of California at Berkeley.[1] The program yearly served seventy low-income students of color. Jaeger recognized that West Oakland was not represented in the YMP student body. I was recruited to design and serve as the lead instructor of the "Cole Kids Project," a YMP preparatory program designed to prepare twelve fifth grade students from Cole to audition for the program.

The time in residence at Cole and teaching at UC-Berkeley ignited a desire to return to school. Between the time spent on campus and developing the jazz studies program at Cole, I felt a deep need to bridge the two experiences and decided to pursue a master's degree in jazz studies. I attended graduate school, but not at Rutgers, my school of choice, and not with a jazz studies degree. Instead, I ended up at the Eastman School of Music and, in 1997, was awarded a master's in music education. Returning to Oakland, I felt prepared to address the systemic inequities that I had seen while teaching at Cole. I accepted a position at a predominantly African American middle school in Oakland.

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[1] https://www.sfcv.org/articles/music-news/was-ymp-now-young-musicians-choral-orchestra

Gereben, J., (December 10, 2013). *Was YMP, Now Young Musicians Choral Orchestra*, SF Classical Voice.

"The Young Musicians Program, originally founded within UC Berkeley's Music Department in 1968 as a summer program for youth from Berkeley and surrounding communities, eventually expanded to a year-round program, featuring individual, group, orchestral, and choral instruction. Musical instruments and all other aspects of the program were provided at no cost to the students and their families."

Within a few months, I realized that my understanding of the role of music education was incongruent with that of the school administrators in certain schools. Music education was not considered to be a fundamental component of the curriculum. The extracurricular classes, of which music was one, served as a place to corral students as they orbited the core academic classes. Band, art, and physical education classes enrolled an average of 50 students. After a year, I decided not to renew my contract. I left disappointed and disillusioned at the end of the school year. Three months later, I accepted a position as the first Education Director of the Oakland Youth Chorus (OYC), a transformational decision on my path from practitioner to researcher.

During my five-year tenure at OYC, I learned the ins and outs of arts administration in a non-profit business model: program design, fundraising, grant writing, developing partnerships with community-based organizations and schools, multicultural organizational development, music teacher training, curriculum design, concert production, and the soft skills needed to manage a staff of eight teaching artists and administrative assistants. Overall, this experience afforded me the time to focus on music education issues that I could not address as a public-school music teacher. The programs I created were designed to occur during out-of-school time (OST). Another affordance that OYC supplied was the opportunity to cultivate awareness of cross-cultural experiences and dissonances between teaching artists and the students, who sometimes were of different racial backgrounds. For example, the teacher of the Zimbabwean music class was a White man who had studied in Zimbabwe. The students in his class were African American. He was aware of his positionality as a White person teaching an ancient African musical tradition to Black children in West Oakland and often spoke about it. I became aware of my thoughts and perspectives and began questioning what I was supporting. All these

experiences prepared me for my next adventure in music education, which would result in the creation of the Oakland Public Conservatory of Music (OPC), the institution I founded 3 years after leaving OYC.

These are two of many experiences that deepened my resolve to create a space to address the inequities and cultural incongruities I had witnessed for decades and had experienced throughout my life as a student, teacher, and performer. By the time of my first graduate school matriculation, I had taught music in predominantly African American schools, where I acquired an understanding and perspective on the necessity and importance of music education grounded in the Black experience. I believed it was imperative for Black students to learn music in environments with teachers and administrators who understood the role of music education as a culturally sustaining (Asante, 1998; Good-Perkins, 2021b; Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2017b) practice.

Doctoral Studies

My curiosity about the banjo drove my decision to pursue doctoral studies. I wondered what it would mean if banjo proficiency were a graduation requirement, in undergraduate music programs. My sights were set on creating the prototype of the Public Conservatory curriculum. I had been researching its African origins and was intrigued to learn that it is of Caribbean origin and that it was first created and played only by enslaved Africans on the plantations of the Caribbean during the early sixteen hundreds (Dubois, 2016; Epstein, 2003; Gaddy, 2022; Linn, 1994.) I hoped my dissertation would be the development of a new curriculum for the study of music in American music schools centered on the banjo. I was told that a dissertation was a study, not a curriculum. Somewhat dismayed, I abandoned the idea.

During the second year of my doctoral coursework, I became increasingly interested in Brown v. Board of Education (1954) and its impact on access to music education for Black students after an interview I conducted for a seminar assignment. I chose to interview Calvin Whitmore, Sr., the band and orchestra director from 1950 through 1975 of Lincoln High School in Kansas City, Missouri. He had experienced the pre- and post- Brown (1954) landscape. During the interview, he said something that altered the course of my research:

> When they began to integrate, we saw it falling to pieces . . . People thought that we were gonna have more opportunities for the Blacks, not only in music, but school-wise, educationally, but really it got worse. It really got worse.

My curiosity piqued. I began to wonder how desegregation had impacted public school music education elsewhere. I conducted a literature review to investigate what was known about music education in Black schools before and after the Brown decision. The findings showed that Black students' access to music education decreased exponentially after Brown. Buoyed by my developing understanding of Charles Mills' (1997) Racial Contract Theory, within which he argued that in Western society, there is a racial contract, a set of agreements between White people, the only ones who count in a racialized society built on White supremacy. I began to question who counts in schools where Black children were systematically denied access to music education? Why was the enrollment of Black children in music classes disproportionate to their overall enrollment throughout the local school district? In contrast, in the community-based music school I founded in Oakland, the Oakland Public Conservatory of Music (OPC), Black student enrollment in its afterschool and Saturday programs averaged 90 percent of total enrollment over its first nine years. We successfully recruited and retained Black students, and I wanted to understand why and how. What accounted for this success?

I have designed this study to understand these questions more deeply and to take the reader on a journey with me. I open this dissertation with an overview of the study. Next, I present a historical analysis of the impact of Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas (1954) on Black music education. A discussion of the conceptual framework and methods follows. The data chapter is in two sections. Part 1 is an autoethnography that details critical life experiences that were influential in my decision to create OPC. Part 2 is the OPC origin story and the creation of its youth programs and curriculum. The discussion of the findings follows. A "Postlude" closes this dissertation.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Research suggests that before the Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954) decision, African American students enjoyed access to various music classes during the regular school day. Conversely, following the Brown (1954) decision, co-curricular music instruction greatly diminished for African American students (Brown, 2008; Early, 2004; Hancock, 1977). Since then, African American students' participation in music has continued to decrease, and now, 67 years after the Brown decision, studies show that their rates of participation have not yet returned to pre-desegregation numbers (DeLorenzo & Silverman, 2016; Elpus & Abril, 2019; Johnson & Litka, 2019). This is reason enough to problematize this phenomenon's ubiquity, understand the conditions that create it, then design and implement alternatives to ensure full, unencumbered access to music education for underrepresented students who fall outside the metrics of neoliberal curriculum design policies. Understanding the complexity of who is and is not enrolled in music in their daily school curriculum is critical to achieving educational equity.

Research Problem

I am concerned about a trend I have seen in the Oakland Public Schools: low participation of African American students in instrumental music programs. Multiple sources have described a nationwide trend of diminishing participation in music education among all students (Aróstegui et al., 2014; Quadrant Research, 2004; Parsad & Spiegelman, 2012). Elpus and Abril (2019) found that though African American students' participation in instrumental music programs is proportional to their numbers in the population as a whole, "African American and Latino students were significantly underrepresented in high school band and orchestra programs" (p. 335). A plethora of systemic barriers, such as the concurrent scheduling

of academic remediation sessions with music classes, effectively keeps a disproportionate number of African American students from participating in music and other arts programming.

To have an equitable representation of African American students in K-12 music classes, educators need to understand how programs that successfully recruit and retain African American students function. I have undertaken this study because I want to understand the successful recruitment and retention of African American students in the youth programs at the Oakland Public Conservatory of Music. To what can its success in recruiting and maintaining consistent enrollment of African American students be attributed? Given current trends of who has access to music during the regular school day, how can OPC's success assist in understanding how music education can be made fully accessible for those with little to no access to traditional music education in K-12 public schools? By "fully accessible," I mean that students obtain readiness for studying music in higher education. While this study focuses on K-12 music education, I am concerned with students being ready and prepared to continue their musical education should they desire to do so. A comprehensive K-12 music education is fundamental preparation for college.

Since Brown v. Board (1954), there have been limited studies investigating options for Black students' access to music education outside of public schools. Of the existing literature, there is a dearth of studies investigating the connection between music education as a core component in African American students' intellectual, personal, cultural, spiritual, and social growth and development—a common belief and practice in Black schools before desegregation. By examining the formation and functioning of the Oakland Public Conservatory of Music's successful youth program, I intend to help fill this gap.

Purpose of the Study and Research Question

This dissertation offers a critical analysis of the formation and development of the youth programs at the Oakland Public Conservatory of Music, a successful community-based music school in Oakland, California. Through this study, I aimed to understand how a thriving music program that recruits and retains African American students functions and thrives despite neoliberal education reforms and gentrification. The following questions guided the study.

1. How have the lived experiences of OPC's founder influenced the design of its youth programs?

2. What is the OPC Youth Program, and what concepts influenced its formation and development?

Research Approach: Autoethnography with Case Study Elements

Bloomberg and Volpe (2016) posit that using multiple data-gathering methods is necessary to reveal the complexity of the phenomenon under study. To understand the functioning of OPC's youth music program and the challenges and successes of recruiting and retaining African American students, I chose to utilize autoethnography with case study elements. Autoethnography offers insight into how my life experiences informed the curricular and pedagogical design of the youth programs. The use of multiple methods (Stake, 1995; Yazan, 2015) allowed for the ability to capture the "particularity and complexity" (Stake, 1995, p. xi) of the "unique life" (p. xi) of OPC's youth programs by combining ethnographic research methods with autoethnographic elements that allowed for the use of my life experiences as primary data. Autoethnography eschews convention, embraces emancipation, and creates space for historically marginalized voices and perspectives in music education research. It is fundamental to my research, which puts music education in conversation with the *Racial Contract*.

Case study requires "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) to construct understanding by providing a "deep, dense, detailed account of problematic experiences" (Denzin, 1988, p. 83). Specifically, thick description builds, connects, and captures meanings and "essential features of the experiences that are described and are being interpreted." (Denzin, 2001, p. 117) It seeks to illuminate and understand the causes of behavior, the deeper structures of the phenomena under examination, and the underlying semantics. For example, Chapter 2 of this dissertation is a thick description of the historical arc of music education in Black educational spaces, in and out of school, from the late nineteenth century to 2014, the ending year of the study. Within this time frame, the description contextualizes the creation of OPC's youth programs in Oakland, California's political and educational climate of the late 1990s through 2014. Thus, through the analytic unraveling of the data, I placed OPC's youth programs and the reasons for their creation on a historical continuum. I compared the current racing of space and individuals with the past to show how some things have changed while others have not and to illuminate the role of the racial contract and White supremacy on Black students' access to comprehensive, formal music education.

Autoethnography

Autoethnography employs tenets of ethnography and autobiography (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011). Most directly, autoethnography is "a systematic analysis (graphy) of personal experience (auto) that seeks to understand cultural experience (ethno)" (p. 273). Ellis and Bochner (2000) described autoethnography as "an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural" (p. 739) through reflexivity. Reflexivity calls the researcher to commit to a process inclusive of an analytic, critical agenda (Hancock & Allen, 2015; Anderson, L., 2006). It allows the critical

autoethnographer to focus outwardly on the culture of the object of study and to gaze inwardly to focus on personal thoughts, ideas, experiences, and subjectivities concerning the object or phenomenon under study. As Saidiya Hartman (2008) asserts, autobiographical accounting "is not a personal story that folds onto itself; it is not about navel-gazing, it is really about trying to look at the historical and social process and one's own formation as a window into social and historical processes, as an example of them" (p. 5).

Autoethnographic reflexivity is of critical importance in this study. It allows an opening for articulating my experiences as a Black woman and the founder of an institution designed to serve Black people and their musical history, in a city experiencing radical cultural, political, and economic transformation. Using an autoethnographic process in combination with case study elements, enabled me to concurrently examine and analyze both the formation of the OPC's youth programs and the intersectionality of my subjectivity in relation to the broader cultural milieu within which the youth programs of Oakland Public Conservatory of Music exist.

Critical Storying

Critical storying (Hanncock & Allen, 2015) is the primary framework I employed to analyze my autoethnography. As a method, critical storying uses a critical lens to tell a story and is characterized by three criteria:

1. Narration of human struggles or strengths in an effort to illuminate sociohistorical and sociopolitical inequities,

2. Has a goal of enlightening, empowering, and engaging the reader,

3. Describes cultural nuances from a first-person disposition.

Furthermore, critical storying "purposes to reveal the cultural nuances of race, power, politics and other factors that impact the webbed lived experiences of the author" (Hancock & Allen, 2005, p. 8), leading to an illumination of broader cultural and social contexts (Bakan, 2014).

Hancock and Allen (2015) assert that autoethnographers employ critical storying to articulate autobiographical "epiphanies" (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 247) that reveal an understanding of the phenomenon or object of study. By employing the three criteria of critical storying, I was able to foreground epiphanies that illuminated the influence of dehumanization, the *Racial Contract*, and *Womanism*, each of which influenced my choices in the curricular and pedagogical approaches of OPC's youth programs. Critical storying also provided a lens to examine the actual writing of the stories, to ensure that what I had written was aligned with what I sought to articulate about my lived experiences as an African American female student, performer, teacher, advocate, scholar, and institution builder. Also, it served to illuminate an understanding of the students' perceptions, feelings, and experiences.Furthermore, I acknowledge that while I am not the sole object of study, the revelations and epiphanies gleaned from the critical storying process are sources of primary data necessary to understand what influenced decisions I made in the creation of OPC and the formation and development of its youth programs.

Data Collection and Analysis

By employing autoethnography and case study, data collection and analysis happened simultaneously and continuously throughout the writing of this dissertation. Merriam asserts that this is a "quintessential attribute of qualitative research design which distinguishes it from the research-oriented by positivistic epistemology" (Merriam, 2002, cited by Yazan, 2015, p. 145). The "concurrent and interactive process" (p. 145) of simultaneous data collection and data analysis engendered the emergence of storylines that centered my voice, intuition, and my impressions of these occurrences as they emerged. I was then challenged to accept and trust those emergences as legitimate data and allowed myself to commit to the autoethnographic process. The research design of this dissertation exemplifies how autoethnography is

emancipatory and challenges canonical ways of researching by creating space for marginalized, silenced voices in educational research (Ellis et al., 2011; Hancock & Allen, 2015).

Theoretical Framework

It was the lesson before the final jury of my junior year. I walked into the studio, looking forward to the end of my studies with him. I had decided to take the course of study track that allowed students to transfer from performance degree programs to a general BA in Music. I was tired of struggling with this man. I fought tooth and nail to get him to teach me what he knew. After all, he was the one with the Doctor of Musical Arts in Trombone Performance. I entered the studio. He was there, seated behind his desk, head down, as if he was reading something. He looked up and said to me, "I remember your audition three years ago. I saw this skinny little Black kid from the inner city trying to play Bach. I thought, well, I guess there's a trombone player in there somewhere." Then he confessed. "I realize now that I didn't teach you what I should have taught you. You are probably the only student in my studio who is a true musician."

My experience of racism and White supremacy in music education as a music student, performer, teacher, and administrator motivated me to create OPC. To understand and make sense of the data, such as the autoethnographic vignette presented in the opening of this section and others throughout this dissertation, I rely on a critical race perspective drawn from Racial Contract Theory (RCT) (Mills, 1997). I have chosen RCT because it provides a robust conceptual framework that advances the centering of White supremacy in music education. It offers a grounding blueprint that illustrates and explains how racism and White supremacy permeate the spaces of music education, how they decide which bodies are worthy of inhabiting the space of the curriculum and the teaching and learning spaces and can reveal ways for the active dismantling of White supremacy and its resultant systemic inequities.

Racial Contract Theory

Charles Mills (1997) developed the Racial Contract Theory to theorize and expose the racist inner workings of the historic social contract. Mills explains that RCT is a set of agreements between Whites "to regard themselves as morally equal while non-whites are treated as moral unequals who can legitimately be exploited for white benefit" (Mills, 2003, p. 27). RCT offers a philosophical perspective that aids in understanding the social formation of Western society and why racial disparities and injustices are endemic in Western society. Mills asserts that RCT provides a framework for exposing the racialized nature of Western civilization and the implication of race in the very fabric of society. This theory can reveal how inequality and inequity are established, maintained, and redressed in social, political, economic, and educational systems.

Mills (1997) outlined the racial contract in 10 theses that supply a complete description of the Racial Contract's inner workings and its White supremacist underpinnings that have spawned and maintained the systemization of racism in social and political institutions. Given the constraints of space, I do not fully engage with each thesis in this dissertation; however, acknowledging the relevance of all 10 theses, I employ two of them to illuminate how the racial contract influences curricular decisions in music education and the development of spaces where, why, for whom, and how the curriculum is delivered. The two theses are categorized as the "Details of the Racial Contract" (p. 41). They are:

1. The Racial Contract norms (and races) space, demarcating civil and wild spaces (p. 41).

2. The Racial Contract norms (and races) the individual, establishing personhood and (sub)personhood (p. 53).

According to Mills (1997), the norming of space is partially accomplished in terms of the racing of space, depicting space as dominated by individuals—whether persons or (sub)persons––of a race. At the same time, the norming of the individual is partially achieved by spacing it, representing it as imprinted with the characteristics of a certain kind of space. Mills writes, "You are what you are in part because you originate from a certain kind of space, and that space has those properties in part because it is inhabited by creatures like yourself" (p. 42). These theses illuminate entry into the exposition of White supremacy and the Racial Contract in music education, their location in the curriculum, how the curriculum is delivered, and who has access to the curriculum based on a student's perceived personhood.

In my analysis, I consider space as corporeal and noncorporeal, i.e., the actual space of the music classroom and who is invited, considered worthy, and expected to take up space there. In other words, space is a vehicle for positioning descriptions and interpretations of corporeal reality—who enters the music classroom or whose music is considered legitimate or official knowledge (Apple, 2004); the knowledge considered worthy of being heard, studied, and performed in the space of the repertoire in music classrooms and the concert halls.

As an analytical tool, RCT explains the White supremacist underpinnings of the world and explains how to reverse the normalization of White supremacy. As Mills (1997) asserts, RCT "unites description and prescription, fact and norm" (p. 91). In this manner, RCT illuminates issues of inequality and inequity in education, challenges normalizing discourses that center whiteness as the standard (Calmore, 1993; Tate, 1997), and transforms how music education is designed and delivered. Racial Contract Theory illuminates an understanding of how White supremacy, as a system of structural domination, operates in music education. It reveals the structures that create inequitable outcomes for Black students. When applied to music

education, it supplies a framework for understanding what makes it possible for Black students not to have access to the study of music during the school day. It is useful for examining curricular structures that result in privileging Western European musical practices and pedagogies over Indigenous and non-European musical cultures in the Americas.

While RCT as an analytical tool can be deployed to illuminate the impact of White supremacy on arts education writ large, it bears critical significance for music. For African Americans, music has been a place of refuge and a form of resistance. Allen (2020) articulates the band room as a "place of respite" (p. 1564). For African American students, the music classroom is often where they experience belonging, safety, cultural identity, and survival. RCT is useful for investigating and explaining barriers that obstruct Black students' rights of access to the band room and for describing and creating pathways to the band room.

Music is fundamental to the cultural identity unique to the people who create it and perform it. When we study music, we study the culture and truth of a people. Music has weight, the significance of which is compounded for Black people specifically because of the stripping of their culture and humanity due to slavery and the twisted distortions of freedom in its afterlife. In many ways, all that was left as a vehicle of cultural preservation was music. This reality makes RCT a particularly effective means for illuminating the impact that White supremacy and the Racial Contract have had on fostering the cultivation of pedagogical environments, such as music. Because music has abundant significant cultural substance and is lost to Black students deprived of the opportunity to learn it, a Racial Contract analysis is warranted. I dive more deeply into the specific nature of the Racial Contract and Racial Contract Theory in Chapter 3: Analytical Process.

Importance of the Study

To create equitable access to music education for Black students, a critical first step is understanding how successful programs function. In this study, I offer a model of a school that has successfully recruited a critical mass of African American students and is, thus, significant in several ways. First, while studies on the impact of desegregation and access to music education for Black students show that participation in public school music classes has dramatically diminished since Brown v. Board (1954), none of the studies have offered discussion or suggestions on how to increase access. Since African American students' participation in music classes does not reflect their numbers in relation to the overall student population, music educators must understand how to address and end this injustice. My goal for this study is to offer insight into what can be done in and out of school to serve African American students better. Second, in this study, I contribute to the growing corpus of research on race and White supremacy in music education scholarship. This dissertation offers a framework that aids in understanding how and why the reproduction of inequity persists in music education. Finally, this study affirms autoethnography as a valid, scholarly form of research in music education that centers the researcher's voice as a source of primary data (Anderson, 2006).

Chapter Overview

This chapter aims to introduce the subject of investigation, the historical background, the purpose of the study, the conceptual frameworks that inform the research questions, and the research approach. Chapter 2 is a review of relevant literature on music education in African American schools before and after the passage of Brown v. Board. Chapter 3 discusses Racial Contract Theory (Mills, 1997, 2003), the main theory I employed in analyzing the influence of the Racial Contract in the formation and design of OPC's youth programs. I focus on the racing

of space and persons in the curriculum, the actual space of the band room, private teaching studio, and the rights of access there. Chapter 4 describes the formation process of OPC from 2005 to 2014. The chapter opens with an autoethnography highlighting defining moments of my life as a Black girlchild, student, musician, and institution-builder. Autoethnography is the method through which I discuss some critical defining moments (Husband, 2007, p. 10) of my life that led to the creation of OPC and the undergirding of my decisions in creating the curriculum. I present the distinguishing features of OPC's youth programming. I discuss the philosophy, curricular and pedagogical model, and the successes and challenges of enrolling and retaining a critical mass of African American students. In Chapter 6, I close this dissertation with a discussion of the findings of the study. I conclude by discussing this study's implications for music education, education policy, schools, and community music education institutions, followed by a Postlude that describes the impact of gentrification on OPC. I also offer closing thoughts and ruminations on the autoethnographic process.

CHAPTER 2: IMPACT OF DESEGREGATION ON BLACK MUSIC EDUCATION

Music education does not exist in a vacuum. It is a part of American society, and it is what it is today because of hundreds of thousands, probably millions, of decisions made by people other than music educators. Tracing any music education historical issue back to its source will reveal at least one political decision. (Mark, 1993, p. 4)

As an African American music educator, I am acutely aware of the underrepresentation of African American students in public school music programs and band rooms throughout the country. Based on stories told by my parents, extended family, and musicians who were my mentors, Black students have not always been absent from the band rooms. Many of them have talked about the robust music programs in the schools they attended before school desegregation and into the mid-seventies. Their stories are evidence that Black students not only had access to music education during school but also actively participated. To better understand the present-day access to and participation in music education by Black students, in this chapter I seek to describe the status of Black music education before and after school desegregation and the impact of desegregation on access to music education for Black students.

Speaking at the 1992 bicentennial celebration of Lowell Mason's[2] birth, music education historian Michael Mark acknowledged, praised, and problematized the progress historians had made in the publication of large bodies of research in music education. He asserted that music education historians' tunnel vision contributed to overlooking "the relationship between American music education and American history, [which is] not just closely intertwined with American history—it is a part of American history. Writing the history of American music education is writing national history" (Mark, 1993, p. 4). Mark further stated that to understand present-day music education in the United States, one must ask new questions that inquire

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[2] Lowell Mason was a key figure in the establishment of public school music education. For more on Mason, see: *A History of American Music Education* (Mark & Gary, 1992).

critically into the broader social, historical, and political contexts in which it has developed. Particularly germane to this dissertation is Mark's problematization of the lack of studies on the impact of desegregation on music education. Mark concluded, "Until these studies are done, it will be impossible to know why conditions are as they are today. The records are there waiting to be examined and interpreted" (Mark, 1993, p. 5). Despite Mark's call 30 years ago, no substantial body of research on desegregation and music education has yet been produced. The literature is lean in this critical area. With this chapter, I address that deficit.

The chapter reviews relevant literature on music education and Black students. It consists of three sections. The first section is a historical overview of extracurricular activities and music education in African American schools from the late 19th century to 1954. Next, though the studies reviewed do not specifically focus on the impact of desegregation on Black students' access to music education, I examine them to ascertain what the literature offers toward understanding the influence of desegregation on access to music education for Black students. I include in this section a discussion of studies that reveal perspectives on the status of music education for Black students. In the final section, I consider out-of-school spaces and practices that provide positive, life-affirming, and culturally sustaining alternatives for Black youth. Finally, the chapter closes with a discussion on the role of school administrators and decisions that affect Black students' access to music education during the regular school day.

Extracurricular Activities in Segregated Black Schools before Desegregation

Before the passage of the landmark school desegregation case, Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas (1954), segregated African American schools practiced a style of teaching buttressed by an ethos of excellence that reinforced community values, prepared students for future occupations, and taught the skills necessary to become fully contributing

members of society. In a review of scholarship from 1935 to 1969, Siddle-Walker (2000) found four common themes related to teaching and learning in Black segregated schools throughout the South: 1) exemplary teachers, 2) curriculum and extracurricular activities, 3) parental support, and 4) leadership of the school principal.

A solid academic education complemented by extracurricular activities provides the fundamental conditions for adult success (Holland & Andre, 1987; Snellman et al., 2015). Despite the inequitable distribution of resources between Black and White schools (Boozer et al., 1992; Margo, 1990), historically Black schools boasted rigorous academic curricula and offered a wide assortment of extracurricular activities. From the late 19th century into the 1970s, Black students who attended segregated schools throughout the North and South enjoyed access to a wide assortment of extracurricular activities and music programs during the regular school day and after school (Bowie, 1984; Brown, 2008; Dunn, 2008; Early, 2004; Hancock, 1977; Manheim et al., 2006; Siddle-Walker, 2000; Thomas, 2008). The activities included speech, drama, pep club, a variety of language, citizenship, scholastic, and academic clubs, and other varied interests such as library science, aviation, and homemaking. Among these offerings were instrumental and vocal music activities such as glee club, rhythm band, choral club, band, and orchestra. Music education was considered a bulwark against students losing touch with their creativity, agency, cultural, and community values and has always been a staple of students' extracurricular lives (Morris, et al., 2002; Rogers,1975; Siddle-Walker, 2000).

Several studies highlight exemplary segregated Black schools with well-established academic and extracurricular programs. Dunbar High School in Washington, D.C., the first Black high school in the United States, set a standard for academic and artistic excellence; it exemplifies a Black school with a long trajectory of well-rounded curricula. From its founding in

1870 through 1955, Dunbar demonstrated what was possible in preparing Black students to be fully contributing citizens after high school and into adulthood. Sowell's (1974) case study of Dunbar High corroborates Hundley's (1965) findings about Dunbar's outstanding extracurricular program. Central High School in Louisville, KY, had a 100-year history (1882–1982) of academic excellence and extracurricular activities that included various music offerings (Tilford-Weathers, 1982). Caswell County Training School, a segregated Black high school, founded in 1933, offered various extracurricular activities through 1969 and was known for its music program. Court-ordered desegregation in 1969 ultimately caused the dismantling of the school's music program (Siddle-Walker, 1996). Other celebrated segregated Black high schools with robust extracurricular programming and comprehensive music programs include Pearl High School in Nashville (Hancock, 1977), Lincoln High School in Kansas City, Missouri Dunn, 2008; Manheim, et al., 2006), Roosevelt, Dunbar, Roth and Jefferson high schools in Dayton, Ohio (Brown, 2008); and Miller High School in Detroit (Early, 2004; Mirel, 1999).

Extracurricular Activities in Segregated Black Schools After the Brown Decision (1954)

Scholars have argued that desegregation of schools resulted in outcomes that created conditions of diminished access to quality educational experiences for Black students (Fairclough, 2004; Hedrick, 2002; Irvine & Irvine, 1983). Drawing on studies conducted by government agencies, unpublished dissertations, and published studies in education and the social sciences, in this section, I discuss what can be ascertained about Black students' access to extracurricular and co-curricular activities after the Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas (1954) decision.

A substantial amount of research focuses on the impact of school desegregation on the Black teaching force, academic achievement of African American students, racial interactions

inside desegregated schools, Black student suspension, and graduation rates. Four key themes emerged from published research on the impact of desegregation on Black students' access to extracurricular activities and music education: 1) busing, 2) school closures, 3) loss of teachers, disempowerment, and disenfranchisement of faculty, students, and parents, and 4) cultural incongruity.

Busing, School Closures and Transformation

As the primary remedy for desegregating schools, busing created various barriers to participation in extracurricular activities for Black students. Studies reveal that the closing or transformation of schools relied on busing students to new school sites and resulted in reduced enrollment at Black schools (Moore, 2004; Robinson, 2014; Woodward, 2011). Reduced enrollment led to reduced resources for those schools, which in turn resulted in either fewer offerings or discontinuation of extracurricular activities at Black schools. Other variables as a result of busing included shortage of buses, scheduling of activities, travel distance from home, and parental consent allowing students to stay after school.

Woodward (2011) provided a critical race theory analysis of busing in Nashville. The researcher employed interest convergence to illuminate the inequities of the Nashville busing plan. Results of the study showed that busing created a burden for Black students who were bused to White schools to address the court-mandated racial balance requirement. This resulted in an extreme decrease in the enrollment of Black students in all Black schools. Eventually, many Black schools were closed. Woodward argued that the busing plan subtracted resources from Black schools: the schools become increasingly underfunded as the result of the low enrollment caused by busing students to White schools. The Woodward study revealed that busing was implicated in the elimination of a wide assortment of extracurricular opportunities for

Black students. Similarly, Hancock (1977) also concluded that busing ultimately resulted in decreased enrollment, which led to the shutting down of robust extracurricular programs in Nashville's Black schools.

Most extracurricular activities take place after school. This is true now and was so during the era of school desegregation. K'Meyer (2013) found that the scheduling of extracurricular activities after school hours created barriers of participation for most Black students in Louisville, Kentucky's desegregated schools because they lived as far as 20 miles away from school, and buses were not always available by the time the activities were over. Thus, many Black students were not able to enjoy participation in after-school extracurricular offerings. K'Meyer conducted oral history interviews with those most directly affected by desegregation processes: students, teachers, parent association members, principals, and community activists. Respondents who were students during this period of school desegregation said the structural and racial barriers caused a lack of equal educational opportunities and access to extracurricular activities during the first two years after the Brown decision.

Though the aftermath of the Brown decision was rife with a plethora of challenges and barriers to music education for Black students, contrary to other studies, Collins (1978) and Trent and McPartland (1981) found that Black students' levels of participation in sports, music, and drama in desegregated schools were higher than White students. These studies suggest that desegregation did not impede access to music and other extracurricular activities for Black students bused to desegregated schools. Trent and McParland (1981) culled data on race, student course enrollments, and membership in extracurricular activities from the National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 to assess the degree of resegregation of Black and White students in desegregated schools. The data revealed that a more significant percentage of Black

students in desegregated schools participated in athletics, drama, and music, while White students participated more in "honorary clubs" (the National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972, p. 21).

Loss of School Leaders, Teachers, and Parent Disenfranchisement

Following the busing of Black students, in concert with the closing and transformation of their schools, principals and teachers were dismissed or transferred. Additionally, parents experienced disempowerment and disenfranchisement at the desegregated school sites (Hancock, 1977; Moore, 2004). As previously discussed, studies on Black education pre-Brown demonstrate that parents, teachers, and school administrators worked collaboratively to ensure students had access to various extracurricular activities (Moore, 2004; Siddle-Walker, 2000). The loss of adult support resulted in low levels of Black student participation in extracurricular activities at the desegregated schools they attended.

Implementing desegregation significantly altered the access to adult advocates, teachers, and administrators who ensured student access to extracurricular activities. Fairclough (2006) and Floyd (1973) found that Black principals suffered tremendous losses due to desegregation. These studies provide evidence that by the 1960s, following the closure of Black schools, most of the principal demotions and/or dismissals had occurred. For example, in Alabama, Black principals dropped to 57 from 210 and in Virginia to 16 from 170 (Fairclough, 2006, p. 8). Fairclough asserts that the loss of the principals is particularly critical because of their leadership roles in schools, the school systems, and the broader community. Floyd (1973) documented the loss of power and decision-making principals experienced because of desegregation. In 1964, working Black principals in South Carolina numbered 143; by 1973 that number had dwindled to

40. Additionally, teachers, parents, and administrators experienced a decrease in or loss of teaching positions and leadership opportunities (Bowie, 1984; Moore, 2004; Rogers, 1974).

With the lack of supportive teachers and limited community involvement student interest in extracurricular activities waned (Moore, 2004). Moore suggested that invisible factors were responsible for the attenuation of student involvement in extracurricular activities. These factors included access to supportive "positive teacher-student and student-student relationships" (p. 79) as well as family and community involvement.

Cultural Incongruity

Cultural incongruity is implicated in the absence of Black students in music and other extracurricular activities in desegregated schools. Van & Noblit (1993) argued that cultural differences and ignorance of African American culture created unexpected negative consequences for Black students during the school desegregation process. In desegregated schools, Black cultural styles were not valued. Black students were forced to conform to White cultural styles. Music performance practices, cheerleading, and school dances are culturally specific activities. Black students were forced to conform to dominant White cultural styles to participate in these activities in desegregated high schools. They either chose not to conform, or they joined sports teams and other activities in their neighborhoods. (Grundy, 2001; Hedrick, 2002; Hancock 1977; Henry & Feuerstein,1999).

Grundy (2001) discussed the challenge presented by differences in cheerleading styles between White and Black squads across North Carolina. Black cheerleaders were at a disadvantage in tryouts at newly desegregated schools. Like Collins' (1978) findings, Grundy noted that in the early years of desegregation, Black students had to conform to White cultural standards. A study by (Irvine, 1990) illuminated the lack of cultural synchronization. According

to Irvine, cultural synchronization occurs "when teachers and Black students are in tune culturally" (p. xx). Grundy (2001) opined that differences in performance styles determined whether Black cheerleaders were accepted and allowed to participate in newly desegregated schools. To make the squad, they had to conform to White cheerleading styles. Findings showed that though Black girls assimilated, in most cases, the judges were White and did not choose Black girls.

Bowie (1984) argued that there was an increasing sense of Black identity during the Civil Rights movement, and the Black marching bands played a significant role in perpetuating Black identity. According to Bowie, Black students did not join the predominantly White bands at the desegregated schools due to cultural incongruity. In other words, students experienced social and cultural dissonance and poor treatment by teachers and students. They lamented losing their schools and the mentorship of Black teachers.

Music Education and Brown

Studies investigating desegregation's impact on music education are scarce in the music education literature. Studies that are focused on African American students' access to and participation in music after the Brown (1954) decision are virtually non-existent; however, some studies include historical overviews of music education (Hancock, 1977; Moore, 2004; Robinson, 2014) and biographies of Black music teachers and Black professional organizations (Moore, 2004; Thomas, 2008). These studies offer data that can be sifted through and examined for intersecting connections that reveal ways desegregation militated for or against access to music education for Black students. In this section, I reveal what is known about Black students' access to music education from 1954 to 1974.

Hancock (1977) examined the 102-year history (1873–1975) of music education in Nashville and Davidson County, Tennessee. Though a section of Hancock's dissertation covers the time frame of the Kelly v. Metropolitan County Board of Education (1970) school desegregation decision in the two counties, there is no discussion of the case. However, Hancock concluded that music programs in Black schools suffered significant losses due to busing. Those losses included reduced time in the school day, lack of buses for field trips, a general reduction in enrollment, and, most noteworthy, disruption of the feeder system of neighborhood schools in Black communities. The gradual desegregation of Pearl High School, the highest-ranked historically Black high school in the state, resulted in the discontinuation of the school's music program. Hancock opined that desegregation also fostered a loss of spirit cultivated by the community's support of extracurricular activities such as sports, clubs, and music. The researcher concluded that a significant outcome of busing, in concert with the loss of Black teachers and the closing of Black neighborhood schools, changed the overall vibrancy and spirit in Black neighborhoods.

In an oral history dissertation, Moore (2004) documented the lives of three music educators in Prince George's County, MD, between the years 1950 and 1992 and found several factors that contributed to the shutting down of music programs in Black schools: busing, school closures, desegregation of Black schools due to racial balance quotas, transfer of Black teachers, and reluctance of Black parents to support schools outside of their own communities. As Siddle-Walker (2000) and others have noted, parent support was a major factor in the advancement of music programs in Black schools during de facto/de jure segregation. Siddle-Walker (2000) concluded that Black parents did not experience a sense of belonging in parent groups at

desegregated White schools and subsequently did not participate at the same level as in the segregated schools their children attended prior to desegregation.

Particularly noteworthy in the study was the effect of desegregation on the music programs at Fairmont Heights, an all-Black high school that was desegregated in the 1970–71 school year. The only White teacher at one of the Black schools in the county said, "You have to understand that Douglass and Fairmont Heights, being the only two [B]lack schools in the county, both in music and athletics, got a richness that didn't exist anywhere else" (Siddle-Walker, 2000, p. 73). The teacher commented on the value of music in the school. "Music was a big part of that school. They had not just bands, but a wind ensemble, chorus, and gospel choir" (p. 73). The teacher lamented the decrease in the quality of the programs due to loss of students and teachers and suggested that busing students and transferring teachers severely impacted the quality of music education and other extracurricular activities at the only all-Black schools in the district. Gerrymandering, busing, school closures, opposition by White parents, challenges that African Americans experienced with the freedom-of-choice remedy, and inequitable distribution of funding between Black and White schools contributed to the gradual dismantling of music programs in the Black schools of Prince George's County, MD.

Though Moore (2004) concluded that the music programs eventually survived "the tumultuous times of desegregation" (p. 97) or were re-established, the study lacked analysis of the social and cultural impact of desegregation on students, teachers, and parents. An interview with an African American vocal music teacher at the school offers insight into the sense of loss that was experienced.

> I think integration was the worst thing that ever happened to the Black child. Because when . . . we had all-[B]lack schools—your parents stood behind you 100%. Once the schools were integrated, your [B]lack parents stopped supporting the schools . . . and

another thing—they were no longer in charge of the PTA. They were just onlookers. They really did not feel a real part of the school. (Moore, 2004, p. 61)

A report by the Commission on Civil Rights (1976) provided supporting evidence of Moore's account of the processes that impacted music in Prince George's County. The Commission's report provides a broader perspective of the effects of desegregation on out-of-school music and other extracurricular activities. Those effects included decreased participation by students and parents, parents discouraging racial mixing, parents preferring their children close to home after school, and a limited numbers of buses for after school transportation (p. 441).

Despite Moore's (2004) conclusion that the extracurricular activities in Prince George's County, MD survived desegregation, the Commission suggested otherwise. The report concluded that there was a "consensus of school personnel . . . that student participation in extracurricular activities had declined after desegregation" (p. 420). The report cited several explanations: variation in activities offered, insufficient availability of after-school buses, lack of parent support "because they did not want their children to 'socialize' with children of another race or because they wanted their children 'to be in their own neighborhood'" at the end of the school day. The Commission's report also emphasized that due to the influence of race in the decision-making process, all children lost. It specifically states:

> A careful review of the board's actions and inactions presents a picture blemished by dilatory tactics, (foot-dragging) evasions, and missed opportunities surrounding efforts by the courts and Congress to secure, for all citizens, the constitutional and statutory rights which most majority group citizens have enjoyed. Inescapably, Prince George's County indicts itself as its activities provide a panoply of state action perpetuating an unconstitutional pattern of segregation. Race played such a definitive role in decision-making in the county that children of all races were losers in terms of the social milieu in which they were nurtured and in terms of the uneconomic dollar expenditures necessitated when decision-making was largely colored by race. (Commission on Civil Rights, 1976, p. 447).

Robinson (2014) provided a historical qualitative study of the Little Rock Central High School band before desegregation through 1958. A critical element of the study was the juxtaposition of the history of Little Rock Central with that of Dunbar, a multi-purpose school for African Americans that opened in 1929. The Dunbar cluster of schools consisted of a junior high school, a high school, and a junior college, a common design in Black schools prior to desegregation (Carver High School and Junior College: 1951-1960, n.d.) After the implementation of Brown (1954) desegregation orders in 1955, Dunbar's award-winning music program was disbanded due to the transformation of the school cluster. Two separate schools were created: Dunbar Jr. High School and Horace Mann High School, and the junior college was closed.

After enduring two years of White terror and resistance, nine of the over 300 students enrolled in Central High, with support from the NAACP, led the way in the desegregation effort in Little Rock. This first group of Black students to attend Central High School is known as the "Little Rock Nine." These students excelled academically, in sports, and in band at Horace Mann High School; however, they were denied participation in Little Rock Central's extracurricular activities. Seven years passed before the first African American student could join the band. Karen Davis became the first African American student to do so. Subsequently, African American students' participation in extracurricular activities gradually increased yearly. Robinson (2014) did not provide an analysis of why the Little Rock Nine were denied participation in extracurricular activities, nor what led to the decision that ultimately made it possible for Karen Davis to join the band and African American students to participate in extracurricular activities.

Brown (2008) chronicled the rise and demise of the funk bands of the 1960s through the mid-1980s that were spawned in the band rooms of Black high schools in Dayton, Ohio. The researcher concluded that desegregation interrupted comprehensive music education for Black students in Dayton, Ohio. By the mid-1970s, "essential pillars of the city's music culture were getting unraveled" (p. 85) due to the closing of Dayton's all-Black schools. According to Brown, there were four Black high schools in Dayton in the early 1960s and by 1979, all were closed to achieve desegregation as mandated by Dayton Board of Education v. Brinkman (1979).

Critical to this study are the rarely heard voices of students in the school desegregation literature. Brown draws on historian Earl Lewis' (1991) concept of "home sphere" to describe the importance of the geography of Black life in the context of segregation, "where home meant both household and the community . . . home sphere enables us to understand more clearly how Blacks framed their own world" (Lewis, 1991, quoted in Brown, 2009, p.74, italics in original). Utilizing the theory of the home sphere, the researcher describes how Black students responded to the closing of their school, Roosevelt High School,

> It's about time for students of Roosevelt and other [B]lack schools to take matters in our own hands . . . we have our own culture, our own ethnics [sic], and our own background, and we want our own thing. We will not stand by and see our school closed. (p 84)

In a pictorial historical account of the development of instrumental music education in Black schools of Florida, Thomas (2008) chronicled the creation of the Florida Association of Band Directors (FABD), a professional association of African American music educators founded to develop musicianship of Black students and to create a feeder system into the Black colleges and universities. The study included a detailed overview of band programs in 111 historically Black middle and high schools in 67 counties in Florida. In 1940, with the creation of the FABD, instrumental music programs were established in the Black schools. Up to this time, only a small number of these schools provided some music instruction, which in most cases was

choir and very little instrumental instruction (Poole, 1988, cited in Thomas, 2008, p. 4). From 1940 to 1966, these schools provided music education programs for Florida's Black students. Thomas gave no account of what happened to the schools after desegregation but wrote that many of the historically Black school bands were still in existence at that time (Thomas, 2008, p. xi). Given the rampant closing of Black schools in the desegregation process in Florida (Thomas, 2008), it is reasonable to surmise that most schools were closed, leaving families to deal with the outcomes of desegregation that separated their children from their communities, culture, and identity. Coinciding with the increased desegregation of schools, in 1996, the FABD decided to merge with the Florida Music Educators Association (FMEA). After the merger of the state's two professional music educators' associations, leadership among the Black music educators decreased. Thomas (2008) did not provide an analysis of the decrease in leadership among African American members.

Though the studies in this review thus far have focused on K–12 schools, a historical essay by Bowie (1984) provided a perspective of how desegregation affected the band programs in Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Bowie argued that from the late 1940s through the late 1960s, Black university marching bands had reached a high performance level and garnered increased attention. Notably, this suggests that the FABD's goal to create a feeder system to the HBCUs was successful. However, in the aftermath of desegregation, Bowie observed that the quality of the bands began to drop in the 1970s due to the closing of Black schools with long traditions of outstanding high school bands and music programs that had enrolled "thousands of Black youths" (Bowie, 1984, p. 36.) The study offered a historical perspective that illuminated the numbers of students who were displaced in the aftermath of

desegregation. Bowie concluded that desegregation was the most impactful dilemma facing the music programs in the HBCUs.

These studies do not tell a mere regional tale. They reflect what was happening throughout the country after May 17, 1954, not just in those states where "separate but equal [had] no place" in the schools. Whether in de facto or de jure states, White resistance to desegregation was unyielding (Moore, 2004; Robinson, 2014). Justice Marshall opined with his prophetic response to the victorious glee after the unanimous Brown decision. While at a celebration party that evening, he warned, "you fools go ahead and have your fun . . . we ain't begun to work yet" (Patterson, 2001, p. 17). He gave it 5 years. Then along came the Milliken v. Bradley decision.

Black Music Education in the Afterlife of Brown

From the Watershed to the Water's Edge: Brown (1954) to Milliken (1974)

> *If Brown was, as it has properly been called, a watershed, Milliken may well mark the water's edge* (Amaker, 1974, p. 349).

Three landmark Supreme Court decisions altered the course of public education for African Americans. Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas (1954) ended segregation in schools based on race (Raffel, 1998); Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education (1971) established busing as an acceptable remedy for school desegregation (Raffel, 1998); and Milliken v. Bradley (1974) discontinued metropolitan, interdistrict busing as a remedy to achieve desegregation (Baugh, 2011; Raffel, 1998). The literature shows that the state of Black music education today can be directly attributed to these decisions.

Access to music education for Black students changed significantly after the implementation of court-ordered school desegregation. There was a general trend of decreasing Black students' enrollment in music throughout the first two decades following Brown (1954).

Subsequent landmark Supreme Court decisions altered the course of public education for Black students and, by extension, the possibility of continued participation in and access to music as experienced during the pre-Brown era (Brown, 2008; Green, 2014; Hancock,1977; Henry & Feuerstein, 1999). Those decisions are at the forefront of the onset of challenges that negatively impacted the access to music programming that Black students enjoyed before desegregation.

Among those decisions, two stand out as having a significant impact on creating the conditions that resulted in decreased access to music for Black students in public schools— Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education (1971) and Milliken v. Bradley (1974). Swann v. Board (1971), the first major Supreme Court decision concerning busing, established busing as an acceptable remedy for school desegregation, resulting in a loss of thriving music programs in Black schools. A major result of busing was the reduction of enrollment at Black schools, disrupting established programs and, in many instances, dismantling the feeder systems in fully functioning elementary through high school music programs (Hancock, 1977).

Conversely, Milliken v. Bradley (1974) discontinued metropolitan, inter-district busing as a remedy to achieve desegregation (Baugh, 2011; Raffel, 1998). The decision's ruling stated that desegregation could not extend beyond the boundaries of the city of Detroit (Clotfelter, 1976). As a result, rather than being required to bus their children to desegregated Black schools, White middle-class families moved to the surrounding suburbs, consistent with the White flight trends that began in the 1950s (Frey, 1980), a significant outcome of which was an erosion of the tax base that provided much of the funding for local schools. The decrease in tax revenue, in concert with busing, deprived Black schools in the urban core of the student population as well as funding and led to the deterioration of once-thriving music programs in Black schools throughout the North and South. The Swann and Milliken decisions set precedents that would

serve as justification for subsequent anti-desegregation cases, further eroding avenues of access to music education for Black students.

Amaker (1975) described Brown (1954) as a watershed and Milliken (1974) as the water's edge. I advance another view of these two cases and posit that if Brown redressed Plessey, Milliken (1974) undressed Brown (1954). Brown struck down the "separate but equal" doctrine of Plessy v. Ferguson and declared "segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race" unlawful (Brown 347 U. S. 483, p. 493). Milliken (1974), nemesis to Brown (1954), is the first northern school desegregation case that made segregation lawful. It was "the turning point in America's willingness to face the consequences of centuries of racial discrimination" (Kluger, 1975, p. x).

Milliken v. Bradley (1974) and Music Education

The relevance of the Milliken decision to music education lies in the fact that it effectively foreclosed access to equitable schooling for African American youth attending Detroit's deteriorating public schools. By the time of the Milliken decision in 1974, the Detroit public schools were experiencing the effects of the social, economic, and political upheaval of the late 1950s. Several factors contributed to the deteriorating schools, including White flight, urban renewal, decreasing tax base, and over-crowded and underfunded schools (Baugh, 2011; Sugrue, 2008). Detroit, like other major urban cities in the north, had been experiencing social, economic, and racial crises directly stemming from the loss of good-paying industrial jobs, employment discrimination, and racial residential segregation (Anyon, 1997; Baugh, 2011; Gotham, 2002; Sugrue, 2008). While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to present a full explication of these cases, a brief overview is useful for understanding the present state of music education for African American students.

Milliken v. Bradley was like a head-on collision between de facto and de jure segregation. In 1974, the Supreme Court overturned a 1971 decision of the Sixth Circuit Court that found that the State of Michigan and the Detroit School Board had enacted policies that effectively maintained de jure segregation in the public schools in an ostensibly de facto environment. The Court returned a decision that required 53 suburban school districts to be part of a metropolitan busing plan that would bus White students into the city and Black students from Detroit to the suburbs. Unsatisfied by the lower Court's decision, the defendants appealed to the Supreme Court, which overturned the lower Court's ruling and returned a 5–4 decision that agreed with the lower Court that de jure segregation was at play; however, there was no evidence to prove that the suburban districts had committed any violations because they were not involved in the decision to maintain segregation in the schools (Milliken v Bradley, 1974). In the dissenting opinion, Thurgood Marshall described the Court's decision as "a mockery of Brown I" (Milliken v Bradley, 1974).

Understanding the implications of Milliken (1974) is fundamental to comprehending the impact of desegregation on access to music education for Black students. Had Milliken (1974) been decided in favor of the plaintiffs, it could have proffered an opportunity to finally equalize the tangible resources referred to in the Brown (1954) decision, in which Chief Justice Warren asked,

> Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other "tangible" factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities? We believe that it does. (493)

Schools, physical facilities, and other tangible factors in Detroit were not equal (Baugh, 2011). This reality was central to the motivation of Detroit parents in their brief to the court in Milliken (1974). They described the overpopulation of the schools and the poor conditions "of 133 virtually all-Black schools, containing over 130,000 students [that were] surrounded by

virtually all-White school districts" (Bradley v. Milliken, 338 F. Supp. 582.) For music education, tangible resources would have included access to instruments and well-equipped music classrooms, the ability to keep instruments in good repair, and, most importantly, teachers. The Milliken II (1974) decision is implicated in the eventual dismantling of established music programs throughout the Detroit school district.

Early (2004) articulated a glaring indictment of the Detroit school desegregation process and its role in dismantling music education in schools. Early asserted that "Motown could not have happened without a strong public-school music education program in Detroit . . . [nearly all] the session musicians, the arrangers, and often the producers . . . were trained in the public schools of Detroit" (p. 78). While African Americans were fighting for better schools in northern and southern courts, many Black schools were thriving, including many exceptional high schools in Detroit, such as Miller and Cass Technical (p. 78).

Brown's (2008) account of the nurturing of musicality and culturally resonating pedagogies and practices in the high schools and other community institutions in Dayton, Ohio, demonstrates how "schools were the elemental place for both music performance and education of would-be creators of the music" (p. 77) that dominated the popular music industry of the 1970s. Two hundred miles north, the Motor City's Motown Records musicians and composers received their training in the rigorous music education programs of Detroit's high schools (Early, 2004). The demise of these essential school training grounds can be directly attributed to the closure of Black schools that ensued following the Brown (1954) decision (Brown, 2008; Early, 2013; Hancock, 1977; Robinson, 2014) and further illuminates the essential and necessary role of institutions that cultivate and nurture performance and the study of music beyond the school walls.

Now, decades after Brown (1954), Black students are disproportionately underrepresented in public school band and orchestra programs across the United States (Elpus & Abril, 2011). Few studies offer precise analyses of the state of music education for Black students in contemporary times. In existing studies, Black students' participation in music is often buried in data that analyzes levels of participation in arts education and does not directly address music specifically (Catterall & Dumais, 2012; Elpus, 2013; Parsad & Spiegelmann, 2012). A 1996 study investigating re-segregation in desegregated schools reflected desegregation's impact on access to music education for Black students. In a middle school in which Black students constituted 50% of the total enrollment, they numbered only 23% in the school's 150-piece band, and even fewer were members of the orchestra and chorus (Henry & Feuerstein, 1999). Only 21% of high school seniors participate in high school performance ensembles, the majority of whom are White and middle class (Elpus & Abril, 2011). Rickels and Stauffer (2010) found that in a Southwest school district with high percentages of students of color, in 19 high schools, approximately 15% of all students were enrolled in music, the majority of whom were White, middle-class females.

Elpus (2017) articulates an approach to understanding Black students' access to music within the last decade. Using data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, Elpus sought to understand the "contextual factors . . . associated with the comprehensiveness of a high school's arts offerings" (p. 4). In his study, students were classified as "white" or "non-white." The absence of a more specific breakdown of ethnicity is problematic and does not allow for a robust perspective and understanding of who, other than White students, has access to music.

Seeding Hope: Reimagining Out-of-School Alternatives

Given that racially based inequity pertaining to access to music education for Black students persists, what is the way forward toward the creation of viable, accessible opportunities to study music? As previously discussed, studies show the devastating impact that school desegregation had on Black students' access to music education. In recent years, racialized neoliberal education reforms such as high-stakes testing and privatization (Apple, 2004; Baldridge, 2014; Lipman, 2011), have further produced entrenchment of oppressive structural inequalities that continue to foreclose Black students' opportunities to learn music during the regular school day, resulting in an increased need for out-of-school programs.

While few studies focus on current access to the formal study of music for Black students outside of school, there is research on out-of-school spaces that provide positive alternatives for Black students outside of the oppressive structures of daytime schooling (Baldridge et al., 2011; Brice-Heath & McLaughlin, 1994; Ginwright, 2007. Across these studies, there is no direct discussion of experiences in music learning; however, experiences that support youth in making informed decisions about their creative pursuits are nurtured in these spaces in ways that the structure of daytime schooling does not allow.

Particularly germane to this dissertation are two studies that illuminate strategies offering a different glimpse into youth development ecosystems that produce dramatically different outcomes than those produced in traditional schooling. Ginwright (2009) outlined the strategy used in the development of his organization, Leadership Excellence, that worked with more than 10,000 youth at a 5–day residential, personal development, and leadership summer camp that occurred over two decades near Oakland, CA. The strategy was essentially a set of practices he calls "radical healing" (p. 8). Radical healing builds Black and minoritized youth's capacity to

address and reconcile the trauma that results from the myriad experiences of oppression they encounter in daily life at school, on the bus, walking, or driving through cities where racial profiling and anti-Black youth sentiment is rampant. Radical healing happens through a three-fold process of building "strong, caring relationships, [nurturing] healthy racial identities among African American youth, and [fostering] a strong political consciousness about community issues in ways that compel them to confront pressing neighborhood problems" (p. 8). Ginwright argues that for Black youth to address the oppressive structures in their communities and create the communities in which they want to live, "spaces that foster hope, and a political imagination" are fundamental, especially during these times when "intensified oppression in urban communities" threatens the existence of such spaces (p.12). He further posits that these spaces are "critical preconditions for collective action because they allow young people to envision the type of communities they want to create" (p. 12).

McLaughlin et al. (2018) documented the experiences of 700 youth from 1978 to 1992 who participated in the Community Youth Creative Learning Experience (CYCLE), an afterschool, neighborhood-based program in Chicago's Cabrini-Green public housing project. CYCLE offered a comprehensive, year-round array of opportunities for youth residents of Cabrini-Green, including academic tutoring, field trips, scholarships, and summer camps. Through in-depth interviews, McLaughlin et al. (2018) sought to learn if the positive, encouraging outcomes of CYCLE chronicled in the book, *Urban Sanctuaries* (McLaughlin et al., 1994), were sustained in the lives of the participants and the lives of their children. Results revealed that now in their 40s and 50s, the majority of students in the study graduated from high school. Many of them had graduate degrees and successful careers in education, business, and other professional occupations. Echoing similar outcomes as those in Ginwright (2007),

participants attributed their success to the program's core features: mentoring and meaningful

relationships with adults, exposure to activities outside of the neighborhood, and the culture of

belonging that was cultivated throughout the program activities. In contrast with current

neoliberal approaches to after-school programming that pathologize Black youth in the

competitive scramble for funding (Baldridge, 2014), these studies' findings challenge current

pathologizing deficit models. McLaughlin (1994) and Ginwright (2007) both argued that

successful youth development programs are youth-centered and create opportunities to develop

meaningful relationships between youths and adults.

As demonstrated in the pre-Brown literature, extracurricular activities, including music,

were central to co-curricular activities. Because of the failures of desegregation, these activities

are now part of the out-of-school time (OST) ecosystem of arts non-profits that fill the void

created by desegregation. While the OST programs create access to music, school-based music

offerings for every student continue to be minimal and, in many cases, not present.

There is a need to understand how music education can be made fully accessible for those

locked out of K–12 music education in public schools. Many of these students participate in

programs outside of school, demonstrating their desire and, in some instances, the absolute

necessity to study music. As observed in the desegregation literature, students thrive when a

sense of belonging, cultural relevance, and valuing of students' cultural expressions exists.

Educators are challenged with two questions: 1) How do we change public schools to ensure that

students have music as a regular part of their daily schedule? 2) How do we ensure students have

viable opportunities to study music outside of school?

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, [S. 1177]) of 2015 designated music as a

critical part of a well-rounded education (Woodside, 2015). The Act states that music should be a

part of every child's instructional day, regardless of their situation. While it does not mandate that all students must take music, it offers new access points, supported by congressional legislation that includes funding for schools to assess the degree to which students receive a well-rounded education and how well schools address deficiencies. The ESSA holds the potential to create avenues of access to music education for all students during the regular school day. However, fully implementing the provisions for music that the ESSA provides will take courageous leadership to ensure access to the well-rounded curriculum that ESSA outlines.

School Administrators as Gatekeepers

As articulated in the opening epigraph of this chapter, political decisions made by people other than music educators have far-reaching impacts on current issues in music education. When considering the inequity inherent in the low enrollment of African American students in music classes, Khalifa and Briscoe (2015) illuminated another challenge to ensuring equitable access to a well-rounded curriculum that includes music—the role of school administrators in the creation of institutional practices that contribute to the maintenance of racism in schools, inadvertently resulting in the subtraction of opportunities that engender full enjoyment, emboldened curiosity, amplified creativity, excitement, and benefits of participation in a well-rounded curriculum for Black students.

School leaders tend to divert attention away from discussions of race and racism in the schools they manage (Larson, 1997; McMahon, 2007, as cited by Khalifa & Briscoe, 2015), even when evidence shows otherwise. For example, Khalifa and Briscoe (2015) interviewed school administrators in districts located in urban areas of Texas. Upon analysis of the administrators' reactions to questions about "racialized disaggregated disciplinary data, and their responses to [the] sharing of findings with them" (p. 1), the researchers concluded that school administrators

contributed to the maintenance of racism by "discursive avoidance of issues of racial marginalization," (p. 17), protection of self-interest, inclusive of racist operational practices, and unwittingly protecting practices that engender racial marginalization. Within this environment, racism is reproduced in schools through administrators' practices when faced with controversy or sanctions that may jeopardize their well-being and status as they navigate the bureaucratic terrain of schools. This myopic attitude causes them to ignore broader moral and ethical issues (Khalifa & Briscoe, 2015) like racialized enrollment in music classes. While school leaders overwhelmingly denounce and disapprove of racism in schools, "racialized gaps in achievement and discipline persist" (Khalifa & Briscoe, 2015, p. 1). By extension, just as racism leads to racist disciplinary practices, it also leads to decisions that diminish access to music for Black students. In the face of conflict and loss of resources, administrators with relative power may default to the status quo. This is problematic for music education because the subjective nature of curricular decisions made by school administrators leaves no system for checks and balances for equitable outcomes in arts and cultural education. Given the implications of decisions made by school administrators that negatively impact Black students' access to music education during the regular school day, out-of-school opportunities, like those offered by the Oakland Public Conservatory of Music (OPC), are critical.

Strengths and Limitations of Extant Literature

The pre-Brown literature reveals examples of Black educational processes that were not impeded by a lack of equal resources. These studies illuminated qualities that could inform present-day projects that seek to create access to extracurricular activities for all students. Several of the studies in this chapter utilized an oral history methodology. Oral history contributes to a greater understanding of the impact of desegregation on the people most affected

by increasing the volume of previously attenuated and silenced voices (K'Meyer, 2013; Moore, 2004). Centering the voices of those directly impacted by desegregation contributes to greater insight into assessing desegregation and its impact. For example, K'Meyer (2013) documented how pro-integration activists won access to educational resources for Black youth. More studies on pro-integration may illuminate ways to proactively address the adverse outcomes of desegregation.

Critique of the studies in this review includes the dearth of studies on music education, a general lack of explicit attention to race, an absence of theoretical analyses, minimal attention to the influence of local desegregation processes on the most affected communities, and a lack of diverse methodological approaches. Knowledge of the broader issues surrounding the cases provides researchers with a robust understanding of the processes surrounding the decisions made in each location. For example, while Hancock's (1977) study provides a robust historical perspective on the development of music education in Nashville and Davidson County schools, the absence of a race analysis occludes an understanding of how processes surrounding desegregation resulted in the loss of access to music education for Black students. A more critical analysis of Kelley v. Board (1970), the case that resulted in the busing of 13,000 Black students in Nashville and Davidson County, would have provided an opportunity for a deeper analysis of race and access to music education for Black students. With this understanding, researchers investigating the impact of desegregation on Black students have a broader set of tools that may assist in understanding and addressing current access issues.

Conclusion

From the late 19th century into the mid-1970s, a practice of ensuring access to a robust variety of extracurricular and co-curricular activities existed for Black students in de jure and de

facto segregated schools. Even with fewer resources, Black schools had vibrant, thriving extracurricular programs. Not only were Black students thriving in music, but evidence shows they were thriving academically and socially (Mannheim & Helmuth, 2006). However, by the late 1960s, Black students' access to and participation in extracurricular activities was either greatly diminished or discontinued due to busing, school closures, loss of teachers, principals, and leadership opportunities for parents and administrators, and cultural incongruity in desegregated schools in which Black students participated in extracurricular activities.

The literature shows that these programs were dismantled entirely, illuminating an unmitigated construction of barriers that diminished the continued well-being of Black students' developing musical selves due to the social and political contexts surrounding the Brown (1954) decision. There is a need for more research on the impact of desegregation on Black music education. For example, when considering the impact of desegregation on Black students' education, the literature provides a limited view of the impact of the process of desegregation on Black students and communities writ large. Acquiring a robust understanding of school desegregation's impact on Black students' access to music education requires adopting research approaches that pay attention to the "broader sociocultural facets of desegregation dynamics" (Irvine & Irvine, 1983, p. 412). Irvine and Irvine (1983) argued that "scant attention is paid to the importance of broader 'socio-cultural facets of desegregation dynamics'" (p. 412). Assessing the effects of desegregation independent of the contextual significance of the broader socio-cultural and historical roots of Blacks as a people misses a vital component of how such a system is implicated in the learning process (p. 412). The literature provides evidence of what is possible when resources are equitable, accessible, culturally relevant, and sustaining. When parents, teachers, administrators, and students have opportunities for leadership, decision-making, and

rigorous academic and extracurricular offerings, including music education, the fundamental conditions for success in adulthood are certain (Holland & Andre, 1987; Snellman et al., 2015).

This chapter documents the gradual decrease in Black students' participation in music and other extracurricular programs from 1954 to 1974 following Brown v. Board (1954) and later Supreme Court decisions (Brown, 2008; Green, 2014; Hancock, 1977; Henry & Feuerstein, 1999). During this period, three landmark Supreme Court decisions altered the course of public education for African Americans: Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas (1954) ended racial segregation in schools; Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education (1971) established busing as an acceptable remedy for school desegregation; and Milliken v. Bradley (1974) discontinued metropolitan, inter-district busing as a remedy to achieve desegregation (Baugh, 2011; Raffel, 1998). As a result, by 1974, music programs that had been a core component of co-curricular activity in Black schools during de jure segregation bore little to no resemblance to their pre-Brown (1954) design.

The critical race theory tenet of interest convergence (Bell, 1980) assists in explaining what might have happened had Detroit schools been remodeled. They would have been made more suitable for White students, resulting in the push out of Black students, as has happened with magnet school efforts and other desegregation efforts (Gotham, 2002; Wright & Alenuma, 2007). Furthermore, interest convergence would predict that had the Milliken remedy been accepted, the schools in Detroit would have been rebuilt and remodeled to benefit White students. Had the parents' case been successful, the Milliken decision would have set a precedent for future metropolitan remedies that would have, in the least, contributed to the promise of Brown "and not substituted . . . one segregated school system for another segregated school system" (Milliken v. Bradley 418 U.S. 717). The literature illustrates how the process of school

desegregation resulted in the dismantling of essential cornerstones of Black music education in school programs, in which fundamental characteristics of Black musical production had been nurtured and cultivated, spawning new genres and expressions of American musical culture and identity that are emulated and honored throughout the globe.

CHAPTER 3: ANALYTICAL PROCESS

Blacks and dark-skinned racial minorities lag well behind whites in virtually every area of social life. (Bonilla-Silva, 2006, p. 2)

Conceptual Framework

Bonilla-Silva (2006) articulates a disturbing commentary on the life conditions of African Americans in the United States. Studies on racial profiling (Birzer & Birzer, 2006; Egharevba, S., 2016), education inequality (Ladson-Billings, 2006), housing and wealth inequality (Kochhar & Fry, 2014), employment disparity (Bowser, et. al., 2015), incarceration rate (Alexander, 2010), even physicians' perception of pain among Black patients in comparison to White patients (Staton, et. al., 2007), further reveal and underscore the breadth of inequality and oppression experienced by Black people in the United States. McKittrick (2006) posits that diasporic geographies are inoculated with racist paradigms that created and have maintained hierarchies of power over time. Underscoring McKittrick, Hartman (2007) avers that in diasporic geographies, "[B]lack lives are still imperiled and devalued by racial calculus . . . entrenched centuries ago. This is the afterlife of slavery—skewed life chances, limited access to health and education, premature death, incarceration, and impoverishment" (p. 6).

Considering these varied assertions of the current conditions of Black life, how can educators understand what has given rise to the construction and maintenance of practices that allow the displacement of Black students from ecologies of thrival,[3] specifically, the ecosystem

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[3] I draw on the definition of "ecology" advanced by the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies. "The scientific study of the processes influencing the distribution and abundance of organisms, the interactions among organisms, and the interactions between organisms and the transformation and flux of energy and matter." (https://www.caryinstitute.org/news-insights/2-minute-science/definition-ecology). *Thrival* is an ongoing act of thriving, a state of being beyond surviving. Thrival is the state of flourishing and prospering. It is the outcome of surviving in an ecosystem bound by processes that ensure the adequate distribution of resources needed to live full, abundant lives. Survival is required in order to experience thrival.

of music education in the afterlife of slavery? What are the root causes of racial disparity in music education? How might this understanding assist with cultivating conditions that allow Black students to flourish in music education? What pedagogical practices reverse the problems and challenges that the Racial Contract presents in music education? These questions are directly related to the research questions of this study articulated in Chapter 1 and illuminate a path toward explaining core influences in the creation and development of OPC's youth programs. To answer these questions, I start with Racial Contract Theory (RCT) (Mills, 1997), a conceptual tool for theorizing "the real character" (p. 2) of the racialized society in which we live. RCT reveals the normalizing theories and practices of dominant discourses that ascribe personhood and humanity to the members of society.

Racial Contract Theory

Racial Contract Theory is an analytic model that sits in the "long, honorable tradition of oppositional black theory" (Mills, 1997, p. 131) and the tradition of revisionist political theory (Pateman & Mills, 2007). Introduced by political philosopher Charles W. Mills, RCT explains "the inner logic of racial domination" (p. 6) in the formation of governments, how they are structured, whom they protect, and people's moral psychology in the modern world (p. 6). Mills critiqued the historic social contract from a lens of White supremacy and racial power and asserted that it is a contract between "the people who count" (p. 3). In Western society, those people are White; thus, the social contract is a racial contract that subordinates and excludes non-White people from enjoying the economic, educational, and social benefits of a just society.

Mills (1997) argued that Kant's social contract theory best demonstrates the "grip of the Racial Contract on Europeans" (p. 69). Considered the creator of the modern concept of race (p. 70), Kant (1775) introduced "the immutability and permanence of race" (Mills, 1997, p. 70) by demarcating "a natural color-coded racial hierarchy" (p. 74) that inscribed an ontology of subpersonhood to non-White people (p. 74). This racial hierarchy undergirds a "racial calculus" (Hartman, 1997, p. 6) that maintains two central conceptual frames of the Racial Contract, personhood and subpersonhood. Within this structure, Whites are perceived as human persons, while Blacks and non-Whites are demoted to subpersonhood (Leonardo, 2013) and not fully human. As a subperson, a Black person cannot reach full and true humanity because true humanity "accrues only to a [W]hite European, [which] . . . is the humanity par excellence" (citing Eze, 1995, in Mills, 1997, p. 54). Mills writes,

> Subpersons are humanoid entities who, because of racial phenotype/genealogy/culture, are not fully human and therefore have a different and inferior schedule of rights and liberties applying to them. In other words, it is possible to get away with doing things to subpersons that one could not do to persons, because they do not have the same rights as persons. (p. 56)

The details of the Racial Contract.

[The slave ship] is a location through which . . . hardship and human cruelty [are articulated], in part mapping and giving new meaning to the vessel itself. (McKittrick, 2006, p.xii)

Black matters are spatial matters. And while we all produce, know, and negotiate space—albeit on different terms—geographies in the diaspora are accentuated by racist paradigms of the past and their ongoing hierarchical patterns. (McKittrick 2006, p. xii)

The details of the Racial Contract examine the norming and racing of space and (sub)persons in relationhip to the traditional social contract and its terms of enforcement. The opening epigraphs of this section call attention to ways that space maps and renders meaning. McKittrick draws attention to the historical reality of the Racial Contract. The description of

the slave ship and Black geographies in the diaspora illuminate the embeddedness of the epistemological underpinnings (as described in the previous section) of the norming and racing of space and individuals. McKittrick asserts "that space and place give [B]lack lives meaning in a world that has incorrectly deemed [B]lack populations and their attendant geographies as 'ungeographic' and/or philosophically undeveloped" (xiii). In the norming and racing of space and individuals, spaces are demarcated as either civil or wild, depending on the inhabitants. For example, after the Brown (1954) decision, the challenge of desegregating schools required the norming of space by racing the space and the students to justify decisions. Mills (1997) writes:

> The norming of space is partially done in terms of the racing of space, the depiction of space as dominated by individuals (whether persons or subpersons) of a certain race. At the same time, the norming of the individual is partially achieved by spacing it, that is, representing it as imprinted with the characteristics of a certain kind of space. "You are what you are in part because you originate from a certain kind of space, and that space has those properties in part because it is inhabited by creatures like yourself." (p. 42)

Mills described the Racial Contract in ten theses (1997) that articulate the underpinnings of White supremacy and the inner workings of the Racial Contract:

1. The Racial Contract is political, moral, and epistemological.

2. The Racial Contract is historical actuality.

3. The Racial Contract is an exploitation contract.

4. The Racial Contract norms (and races) space.

5. The Racial Contract norms (and races) the individual.

6. The Racial Contract underwrites the modern social contract.

7. The Racial Contract has to be enforced through violence and ideological conditioning.

8. The Racial Contract historically tracks the actual moral/political consciousness of (most) [W]hite moral agents.

9. The Racial Contract has always been recognized by non[W]hites as the real

moral/political agreement to be challenged; and

10. The Racial Contract as a theory is explanatorily superior to the raceless social contract.

In this study, I employ theses four and five to illuminate the influence of the Racial Contract on curricular and pedagogical decisions that determine where, why, for whom, and how music education happens.

4. The Racial Contract norms and races space demarcating civil and wild spaces (p. 41).

5. The Racial Contract norms and races the individual, establishing personhood and subpersonhood (p. 53).

The norming and racing of space. To justify the moral, political, and epistemological underpinnings of the Racial Contract, space must be normed and raced in a world in which White supremacy is the dominant political system on a global level or, as Mills (1997) describes, at the "macrolevel" (p. 43); i.e., entire countries and continents: Africa, "the dark continent"; local levels, such as city neighborhoods like the inner-city/the "ghetto"; and the microlevel of the body itself (p. 44). Mills avers that this "microspace of the body. . .[is] in a sense, the foundation of all the other levels" (p. 51). He further posits that the "persons and subpersons, the citizens and noncitizens, who inhabit these polities do so embodied in envelopes of skin, flesh, hair. The non[W]hite body carries a halo of blackness around it, which may actually make some whites physically uncomfortable" (p. 51).

The burden that busing placed on Black students represents an example of the norming and racing of space, persons, and sub persons. Wells et al. (2004), depict the struggles and challenges of desegregation processes in Charlotte, North Carolina, Pasadena, California, Austin, Texas, Englewood, New Jersey, Shaker Heights, Ohio, and Topeka, Kansas. They found that African American and Latino children were more likely to bear the logistical

burdens of integration due to White parents' overwhelming belief that the Black community schools were not "good enough" for their children. The data showed that while the inconvenience of busing was indeed burdensome, "closing [B]lack schools that required students of color to bear the brunt of busing dealt a blow to these communities' pride and dignity. It was as if [W]hite society were saying nothing was valuable in the [B]lack or Latino communities" (Wells et al., 2004, p. 1731). This is an example of the epistemological underpinnings of the Racial Contract, remarkably reminiscent of the 1857 Dred Scott v. Sandford (1856) decision in which Chief Justice Roger Taney wrote that Blacks

> had for more than a century before been regarded as beings of an inferior order, and altogether unfit to associate with the [W]hite race, either in social or political relations; and so far, inferior, that they had no rights which the [W]hite man was bound to respect; and that the [N]egro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his benefit. He was bought and sold and treated as an ordinary article of merchandise and traffic, whenever a profit could be made by it. (p. 60, U. S. 408)

The norming and racing of the individual.

The epistemological dimension of the Racial Contract implies that "real" knowledge is preemptively restricted to "European cognizers" (Mills, 1997, p. 44), suggesting that knowledge is not even possible in non-[W]hite spaces. Mills argues that "significant cultural achievement, intellectual progress, is thus denied to those spaces, which are deemed to be permanently locked into a cognitive state of superstition and ignorance" (p. 44). For example, in 1935, the Wiley College Debate team[4] defeated the reigning national debate champion, the University of Southern California. Though they won, they could not officially claim the victory because African Americans were not yet allowed to join the Pi Kappa Delta debate society.

Since the Racial Contract links space with race and race with personhood, the White-

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[4] The Wiley Debate Team is the subject of the film, *The Great Debaters* (Washington, 2007)

raced space of the polity is, in a sense, the geographical locus of the polity proper. Where Indigenous peoples were permitted to survive, "they were denied full or any membership in the political community, thus becoming foreigners in their own country" (Mills, 1997, p. 50). An example of this thesis can be seen in school desegregation cases in which all-Black schools were desegregated and evolved into White-dominated spaces (Henry & Feuerstein, 1999).

Racial Contract Theory in Education

Unlike Critical Race Theory (CRT), which has been widely applied in education (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006; Ladson-Billings & Tate,1995; Stovall, 2013; Tate, 1997; Woodward, J. R. 2011), RCT has rarely been used to analyze the spaces, places, and personhood associated with education. However, two examples bear attention in this dissertation. In the first, Smith (2015) employs Mill's stance on systemic de facto racism in a structural analysis of the Supreme Court decision in Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1 (2007). The second is Leonardo's (2013) application of Mills' Racial Contract as methodology.

Smith (2015) applied Mills' argument that the Racial Contract can reveal "systemic and deeply engrained forms of de facto racism" (p. 504) in school segregation. Through the lens of the Racial Contract, Smith sought to understand the structure of the United States Supreme Court's decision in Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1 (2007). The Seattle School District No. 1 had adopted race-based school assignment plans to ensure racial balance. To achieve the school district's racial integration goals, some White students were not assigned to the schools of their choice but to other schools based on their race. The school of choice, Ballard, was a newly built facility.

Though in a predominantly White neighborhood, Ballard had an enrollment that had been predominantly non-White before the construction of the new state-of-the-art building and an enriched innovative curriculum. Following the construction of the new building and the new curriculum, the White student enrollment increased. The parents sued, claiming that the school district violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. The case was dismissed in the lower court, and the decision was reversed upon appeal in a higher court. Smith (2015) concluded that Mills' de facto racism thesis explained how the "devastating response of the Supreme Court . . . can be understood as a . . . highly significant development of the Racial Contract" (p. 516). It showed that the Racial Contract "is entirely persuasive" (p. 518) in predicting and explaining the Parents Involved (2007) decision.

Leonardo (2013) argues that the "Herrenvolk Education—one standard for Whites, another for students of color" (p.1) in schooling in the United States can be explained through Mills' use of the Racial Contract as methodology. Drawing on Mills' position that the Racial Contract is the dominant contract in the United States and that education is one of its main racial state apparatuses, Leonardo (2013) posits that the Racial Contract as methodology reveals the "Educational Racial Contract" (p. 7) by illuminating differing standards, curricula, and expectations for students: one standard for students of color/non-ideal and a different standard for White students/ideal. For example, the adultification of Black male students results in greater punishment in comparison to White male students who commit the same transgressions (p. 9.) Thus, as with Mills, the norming and racing of the individual, the "normed 'human' becomes a loaded signifier; so does the term 'student' become a racially valenced construction in education" (p. 9).

Leonardo asserts that RCT provides a methodology for revealing the real terms of an Educational Racial Contract, just as Mills' RCT reveals the real terms of the social contract, which, as Mills insists, is a racial contract. Leonardo (2013) concluded that when employing RCT as methodology, the elucidation of "the inner workings of racial domination in schools" (p. 7) is made possible, juxtaposing such notions as the human and the student and questioning "who can be saved. . . and who can be taught" (p. 11).

Mills demonstrated what happens when we think about the Enlightenment and its White supremacist underpinning. Through this process, the true nature of the social contract is revealed. He advanced the notion that the social contract is a racial contract that confers privileges on the signatories of the contract, and those are White people. In theorizing the social contract as a racial contract, understanding the episteme that creates and maintains skewed life chances for Black people is made evident. When the contract is, as Mills (1997) articulates, the "lingua franca of the West" (p. 10), it illuminates the tacit agreements made between the beneficiaries of the Racial Contract. These agreements are normal in systems where the privileging of whiteness is the default, as seen with the continued dominance of Western Classical music in music education (Hamilton, 2021; Hess, 2017) or the diminished presence of Black students in co-curricular music classes.

Beyond the Racial Contract

As a theory that undergirds systems of oppression experienced by non-White, non-male people, RCT provides conceptual guidance for this work. Even with this reality, it was insufficient for explaining the influence of my life experiences on the design of OPC's youth programs. I wondered what epistemologies and pedagogical dispositions could explain my decisions in creating the OPC youth program philosophy, curriculum, and pedagogical practices.

To better understand other concepts that informed what I did, I engaged in a "cycle of reflection" (Miller, 2008, p. 349), which included reviewing entries in my dissertation journal and free-writing exercises. This process of "writing as a method of inquiry" (Richardson, 1994) resulted in (re)membering my engagement with Black feminism and womanism during my coming of age as a young Black woman in her twenties. I cut my theoretical teeth on the works of bell hooks (1981), Audre Lorde (1978, 1982, 1984), Ntozake Shange (1976, 1982), Angela Davis (1981), Cherie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa (1981), Barbara Smith (1983), Alice Walker (1981), and the consciousness-raising activism of the Combahee River Collective (1977). Thus, the (re)membering process revealed Black feminist, womanist, and humanist dispositions foundational to my work as a music educator of Black children.

With this understanding, I turned to social, educational, and pedagogical theories that connect to theses four and five of RCT—the norming and racing of space and individuals—to guide and interpret my autoethnography and its influence on design decisions of the OPC youth program. Black feminist, womanist, and humanist theories that explain the humanist (Bartolome, 1994; Freire, 1970) and culturally sustaining (Paris, 2012) pedagogies of OPC's youth programs. Furthermore, they provide the conceptual bridge that connects the autoethnographic stories to the OPC youth program.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

Autoethnography with Case Study Methods

Stake (2010) suggests that "much qualitative research aims at understanding one thing well" (p. 27). This qualitative study seeks to understand and explain how the Oakland Public Conservatory of Music (OPC) youth program was designed and how it successfully recruited young African American musicians despite a culture and history of exclusion of Black students in music education. The overarching concern is how race and White supremacy informed the formation and design of OPC's youth programs. To address this overarching concern, I asked the following questions:

1. How have the lived experiences of OPC's founder influenced the creation of OPC and its youth programs?

2. What is the OPC Youth Program, and what concepts influenced the design of its curricular and pedagogical approach?

This study's overarching concern is understanding how my lived experiences influenced the development and design of OPC's youth program. By combining autoethnography with case study methods, I was able to investigate how my life experiences influenced the curricular and pedagogical design of the programs. Since I am the founder of the school, I employed autoethnography to explore my lived experiences, in and out of music, to reveal and deeply understand what inspired me to create OPC and its youth program.

The primary research method of this study is autoethnography; however, using case study elements was useful and appropriate for this project, particularly because case study encourages design that can capture a case's unique and complex characteristics by asking how and why (Stake, 1995). Case study combined with autoethnography allowed a robust platform and set of options to investigate my life experiences alongside the available data sources in the OPC

archive. This utilization of multiple methods (Stake, 1995; Yazan, 2015) was well-suited for this study's inquiry into the influence of the Racial Contract in creating OPC's youth program and curriculum. Because case study allows the researcher to look closely at problems or issues, case study elements provide a broadened perspective beyond the autoethnographic data to examine the social conditions surrounding the creation of the youth programs. For example, by reviewing demographic studies and comparing their results with OPC's enrollment of Black students, which maintained a steady ninety percent between 2005 and 2014, it became apparent that though the community was plagued with a plethora of socio-economic challenges, OPC's Black student enrollment experienced minimal fluctuation. This reality forced the need for a deeper investigation to understand that particular phenomenon. Utilizing mixed methods led to a deeper understanding of the intersecting elements that coalesced and informed how (case study) and why (autoethnography) the youth programs and the curriculum were created. Autoethnography and case study illuminated the struggles, coping mechanisms, and successes (Stake, 1995) in the program's formation.

The breadth and flexibility made possible through case study allowed for the creation of a type of "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) needed to advance understanding of the complexity and significance of the social, cultural, and political issues involved in the formation of OPC. Thick description, as introduced to the social sciences by Clifford Geertz (1973), occurs through an exhaustive analysis of visual and literary texts to reveal the deepest layers of significance related to the phenomenon under study. Geertz borrowed the term from the philosopher Gilbert Ryle, who distinguished between "thick description" and "thin description." Whereas "thin" description describes physical manifestations of behavior, "thick description" seeks to understand the cause of the behavior, the deeper structure, and the underlying semantics. Thus,

the research approach of this dissertation is "an elaborate venture in 'thick description'" (p. 6) accomplished through a case study infused with critical autoethnographic elements.

Autoethnography

Autoethnography is the study of culture through the self (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011). Thus, the "self is a subject to investigate and a lens to look through to understand a societal culture" (Duckart, 2005, as quoted in Chang, 2008, p. 49). By utilizing autoethnographic methods, I framed my story in the context of a bigger story, the story of music education in a racialized system of education (Chang, 2008), to use my subjectivity to gain insight into an understanding of the broader socio-cultural context. In this manner, autoethnography has been emancipatory, as it has allowed me to examine cultural phenomena from a perspective rooted in my lived experiences.

Using autoethnographic methods, I reflected on my life experiences to frame this creation story through a reflexive process engendered by autoethnography. This process resulted in increased familiarity with the underlying factors operating in the background of my psyche and led to a deeper understanding of the challenges, struggles, coping mechanisms, and successes (Stake, p. 16) that occurred before, during, and after the creation of OPC's youth programs. In this dissertation, autoethnography has allowed for the simultaneous accounting of the formation of the Oakland Public Conservatory of Music (OPC) while also capturing my intersectional subjectivity in relation to the broader cultural milieu within which the OPC exists. This intends to illuminate "the nuanced complexities of how race is played out" in the personal and institutional (Miller, 2008, p. 349).

The primary autoethnographic methods I employed were critical storying, personal narratives, and vignettes, which I conceptualize as taproots that store critical information that

aided in understanding why I was compelled and inspired to create OPC. Through the autoethnographic narration of my life, I documented how my lived experiences are critically foundational to creating and developing the school's ethos, philosophical disposition, curriculum pedagogical impetus, faculty, staffing, and board structure. Through the research and analytical process, autoethnography emerged as fundamentally more critical to the study's design than I anticipated it would be in this dissertation. That realization inspired a methodological shift in the design and prompted the decision to focus more on autoethnographic design and to utilize case study methods to research OPC's archival records on student attendance, local and state demographic reports, and other qualitative research methods described in the next section.

Data Collection and Analysis

This study is bounded (Cresswell, 1998) by August 2005 through August 1, 2014. These dates encompass the school's opening through the day we arrived and found a 30-day notice to vacate. The development and design of the OPC youth program is thus contextualized (Merriam, 1998) from its beginning to the first major interruption of ongoing instruction after displacement due to rapid gentrification. I conducted an inductive and deductive analysis of the data to gain insight into how OPC's youth programs function, to understand how my lived experiences influenced the pedagogical and curricular design decisions and to understand the influence of the Racial Contract in the creation and design of the programs.

Data sources and collection process.

Data sources for this study included autoethnographic stories (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011, semi-structured interviews (Creswell, 1998) with OPC stakeholders, vignettes (Stake, 1995), archival documents (Hartman, 1997; Siddle-Walker 2000, 2018), audio-visual recordings, and photographs, social media posts, written and audio/visual artifacts from the school's and my

personal archives, personal communications. To understand the ethnic and demographic composition and changes of the program's student enrollment over time, I created a list of city, state, and national databases to access information on Oakland's socio-economic, cultural, educational, and political landscape. (See Appendix A for a detailed list of databases and all artifacts collected and examined.)

Autoethnography data collection process and analysis.

To understand how my lived experiences influenced my decisions in designing the programs, I gathered all my available personal handwritten and digital journals and began reading them. As I read, I did a variation of "emotion coding" (Saldana, 2009). In other words, during the first few readings, I documented feelings and emotions that emerged by writing single words that described the feelings. Through daily free-writing exercises, gleanings and epiphanies emerged, including memories as a student, performer, educator, and institution-builder. I entered this data into my research journal and disaggregated it into six experiential categories: 1) family background, 2) music education experiences, 3) education K-12 through graduate school, 4) African diasporic experiences, and 5) Musical Career.

Because of the inductive process employed through the critical storying framework, analysis was ongoing throughout the writing of the autoethnography. I periodically returned to my research questions and wrote memos on thoughts and ideas that surfaced about the relationships between the questions and the stories. Through an exhaustive iterative process of reading and writing, holes in the stories emerged. By rereading the memos, the connective tissue needed to fill the holes emerged. I incorporated the data into the stories, resulting in smooth, robust storylines that rendered "evocative thick descriptions" (Ellis, et. al., 2011) of my personal experiences, which facilitated broader understanding of the cultural experiences that sculpted

who I became. Overall, the iterative nature of this process was fundamental in assisting with determining the stories that were paradigmatic of my identity and subjectivity, and those that held critical "issue-relevant meaning" (Cresswell, 1998, p. 154) and significance for the study.

Having gathered and completed over a dozen stories that spanned three and a half decades of my life, I created a timeline to chronologically order them. The result was the flow of a storyline that began with my earliest childhood memory and ended with my junior year in college. I spent much time thinking and taking notes to decide the format for presenting the stories. I grappled with whether to present each story separately followed by an analysis. I decided against the back and forth of story and analysis and chose to present them chronologically as they occurred through the years. This choice allowed an overarching perspective of my life experiences that spanned nearly four decades from preschool age through my late thirties.

Next, I sought to understand which stories were most relevant to the study and research questions. Since music education is the main area of investigation in this dissertation, I decided to choose stories based on three criteria: 1) stories that were critical defining moments of my music education experiences, 2) those that were paradigmatic of my psychological, social, cultural, and spiritual development, and 3) stories that directly shaped the curricular and pedagogical design decisions. I noticed three recurring themes that consistently appeared throughout the autoethnographic data, 1) invisibility, 2) trauma, and 3) hope. Interestingly, I noticed that with the invisibility and trauma-producing experiences, experiences that engendered a sense of hope occurred afterward. They were like antidotal remedies to the dehumanizing trauma. After several readings of the final design of the autoethnography, I began to understand the relationship of these recurring thematic patterns (Stake, 1995) to the pedagogical design

decisions I made in the creation OPC's youth programs. I concluded that experiences of the invisibility, trauma, and hope were fundamentally influential taproots from which I subconsciously drew in the design decisions of the OPC youth program curriculum and pedagogy.

Analysis of case study methods.

I began data analysis of the case study methods by reviewing my entire data corpus and wrote down "jottings" (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw, 1995, as quoted in Creswell, 2007, p. 138) to capture initial thoughts, and perceptions. After an initial review, I focused on Oakland's demographic and socio-economic trends from 2000 through 2014. Those sources included data from the State of California Department of Education databases and the Oakland Unified School District website.

After accessing and reading the demographic data provided in the studies, I sat with it and asked what these data sources revealed about African Americans' sociocultural, educational, and economic conditions that might impact participation in OPC's youth programs. I returned to my research question: How has the Racial Contract informed the formation and development of OPC's youth programs? With this question as a guide, I looked at the race categories in the lists and wrote analytic memos that captured my thoughts about what I saw across the data (Saldana, 2009) specific to the Black student enrollment at OPC. The demographic shifts I had been noticing in Oakland, specifically the decreasing numbers of Black students in the Oakland public schools, was not commensurate with their numbers at OPC, which averaged 90% from 2005 through 2014,

Returning to the research questions, I (re)membered my initial decision to focus on recruiting and enrolling African American students. To acquire an understanding of Black

student enrollment, I started with student records. It became apparent that there were gaps in the availability of year to year student records. I turned to visual documentation of flyers and a large collection of photos and videos stored in social media platforms, my personal archives, and the OPC photo archives on the office computer. I was able to access images of student performances that occurred over seven years. A survey of OPC program photos from 2007 to 2014 revealed a striking difference between the demographic shifts of students in Oakland public schools and the majority enrollment of African American students at OPC. Though this finding demonstrated success with our intentional focus on recruiting African American students, I wondered what else could account for our ability to maintain a majority enrollment of Black students when their population in the city and the schools was declining yearly. To address this question, I employed autoethnography to examine key moments in my life.

Autoethnography, and the Path to OPC

The autoethnographic critical stories in this study provide fundamental data that reveal how my life experiences influenced crucial decisions in the formation of OPC's youth programs. They contribute to an understanding of why it matters that OPC exists. I reiterate the critical story from Chapter 1 as a vehicle to explore how norming the individual is partially achieved by spacing it through a process that brands the individual with contrived characteristics of normatively constructed space. Mills (1997) writes, "You are what you are in part because you originate from a certain kind of space, and that space has those properties in part because it is inhabited by creatures like yourself" (p.42). This story is followed by an accounting of an experience that exemplifies a transcendence from the normative construction of the black body rendered through adherence to the Racial Contract.

It was the lesson before the final jury of my junior year. I walked into the studio, looking

forward to being finished with him. I had decided to take the course of study

track that allowed students to transfer from performance degree programs to a general

BA in Music degree. I was tired of struggling with this man whom I fought tooth and nail

to get him to teach me what he knew. After all, he was the one with the Doctor of Musical

Arts in Trombone Performance. I entered the room, and he was there, seated behind his

desk. He looked up and began to speak. "I remember your audition three years ago. I

saw this skinny little Black kid from the inner city trying to play Bach. I thought, well, I

guess there's a trombone player in there somewhere." Then he confessed. "I realize now

that I didn't teach you what I should have taught you. You are probably the only student

in my studio who is a true musician."

This vignette describes an experience that resulted in the premature end of my course of

study at a mainstream conservatory of music. It illustrates the dehumanization that Black

students are subject to when navigating music education geographies in predominantly White

schools of music. The story illuminates how I was normed and raced by my trombone studio

professor, who saw me as a "skinny little Black kid from the inner city" and an assumption that I

did not know how to play Bach. This skewed vision distorted his ability to see me and my

potential, rendering me invisible. From his normative perception, a kid from the inner city could

not play Bach as he or his white students could. So why bother trying?

The following vignette is a counternarrative that offers a glimpse into what happens when

the presence of a Black body in the confines of the private teaching studio is not raced and

normed to the extent that it clouds and skews the cognizer's recognition of the student's

humanity. In other words, the story exemplifies a humanizing intervention that assisted in

dissolving trauma that had haunted me for more than a decade. These two critical stories are defining moments fundamental to decisions made in the pedagogical design of OPC's youth programs.

A common trope during my undergraduate years was that jazz players could not play in the "legit" style; legit was another word for classical music. I had been working on a Borgdoni "Vocalisse" transcribed for trombone. My interpretation was off. The Prof asked me to stop for a second. He asked, "What's one of your favorite jazz ballads that you like to play?" "Ellington's In a Sentimental Mood," I said. "," he said, "Play the first A section." Just as I was finishing the turnaround, he said: "Okay, oKAY! Now," pointing to the Borgdoni, "play this like you just played that." It was magical. He exclaimed, "That's it! There's no difference. They are both ballads. It's all music. It's not about anything else. A ballad is a ballad."

The two encounters above are paradigmatic of how the norming and racing of the individual in a private teaching studio occurs and how humanizing pedagogies (Freire, 1970) can address and heal the lingering pain of trauma or stave off anticipated expectations of repeated trauma. By employing theses four and five, the Racial Contract norms (and races) space and the Racial Contract norms (and races) the individual, it is possible to see normalizing epistemologies in action. "I saw this skinny little Black kid from the inner city trying to play Bach." Mills underscores, "You are what you are in part because you originate from a certain kind of space." Therefore, you can't play classical music correctly because you are a jazz musician, which interferes with your ability to correctly interpret the rhythmic style of classical music.

The first experience impacted me so profoundly that I decided to opt for a different course of study that resulted in completing my degree sooner than the original course of study I had chosen, a BA in Trombone Performance with a minor in Music Education. While this

decision meant a quicker exit from an inhospitable environment in which I felt invisible, unsupported, and unwelcomed, it also meant that I would not experience the growth and development I would have gained through preparing for a Senior recital and jury.

The second experience was a humanizing antidote to the trauma I had carried for over a decade. It seeded hope and initiated a healing process that enabled me to discard feelings of inadequacy and hopelessness. The humanizing pedagogical approach of my graduate school trombone professor allowed him to see me and connect with my well-established and developed musical voice. Through this process, I successfully interpreted and performed the Borgdoni vocalise, achieving the intended purpose of improving musicianship through mastering the etudes. By asking me to play my favorite jazz ballad, my professor chose a culturally relevant approach with the goal of helping me recognize the universal characteristics of a ballad, regardless of the genre and after I successfully performed the etude, he said, "A ballad is a ballad!"

McKittrick (2006) argues that diasporic geographies are inoculated with racist paradigms that created and have maintained hierarchies of power over time. Hartman suggests that "[B]lack lives are still imperiled and devalued by racial calculus . . . entrenched centuries ago. This is the afterlife of slavery—skewed life chances" that result in impoverishment. Mills' (1997) theory of the Racial Contract divulges the epistemological underpinnings of these geographies that have summarily allowed for constructing and maintaining the ongoing momentum of the racial calculus that generates practices that displace black students from ecologies of thrival.

Autoethnographic vignettes offer insight into what happens when teachers practice humanizing pedagogies that support the psycho-social-cultural-spiritual-creative development of Black students in traditional music learning spaces, such as private studios in mainstream

conservatories. They illustrate how Black students can be at risk of dehumanization and invisibility, both of which can effectively foreclose the possibility of fulfilling their dreams. Conversely, vignettes reveal that by acknowledging the student's humanity, humanizing pedagogy can supplant trauma and give rise to a greater sense of self-efficacy, hope, and achievement for Black students.

CHAPTER FIVE: AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

Part One: My Autoethnography

Gnatola ma no kpon sia, eyenabe adelan to kpo mi sena.
Until the lion has his or her own storyteller, the hunter will always have the best part of the
story. Ewe-mina Proverb (Benin, Ghana, and Togo)

I think about the life I live, a figure made of clay, and think about the things I've lost, the
things I gave away. (Lincoln, 1981)

I became convinced that in order to hold carefully the stories of [others]. . .I had to tell
carefully some of the stories of my own experience. (Baker, 2001, p. 406).

What I leave behind has a life of its own. I've said this about poetry; I've said it about
children. Well, in a sense, I'm saying it about the very artifact of who I have been.
Audre Lorde (1978)

Dillard (2008) draws attention to the idea that research is embedded in "the act of memory" (p. 89), suggesting that in this manner, doing memory translates as (re)membering, to "recall, think and think of again" (p. 89). The autoethnographic stories that I have (re)membered begin the exposition of the core data of this study and are presented to reveal concepts that influenced the design decision in the creation of the youth programs at the Oakland Public Conservatory of Music.

This section of autoethnographic stories is a tapestry of vignettes. They are artifacts of my life. With care and much trepidation, I have woven these revelations into a narrative that offers insight into the development of my worldview and relationships with others (Chang, 2008) as a Black girl child, woman trombonist, music educator, and institution-builder. The stories offer a lens through which to understand the epistemological substrate for decisions I made to create safe spaces for Black children where they are seen, cared for, and can discover life and

themselves through music, unencumbered by the stress caused by familial pressures, adultification (Cooke & Halberstadt, 2021), misafropedia (Ziyad, 2021), misogynoir (Bailey, 2018, and the ever-present White gaze (Morrison, 2019).

To introduce this autoethnography, Hartman's (2008) assertion about autobiography bears reiteration to clarify my methodological choice of autoethnography. The following "is not a personal story that folds onto itself; it is not about navel-gazing; it is really about trying to look at the historical and social process and [my] own formation as a window into social and historical processes, as an example of them" (p. 5).

Starting with my earliest memory, each story is a stepping stone that illuminates critical defining moments that shaped my epistemology and understanding of what Black children need to flourish. These memories have been ever-present companions throughout my life. I have wondered, "Why these memories?" Through writing this autoethnography, I have understood their relevance as critical arbiters in sculpting my epistemology as a Black educator of Black children. In contemplating Abbey Lincoln's lyric, which alludes to the malleability of life, I consider the same, inclusive of the innocence of Black children and the protections, systems, and supports they need to flourish in a society that does not see them, all too often, as human.

"If they would just look and see what this is doing to me, maybe they would stop."

My father was in the Air Force and was home on leave. He had come home bearing gifts from one of the South Pacific Island airbases where he was stationed. Among the gifts was a bag of pennies he had saved for me in a royal blue Seagram's Seven felt bag. For my mother, he brought a matching pair of ceramic tiki-style lamps. The body of the lamp was reminiscent of a Polynesian warrior mask. I had never seen anything like it. Those lamps were enthralling, and for the brief period they were with us, I spent extended periods sitting and staring at them,

touching them, watching my little fingers be swallowed up by the deep grooves that formed the wrinkles on the forehead, the cheeks, the lips, and the nostrils of this otherworldly creature.

One night I was awakened by the sound of my parents arguing. I got up and went down to see what was going on. I sat on the steps and peered through the railing. My mother's anger was intense. She reached for the lamps and threw them at my father at some point. "No! Not the lamp!" I cried out. "Please stop!" Then shortly after, the other went flying. "No! Please, no!" They did not hear me. I remember thinking, "If they could only look over here and see what this is doing to me, then maybe they would stop." I sat peering through the square wooden posts of the staircase handrail, tears pouring down my cheeks from my four-year-old eyes, waiting for a glance in my direction that never came.

First Lessons: Red Roses for a Blue Lady

I was born into a family of musicians. My grandfather was a stride pianist. His daughter, my mother, was a jazz vocal stylist (though her dream of becoming a classical pianist was never realized, an experience of living through dreams deferred that I would inherit), and my father was a jazz pianist. My parents worked full-time jobs and performed professionally. Of my eight aunts and uncles, three were musicians. Of my five siblings, three became professional musicians. I am the only member of my extended family with undergraduate and graduate degrees in music from mainstream conservatories. I began performing professionally at nineteen years old.

My music education began at an early age. The time spent as a small child with my piano-playing grandfather was monumental to my perception of myself as a performer. Most importantly, it was a time that I embodied an experience of absolute joy generated by the loving attention I received from my grandfather.

In a similar sentiment to Robert Fulghum's (1986) popular text, "All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten," all that I needed to know about performing music, I learned from my grandfather. While my mother worked at the Army Hometown News Center, cranking out stories about service members stationed at U.S. military bases across the globe, I had the blessed fortune of spending summers with my grandparents. Each day my grandfather would come home from work, take a bath, change his clothes, dressing as if he was going to a casual gig. He wore freshly ironed and starched khakis and a shirt. He garnished his outfit with a bolo, a pair of white silk socks, and a newly polished pair of black Florsheim wingtips. While he was dressing, I sat patiently waiting for him in my grandma's rocker in the family room, where a stately mahogany upright piano with a matching swivel seat awaited. Soon the room would be animated with melodies of popular songs from the twenties through the forties. As granddaddy made his way to the family room, I scooted to the rocker's edge, holding it steady so as not to tip over. Feet firmly planted on the floor, I waited anxiously for the invitation to join him at the piano. He entered, strolled to the piano, spun the stool's seat, raised it to his desired height, and sat down. After he warmed his hands and fingers and the room with a few scales and arpeggios, the music began. In the style of his contemporary, James P. Johnson,[5] he rolled out early 20th-century popular favorites like "Red Roses for a Blue Lady," "Blue Moon," "Moon River," and show tunes from the twenties, thirties, and forties. At any given moment, he'd say in a singing style, "C'mon Angie. Let's go!" and I'd hurry across the floor to stand next to him as he played, in impeccable stride style, an introduction to a medley of tunes I sang as he accompanied; "Red Roses for a Blue Lady," "Blue Moon," "Moon River." Taking a deep breath in the way I saw my mother do when singing with my uncle's big band, I threw my head back and began to sing, "I

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[5] James P. Johnson (1894-1955) is considered by many to be the Father of Stride Piano.

want some reeeeed roses for a bluuuuue lady," then "Moooon River, wider than a mile, I'm

crossing you in style some daaaay," then "Blue moooon, you saw me standing alone. . .".

The weekly sessions with my grandfather were part of a daily schedule of activities,

beginning with my grandmother, who worked in the home. By the time my grandfather came

home, I had spent time playing alone and helping my grandmother with chores, pulling weeds

from the flower garden, hanging clothes on the clothesline outside, and flipping through the

Montgomery Ward and Sears catalogs, dressing and undressing McCall's paper dolls, or

napping while grandma watched her stories.[6] The days were peaceful. I was safe, happy, loved,

and nurtured. The time with my grandfather was the cherry on top.

First Formal Lessons

At age 6, I began my first formal music education, piano, at the Kansas City

Conservatory of Music. I had a Saturday lesson that was 30 minutes long. Too many times, I

arrived up to 15 minutes late. After having such fun with my grandfather, I looked forward to

learning piano and one day accompanying myself. Not long after starting the lessons, the teacher

commented on my tardiness. "There's no reason for you to come if you can't be on time." I felt

shame, as if it was my fault. Walking through the halls of that place, I felt as if I was in a land of

White giants as I approached the teacher's studio, aware I was late. I didn't get into the lessons

because of my incessant tardiness. Eventually, I stopped going.

"Get Outta That Swing, Nigger!"

On July 2, 1964, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the most comprehensive civil rights

legislation since Reconstruction, was signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson. The day it

was signed, I was most likely doing my favorite activity, riding my bicycle from one corner of our

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[6] My grandmother referred to the daily soap operas as the "stories."

block to the next, back and forth between Fiorelli's Grocery Store at one end and Brooks' Candy Store at the other. Feeling as free as the hot, humid air that whistled past my ears, I rode as fast as my little brown legs could pedal on that hot, 93 degrees summer day, oblivious of the significance of the new legislation. I was safe and protected in a segregated world that shielded me from the horror and trauma of racism. But that would soon change.

The following year, my father, an airman in the United States Air Force, was transferred to Honolulu, Hawaii. My mother, three brothers, and I joined him. We arrived on my birthday, and after arriving at our new home, we unpacked just enough to find our bathing suits, towels, flippers, and goggles and made a beeline to Waikiki Beach to celebrate. The sight of Diamond Head and the warm waters of the clear blue Pacific Ocean are forever etched in my mind. I felt like the luckiest kid in the world. Then school started.

My brothers attended the local public high school in our neighborhood. I attended Holy Family Catholic School on Pearl Harbor Naval Base. I was one of three Black student: two girls, and one boy. We girls were both in the 4th grade but were in different rooms. Each day during recess, I spent the whole time at the swings, swinging and reciting a children's poem I memorized the previous year in 3rd grade, "The Swing" by Robert Louis Stevenson. With every pump and kick of my legs, I was transported to my hometown school in Kansas City, where I felt safe, loved, cared for, and seen.

Interstitial Refuge

"The Swing," by Robert Louis Stevenson
How do you like to go up in a swing,
  Up in the air so blue?
Oh, I do think it the pleasantest thing
  Ever a child can do!
Up in the air and over the wall,
  Till I can see so wide,
Rivers and trees and cattle and all

Over the countryside—

Till I look down on the garden green,
  Down on the roof so brown—
Up in the air I go flying again,
Up in the air and down!

One day on my imaginary journey home, the trip was interrupted. After reaching the highest point, as I descended, I saw a boy standing in the direct path of the swing. His arms akimbo, he yelled, "Get out of that swing, nigger!" Then he stuck both of his arms out just as I reached the ground. He gave a sharp, abrupt push, and my body was thrust backward and out of the swing. After hitting the ground, I lay on the asphalt, my elbows bleeding from breaking the fall to keep from hitting my head on the asphalt. Startled and blinded by the bright white light of the sun, I slowly opened my eyes to find a circle of White faces, children and one adult, the playground monitor, peering down at me. There were no offers to help me get up, nor was I asked if I was okay. One by one, they walked away. I sat up and rubbed the pebbles from my elbows while the boy that pushed me began to swing until the bell rang, signaling the end of recess. We returned to our classrooms. The incident was never reported. I told my parents and was told that I had to develop a thick skin because those types of incidents were part of being a Negro.

Fourth grade was the most challenging year of my K-12 schooling. The swing incident showed me a part of my reality that I would have to accept as normal. The other Black girl and I became friends and often played together at recess. With that friendship and the swing, l managed to survive the most dreadful year of my K-12 schooling. Moreover, I got through 4th grade with that friendship and the swing. The school experience and my parents' deteriorating marriage left me with my bedroom and the neighborhood park as my two places of refuge until my mother asked my brother and me if we would like to take music lessons. She'd met a woman

who had a small music school with a roster of teachers who taught various instruments. She herself was the piano teacher. My brother and I both gave an enthusiastic "YES!"

With memories of times with my grandfather, I chose pian. Even though my first experience of piano lessons outside of the safety and care of home had been traumatic, the time with my grandfather outweighed the lingering sadness and confusion of my first lessons at the conservatory. My teacher was the owner and director of the school. I enjoyed her, and she me. The attention and focus during our time together and the smile on her face at the close of each lesson were like a balm for the mounting anxiety I was experiencing at school and home. She was gentle yet firm and patient. She saw me and my love for the piano, which in turn inspired me. After homework, dinner, and chores, I practiced for hours and on weekends. When we returned to the mainland, she encouraged my mother. "Make sure she keeps going. She's got it." Though I did not continue with piano, I began studying the trombone and drums in the 6th grade.

The Black Catholic schools in our city did not offer co-curricular music education. Nonetheless, choral and instrumental music was offered after school. It was in that program where I first played in an all-female trombone section in the 6th grade beginning band. We were two girls named Angela with the same initials—AMW, best friends, and the only students to select the trombone. Deciding which instrument to play was straightforward. Brass and woodwind instruments were displayed on a table. The teacher gave an overview of each and played a short song. After the demonstrations, he held up each one and said, "Okay, when you see the instrument you can imagine playing, come on up and give it a try. If you get a sound, that's the instrument for you!" Having been successful at producing a sound, the two Angelas became the bone section of our 6th-grade band. Much to our dissatisfaction, the program was discontinued and was never reinstated.

The summer before entering high school, I began studying drums at another after-school program, the Charlie Parker Academy of the Arts (CPAA), a community music school founded by my uncle. It all came together for me there. I began to think of myself as a musician. We were seen and taken seriously and were expected to meet the challenge of rigor and dedication to "The Music.[7]" With Charlie Parker's genius as a beacon, we had an ever-present reminder of what was required to excel and develop a unique musical voice. I began studying drums and piano and continued trombone. I blossomed as a musician. There was a crew of kids like me.

The Charlie Parker Academy of the Arts Youth Jazz Ensemble . (cerca 1973)
(L to R) Angela Wellman-drums; Sandy Walker-alto sax; James Mason-piano; Kevin Mahogany-baritone sax; Beatrice Gray-bass; Sonny Kenner-guitar/tradition-bearer & mentor

We all blossomed; spending hours practicing and hanging out at the center after school and on weekends. We proudly identified as musicians. The ensembles in which we performed represented the Academy at various events throughout the city. The rich mixture of the lineage of

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[7] "The Music." This framing speaks of the qualities of music that are culturally specific and all-encompassing of the cultural significance, embeddedness, and value of music as a vessel that holds and protects the truths of the people.

Kansas City jazz pioneers who were our teachers combined with the impromptu visits, private lessons, and concerts by internationally acclaimed jazz musicians such as Max Roach, Dizzy Gillespie, Count Basie, Dexter Gordon, Carmel Jones, Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis, and so many more, provided not only exposure to Black musical excellence and heritage, but equally important, an intergenerational family of culture-bearing jazz musicians.

Attending CPAA became more critical during my high school years. It was my place of refuge between the debilitating dysfunction of familial pressures at home and the all-girls Catholic college preparatory school I attended. The academic competition, compounded by the pressure to conform to the requirements of whiteness, was a new and stressful experience. Social protocols that spared no space for blackness were a daily struggle. For example, about two weeks into our first year, all the African American students in our class were summoned to the principal's office. She informed us that we needed to "mingle more with the other girls" because they were intimidated and afraid of us. She continued to explain that it was their first time being around Black people daily, and it would be easier for them if we would not sit together on the campus grounds during our free time. The consideration that we were having a similar experience, though not particularly afraid and intimidated by them, did not enter the conversation. We had lived in predominantly Black neighborhoods and attended all-Black schools through 8th grade. Though we, too, were navigating a new racial terrain for which we had no experience, we were expected to tend to the White girls' fears. Our parents, most likely theirs, also worked in integrated work environments. We had not attended integrated schools or had extracurricular activities with non-Black youth other than playing against them in intermural Catholic sports leagues. Most of the white people we encountered daily were nuns and priests at our schools and churches. Our high school was a safer space for White students

on every level. The school was in a neighborhood within walking distance or a short drive for most of them, and all the teachers were White except the Spanish teacher. It was clear that we were on our own to figure it out. All we had was each other.

Diasporic Connections

Agustín Romero-Diaz
(1947-2014)

Doris Salas y su Orquesta La Propia
(1981)

My first journey outside the United States took me to Venezuela, where I was one of two trombonists in a dance band, Doris Salas y su Orquesta La Propia. I studied Afro-Cuban drumming before going to Venezuela. My teacher, Agustín Romero-Diaz emigrated to my hometown, Kansas City, Missouri, in 1980. Under his tutelage, I developed a deep curiosity about the music created by Africans brought to this hemisphere through the Middle Passage. Studying with Agustín ignited my lifelong curiosity about the evolution of African music in the Americas.

Though it was billed as an all-female orchestra, "La primera orquesta feminina de latino america," there were four men and fifteen women. Doris Salas, the leader, was an Afro-Colombian woman from Barranquilla, Colombia. The other band members were from Colombia, Venezuela, and Cuba. There were two gringas from the United States. We were the trombone sectionUntil then, I had not performed with a predominantly all-female ensemble and only knew of one all-female orchestra, the Sweethearts of Rhythm.

Shortly after accepting the gig with La Propia, I began researching the music of Venezuela and learned about Barlovento, the Venezuelan port city where enslaved Africans from the region now known as the Republic of Congo disembarked from ships to work in the region's cacao plantations. The Congolese influence permeates Venezuela's various musical styles. After a visit to the Barlovento Cultural Center, I reflected on my Cuban percussion studies. I was particularly struck by the realization that the drums had not been outlawed as they had been in the United States, leaving the musical connection to Africa intact; the recognition of the connection was brought to light when the director of the center journeyed to the Congo and discovered the similarities between Congolese drumming and the drumming styles of Barlovento.

As I observed the intergenerational gatherings in homes, at various celebrations, in parks, or just hanging out on the streets, people dancing, singing, and performing on folkloric instruments throughout the whole country, I developed a profound understanding of and respect for the way music has been passed through the generations. I was awestruck at the children's musicality and the spirit that flowed through them as they sang in harmony while accompanying themselves on the Venezuelan cuatro and maracas. The year I lived in Venezuela and other encounters with music throughout my journeys to other places where Africans had been enslaved left me with a heightened awareness of the profound imprint of Africa on music in the Americas. Enslaved Africans and their descendants created new rituals, songs, dances, and rhythms that are revered and emulated globally.

I played for several hours every day in Venezuela. My chops were on fire. I felt confident and accomplished. I felt ready and prepared to delve into my heart's desire—to master and perform the classical trombone repertoire required for my senior recital the following year.

During my first lesson that year, I shared a list of my goals for the semester with my

studio professor, including repertoire from the school's required list for juniors. He said we were going to be working on jazz. I did not want to study jazz with him. I had been studying at Parker Academy with Kansas City Jazz pioneers. I wanted to build my classical chops. He told me he was the instructor and determined what I would do. I stressed that my focus was preparing for my senior recital and working on music aligned with the performance expectations for a third-year performance major. We struggled, and I was prepared to take it to the dean. He finally acquiesced in his decision and, at my next lesson, handed me the ensemble placement list.

I had been assigned the lead chair in a trombone quartet of freshmen. After attending several rehearsals, I told him I was planning to withdraw from the quartet. I explained that it was an improper placement for me. I asked why he gave me the lead seat. It was based on seniority. The other three students were freshmen. I expressed that I was not familiar enough with the repertoire to lead that ensemble and that I'd rather play the third chair in an ensemble with the third and fourth-year players who were my peers. I wanted to learn, and the only way to do that was to be challenged by being in an ensemble with more experienced trombonists. He refused to place me in a higher-level ensemble. I was deeply disappointed. I wondered how I would fulfill my dream of becoming a chamber and symphonic trombonist with him as my primary studio professor. I attended a few more rehearsals and felt I was not doing an adequate job as the lead player. As a result of this experience, in combination with the cultural incongruence between me, a 24-year-old Black woman, and three 18 year-old young White males from rural Missouri, I decided to withdraw from the ensemble.

That year felt like an uphill battle. I felt unfulfilled and dissatisfied. It was as if he was withholding information. I was unsure and doubted my experience and gut-level feelings. I arrived at the last lesson of the year and was looking forward to being finished. I had decided to

opt into a course of study that allowed students to transfer from a performance degree program

to a general BA in Music degree. I had grown weary of struggling with his unwillingness to

teach me what he knew. I entered the studio, and as I unpacked my trombone, he was seated

behind his desk and began speaking. "I remember your audition three years ago. I saw this

skinny little black kid from the inner city trying to play Bach. I thought, well, there's a trombone

player in there somewhere." Then he confessed. "I realize now that I didn't teach you what I

should have taught you. You are probably the only student in my studio who is a true musician."

This autoethnography is incomplete without discussing the influence of my uncle, Edward

"Eddie" Byron Baker, Sr., the founder of the Charlie Parker Memorial Foundation and

Academy of Arts. My understanding of the importance of building institutions that preserve

Black musical heritage through music education comes directly from him. I watched him carry

his dreams and plans around in an attaché case for years. He was never without that case. I was

a very young child, but I understood that he was engaged in something important. His passion

was palpable and infectious. When he wasn't composing and arranging music, rehearsing, or

gigging with his big band, he was in planning meetings, navigating governmental structures,

fundraising, and sharing his dreams for a center dedicated to the memory of Charles

Christopher Parker, aka Charlie "Bird" or "Yardbird" Parker. He knew Bird had not been

properly recognized in his hometown and was determined to make it right. His response was to

create the Charlie Parker Memorial Foundation (CPMF). He believed preserving Kansas City's

rich musical legacy would happen through free music education for the youth.

Grand Opening of the Charlie Parker Memorial Foundation & Academy of the Arts
(L to R) Carroll Jenkins-Board President, Count Basie, Dave Brubeck, Carmel Jones,
Max Roach, Eddie Baker

Our family encouraged and supported my uncle as he planned and plotted the creation of

an institution dedicated to preserving Kansas City's jazz culture and heritage. The Foundation

was dedicated to illuminating the life and contributions of a native son, Charlie "Bird" Parker,

one of the most influential jazz musicians of all time, and to fundraising for the Academy of the

Arts to ensure the preservation of jazz through access to music education.

A hallmark of the school was a faculty comprised of progenitors of the swing style of jazz

spawned in Kansas City. They were of the community and best suited to pass on the knowledge of

the music. Hiring them was a strategy intended to maintain and cultivate authenticity and

connection to the spirit of the music. The fundraising efforts of the CPMF enabled the opening of

the Charlie Parker Academy of the Arts. Support from many of the preeminent jazz legends of the

era underscored the importance and value of music education in the Black community and

communicated the necessity for a place that offered unencumbered access to music education

and the jazz tradition spawned in Kansas City, Missouri. I continued this tradition at OPC. As a

professional jazz trombonist, I have met and performed with a host of noted jazz artists, and, like

my uncle, I have been successful at garnering their support, OPC *encouragement, and presence.*

The rhythm section of the Count Basie Orchestra after a big band workshop (December 23, 2015).

PART 2

The Oakland Public Conservatory Of Music: An overview of its Origin and Work

The Oakland Public Conservatory of Music (OPC) is dedicated to illuminating the role of

the African American experience in the development of American musical culture and identity

within a praxis that is rigorous, innovative, and undergirded by philosophical and pedagogical

practices that engender *belonging, equity,* and *empathy.* The curriculum is intentionally imbued

with values that instill, cultivate, nurture, and sustain a sense of *home*[8] for students, many of

whom are required to spend a significant portion of their regular school day at the edge,

marginalized at curricular borderlands that are the result of decisions generated from policies that

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[8] "Home" as described by Robyn Boylorn (2016) "A place where we can be our full-bodied selves and not be under surveillance. Home is a place we create with our own hands and experience when nobody is looking" (p. 45). Home is where "we learn who we are and how to be who we are at home (p. 46). bell hooks (1990) writes, "Homeplace was the one site where one could freely confront the issue of humanization, where one could resist." Home, a place of self-affirmation and restoration of "the dignity denied us on the outside in the public world" (p.42, as quoted in Boylorn, 2016, p. 46).

waive arts classes for students[9] who score below grade level on English language arts and mathematics tests, requiring them to attend academic remediation classes (Baker, 2012). In this borderland/hinterland, they are programmed out of participation in arts education and held captive within a culture/structure that systematically subtracts resources to which they are entitled.

Today, the OPC is a highly successful, award-winning institution that has served hundreds of students from 2005 through the 2008 housing crisis, the Great Recession of 2008, and into the present-day wave of gentrification sweeping the globe. Students have received scholarships for undergraduate and graduate study, the results of which have ushered them into thriving careers as professional musicians.

Beginnings

In December 2005, the OPC's doors opened for the first time. I had always wanted to create a school but had not thought it would be a music school. However, when the opportunity presented itself, I ultimately could not resist. It all began when a woman contacted me in fall of 2004 about starting an after-school music program. After ignoring several of her emails, I finally responded, mainly to ask her to leave me alone and to say that I did not have time to start an afterschool music program. I had been there and done that. She persisted, "But I spoke with the people at Destiny Arts, and they told me, 'Oh, you want to make music with kids, you gotta talk to Angela Wellman about that.'" She told me about the high school in Oakland where she was teaching piano as a volunteer in their afterschool program and how shocked she was to learn that most students had not studied music. She wanted to do something to contribute to changing that

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[9] These students tend to be low income, second language learners and non-white (Government Accountaility Office, 2009).

reality. After reaching out to various youth arts programs in Oakland, she found her way to me. She had just completed a bachelor's degree in piano performance at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. She was ready to start an afterschool music program in Oakland, hoping to recruit the students she had worked with and reach other youth interested in music.

Our meeting was a serendipitous encounter. Little did we know that our lives had been inadvertently connected through our ancestors. Her great-grandfather had provided seed funding for the music school my uncle founded in the late 1960s in my hometown of Kansas City, Missouri, the Charlie Parker Foundation and Academy of the Arts, Missouri. This school became the inspiration for my teaching and learning pursuits and, ultimately, the OPC.

Following that first conversation, we agreed to continue dreaming together about how we could create opportunities for kids in Oakland to have access to music education during out-of-school time, like that we had as children. We spent hours imagining how such a program would look. At the outset, I suggested that we not let the lack of money interfere with our dreaming process and approach the design with a sky's-the-limit perspective. Setting this intention allowed us to dream freely and create a blue-sky budget encompassing everything from instruments to competitive wages for the teachers and administrators. A commitment to affordable tuition and scholarships was critical to ensuring access for everyone and so that no child would be turned away due to the inability to pay. After several sessions of designing the curriculum, imagining the schedule and who the faculty would be, who would be the program director, and what type of space would be needed, we ended up with a blue-sky budget of $500K for the first year.

After days of dreaming, I was ready to move on from this exercise. As we were ending our final conversation, I expressed my delight and appreciation for our dream time and the satisfaction I experienced sitting with another person who shared a similar belief that kids of

color deserved to have access to quality music education. As I was preparing to say goodbye, she said, "Wait, I have something to tell you!" "What?" I asked. "I have a family foundation, and we can get some seed funding to start." Until that moment, I enjoyed dreaming together, which was the extent of it. I did not think it would move in a direction with any actual possibility to come to fruition. Our meetings had been merely an exercise in exploring a lifelong dream to create a school. It was futile to believe that blue sky dreams, such as this one, could come true.

"Oh, a family foundation? What exactly are you saying?" I asked. "Well, I'm pretty sure we can get our blue-sky budget, but it would come in increments. We have monthly meetings where we discuss projects various family members want to do and are doing. I can present a proposal for our program at the next meeting." I was still in disbelief. "Well," I said hesitantly, "Ooo-kay. Let's go for it!" We wrote a complete proposal based on our blue-sky projections to be presented at the next family foundation meeting. Before the meeting, she repeated, "I have something else to tell you. Our projects are generally always accepted." She told me shortly after the meeting that the proposal had been accepted, and they would disburse the first $50K once we secured a fiscal sponsor to receive the donation while our application for 501(c)3 status was being processed.[10]

By the time we were ready to start looking for a place, a Board of Directors had been selected. It comprised the minimum officers required by law: a president, a secretary, and a treasurer. We had received enough funding to hire a six-person staff and offer a living wage with benefits. The staff consisted of three full-time positions—the Executive Director, Dean of Students/Director of Programs, Assistant Dean/Program Administrator—and three part-time

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[10] The application for tax exempt status in the state of California was submitted and approved in December 2004.

positions: the Registrar, Administrative Assistant, and Program Coordinator. In addition, five of the six staff also taught core classes in the youth program and weekly 8-week workshops in the adult program. All staff were female: two African Americans, one Latinx, and three European Americans. The founding Board of Directors comprised three White women and one African American.

Space is the Place

Having secured start-up funds, we immediately enlisted the services of a real estate broker to assist with the search for the perfect space that would accommodate the robust vision we had created. Location options were varied and plentiful. We were encouraged to acquire a building in a residential neighborhood, an unoccupied school building, a church, or other public facilities. The location of the space was an integral component of the sense of belonging that we sought to cultivate. It needed to be in a location where a sense of public space for all was common in the public imagination, rather than a neighborhood associated with a unique identity and ethos.[11] The decision to be housed in the civic center and central business district exploited OPC's intended public benefits and character. After several months of touring commercial spaces throughout the East Bay, we settled on a property in the heart of the central business district of Oakland, California. It was a 4,400-square-foot facility that would eventually accommodate four classes concurrently, a multipurpose hall used for ensemble rehearsals, large group meetings, play space, and a 140-seat performance space, administrative office, kitchen/café area, outdoor patio, and an instrument storage room.

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[11] The regions of Oakland are North Oakland, West Oakland, and East Oakland, each, with its own unique characteristics, socioeconomics, cultural and ethnic identities. To have chosen a location in one of these districts would have suggested that OPC was just for the inhabitants of that district.

What's in a Name?[12]

Then there was the question of the name of the school. At the heart of the creation of OPC are connections to West African ancestral epistemologies. One of the first places this can be witnessed is in the naming process of the school. Many questions were pondered. What should a music school that centers on the musical practices of people of color be named? What words would communicate the school's philosophical, social, and political standpoints? What name would embody and impart a message of accessibility, cultural relevance, affordability, and belonging? The name needed to communicate a counternarrative to the elitism, high cost of mainstream conservatories, and the privileging of European music over Indigenous American music. It also needed to embody an ethos that incited curiosity and provoked investigation. To answer these questions, I reflected on the multiple benefits and deficits of my experiences in the conservatories where I received my collegiate musical training. The most impactful benefits were rigor, striving for virtuosity in performance, small classes, well-equipped facilities, numerous concerts and workshops by visiting artists, exposure to world-class musicians, various scholarship programs, and a community of students who shared similar goals and aspirations.

Conversely, deficits included the majority White population of students, faculty, visiting musicians, the curriculum's Eurocanonic (Sarath, 2021) nature, and the cost of attendance. This reality provoked an experience of two-ness (Du bois, 1903). This DuBoisian double consciousness required constant negotiation between my sense of blackness and the constitutive whiteness of mainstream conservatories. How would the name of our project incite curiosity,

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[12] The Akan maxim 'his/her name befits his/her body' embodies the ancestral understanding of the importance of naming. Agyekum (2006) suggests that there is an "inherent element in the name that corresponds with the bearer's mental and social behavior" (p. 208). Zawawi (1993) further explains that "a name constructs a person because the name one bears may create an attitude in those who hear it before they meet the name bearer" (p. 6).

inquiry, and participation from people of color in Oakland? How could we not duplicate similar gatekeeping mechanisms that maintained a majority White student body, similar to the mainstream conservatories I attended?

After weeks of pondering the deficits and benefits of my conservatory training, I arrived at an understanding that the name had to communicate a sense of belonging for all people. While at a café one day, I wrote on a napkin, PRIVATE—PUBLIC, PUBLIC CONSERVATORY. I searched the internet for anything with "Public Conservatory" in its name. The closest I found was the Prazska Konzervator, a public music school in the Czech Republic founded in 1808 (Žídek , 1982). I was thrilled that there was no other institution known as a Public Conservatory. My decision to add the name of the city in which the first Public Conservatory would be launched was reflective of my vision to open others in locations where major genres of Black music were spawned. Thus, the chosen name became, "Oakland Public Conservatory of Music, a name that expressed the qualities and values of the project. "Public" invoked a sense of The People, all people. Juxtaposed with "private," it expelled the notion of being exclusive, elitist, and costly. "Conservatory" described a musical institution that valued rigor, scholarship, and excellence.

Being the first conservatory of music of its kind in Oakland, the notion of a conservatory of music was not in the public imagination. Most people I spoke to in passing or while explaining the meaning of "public conservatory" equated the word "conservatory" with the Conservatory of Flowers,[13] a botanical preserve across the bay in San Francisco, as opposed to the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. This revelation illuminated the critical work ahead,

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[13] "The Conservatory of Flowers is a national, state, and local landmark built in 1879...It is an internationally renowned icon at the entrance of world-renowned Golden Gate Park." It houses rare and unusual flowers from rain forests to desert ecosystems. (https://conservatoryofflowers.org/about-us/welcome/)

that of instilling the notion of a conservatory of music in the public imagination, a necessary

component of promoting OPC's existence.

Founding Design Team

Moving forward with the commitment that OPC must reflect the community's desires

and ideas for the first "Public Conservatory" in the United States, we organized a series of

"friendraisers" to raise awareness of the Public Conservatory project and to gather community

input on the types of music education and events they wanted to see at OPC. After a series of

weekly friendraisers, we organized a multi-ethnic, intergenerational design team of 17 critical

stakeholders comprised of music educators, community activists, musicians, people who

believed in accessible and affordable music education for people of color. The group committed

to meeting five hours every Saturday for six weeks in the late summer of 2005 to create the

Vision and Mission Statements and programming. Over breakfast and lunch, the group chiseled

out OPC's raison d'etre, covering the walls with thoughts, ideas, wishes, hopes, dreams, and

frustrations with the lack of community-oriented spaces dedicated to music teaching and learning

scribbled on yellow, neon green, and blue post-its on the walls. In breakout sessions, each group

tackled countless ideas and suggestions on design, funding, programming, and argued whether to

use the word "mission," as it evoked references to the genocide of First Nations people of

California.[14] At the end of the six weeks, the group settled on "Purpose" to explain the reason for

OPC's existence and Vision to express OPC's goals. An agreement was made to review and

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[14] On November 8, 2004, an article was published in the San Francisco Chronicle arguing in opposition to the California Mission Preservation Act that was sponsored by Senator Barbara Boxer of California. The bill provided $10 million toward the restoration of California's Roman Catholic missions. The author argued that the bill omitted "that locked within the missions is a terrible truth—that they were little more than concentration camps where California's Indians were beaten, whipped, maimed, burned, tortured and virtually exterminated by the friars"

revise the statements later to ensure that the school remained relevant and congruent with the

desires and needs of a changing, evolving community.

> Purpose
> OPC opens the world of music to all through access to quality, affordable instruction in a nurturing environment. We value rigor and scholarship in our quest to preserve the musical traditions of Oakland.
>
> Vision
> Oakland's diverse communities will make and hear music everywhere. Everyone experienceshealing, harmony, non-violence, and safe streets through learning and playing music together. Our music and educational process resonate with the aspirations of our communities and our native artists by reclaiming spirit and culture, illuminating ancestral authenticity.[15]

The Doors Open

On the first weekend of December 2005, the new OPC staff and faculty curated a festive

three-day Open House complete withmini-workshops that offered opportunities to sample

upcoming course. Each day concluded with evening concerts featuring the faculty We danced,

ate, and basked in the excitement of the existence of this new space created to center the teaching

and learning of the music of Oakland's diverse population. The inaugural year offerings included

a host of programs: Jazz Studies, Strings, Music Theory and Songwriting, Music Technology,

Afro-Cuban Rumba, Hip Hop and Spoken Word, Blues Piano and Guitar for youth ages 9

through 17. The Preparatory Studies in Music Program offered music fundamentals and

instrumental music classes after school and Saturday and the OPC Rockin' and Rollin'

Performing Arts Summer Camp. (See Appendix B for a catalog of the programs, associated

classes, and faculty.) From 2005 to 2014, the conservatory studios teemed with youth and adults

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[15] www.opcmusic.org/about. The Mission and Vision statements remain the same at the time of the writing of this dissertation, however, the commitment to articulate that OPC centers African American culture in the development of music in the Americas has emerged as a grounding analogic and is written on OPC's homepage.

taking classes and attending workshops, master classes, jam sessions, and concerts. During its first 9 years, OPC became a destination for music education, community gatherings, meetings, parties, and rehearsal spaces. As a result, it evolved into an institution demonstrating how music education spaces serve as hubs for gathering, animating, and enriching the whole community.

Though OPC was able to keep its doors open through turbulent economic shifts of the Great Recession of 2008 and the sub-prime mortgage crisis, the effects of the economic downturn on housing and employment in Oakland (Rose & Lin, 2015), began impacting OPC's ability to maintain tuition-paying adult students. Notably, for nearly 2 years, the student body was predominantly adults whose tuition significantly supported the overhead costs of maintaining the building. The decrease in adult student enrollment in 2007 forced the decision to consider a different business model centered on youth programming. The new model was designed to increase the onsite afterschool classes, offer daytime classes for homeschoolers, offer OPC services at local schools, and appeal to individual donors and foundations for greater support of the youth programs.

This section provided an overview of the creation of OPC. The next section presents the creation and evolution of the youth programs, with a focus on recruitment and retention of African American students.

The Development and Evolution of the OPC Youth Programs

Development, design, and expansion of OPC youth programs resulted from boots-on-the-ground, grassroots organizing and leveraging relationships of OPC's founders, faculty, and supporters. Because of OPC's location in the central business district, as well as its proximity to West Oakland, the historic "heart and . . . center of Black Oakland" (Summers, 2021) and the home of Black music in Oakland, we focused recruitment efforts in West Oakland for the initial

cohort of students. We utilized grassroots outreach strategies to connect with the students we sought to recruit for the first cohort. We spoke directly with students at informational assemblies at the West Oakland elementary and middle schools, where we planned to recruit most students. Other strategies included the distribution of flyers and posters at libraries, churches, cafes, laundromats, and community centers and talking with pedestrians throughout the city, particularly in front of OPC and in West Oakland. We attended PTA and school-site Parent Advisory Council meetings. We hosted informational sessions at OPC, set up information tables throughout the community, and presented at Oakland Unified School District monthly music teacher meetings. Broader media outreach included ads and articles in local print media such as the East Bay Express and the Oakland Tribune and radio interviews on KPFA, the local public radio station.

Leveraging Established Relationships

Critical to outreach activities was the ability to leverage established relationships in the community. Three relationships stand out as fundamental to the recruitment and retention of the first cohort of students: Kizmet Academy, a new middle school that was part of the McClymonds Educational Complex in West Oakland, the Oakland School of the Arts (OSA), which offered a classroom for Saturday classes, and the Marcus A. Foster Education Institute, an Oakland-based organization that supports projects and organizations that focus on achieving systemic equity in education. The institute assisted by supporting the facilitation of student applications for scholarships.

The First Cohort: A Perfect Storm

We sought to recruit low-income students of color who were under-represented and under-recruited in pre-conservatory training programs. Achieving this goal required accessing

established relationships in the school system and broader community. One such relationship proved to be a perfect storm. The principal of Kizmet Academy Middle School was familiar with my work as an artist-in-residence in the early 1990s at the Cole Performing and Visual Arts School in West Oakland. Also, OPC and Kizmet were both embarking on new and innovative ideas. Together, we were poised and ready to act outside of the box to create access to music education for underserved Black students of West Oakland.

In the months leading up to the first semester in January of 2006, the founders met with the principal of Kizmet Academy to discuss a collaborative partnership for their incoming 6th grade class. As a new school, Kizmet earmarked most curricular resources toward improving academic outcomes. The only co-curricular arts education class offered was visual art. When OPC reached out to discuss a music education partnership, the principal whole-heartedly supported OPC's vision, about which she exclaimed, "Finally, [an] opportunity to begin to erase some of the inequities that confront our young people by participating in this excellent music preparatory program." (Personal conversation with Lynn Hains Dodd, principal, September, 2005.) The first cohort of 19 students was composed of 12 African American students from Kizmet Academy (the number recruited that would fit in the van) and seven students from other parts of Oakland, five African American and two Mexican Americans. Approximately 65% of students were girls. These students attended twice weekly for 2 hours after school at OPC's main campus. Transportation was provided for Kizmet students. They were picked up at the school, and if parents were unable to pick them up from OPC at the end of each session, students were taken to the school or the West Oakland branch of the Boys and Girls Club of Oakland, where many of them spent afterschool time during the week.

Saturday classes were launched concurrently with the afterschool program in January 2006. The students who enrolled were from various parts of Oakland and neighboring cities. The race and ethnicity of students in Saturday classes represented the ethnic and socio-economic diversity of the Oakland youth population. Though the African American student population in Oakland declined by approximately 13% from 2005 to 2013, they comprised the majority of OPC students from 2006 through July 2014. (See Appendix C for Demographic Profile Oakland Public Schools 2005–2014).

For its first 8 years, OPC maintained a majority enrollment of Black students through extreme macro-level challenges such as gentrification, displacement, high-stakes testing practices, and the housing crisis. Notably, Oakland was experiencing exponential development and gentrification that resulted in housing insecurity and the displacement of Black families who had lived in Oakland since The Great Migration. Throughout these tumultuous, destabilizing circumstances, the student body remained predominantly Black.

Whether in attendance at private schools or public schools in Oakland or surrounding districts, music education was minimal to non-existent for most OPC students. OPC provided an affirming, equitable, culturally sustaining (Paris & Alim, 2017) experience in a place where students and parents were core participants in leadership and decision-making. These attributes, in concert with robust culturally resonant music education, can be ascribed to the ethos of OPC that centers cultural resonance and belonging in its curricular and pedagogical practices.

The challenges of the inaugural semester revealed infrastructural gaps that were not anticipated. Naively, the focus was on meeting desired benchmarks to be prepared for future funding and not enough on understanding students' interests and other needs. For example, the available instruments were violins, which were enough to distribute to every student. In the end,

most of the first cohort expressed that they were not interested in the violin.

It became clear that serving youth from historically marginalized communities required an administrative infrastructure that could support students more broadly. Infrequent attendance by Kismet students resulted from lack of transportation, which confirmed the results of extant studies about barriers to attendance in after-school programs by underserved youth in urban areas. Transportation to an off-campus afterschool activity is one of the main barriers to participation in afterschool programs by youth in low-income urban communities (Sanderson & Richards, 2010; Pelcher & Rajan, 2016). Providing transportation was critical to OPC's ability to meet its enrollment objective of enrolling middle school students from the predominantly African American community of West Oakland.

Transportation, healthy snacks, full scholarships, instruments, and access to caring adults were not enough to support the Kismet students. The biggest challenge was accessing parents and other primary caregivers. With a faculty doing double duty teaching and performing various program administration duties, following up with families required a dedicated community liaison whose main role was cultivating and maintaining communication with the student's families. To mitigate this challenge, board members and other volunteers supported administrative needs, including communication with families.

Though the goal of enrolling African American students was accomplished, several challenges contributed to an unanticipated level of attrition. As the semester progressed, attendance of the Kismet Academy students gradually and steadily decreased. Though every student was provided with an instrument, many parents would not allow it to be checked out for practice at home, citing reasons like a place to practice, too much noise, and concern about their student taking care of the instrument. Attempts to find other locations for students to practice at

their daytime school site or the Boys and Girls Club were unsuccessful. Reasons for non-attendance included competing circumstances such as caring for younger siblings after school, responsibilities at home, loss of interest, learning to play the instrument was "too hard," a pending move to a different neighborhood, and students preferred to "hang out" with friends after school. The following semester most of the Kismet Academy students did not return.

Although the impact of displacement was devastating, the ethos that had been cultivated informed the constantly changing curricular and pedagogical needs. As a trusted and honored model for teaching and learning music, the ethos and philosophy provided a ballast of support and refuge while the community navigated the deleterious effects of job and housing insecurity, displacement, and gentrification.

The partnerships and collaborations with public schools and other community-based organizations allowed OPC to leverage resources that ensured access to the robust, rigorous music education opportunities available at OPC, resulting in flourishing lives in music as professional musicians and educators, as mentioned in the introduction of this study.

The Curriculum

During the years this study encompasses, there were three main youth programs at OPC: Preparatory Studies in Music Program (Prep Program), an afterschool offering four days a week and Saturday, and a 6-week summer program. For teens who aspired to become professional musicians, the Frederick Douglass Youth Ensemble (FDYE) provided pre-professional training focused on developing advanced performance, leadership, and entrepreneurial skills.

Three overarching objectives drove the curricular and pedagogical design:

1. Develop musicianship, creativity, and critical literacy,

2. Cultivate a greater sense of self-efficacy, and

3. Foster a sense of belonging.

The objectives were achieved through a combination of rote and experiential learning. Classes focused on the fundamentals of music, developing and advancing technical proficiency on an instrument, and becoming well-versed in the language of music to facilitate participation in critical conversations about music. Classes included music fundamentals, theory, wind and string instruction taught in homogeneous groupings, jazz band, and a revolving assortment of African diasporic ensembles, including Zimbabwean marimbas, steel pan, South African gumboot, and Afro-Caribbean drumming. The overarching goal was to provide culturally resonant music education for elementary through high school students of color who were underrepresented in mainstream conservatory youth programs.

A critical feature of the teaching philosophy is that students must be seen, as discussed earlier and explained as the incorporation of the Shona greeting, Sawubona! The arrangement of chairs along the circumference of the circle is critical to fulfilling this primary objective. Seeing the students is meant literally and figuratively. In a circle, as opposed to the more traditional classroom design of rows, the view of each body is not obstructed by other bodies. Each one is in full view and faces the center of the circle, a figurative enactment in the spirit of Sawubona! I see you! I recognize your dignity! I honor your humanity!

Preparatory Studies in Music

The Prep Program happened after school and on Saturdays during the school year. Classes ran Monday through Thursday from 3:00 to 6:00 pm. Each student attended 2 days a week. The student/teacher ratio was 10:1, with approximately 30 different students in attendance. Instruments were provided as needed. During the first hour, students did homework. Classes began at 4:00, starting with the gathering circle. The curriculum included group and private

instruction, ensemble training, musicianship, and master classes with visiting artists. Students were exposed to various musical styles that reflected Oakland's culturally diverse communities. The program also included academic tutoring, college readiness support, and career mentorship. When not attending Prep Program classes, students were encouraged to utilize the OPC space as much as they desired. It became a gathering place for them. They practiced, rehearsed with their bands, held weekly youth jazz jam sessions, did homework, or hung out with friends after school. Some received a stipend for doing light administrative tasks, answering phones, or providing other assistance around the school. These activities evolved into the Teen Music Mentors and incorporated assisting in classes, tutoring, and mentoring younger students.

The Summer Music Academy

The Summer Music Academy (SMA), originally called Rockin' and Rollin' Performing Arts Camp,[16] was the main vehicle for developing and designing OPC's youth program curriculum. Though not planned as such, from its inception, the summer program was essentially a design laboratory. The overall curriculum and pedagogical praxis evolved through a cycle of experimentation, observation, evaluation, and implementation. Overall, the breadth of the curricular activities offered opportunities for the students to explore various musical styles, visual and theater arts, tai chi, yoga, and organized sports.

The SMA was an intensive six-week all-day summer camp divided into three two-week sessions. The comprehensive curriculum was designed to allow students to delve deeply into their curiosity about musical instruments and styles. Students explored the music and dance of the African Diaspora, which included Zimbabwean marimbas, Afro-Peruvian Cajon, Trinidadian

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[16] The Rockin' and Rollin' Performing Arts Camp was a summer camp I started 3 years before the opening of OPC. When OPC opened, it was included in the OPC course catalog.

steel pans, Puerto Rican bomba, Afro-Cuban drumming, Brazilian samba, Ghanaian drumming and dance, Oakland blues, plantation melodies of the southern United States, jazz, and the ancient voice of Africa in the banjo. They danced Lindy Hop, Zimbabwean Gum Boot, Hip Hop, went on field trips such as ice skating at the Oakland Ice Center and biking around Lake Merritt to the historic landmark ice cream shop, Fenton's Creamery, for lunch before returning to OPC in time for the closing circle.

To cultivate an awareness of higher education and a sense of commitment to study, connection to learning, and ownership of a self-determined path, students chose a major and a minor. The main difference between a major and a minor was the opportunity to take their major instrument home with the expectation of practicing at least fifteen minutes daily during the week and thirty minutes on the weekend. Students without a dedicated space to practice at home were encouraged to practice during free time, take a shorter lunchtime recess, stay for after-care at the end of the day, or go to OPC on one of the open studios days.

To maintain continuity and familiarity for the students, the daily arrival and dismissal were the same as the academic school year. Students arrived as early as 8 am. Classes began at 9 o'clock and ended at 4 o'clock. Because of the focus on developing substantive relationships, half-day enrollment was generally not offered nor encouraged. In this way, the time to delve into the daily interactions and activities was facilitated organically, allowing flexibility as the students' desires and needs emerged. In some instances, special accommodations were made for youth who could not handle a full day.

By the end of the 6-week summer session, three performances were produced. At the closing of each 2-week session, families and the public were invited to the Presentation of Learning. Students played an integral role in the design of the productions. In collaboration with

the teachers who served as facilitators and motivators, students performed and managed the lion's share of the production activities, including emceeing, writing and designing the program notes in collaboration with the teachers, sound engineering, lighting, stage management, and acting as greeters and ushers.

Over the course of 9 years, the students produced and performed 27 performances, including three musical theater productions in which they performed, designed and built the sets, and made the costumes. The productions were *Sundiata: The Lion King of Mali*, *Horton Hears a Who*, and a musical revue entitled *Being Green*, a student-driven performance from ideation to creation. *Being Green* was designed to bring parents and grandparents into the experience of familiar music through Motown hits of the 1960s and 70s. The students designed the production, wrote the lyrics, and performed the music. They chose some of their parents' favorite Motown hits and rewrote lyrics with an environmental awareness focus. An example is the Jackson Five's "ABC."

> Original lyric of the chorus:
> A B C, easy as 1 2 3, as simple as Do re mi,
> A B C, 1 2 3, Baby you and me girl
>
> Student's version:
> A B C, easy as 1 2 3, as simple as Do re mi,
> A B C, 1 2 3, That's how easy being green can be.

Extramusical Benefits: Belonging, Cultural Identity, Life Skills

In personal communications, focus groups, and social media posts, comments by parents and students revealed the extra-musical benefits of participation in OPC's youth programs. The following themes emerged: cultural identity, sense of belonging, accepting students where they were, and students feeling celebrated.

Parents shared their thoughts and experiences of OPC in social media posts:

OPC has been more than a family to my son. As he has shared many times, OPC has been a safe space for him to find belonging during very difficult times. OPC continues to be an exciting, fun, and challenging environment where discipline and creativity truly intersect. At OPC, my son feels celebrated. Thank you for that! (Facebook post-May 19, 2019). My daughter couldn't attend her full session in the summer due to family issues, but Angela, the staff, and the children were truly phenomenal: authentic community/extended family energy, effective holistic learning (permaculture included body movement, music, gardening at Lake Merritt), multicultural and intergenerational. I will absolutely support to my maximum ability whenever I can. (Facebook post, Dec. 6, 2014.)

While (re)membering and collecting data, I happened to see a parent whose daughter spent five consecutive summers at OPC. With the data gathering fresh on my mind, I decided to do a member check and talked with him about his daughter's time at the SMA. I said, "Once I overheard you talking to another parent about what you heard and experienced while waiting for your daughter as the closing circle was wrapping up. Do you remember what you said to them?" He responded with clarity in a definitive, firm voice, "I sure do! I said OPC was teaching not only music but how to navigate through life as a person of color." I went on. "She lived out of state with her mother and visited you every summer, and every summer for 5 years, she spent 6 weeks at OPC. Why? I mean, Oakland has lots of fun and exciting summer activities for kids." "Well," he said, "let me put it this way. I had heard about you before I met you. You stood out before I met you." I asked him to explain what he meant. "Say more about that."

Well, in terms of your dedication to music education, that's what led me to bring my daughter there and to help out around there because of what you were doing for our kids. But what really got my attention was the day I came to pick her up, and y'all were in the closing circle. I was waiting with some other parents up in the front, and I heard you talking about integrity, and then you asked the kids to talk about where they saw examples of integrity that day. I thought, "Wow! this is about more than music. They are teaching life skills, how to be a decent person, teaching our kids how to be out in the world." That did it for me. I knew she was in the right place.

He continued:

And another thing, you know my daughter lived in another state with her mother during the school year, right? Yeah, she went to school with mostly White kids. I wanted her to get some culture during the summer when she was with me. OPC was mostly Black, and

that's what I wanted for her. She needed to be with other Black children, and she got that at OPC.

In another passing conversation with a parent, I asked why their family returned to OPC year after year:

> Connection to the culture. They could relate to the curriculum because they saw themselves. That wasn't happening in other programs my kids had been to. . . Being able to connect with other Black people from the Diaspora. That was unusual. Nobody was doing that. The sense of community. The sense of belonging to something; and the Circle, girl, they did not want to be late for that Circle. And don't let me be runnin' just a little late in the morning. My girls would be like, "Mama, let's go! We gon' be late for Circle!"

One day after the closing Circle, in my peripheral vision, I noticed the grandmother of an older student walking toward me. Her energy was very directed. I sensed that the conversation that was about to ensue was not just small talk. I was concerned. My heart raced. She waited until I finished talking with another parent, then asked straight-faced and with no smile, "What have you done to my grandson?" Taken aback and concerned, I inhaled and, on the exhale, asked, "Um, is there something wrong? What happened?" A smile stretched across her face as she spoke. "No, no, no, don't worry! NOTHING is wrong! "It's just that I haven't seen him so happy and smiling so much in a long time. Whatever you're doing, keep on! Keep it up!"

One parent said they were in a traffic jam about a block away, and it was clear they would likely not arrive before the Circle started.[17] Her son jumped out of the car and ran one block to be on time. She arrived shortly thereafter to deliver his backpack and the lunch he left behind. The Circle had begun. A seat was placed in the Circle for her to join. Afterward, she told me about her son choosing to go by foot so he would not miss the beginning of Circle and said, "Now I understand why. Thank you."

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[17] It was stressed that the day's activities started promptly at 9:00 o'clock, regardless of how many were present, and it was optimal to arrive before the start time.

Disconfirming Evidence

There are a few examples of disconfirming evidence. A student who self-identified as a White girl enrolled in a 2-week summer session. She was reticent to engage. Her reason for not continuing was attributed to me. She felt that I did not make it a welcoming space for her. She left after one week, even as I was working to create not just a space for Black children specifically, but for all children in general.

Another example is related to a parent who would not allow her daughter to continue during the after-school Prep Program. The student's grandmother advocated for her participation, enrolled the student, and brought her to class every week. The grandmother shared with me her daughter's dissatisfaction with the program. She said the program was not "good enough" for the child. The grandmother told me she believed that if more White students were in the program, "it would be a different story." The family I am referring to is African American.

These examples demonstrate how the program was not for every child. With the White student, I argue that her experience exemplified what happens when the White gaze is not centered, and habits of whiteness are not the driving force. The student felt uncomfortable and out of place and had difficulty engaging fully with other students. There was a White boy similar in age. She chose to spend the majority of her time with him. On the other hand, he could participate fully in the program activities. With the Black family, the mother's perception of the program was class-based. Her perception about Black space as not "good enough" for her daughter demonstrates the depth of the internalization of the Racial Contract by Black people and the degree to which they also norm and race space.

Throughout this chapter, the reader has encountered numerous references to "the Circle." The next section discusses the OPC Circle, how it evolved into the principal space of ritual,

refuge, and a nexus linking the curricular and pedagogical activities with nurturing and caring for the psycho-social-spiritual aspects the students' humanity. The section opens with a critical story that describes the creation of the Circle, how it evolved as a core practice in the teaching and learning environment of OPC's youth program, and why.

From Zimbabwe to Oakland: The Evolution of the OPC Circle

A Shona daré circle   OPC Summer Music Academy

During my tenure as the Education Director at the Oakland Youth Chorus (OYC), I created the Music of Our World (MOOW) program, which focused on the music of the African Diaspora. Zimbabwean music was one of four classes offered. The teacher of that class shared with me that he had been studying with the renowned Chigamba family from Zimbabwe for over a decade. He explained that they are respected tradition bearers of Zimbabwean musical and spiritual practices and trace their lineage as musicians and dancers back seven generations. He said that one of the daughters would soon be in the Bay Area and wanted to introduce us. We discussed the possibility of coordinating a workshop for her, which we did. Meeting her was a defining moment and was critically influential in the development of OPC's youth program curriculum.

The MOOW program was part of the afterschool program at Cole Performing and Visual Arts Magnet School in West Oakland. By the time Julia arrived, there weren't many options to

schedule a workshop, as it was the last week of the school year. It was a long shot, but we decided to do the workshop on the last day of school. To our surprise, the students participated at a greater level than we anticipated. Interestingly, a workshop that spawned the development of a critical ritual in OPC's curriculum derailed a yearly last-day-of-school ritual in which students would commit petty acts of vandalizing teachers' cars.

Julia later shared that she had been visiting and teaching in the United States for a decade but never taught Black kids. She had only taught White people. Appalled and outraged by this discovery, I said, "Well, now you have, and hopefully, it won't be the last." On that day, I vowed to create a pathway for Julia to share ancient musical practices of her people with the Black community of Oakland. I conveyed the success of the Cole School workshop and Julia's story to the OYC leadership and suggested we sponsor a P3 visa[18] for her to return and join us. The following year, we welcomed her as an artist-in-residence in the Music of Our World program. She taught a dance class at Martin Luther King, Jr, the elementary school blocks from Cole, the school at which she taught her first all-Black class in the United States.

One day at a faculty meeting, Julia shared an epiphany. She was teaching a harvest dance that featured the tswanda (basket), in which the crop was stored and balanced on the heads of the women as they walked home or to the market. As she and the students sat in the closing circle reflecting on the class, one of the students asked, "Where's our basket? Why don't we have a basket?" The student appeared distraught and confused. Julia told her, "You have a basket now. I brought you these from home." The expression of bringing the students a basket from "home"

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[18] A P-3 visa allows individuals or groups entry into the United States to present a unique or traditional ethnic, folk, cultural, musical, theatrical, or artistic performance that is not commonly experienced by U. S. citizens. Artists must be coming to the United States to participate in cultural events that further the understanding or development of their art form. For more information on P-3 visa see U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/temporary-workers/p-3-artist-or-entertainer-coming-to-be-part-of-a-culturally-unique-program

was transformational for them and Julia. She went on to say that though the students were still quite active and "kids will be kids, you know, but now they are more THERE. Prrresent!" Tears welled in her eyes and flowed down her cheeks. "That basket; it means something!"

During the faculty meetings, each teacher was asked to share something about their praxis, teaching philosophy, or a specific lesson on how they teach the elements of music. Julia often chose to talk about her Zimbabwean musical and communal practices. One such practice was the daré. In Shona society, the *daré* is a governing committee that advises on the concerns of the community members, offers advice, supports decision-making, and holds the community accountable to community agreements. This manner of supporting community members inspired me.

I began to wonder how the daré could be utilized to create a sense of belonging and safety for the students in my summer program, the Rockin' and Rollin' Performing Arts Camp. I was particularly interested in learning new ways to expose students to the African Diaspora by providing immersive experiences incorporating music, dance, culture, and language. I asked Julia to work with me to design a Zimbabwean music and culture curriculum incorporating the daré. I imagined the daré as the space where the spirit of the curriculum could be animated, activated, and renewed daily. We designed a curriculum that immersed everyone in the Shona culture. I wanted the Shona language to be learned organically and functionally. We learned and practiced standard greetings and other functionally useful phrases. For example, at the end of the dáre, the facilitator announced, "*Nguva yekudzitza*!" ("It's time for learning!"), and the day of *kudzitza* (learning) began. Everyone was encouraged to practice the language as much as possible. For example, when passing one another in the hallway or if a student was walking alone, the question asked was, "*Urikuenda kupi*?" ("Where are you going?"), to which the

response was, "*Ndiri kuenda guitar*." ("I am going to guitar.") At the end of the day, students were invited to discuss or demonstrate something they learned during the closing daré. As such, the day began and ended in the daré with rituals to honor a day of teaching and learning music together.

Through the years, the activities evolved as we understood the role of the dáre in the community. As it evolved into an integral component of the pedagogy and eventually the main grounding activity of the curriculum, the use of the Shona word, dáre was replaced with "The Circle," a more linguistically relevant change since English was the primary language of the students and metaphorical meaning was more easily comprehended.

Teaching and learning at OPC began and ended in The Circle. We said hello and goodbye, and honored and acknowledged one another's humanity, creativity, and vulnerability through daily reflection on the OPC principles. The reflective activity was a ritualized practice that cultivated authenticity in our interactions by practicing the OPC guiding principles of Compassion, Creativity, Fun, Integrity, Love, Perseverance, Reciprocity, and Respect. In this way, Circle time evolved into a ritual that students embraced wholeheartedly, exemplified by the following critical story that shows students' wholehearted embrace of the Circle as a sacred space. They showed agency by insisting that the ritual be honored and practiced. The story shows how the Circle was a place of refuge and underscores the students' understanding of its purpose.

One day I arrived after Circle time. A group of junior counselors greeted me. "Miss Wellman. We need to talk with you?" I said, "Sure! What's up?" They asked that we go into my office to talk. They were trying to cloak their distress. One of the most outspoken students expressed their concerns. "We don't want to sound disrespectful or anything like that, but the

teachers are not doing The Circle. Well, it's really the new teachers that aren't doing the Circle.
We tried to talk with them about it and that we HAVE to do The Circle and can't end it early. We
have to do the whole thing. And they said, "We don't have time for that. It takes too long." The
students said they talked with the teachers and decided to talk with me because they didn't want
to appear disrespectful by insisting on having the full Circle time. They asked if I would please
talk to the teachers because they weren't listening. Then the leader said, "They don't really
understand how we do things around here. Our Circle is the most important thing we do. We
have to have it every day in the morning and before we go home."

A day in the life of The Circle.

As a pedagogical method, the Circle centers on the students' humanity. It is designed
with activities that ensure ample time and space for all voices to be heard and respected. A
critical feature of the teaching philosophy is that students must be seen, in the spirit of the Shona
greeting, *Sawubona*! The arrangement of chairs along the circumference of the circle is critical to
fulfill this primary objective. Seeing the students is meant literally and figuratively. In a circle, as
opposed to the more traditional classroom design of rows, the view of each body is not
obstructed by other bodies. Each one is in full view and faces the center of the circle. This

section offers an example of the Circle in practice and explains how the spirit of Sawubona is incorporated in the pedagogy of the Circle

Recorded or live music could be heard each day as everyone entered the building. The music was representative of the curricular focus for the session. Entering through an opening created by a removed chair, students select their seats and have free time to play or practice until the sound of a gong or singing bowl signals that it is time to begin the day.

Once all are seated, the Circle is closed by returning the missing chair, and the first activity begins. The choice is often the student's favorite icebreaker game, "The Great Wind Blows." A chair is removed, and a person who is "it" stands in the middle of the circle and calls out, "The Great Wind Blows for anyone who has eyeballs!" All for whom the statement is true move to another chair, and the caller runs to a seat, leaving one person standing. That person becomes the caller. After a few rounds, when it is observed that students are seated next to someone with whom they do not normally interact, much to the students' dismay, the game ends, and check-ins begin.

The morning check-in activity is designed to assess students' emotional barometer. This critical activity informs pedagogical processes for the day. A prompt question is, for example, "If you were a fruit, what would you be, and why?" Everyone is encouraged to remember one another's responses and take them into account in their interactions with one another throughout the day. For example, if a student was feeling like a lemon, they would say something like, "I would be a lemon because they are sour, and I'm feeling sour right now." This is considered, and all are encouraged to consider the student's responses as they interacted during the rest of the day. The goal in this exercise was the cultivation of empathy and compassion. Next, the principle

of the day is introduced, defined, and discussed in relationship to music making. Finally, the day's schedule is reviewed, and another day of musical interactions begins.

Works in progress.

As the day begins in the Circle, it ends in the Circle. The last thirty minutes of each day is dedicated to student presentations of the day's lessons; Works in Progress (WIP) is a time for students to show what they learned through verbal description or demonstration. WIP is two-fold. First, it gives students time to reflect on what they learned individually and collaboratively. Second, the notion of humans as works in progress is introduced, inviting students to see one another as works in progress and to understand their musical growth and development as a process.

Teachers often experience cognitive dissonance with WIP during the first days of a session. They asked, "How is it possible when we've only been together one day?" I explained that the idea is not to perform but to focus on the scaffolding process. For example, before playing a note on a brass instrument, the student must understand where the sound comes from and how to produce the sound. During works in progress on the first day, the student explains, "Well, today I learned how to make a sound on my trumpet." The student is asked to demonstrate if they feel comfortable; otherwise, they may describe it verbally. The next day, that student says, "I was able to vibrate my lips and get a sound." They are asked to demonstrate. The next day, the student says they learned that fast-moving air creates high notes and slow-moving air makes low notes. The student then attempts to demonstrate a high note with fast vibration and a low note with slow vibration on the mouthpiece. The next day, the student learns about lip slurs and how to slur from G down to C, which may or may not be successful. The focus is on understanding what is required to produce low and high pitches, rather than producing the notes.

WIP allows the students to focus on their personal growth and development and to reflect on what is needed to play music with others. To aid with helping students reflect on their personal contribution as music makers, the principle of the day is referenced and discussed in relationship to music making. Students are asked to think about the principle and how it relates to learning music with others.. As students demonstrate the learning process daily, they become more patient with themselves and others as they witness the challenges of learning and performing music. Teachers had an opportunity to reflect and gain new insights on their pedagogical practices and praxis.

The final closing ritual begins after WIP. It consists of two parts: 1) students reflect on the day and share a word that describes their experience of the day, and 2) they express an appreciation for someone and say why. The person appreciated receives this expression, and the experience of Sawubona/being seen is magnified. For example, a student's mother confided in me about her daughter's experience of feeling self-conscious and having low self-esteem about the weight she had gained, among a host of anxieties triggered by other adolescent woes. She told her mother that the appreciation given to her by a fellow student during closing Circle lifted her spirits and "made her feel really good about herself." A student drummer talked about how he saw her struggling with a challenging section of the music she was learning. He shared how he appreciated that "even though she was having a hard time, she stayed with it and didn't give up, and I appreciate that a lot."

(Re)membering the origin of the OPC Circle.

Through a gradual embrace and understanding of the time spent in the daré, I noticed how the space dedicated to beginning and ending each day was gradually morphing into a safe harbor for the students. Though a gamut of emotions was expressed and encouraged in the daré,

students relied on it as a safe place for working through challenges and difficult conversations. These experiences corroborated what Julia shared about the purpose of the daré in Shona culture. From the first daré-based curriculum, the seeds of the OPC Circle germinated, and by the time OPC had its first summer program 5 years later, the daré had evolved into The Circle with a clear design and purpose.

The Circle was not an intentional choice. It was the result of an emergent process. As the practice of the daré deepened, an understanding of what was happening in that space evolved. I began to reflect on what I noticed in spaces where Black youth gathered. I was struck by a phenomenon I witnessed in practically every space. They were circled up, rapping, rhyming off the dome, and dancing. During this (re)membering process, I thought of Congo Square in New Orleans, a place enslaved people gathered on Sunday to get down, to play, sing, drum, worship and connect with their cultures and one another. I felt that the young people I saw in the ciphers were channeling ancestral practices and ways of being together. I began to understand that the daré was connected to something we already knew, an ancestral connection and *remembrance*. The soulful experience it evoked was connected to a memory of a collective past we shared, which struck me as important and necessary. I resolved to keep the daré as the core element of the curriculum. The day of music teaching and learning would always begin and end with the daré. Through the evolution from daré, we had borne witness to and wholly embraced a transformative cultural practice. By connecting its ancestral juju with the transformational experiences of students, teachers, parents, and myself, I understood the value and knew that Circle was the right thing to do and keep doing.

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study are the product of 2 years of autoethnographic reflection through critical stories that examined my life as a Black child, musician, music education pedagogue, and institution builder. Additionally, they are the product of the employment of case study methods that investigated the creation of the Oakland Public Conservatory of Music youth programs. Two questions guided my study:

1. How have the lived experiences of OPC's founder influenced the design of its youth programs?

2. What is the OPC youth program, and what concepts influenced its formation and development?

I sought to understand how a thriving music program that recruits and retains African American students functions and thrives despite neoliberal education reforms and gentrification. As discussed in Chapter 2, since Brown v. Board (1954), limited studies exist that examine options for access to out-of-school music education for Black students. Of those, few investigate music education as a core component in African American students' intellectual, personal, cultural, spiritual, and social growth and development.

Using a methodological design that employed autoethnography with case study methods, I understood how my life experiences informed the design decisions of OPC's youth programs. Case study methods revealed the disparities Black students experienced in Oakland and how music education was not prioritized for them. A conceptual framework comprised of Racial Contract Theory, culturally sustaining and humanist pedagogies, and informed by Black feminist epistemology revealed attributes that engender self-efficacy and belonging for Black students at OPC: 1) seeing Black children, 2) refuge, 3) ritual, and 4) cultural congruence.

Seeing Black Children

A throughline that connects the autoethnographic critical stories is that of invisibility. The stories illuminated the experiences of invisibility throughout my life. Having experienced the debilitating outcomes of not being seen as a child is a core influence in the design decisions of OPC's youth programs, decisions driven by an ethos grounded in seeing and acknowledging Black children's humanity. Invisibility connects what might otherwise appear to be a disparate string of stories without connection. Through (re)membering (Dillard, 2008) these moments, I accessed an empathic place that highlights a feature of autoethnography that allows the ethnographer to gain an understanding of self and connection with others (Chang, 2008).

There is a theory of juxtapositioning inherent in my life experiences of trauma to antidotes that rendered love and joy. This juxtaposition connects the autoethnography to the design decisions of OPC's youth program. Seeing the relationship between trauma I experienced as a child and trauma that Black students experience helped me see what I am working to remedy through the design of OPC's youth program. The autoethnographic stories allowed me to see the debilitating outcomes of not being seen as a child. The juxtaposition of not being seen with witnessing the disregard for Black students' humanity in Oakland school culture is directly related to decisions about OPC's curricular and pedagogical designs. Awareness of how I was traumatized by the denial of my humanity is directly related to the design of curricular and pedagogical activities that allowed OPC students to be seen emotionally, creatively, and spiritually and to have a break from the dehumanizing experiences of daytime schooling.

The pedagogy of the Circle is the primary pedagogical vehicle for cultivation of the four attributes. The activities are bound to the critical understanding that Black children must be seen and given time to speak and express themselves fully. The activities of the Circle are designed to

allow space and time for being seen and heard and offer insight into what is needed for Black students to identify with learning and being learners and guardians of the spaces where they experience well-being and belonging.

Refuge: The In-Between Space

Safety and refuge are only sometimes found at home (Jenkins, 2021; Williams et al.2008). The critical stories about students not wanting to be late for the Circle demonstrate students' experience of the Circle as a refuge. The spatial and pedagogical designs of the Circle imbued a sense of refuge through the tight design of the chairs and the activities designed to augment student voices, allowing them to speak about music, support each other, and express personal concerns as needed and desired.

The Circle is a place of refuge between home and school that provides buttressing against the attitudes that pathologize and dehumanize Black youth. The humanist pedagogical practices of the curriculum drive the insistence on valuing the students' sense of themselves and each other, instilling and cultivating empathy and self-efficacy through activities like Works-in-Progress and appreciation time. These activities assist students with seeing each other. An example of this is found in the story of the parent who shared a transformational experience her daughter had in response to an appreciation from a fellow student.

Love (2016) argues that Black children experience "spiritual deaths" (p. 3) due to "systemic, race-centered violence on Black children in schools" (p. 2). To illustrate how the attribute of refuge is inherent in the curriculum, I came to understand the youth program as an "in-between space" where the students experienced healing and safety. In-between-space articulates the Circle as a place of refuge existing in the interstices between home, school, and social spaces where youth experience stress and trauma. It allows Black children to flourish,

unantagonized by anti-blackness and the panoptic debilitating "spirit murdering" (p. 2) White gaze that maintains practices that steer Black students away from safe, nurturing spaces. In-between space is a location where students experience being human on their terms in a space absent of circumstances and conditions that interfere with their right to thrive and flourish. OPC students expressed frustration when the Circle was interrupted or prevented from occurring. They felt unseen and unheard when explaining to the teachers that no parts of the Circle's activities could be sacrificed. Their expressed agency and demand that the Circle and its purpose be honored and fully practiced every day was demonstrated through communicating their consternation with teachers needing to implement the Circle activities properly. These interventions by students are evidence that when students experience pedagogical activities designed to prioritize seeing and hearing them, they will show up to advocate for themselves and ensure that systems supporting their well-being are not disrupted or abandoned. In this manner, the Circle can be understood as a place of refuge and "a homeplace . . . to heal and become whole" (hooks, 1990, p. 42). Its existence responds to Love's (2016) question, "Where does the soul go when school is a place of trauma?" At OPC, it goes to the Circle.

Ritual

Rituals provide order, structure, a sense of direction, purpose, and respite. They contribute to developing a sense of belonging. The core activities of the Circle were designed to provide an experience of continuity and ease for the students, much like the calm and peace I experienced as a young child steeped in the rituals of the Catholic mass. Ritual, as related to the Circle, is not simply the notion of routine; instead, it is a set of activities designed to be a buttress that renders support and care for students.

The autoethnographic narratives in this dissertation are critical moments of my life that have been foundational in developing my identity as a music educator of Black children. Through a process of (re)membering (Dillard, 2008), I journeyed into a space that illuminated the importance of the times with my grandfather, the first person to recognize not only my musical abilities but my connection to music. The regularity and structure of our time together were of particular significance.

The influence of ritual emerged as another element from my childhood that influenced the design decisions of OPC's youth programs. The (re)membering of this story revealed the value and importance of ritual in a child's life. Significant aspects of my childhood were bound by rituals that fostered a sense of identity and belonging. For example, my grandparents bore nine children, who bore approximately 70 children. We were devout, practicing Catholics who went to mass every Sunday. Most of us attended all the Black Catholic schools spread throughout the diocese of Kansas City, Missouri.[19] The ritual of attending mass, antiphonal singing of Gregorian chant during the Latin high mass, call and response prayers, standing, sitting, and kneeling in unison with others instilled a sense of oneness and belonging. Unlike my home culture, I was a part of something predictable and chaos free.

Cultural Congruence

Du Bois (1935) issued a clarion call signifying that separate schools where Black students were respected and treated like humans would be necessary as long as the "problem of the color line exists (p. 328). The norming and racing of space and individuals demonstrates

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[19] Kansas City had one of the largest populations of Black Catholics in the Midwest into the 1970s. Desegregation is implicated in the closing of the majority of the Black Catholic Schools. As White flight created available housing, Black families moved into neighborhoods with predominantly White Catholic parishes, and the schools were all White.

how White supremacy has been maintained through the years and effectively infringes on opportunities to thrive. The details of the Racial Contract, when mapped onto the autoethnographic critical stories, assisted in seeing how trauma occurs with Black students in hostile educational spaces. From a place of empathy and love for my young self and the current and future OPC students, I made design decisions that stemmed from the isolation I experienced in the music learning environments where I was a student. I designed curricula with pedagogical methods that value and nurture Black students. Overall, the design tackles feelings of isolation and cultivates belonging through culturally congruent dispositions.

Du Bois (1935) further asserted that Black students need teachers who understand their culture, language, history, and memories (p. 328, 333). Though Du Bois' assertions relate to his times, his prophetic pronouncements ring true today. It highlights the continuing need for culturally sustaining schooling congruent with Black students lived experiences in the afterlife of slavery plagued with the persistence of white supremacy and the Racial Contract, which, as discussed earlier, result in misafropedia and adultification. These dispositions foreclose on opportunities for Black students to thrive.

OPC's success at recruiting and retaining a majority Black student population over its first 9 years can be attributed to practices congruent with students' culture and reinforced through culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012). The OPC Circle is a space with a unique social contract imbued with culturally congruent principles, which all agree to abide by, practice, and commit to, holding themselves and each other accountable.

Reflexivity

Through (re)membering these practices, it became evident how and why I developed some of my values that have informed the design decisions of OPC's youth programs. For

example, mass was an in-between space with practices that called one to be self-reflective. Practicing the sacrament of penance was a time to reflect on my actions, my inner being, interactions with others, my connection to a god/spirit/soul, and what it all meant in my life and how I interacted with others.

This story illuminates another aspect of how my life experiences influenced the design of OPC's youth program. Notwithstanding my choice to discontinue practicing Catholicism, I value the ways in which I learned to be self-reflexive. The experience is directly related to the creation of OPC curricular elements that require self-focus. OPC's guiding principles provide a platform for reflection, starting with the self and expanding to the broader community.

The autoethnographic critical stories in this dissertation revealed the conditions that breathed life (Dillard, 2008) into my decisions in designing OPC's teaching and learning culture. (Re)membering and reflecting on my life through the autoethnographic process, I have considered the meanings of the stories and their relationship to the development of OPC's youth programs; by (re)membering my racial/cultural memories, I have articulated how the manifestations of White supremacy are maintained through the racing of space and individuals in music education.

The autoethnographic stories and vignettes were chosen because they illustrate critical defining moments that galvanized future decisions in the creation of the youth programs of OPC. Mined from my personal journals and memories, the vignettes are palimpsests of ethnographic data that, upon analysis, assisted in gaining an understanding of the ways my life experiences are "intimately connected to others. . ." (Chang, 2008, p. 212) and connect to design decisions in creating the youth programs of OPC. The "others" in this study refer to Black children who desire to study music, and Black music educators who desire to teach them. I intended to explore

portions of my lived experiences as "an ethnographic project" (Baker, 2001, p. 395) to uncover and understand what influenced decisions I made in creating OPC's youth programs and their curricular and pedagogical approaches.

Employing theses 4 and 5 of RCT in analyzing these autoethnographic critical stories revealed how norming and racing of space and individuals operates and functions in music school geographies built on White supremacist paradigms that privilege European musical practices. Moreover, it exposed the long-term trauma that burdened my psychological health and well-being, and illuminated the crippling outcomes of normalizing epistemologies. For example, my decision to leave my initial course of study foreclosed my dream of becoming a classical chamber musician. Conversely, when applied to the Borgdoni critical story on page 62, RCT describes how commitments to White supremacy and whiteness can be reversed by disavowing and relinquishing commitments and attachments to White supremacy and centering other ways of being. thus making conceptual room for "White renegades" and "race traitors." In this manner, the ultimate aim is to eliminate race (not as innocent human variety but as ontological superiority and inferiority, as differential entitlement and privilege) altogether" (Mills, 1997, p. 89) and not to replace one Racial Contract with another of a different color

RCT exposes and describes pedagogies that challenge the normalizing discourses that promote the dehumanization of racing and spacing black bodies. *I saw this skinny little black kid from the inner city trying to play Bach*, and utterances like *A ballad is a ballad!* (and other such statements) demand that Black students be in music education geographies with teachers who practice humanist and culturally sustaining pedagogies.

In thinking about how my life experiences informed the development of OPC's youth programs, I excavated my upbringing and took risks reading and re-reading my journals for

clues. As I read them, the story began to take form. I understood that while not always in the forefront of my consciousness, the experiences I documented were nonetheless ever-present in the interstices between the past and present, like buoys keeping me afloat and focused on the work I was called to do. Thus, to understand and reveal the conditions that led to the development of the OPC youth programs, the autoethnographic process I engaged in this dissertation has illuminated a deep understanding of the forces and influences that drove me to create the Oakland Public Conservatory of Music. The design decisions of OPC's youth programs were informed by 1) my experiences in music and other extra-musical areas of my life that impacted my sense of self, growing up in a society rooted in White supremacy and anti-blackness, and 2) awareness of the disparities Black students were experiencing in Oakland that demonstrated that music education for them was not prioritized.

Reflections on In-between Space

As though our lives have no meaning and no depth without the white gaze. (Morrison (2019).

Over its first 9 years, the youth program of the Oakland Public Conservatory of Music evolved into an in-between space that provided opportunities for Black children to fully engage in a music education program centered on their humanity. Because it is an in-between space, it successfully recruited and sustained Black student enrollment during the first 9 years of the program's existence. The contours of in-between space operate as a buttress composed of curricular, pedagogical, social, and spiritual domains that cultivate a sense of self-efficacy. Epistemologically, the in-between space model of the OPC curriculum can assist with understanding why and how to design music learning spaces where African American students can flourish in music education. Such designs redress African American students' loss of access to music education during the regular school day.

The OPC in-between space allows Black children to flourish unantagonized by White supremacy, anti-blackness, and the panoptic White gaze. It is a space where Black children can be human on their own terms. The curriculum is built on the refusal of circumstances and conditions that interfere with Black children's right to thrive and flourish. In-between space is a place of refuge. In-between space provides a way of thinking about how to design music education spaces connected to the humanity of Black children, even where, as Audre Lorde reminds us, "we were never meant to survive" (Lorde, 1978).

The literature demonstrates that music education was a component of the daily, in-school curriculum for many segregated Black schools before the Brown (1954) decision and underscores that music as a part of a well-rounded curriculum during the school day was valued in Black segregated schools. Not all schools had a similar breadth of extracurricular opportunities. Still, it can be generalized that most segregated Black schools had a basic set of options for students, and music was included. After the desegregation of schools, Black students' music education opportunities in school were significantly diminished, and in many instances, it ceased altogether. But as shown in the literature, music education was present in Black schools through Reconstruction, Jim Crow, and into the Brown v. Board era. Though many music programs were discontinued after the Brown (1954) decision, music education was maintained in community-based in-between spaces.

To ensure access to culturally sustaining music education for Black students, it is necessary to understand and address ways the Racial Contract in music education influences decisions that limit opportunities for Black students to study music in school. When schools are under-resourced and policies are enacted under the pressure of high stakes testing and other

bureaucratic concerns, as previously discussed, Black children miss out. This reality illuminates the critical need for out-of-school spaces such as OPC.

Discussion and Conclusion

How might this dissertation inspire ways of developing equitable practices that ensure that Black students have access to the full complement of music education provided at their schools during daytime instruction? First, given the neoliberal practices in schools that continue to lock Black students out of opportunities for music education during the regular school day, there is a need for more music education community-based spaces.

Second, whether in-school or out-of school time, practices like the Circle offer a model that ensures that students are seen and called to be fully present. My intention is not to proselytize the use of the Circle; rather, it is to use it as a paradigmatic example of key pedagogical features that are successful in engaging Black students in the learning process. I view those features as centering culturally sustaining practices grounded in rituals that cultivate belonging, self-efficacy, and empathy, as demonstrated in the pedagogy of the OPC Circle.

Third, critical to the successful implementation of these practices is a commitment by school leaders and teachers of Black children to refuse to participate in practices that norm and race Black students. A way of doing this is to practice self-reflexivity by asking "What fuels my classroom and curriculum design decisions?" "Why do I do what I do?" Engaging in autoethnographic reflection can assist with uncovering internalized oppression, biases, and other attitudes that interfere with conscious, honest recognition of attitudes and behaviors that do not support Black students flourishing in music. By utilizing a self-reflexive process such as autoethnography, music educators can develop a practice of recognizing when White supremacy is subconsciously influencing decisions and actions in their curricular and pedagogical decisions.

It is this specific disposition that, regardless of their race, teachers of Black children can begin to recognize the Racial Contract and then work to mitigate its effects. Autoethnographic journeys, such as the one in this dissertation, can support the establishment of a self-reflexive practice that invites interrogation of the contours of the consciousness that keeps the status quo operational.

Mills (1997) has outlined an indisputable detailed treatise on the White supremacist underpinnings of a Racial Contract that governs the distribution of resources needed for the citizenry to flourish. This Racial Contract has resulted in a racial calculus that requires constant vigilance and intervention to ensure equitable distribution of resources. Mills (1997) reminds us that the Racial Contract is not just. It is maintained by a willful and persistent "studied ignorance" (p. 93), an "epistemology of ignorance" (p. 93) that ensures constant revisions and rewriting of the Racial Contract.

Given this reality, Black lives will remain in constant peril requiring interventions that tender access to resources that engender prosperity in every aspect of life. The Oakland Public Conservatory of Music (OPC) is an intervention against the deleterious impact of the Racial Contract in music education. In the case of its youth programs, intervention is the in-between space provided by culturally sustaining and humanizing curricula and pedagogical practices that provide a buttress against the debilitating, dehumanizing forces of White supremacy, misafropedia, adultification, and systemic racism in mainstream music education. At OPC, Black youth are not perceived as needing intervention due to a pathological impairment. OPC is dedicated to intervening in the White gaze that skews culturally sustaining music education delivery for students at constant risk of experiencing the subtraction of resources (Valenzuela, 1999) to which they are entitled, such as music education.

The inherent Racial Contract in education and, by extension, music education, manifests in curricular choices, pedagogical approaches, teaching and learning practices, and policies that militate against the presence of Black students in the band room. Because of the permanence of racism and White supremacy (Bell, 1992; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Mills, 1997) "skewed life chances" (Hartman, 2007, p. 6) for Black people persist. Out-of-school opportunities, like those offered by OPC, are critical because they are driven by an ethos grounded in and committed to seeing and loving Black children and ensuring that access to broad and comprehensive music education experiences for them is not compromised. Hence, if Black students are to have full access to comprehensive music education, out-of-school spaces for music education are necessary—spaces where hope is seeded and cultivated and Black students experience belonging. This study portrays one such place.

Because of the persistence of the Racial Contract, studies are needed that investigate how to mitigate the constant re-writing of the Racial Contract, a process that disrupts Black students' access to ongoing, comprehensive music education. Constantly evolving dispositions, pedagogies, and spaces away from the normalizing White gaze are necessary for Black students to thrive, flourish, and be free. This disposition makes a space like the Oakland Public Conservatory of Music possible.

POSTLUDE

OPC Today and the Impact of Gentrification

In the spring of 2014, the building that served as OPC's first home was put on the market for sale. Upon first learning of the imminent sale of the building, the OPC leadership team prepared to negotiate a new lease based on market-rate rent. To the organization's good fortune, a long-time major donor made a surprise visit to a concert. A few months after their visit, a check arrived in the mail with an accompanying note that read, "I saw the For Sale sign on the building and thought this could come in handy. I will send another check for the same amount next quarter."

On August 1, 2014, we arrived to find a 30-day notice to vacate. It was a disappointment, but we believed we had a reasonable and fair offer that would be accepted. We also expressed that school was beginning in September and moving in thirty days would be detrimental. The offer was refused with the explanation, "We can get twice that amount in this market." OPC joined the rank and file of arts organizations that were being displaced due to increased development in urban areas that was driving up the cost of real estate.

The forced displacement was destabilizing and negatively impacted enrollment. Over the course of the previous year, an increased focus on recruitment was implemented in preparation for the departure of students graduating from high school and moving on to other post-high school pursuits. The Summer Music Academy of 2014 generated a new cohort of approximately 20 African American students who would be enrolling for the upcoming school year.

Unfortunately, OPC was forced to closed the doors of its original home of 9 years in January 2015 and was without a dedicated programming space for nearly 3 years. Administrative activities moved to Impact Hub: Oakland, a new co-working space in downtown Oakland, CA (*Impact Hub Oakland–Oakland–LocalWiki*, n.d.). Though having lost our home of 9 years, it

was a tremendous relief not having to maintain the overhead of a brick-and-mortar building. It was an opportune time to reflect, study, and strategize next steps. We developed new programming partnerships with local schools and youth-serving organizations and acquired new funding partners with foundations and local government. In September 2017, OPC acquired a new space in the California Hotel, a historic landmark and performance venue for a host of jazz and blues greats from the early 1940s through the late 1960s (*California Hotel–EBALDC*, 2021).

For its first 9 years, an average enrollment of 90 percent Black students participated in OPC youth programs. Currently, the Black student population is 27 percent. Although the impact of displacement was devastating, the ethos cultivated for 9 years informed the constantly changing curricular and pedagogical needs. As a trusted and honored vehicle for teaching and learning music, the ethos provided a ballast of support and refuge that held the cultural and spiritual elements of the OPC praxis.

Closing thoughts for (re)membering

So it is better to speak remembering we were never meant to survive. (Lorde, 1978)

Since enslaved Africans arrived, the Black experience has been central in developing the musical cultures and identities throughout continental North and South America and the Caribbean. Music has been and is a vehicle through which African Americans' heritage, history, and culture are enshrined and transmitted. From Congo Square, the ring shout, field hollers, chain gangs, Sea Island stick pounding, plantation Cake Walk, gourd banjo strummings, high-stepping marching bands, New Orleans brass bands and second lines, musical signifying of jazz improvisations, to bebop, hip hop, rhythm and blues and yet to be created forms of Black musical expressions, the cipher of Black music ritualizes, nurtures, protects, and articulates the Black experience. Black children have a natural-born right to access this cipher in school, in

culturally congruent ways that light up innumerable pathways to life options. Black students

flourish when educators of Black children commit to understanding by (re)membering what

drives and inspires their curricular and pedagogical dispositions. When music education curricula

reflect this cultural heritage, ancestral connections are animated, increased self-efficacy prevails,

and Black children flourish. No dreams are deferred.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Log of Artifacts Collected and Examined

Archived hard-copy artifacts:
- approximately 250 concert and recital programs
- the Vision and Mission statements,
- student enrollment applications,
- class rosters
- email communications
- press releases
- social media messages and posts
- grant proposals and reports
- funding award letters
- print and virtual newspaper and magazine articles
- program informational flyers and posters
- greeting cards
- photos
- special event flyers
- course catalogs
- website archives.

Audio-visual artifacts:
- audio and video recordings of student performances
- videos and testimonials by students, parents and supporters
- radio interviews
- video documentation of classes in progress
- videos of students at play during free time
- opening and closing circle rituals.

City, state, and national databases
- City of Oakland's Office of Economic and Workforce Development
- California Department of Education Data Quest
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Bay Area Equity Atlas
- United States census reports
- historical data on demographics of the Oakland public schools
- archival documents at the Oakland Historical Society.

Appendix B: First catalog of courses

The Oakland Public Conservatory of Music

"Preservation through Music Education"

Winter 2006 Course Offerings
January 23 - March 10

1616 Franklin St.
Oakland, CA 94612
(510)836-4649
REGISTER ONLINE AND RECEIVE A DISCOUNT
www.opcmusic.org
e-mail: info@opcmusic.org

Course Descriptions

Jazz Studies

Jazz for Strings
Teacher: Sandi Poindexter
6-7:30pm/Mondays
Jan. 23 - Mar. 13

360 Degrees of Jazz Drumming
Teacher: Babatunde Lea
8-9:30pm/Mondays
Jan. 23 - Mar. 13

Saxophone Ensemble
Teacher: Ron Stallings
Tuesdays 5:30 - 7pm
Jan. 23 - Mar. 14

Strings
violin
viola
cello
bass

Beginning Strings-violin/viola
Teacher: India Cooke
Wednesdays/10:30-12pm

Beginning Acoustic Bass Group Class
Teacher: Ed Williams
Wednesdays/6pm-7:30

Bass Ensemble
Teacher: Ed Williams
Wednesdays/8pm-9:30

Music Theory & Songwriting

Basic Musicianship
Teacher: Allan Crossman
Mondays/8-9:30pm
Jan. 23 - March 13

Jazz Theory/Performance Ensemble
Teacher: Anthony Michael Peterson
(call for schedule)

Songwriting for Beginners
Teacher: Anthony Michael Peterson
(call for schedule)

MUSIC TECHNOLOGY

Computer Music Applications
Coda Finale and Digidesign Protools
Instructor: Ed Williams
Thursdays/6-7:30

Vocal & Choral

Vocal Performance Class
Teacher: Angela Dean-Baham
Mondays/6-7:30pm
Jan. 23 - Mar. 13

Choir 101 - 102
Instructor: Lauren Carley
Mondays/6:30-8pm
Jan. 23 - Mar. 13

Doo-Wop Vocal Ensemble
Instructor: David Glover
Wednesdays/6-7:30pm
Jan. 25 - Mar. 15

Afro-Cuban Rumba Ensemble
Thursdays/Jan. 26 - Mar. 16 8-9:30pm
Saturdays/Jan. 28 - Mar. 18 12-2pm
Teacher: Iluminado "Yaya" Maldonado

HIP HOP & SPOKEN WORD

Turntablism
Teacher: Willie Adams
6-7:30pm
Thursdays/Jan. 26 - Mar. 16

Music and the Word
Instructor: Avotcja
2pm-3:30
Saturdays, Jan. 29-Mar. 18

BLUES PIANO & GUITAR

Blues Piano (Beginners)
Teacher: Bill Crossman
6-7:30pm
Wednesdays/Jan. 25 - Mar. 15

Blues Piano (Intermediate)
Teacher: Bill Crossman
8-9:30pm
Wednesdays/Jan. 25 - Mar. 15

Blues and R&B for Guitar
Teacher: Chris Planas
6-7:30pm
Thursdays/Jan. 26-Mar. 16

World Music Styles for Guitar
Teacher: Chris Planas
8-9:30pm
Thursdays/Jan. 26-Mar. 16

SATURDAY KIDS' CLASSES!
10AM - 3PM
(CALL FOR SCHEDULE)

SALSA FOR KIDS - TEACHER/TEDDY STRONG
MARIMBA - TEACHER/RUSS LANDERS
STEEL PANS - TEACHER/ANTHONY HERNANDEZ
MUSIC & MOVEMENT FOR INFANTS-KINDERGARTEN
AND THE ADULTS WHO LOVE THEM
TEACHER/VIOLA PELLIGRINI
BEGINNING GUITAR GROUP CLASS - TEACHER/CHRIS PLANAS
BEGINNING JAZZ BAND -TEACHER/ANGELA WELLMAN

Appendix C: Demographic Profile Oakland Public Schools 2005–2014

Oakland Fund for Children and Youth

Oakland Youth Demographic Profile

Race and Ethnicity of Students

Hispanic/Latino student enrollment in Oakland's public and charter schools has increased since 2005, while African American student enrollment has declined.

Figure 10. OUSD Public and Charter School Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity, 2005–2014

Source: California Department of Education, 2005–2006, 2008–2009, and 2013–2014