

Liberty University

School of Music

**Evaluating Expressive Conducting: A Statistical Analysis of Rural High School Wind  
Ensemble Performances**

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the Faculty of the School of Music  
in Candidacy for the Degree of  
Doctor of Music Education

by

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## Abstract

This quantitative research study seeks to discuss differences between musical performances of band students at a rural high school of low socioeconomic status when conducted with expressive and non-expressive gestures as measured by the Georgia Music Educators Association Large Group Performance Evaluation rubric defined as tone, intonation, technique, balance, and musicality. Students in ensemble classes are instructed to watch their conductor or director as he or she gestures from the podium. Gestures may include but are not limited to providing cues for students to begin playing, depicting tempo, and demonstrating the musical phrase and style of the current passage. The researcher used descriptive statistics and a one-sample *t*-test to analyze the musical performances of two developing wind ensembles in a rural high school. The researcher used Welch's *t*-test to compare student perceptions of two conducting styles: expressive and non-expressive. Students in each of the two wind ensembles performed three musical selections. A guest conductor led one ensemble with non-expressive gesturing. The guest conductor led the other ensemble with expressive gesturing. Audio recordings of the two performances were emailed to three experienced band directors selected as judges for this experiment. The judges rated both performances based on technical proficiency and musicality using the rubric sheet designed by the Georgia Music Educators Association for Large Group Performance Evaluations. The results of this study indicate an increase in perceived musicality when the performing ensemble is conducted with expressive gestures. Results also indicate that students prefer to be conducted with expressive gestures.

Keywords: conducting, expression, musicality, performance

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## **Abbreviations**

GMEA – Georgia Music Educators Association

LGPE – Large Group Performance Evaluation

S – Superior

E – Excellent

G – Good

F – Fair

P – Poor

## Chapter One: Introduction

### Background

Band directors are tasked with managing equipment, delivering feedback, providing opportunities for students to perform as musicians and listen as audience members, demonstrating proper instrumental technique, and communicating with students through verbal and non-verbal means. Effective band directors strive to provide quality instruction to all music students regardless of socioeconomic status. Band directors teaching at rural high schools of low socioeconomic status have many struggles, such as lack of resources, low retention, students' low-income economic status, and class scheduling conflicts.<sup>1</sup> However, the modern music educator utilizes appropriate rehearsal strategies and instructional tools, such as conducting, to foster musicality among high school band students. Conducting, the act of conveying musical ideas through gestures and body language, is a complicated and challenging process involving much decision-making. Conductors must decide upon what an ensemble should sound like, respond to the ensemble's sounds, and react to the ensemble's performances. Forrester stated that "in order to understand the complexities of teaching music and music teacher knowledge, it is important to understand that the demands of teaching instrumental music require specialized knowledge that encompasses an integration of teaching and conducting."<sup>2</sup>

This quantitative research study uses descriptive statistics to add to the existing body of literature by specifying which kind of conducting gestures lead to more expressive musical performances in a rural high school of low socioeconomic status. Examples of gestures utilized

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher Libby, "Competing with Small Town Football: The Challenges of Teaching High School Band in Rural America," (DME diss., Liberty University, 2022), 84.

<sup>2</sup> Sommer Forrester, "Music Teacher Knowledge: An Examination of the Intersections Between Instrumental Music Teaching and Conducting," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 65, no. 4 (2018): 478.

include elevating the left hand or increasing the size of the conducting pattern, which are common gestures to symbolize a crescendo. Conveying inaccurate intonation may consist of a facial expression and pointing up or down to inform students to raise or lower their pitch. Cueing a musician to begin playing his or her instrument after a rest may be gestured with an open palm outstretched toward the entering performer. Directors may show articulations by altering the beating pattern by smoothly gesturing to demonstrate legato playing and creating a jerky, pointed pattern to indicate staccato or separated playing. Conductors may show tempo fluctuations by altering the speed of the beat pattern. There are a myriad of musical expressions that each call for their own unique gestures. Ensemble directors must be aware of the different gestures and understand what they mean to students. Conducting courses allow preservice music teachers to practice and develop the technical skills required to lead an ensemble. Grey posits that “within undergraduate programs, [conducting courses] serve as key components for identifying and addressing musical competencies and may play the most important role in helping establish [preservice music educators] future rehearsal success.”<sup>3</sup>

### History of Conducting

The archetypal orchestra conductor, the leader of an ensemble with a black tuxedo and baton, came to be in the middle and late nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup> Before the nineteenth century, musicians were often led by the composer or one of the musicians. Before a performance, the leader would rehearse the ensemble. During a performance, the leader would gesture any tempo fluctuations or style changes with his or her body or instrument. Early conducting gestures of

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<sup>3</sup> Alyssa Grey, “Conducting and Rehearsal Skills in Preservice Music Education: A Review of the Literature,” *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 32, no. 1 (2022): 84.

<sup>4</sup> John Mauceri, “A Short History of Conducting,” *The Yale Review* 105 no. 4 (2017): 74.

ancient Egypt and medieval Europe communicated musical ideas such as pitch and rhythm.<sup>5</sup> Southerland stated that the ancient Greeks inserted elements of the Egyptian conducting style into their culture and adjusted the technique to include moving the feet to communicate rhythmic ideas and moving the hands to communicate melodic ideas.<sup>6</sup> According to Camesi, the noisy act of conducting by foot decreased in the eighteenth century, perhaps due to the complaints of composer and music critic Johann Matheson.<sup>7</sup> Throughout the Baroque and Classical Periods, the number of performers in an ensemble increased, thus necessitating the “archetypal orchestra conductor” with the baton and podium.<sup>8</sup> Even the silent conductor, using hand gestures and body language, received criticism from those who did not believe that the role of the conductor should be such a prestigious position. One critic included German composer Robert Schumann, who declared conducting “a mania” and “a necessary evil.”<sup>9</sup> Another critic, Italian composer Giuseppe Verdi, said, “It is the style to applaud conductors too, and I deplore it.”<sup>10</sup>

In addition to the increasing sizes of orchestras, Western music began developing more rhythmically complex melodies and intricate harmonies. Leading a rehearsal became almost impossible without a full score and somebody to interpret it whenever the composer was not around to provide feedback.<sup>11</sup> Mauceri stated, “Even in the first quarter of the nineteenth century,

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<sup>5</sup> William Southerland, “Giving Music a Hand: Conducting History in Practice and Pedagogy,” *The Choral Journal* 59, no. 8 (2019): 33.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> David Camesi, “Eighteenth-Century Conducting Practices,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 18, no. 4 (1970): 367.

<sup>8</sup> William Southerland, “Giving Music a Hand: Conducting History in Practice and Pedagogy,” *The Choral Journal* 59, no. 8 (2019): 33.

<sup>9</sup> Mauceri, “A History of Conducting,” 74.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 77.

it was barely possible to perform new music, like a Beethoven symphony, without a conductor standing in front of the players.”<sup>12</sup> In 1836, Robert Schumann wrote that “a good orchestra needs to be conducted only at the start and at changes in tempo. For the rest, the conductor can quietly stand at the podium, following the score and waiting until his direction is again required.”<sup>13</sup>

While that may have been enough at one time, and for the music that Schumann wanted to write and perform, it would become almost impossible to perform later works without a conductor.

Due to changes such as the development of newer concert halls, the creation of pit areas under the stage, and the increasing musical demands asked by more modern composers, significant works could not be interpreted without the “all-knowing maestro.”<sup>14</sup>

### **The Role of the Conductor**

Implementing appropriate conducting gestures to convey the information required to produce an expressive musical performance is a vital role of the conductor. However, technical proficiency in communicating musical ideas is not the only component needed in producing expressive music. A well-executed crescendo performed by an ensemble as they follow the gesture of the conductor means very little if not serving to create an expressive moment for an audience to respond to in some manner.

Conducting was initially considered an innate skill or art that was impossible to teach but instead felt. Since then, the practice of conducting has become an integral component of music

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<sup>12</sup> Mauceri, “A History of Conducting,” 82.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.



education courses.<sup>15</sup> Music educators become conductors to reinforce musical information through study, practice, and score study. Meier declares score study and analysis to be “at the heart of the conductor’s learning process.”<sup>16</sup> An understanding of form, structure, style, articulations, and musical priorities is required for the music educator to adequately prepare to conduct a piece of music with conviction and integrity.

### **The Role of the Music Educator**

The role of the music educator is to develop a love for music and foster musical independence in students. Effective verbal and nonverbal communication is required to convey information to students. Modern music educators must be able to use precise language to communicate complex musical information that is digestible to young students. However, it is also of equal importance that the educator is capable of showing the information through his or her conducting. It is when the conductor is not talking but showing students what to play on their instruments that learning is occurring. Being overly verbose may be a hindrance in the band room. Duke states, "If we want students to learn to become historians, mathematicians, and pianists, then we must have them do the things that historians, mathematicians, and pianists do right from the start."<sup>17</sup> Achieving proficiency on musical instruments requires that students in band class spend time on instruments and that the band director must be able to teach not only with words but also through effective conducting gestures. Watkins and Scott state that music educators should “talk less, play more, [and] establish a balance between your instruction and

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<sup>15</sup> Gary Donn Sousa, “Musical Conducting Emblems: an Investigation of the Use of Specific Conducting Gestures by Instrumental Conductors and Their Interpretation by Instrumental Performers,” (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 1988), 11.

<sup>16</sup> Gustav Meier, *The Score, the Orchestra, and the Conductor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 131.

<sup>17</sup> Robert A. Duke, *Intelligent Music Teaching*. (Austin: Learning and Behavior Resources, 2014), 14.

feedback and student performance. Instruction and feedback statements should be specific and brief.”<sup>18</sup>

### **Conducting as an Instructional Tool**

Conducting is a skill that can be improved through study, practice, and experience. Because of this, college courses in conducting are required when studying to become a music educator. As Wall states, “It is the intent of all conducting teachers . . . to see conducting students achieve mastery before graduating from beginning conducting courses.”<sup>19</sup> While it is not feasible to expect complete mastery over the art of conducting in one or two semesters, a certain level of proficiency is expected before leading a musical ensemble. One role of the high school band director is to teach students basic conducting gestures so that students know what is expected when a conductor provides nonverbal instruction. As stated by Kelly, it “is necessary for students to be able to recognize and interpret the differences in gestures if they are to respond properly.”<sup>20</sup>

Middle and high school students attend band class expecting to play on their instruments. The music educator's role is to utilize conducting gestures as instructional tools to convey important information and reinforce previously discussed ideas instead of merely verbalizing them. It is not practical to expect that all musical ideas can be expressed or taught to developing band students through conducting gestures alone. It is also detrimental for band students to have

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<sup>18</sup> Cornelia Watkins and Laurie Scott, *From the Stage to the Studio: How Fine Musicians Become Great Teachers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 200.

<sup>19</sup> Jeffery Wall, “Intentional and Expressive Conducting: It’s All in the Rebound,” *The Choral Journal*, 41 no. 8, (2015): 44.

<sup>20</sup> Steven Kelly, “Effects of Conducting Instruction on the Musical Performance of Beginning Band Students,” *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 45 no. 2, (1997): 296.

teachers talk more about music than have students actively perform music in band class. Creative ideas should be discussed in ways that encourage student input, limit the amount of time that the teacher lectures, and allow the use of appropriate conducting gestures. Watkins and Scott posit that “coaching students through the principles of musical choice can foster a sense of ownership of the music and inspire expressive musical performances.”<sup>21</sup> By including students in the creative process and even teaching them some basic conducting techniques, educators are helping students foster musical independence and facilitate an understanding of what conducting gestures mean and what the student musicians should do when they see certain gestures.

### **Musical Conducting Emblems**

Band directors utilize verbal and nonverbal means to provide musical direction to students. Specific conducting gestures correspond to verbal commands given to a musical ensemble. According to Sousa, when the intended audience understands the precise meaning of the gestures, the status of “conducting emblem” is potentially achieved.<sup>22</sup> The band director is responsible for ensuring that his or her students understand the meanings of certain gestures because not all conducting gestures are naturally intuitive, especially for middle and junior high school students.<sup>23</sup> Gestures such as an outstretched hand with the palm facing the musician indicate to the instrumentalist to play softer. In contrast, an outstretched hand with the palm facing towards the conductor or slightly upward shows more volume to the musician. If executed

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<sup>21</sup> Cornelia Watkins and Laurie Scott, *From the Stage to the Studio*, 130.

<sup>22</sup> Sousa, “Musical Conducting Emblems,” 5.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

correctly and consistently, the musician understands the gestures and can perform them on command, thus elevating the gesture to the level of conducting emblem.<sup>24</sup>

### **Statement of the Problem**

Preservice music educators may experience one or two courses on conducting throughout their undergraduate studies. With limited time on the podium and so much technical competency required to gesture clearly, great care must be taken to ensure that new educators are prepared to meet the needs of their students. Due to the lack of time and resources to cover every facet of conducting, rehearsing, and performing with an ensemble, priority must be given to certain components of leading as a band director, such as specific score-studying methods, practical rehearsal strategies, or effective conducting gestures. This quantitative research study sought to discuss differences between the musical performances of band students at a rural high school of low socioeconomic status when conducted with expressive and non-expressive gestures. Utilizing descriptive statistics, the researcher summarized the evaluations of each performance as measured by judges via the Georgia Music Educators Association Large Group Performance Evaluation rubric defined as tone, intonation, technique, balance, and musicality. Utilizing Welch's unequal variances *t*-test, the researcher compared differences in students' perceptions of performing music with expressive and non-expressive conducting gestures.

### **Statement of the Purpose**

The purpose of this quantitative research study is to address the gap in the literature pertaining to the universality of conducting gestures, expressive versus non-expressive, as a tool in the musical performances of wind ensembles from a rural high school of low socioeconomic

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<sup>24</sup> Sousa, "Musical Conducting Emblems," 5.

status. as measured by the Georgia Music Educators Association Large Group Performance Evaluation rubric defined as tone, intonation, technique, balance, and musicality. Missing in previous research is the study of which specific gestures are most effective at conveying ideas and which gestures students of a rural high school of low socioeconomic status are more successful in responding to and performing.

### **Significance of the Study**

In previous research, identifying what kind of gestures contribute to increased perceived levels of musicality in a performance is missing. In this quantitative research study, the judges' evaluations of two musical performances, one conducted with expressive gestures and one conducted with non-expressive gestures, are discussed using descriptive statistics and a one-way sample *t*-test. Additionally, the differences in students' perceptions of performing music with expressive and non-expressive conducting gestures are compared using Welch's unequal variances *t*-test. Participants in this study are high school band students. One of the primary objectives of the music educator is to convey information with accuracy and precision to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to perform musical selections with technical proficiency and musicality. Such clarity is achieved when the notated music is aligned with the ensemble director's verbal and nonverbal instructions. According to Nápoles, one of the "most important function[s] of the conductor is to express the music nonverbally."<sup>25</sup>

In addition to studying the musical score and implementing effective rehearsal strategies, the music educator must act as a conductor and lead students in a way that provides a unified

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<sup>25</sup> Jessica Nápoles, Brian Silvey, and Mark Montemayor, "The Influences of Facial Expression and Conducting Gesture on College Musicians' Perceptions of Choral Conductor and Ensemble Expressivity," *International Journal of Music Education* 39, no. 2 (2021): 261.

vision for each specific piece of music congruent with the composer's intentions. As Maiello suggested, "to 'show' the music... it is necessary to 'know' the music thoroughly."<sup>26</sup> When that vision is achieved, the music ceases to be about accurate pitches played at the right moment. Instead, it morphs into melodic contour and a harmonic blend of instruments that encourages an audience to feel some emotional impact in response to listening to the music being performed.

### **Research Question and Sub Questions**

The present study will address the following research questions:

Research Question One: Does the quality of musical performance as measured by the Georgia Music Educators Association's (GMEA) Large Group Performance Evaluation (LGPE) rubric defined as differ between students who were conducted with expressive gestures and students who were conducted with non-expressive gestures?

Research Question Two: What are the specific kinds of gestures contributing to differences in performance qualities of tone, intonation, technique, balance, and musicality?

Conducting is an instructional tool that allows the director to communicate with musicians and reiterate concepts rehearsed in practice. College courses in conducting are required when studying to become a music educator. Like other courses, such as music theory and aural skills, introductory conducting courses foster development in the area of score study, rehearsal strategies, and nonverbal communication. As Wall states, "It is the intent of all conducting teachers . . . to see conducting students achieve mastery before graduating from beginning conducting courses."<sup>27</sup> The research questions are significant in contributing to the

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<sup>26</sup> Anthony Maiello, *Conducting: A Hands-On Approach*. (Belwin-Mills Publishing Corp., 1996), 10.

<sup>27</sup> Jeffery Wall, "Intentional and Expressive Conducting: It's All in the Rebound," *The Choral Journal*, 41 no. 8, (2015): 44.

current understanding of the effectiveness of conducting as an educational tool in teaching musicality to students.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Potential limitations exist in the present study. Such restrictions include limited participants. The researcher selected student performers from one rural high school of low socioeconomic status. None of the students from this high school have ever had private lessons, and most students use school-owned equipment. Secondly, this study only applies to conducting in the band setting. While overlap exists among band, orchestra, and choral conducting, the guest conductor is a band director, and all student participants are band students accustomed to being directed under the baton, as was the case in the present study.

### **Definition of Terms**

Conductor refers to one who communicates with a group of musicians to produce a unified and impactful musical performance. This communication involves gestures that link teacher ideas to student actions. Conducting gestures are tools that music educators use to interact with students, often involving body and arm movement, eye contact, facial expression, and overall posture.<sup>28</sup>

Expression in music performance is the recognition of musical ideas via aural elements, such as dynamic contrast, varied articulation, harmonic progression, and compositional structure. In conducting, expression is the conductor's physical presence that creates a complementary visual embodiment of the sounds being produced by the performers.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Steven Kelly, "Using Conducting Gestures to Teach Music Concepts: A Review of Research," *Applications of Research in Music Education*, 18, no. 1 (Fall, 1999): 3.

<sup>29</sup> Imogene Newland, "Instrumental Gesture as Choreographic Practice: Performative Approaches to Understanding Corporeal Expressivity in Music," *Choreographic Practices*, 5 no. 2 (2014): 152

Expressive gestures are physical movements combined with facial expressions that conductors use to lead an ensemble as he or she conveys the musical phrasing, dynamics, and style of a piece while also responding to the ensemble's performance in real time with appropriate nonverbal feedback.<sup>30</sup>

Georgia Music Educators Association (GMEA) is an organization formed in 1922. GMEA is an organization that hosts and sponsors many music education events and opportunities for students and teachers in the state of Georgia, such as LGPE.<sup>31</sup>

Large Group Performance Evaluation (LGPE) is an event hosted by GMEA in which music ensembles travel to a school within a specified district to perform for judges and various audience members to receive feedback in the form of scores and comments.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Mark Montemayor and Brian Silvey, "Conductor Expressivity Affects Evaluation of Rehearsal Instruction," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 67, no. 2 (2019): 134.

<sup>31</sup> Georgia Music Educators Association, "GMEA Handbook," 2023. *Opus*. Georgia Music Educators Association. Accessed October 18. <https://opus.gmea.org/>.

<sup>32</sup> Georgia Music Educators Association, "GMEA Handbook," 2023. *Opus*. Georgia Music Educators Association. Accessed October 18. <https://opus.gmea.org/>.



## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

The previous chapter indicates that conducting can be a valuable tool in achieving expressive musical performance. This review focuses on the literature regarding the purpose of conducting, the effectiveness of conducting gestures on musicians from middle and high school students to college and university students, and the rehearsal strategies and conducting gestures band directors use while leading from the podium. While researchers have investigated the effects of conducting gestures on ensembles, researchers have not analyzed data involving specific expressive gestures and ensemble performance in the context of a developing rural high school wind ensemble of low socioeconomic status.

### **Conducting Gestures**

Conducting technique has evolved from basic time-keeping to expressing style and musical contour. Different gestures represent different musical concepts, which ensemble directors must clearly define to understand the effect that each gesture has on a musical ensemble. Gestures can include information such as tempo and time signatures, expressive melodic shape, ensemble balance, and cuing entrances.

#### **Time-Keeping Gestures**

One of the roles of the conductor is to keep all members of the ensemble together, as each performer may have his or her ideas about when to speed up or slow down a passage. Consistency in tempo, unless fluctuation of tempo is desired, is crucial for removing ambiguous tempo messaging to the ensemble. Depicting of tempo is initially demonstrated with a preparatory beat. The ensemble conductor often creates this gesture with the hands beginning

outstretched in a ready position and then moving the arms upward and back down again with an inhalation.<sup>1</sup> The conductor must execute the motion and the inhalation in tempo to accurately inform the musicians when and how to perform their first note and what they can expect from the next gesture.

The pattern the conductor uses varies depending on the time signature of the piece. However, the first beat of a measure generally starts with the arm and baton moving down and rebounding at the invisible horizontal plane called an ictus. The remaining beats of each measure are performed similarly on the vertical plane, but the location of each beat varies on the horizontal plane to provide clarity for the musicians. The specific location of the rebound informs the ensemble which beat within any given measure that the conductor is showing.

Conductors often depict cutoff gestures as circular motions ending with one arm extended outward away from the body.<sup>2</sup> Both arms may execute the cutoff gesture in rare circumstances, such as when conducting a marching band. This motion is also executed in the piece's tempo to provide an unambiguous release in which the musicians cease playing in a unified manner. The cutoff gesture may signal the end of a phrase, the ending of a movement, or the ultimate ending of the piece.

### Expressive Gestures

In addition to maintaining timing and tempo, the ensemble conductor is responsible for depicting the style and character of any given piece of music. One method of depiction involves the conductor slightly altering the speed and height of the rebound as he or she navigates through the time-beating pattern, either with both hands or solely the right hand. Maiello stated, "A

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<sup>1</sup> Anthony Maiello, *Conducting: A Hands-On Approach*. (Belwin-Mills Publishing Corp., 1996), 20.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

legato, sostenuto style is open to more rebound in the beat pattern immediately following the ictus, where a staccato, marcato style would have less or almost no rebound immediately following the ictus.”<sup>3</sup> Such stylistic gestures are done while maintaining the established tempo.

Incorporating left-hand techniques allows for a greater depiction of musical expression than simply mirroring the right hand. The left hand is visually responsible for cueing, expressing dynamics, illustrating style, and shaping the musical phrase.<sup>4</sup> One method of communicating dynamics involves raising or lowering the left hand to symbolize louder or softer playing, respectively. While new music educators commonly use the technique of raising and lowering the left hand to portray volume, dynamics may also be indicated by increasing or decreasing the size of the time-beating pattern. The experienced conductor may also lean in while increasing the size of his or her beating pattern to portray a crescendo further. He or she may also lean away from the musicians when decreasing the size of the beating pattern to portray a decrescendo.

While the music educator should develop independence between the left and right arms, there are situations in which the left arm may effectively mirror the right arm. By stylistically mirroring the right hand, emphasis can be directed towards style and articulations. By incorporating little to no bounce within the rebound, both hands reinforce that the style of the musical selection is to be staccato, marcato, or, in some fashion, contain notes and articulations that are separated rather than smooth and connected. Shaping the melodic phrase with the left hand often involves incorporating the same gestures used to demonstrate dynamics over longer periods to show direction and energy as the musical line continues.

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<sup>3</sup> Maiello, *Conducting: A Hands-On Approach*, 21.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

### Balancing, Blending, and Cueing Gestures

Conductors cue musicians for a variety of reasons. Conductors use cues to alert musicians of an approaching entrance, to assist when a section or a soloist has been resting for a long time, or to highlight which instruments have the melody or most prominent thematic material.<sup>5</sup> Cueing an entrance is commonly performed by gesturing towards the musician or instrument section from the rest position and opening the hand at the moment of the entrance. Other ways to depict a cue include a head nod or a change of stance and manipulation of the baton within the context of a pattern.

Ensembles achieve balance in music when all musicians understand their roles within the compositional structure. To help facilitate this understanding, a combination of facial expressions, cueing gestures, and dynamic gestures can bring out the moving lines and thematic material to the foreground while relegating the harmony and accompaniment to the background so that the audience easily hears the most important musical ideas. By gesturing towards the instruments with the melody, the members of the ensemble should know who to listen for and support as opposed to covering up. Additionally, a dynamic gesture depicting the accompaniment instruments to play softer can help achieve a balanced sound in which they instead support the melody or moving lines as notated and interpreted by the composer and conductor.

Blending, as opposed to balance, is less about matching volume and more about matching tone, intonation, articulation, and style. Facial expressions and stylistic gestures are used in conjunction with one another to achieve the desired result. A conductor can redirect a musician playing out of tune with eye contact, a disapproving facial expression, and a point up or down,

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<sup>5</sup> Maiello, *Conducting: A Hands-On Approach*, 53

depending on whether the musician is flat or sharp. Gestures for articulations have already been described, but certain levels of proficiency among ensembles may require the conductor to provide more or less guidance. Conductors of middle school and high school ensembles commonly adjust their stance and direct the stylistic conducting pattern towards the offending section as a familiar instructional gesture. Band directors must be able to respond to the sounds of the ensemble and make corrections in real time, such as in the instance of addressing the concepts of balance, blend, and intonation.

### **Effects of Expressive Conducting Gestures on Various Ensembles**

Conducting techniques require that conductors show clear and precise instructions so musicians can understand and appropriately respond. Kilburn stated, "Communication is not only reliant on the person sharing the communication but also on the perceptive capacity of the one receiving the information."<sup>6</sup> Researchers have conducted numerous studies on the relationship between conducting gestures and ensemble performance as well as musician and audience perception of expressive gestures as opposed to non-expressive gestures.

#### Perceptions of Expressive Conducting Gestures

Conductors strive to convey musical concepts to their ensembles through expressive gestures, combining physical movement and facial expressions. According to data collected by Silvey and Koerner, eighth-grade and high school students could distinguish between expressive and non-expressive conducting gestures.<sup>7</sup> In addition to distinguishing between the expressive

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<sup>6</sup> Katherine Kilburn, "Pedagogical Approaches to Conducting Gesture in Contemporary Music," (DMA Diss., Bowling Green State University, 2016), 10.

<sup>7</sup> Brian Silvey and Bryan Koerner, "Effects of Conductor Expressivity on Secondary School Band Members' Performance and Attitudes Toward Conducting," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 64, no. 1 (2016): 39.

and non-expressive gestures, band students preferred performing with expressive gestures, corroborating the results of a previous study conducted by Price and Winter.<sup>8</sup> In both studies, students completed identical surveys consisting of five statements gauging their opinions about the expressive and non-expressive conditions. Students responded using a 7-point Likert scale. Silvey and Koerner conducted a repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) with one-within-subjects factor, expressive or non-expressive conducting, and one between-subjects factor, eighth-grade and high school students.<sup>9</sup> Both subject groups responded more favorably to every statement when conducted with expressive gestures.<sup>10</sup> While musicians seemed to prefer expressive conducting gestures, research conducted by Silvey and Koerner did not indicate that expressive gestures specifically lead to more expressive performances based on expert and adjudicators' evaluations.<sup>11</sup>

A study by Napoles indicated that participants rated performances more expressively when conducted with more expressive gestures across various presentation modes, including video recording of the conductor from the front, video recording of the conductor from the back, and audio recording.<sup>12</sup> In all presentation modes, participants perceived the performances of the high school musicians to be more expressive when conducted with expressive gestures as opposed to strict gestures.<sup>13</sup> Because participants did perceive certain conductors to be more

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<sup>8</sup> Henry Price and Suzanne Winter, "Effect of Strict and Expressive Conducting on Performances and Opinions of Eighth-Grade Band Students," *Journal of Band Research* 27, no. 1 (1991): 39.

<sup>9</sup> Silvey and Koerner, "Conductor Expressivity and Attitudes Toward Conducting," 37.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Jessica Napoles, "The Influences of Presentation Modes and Conducting Gestures on the Perceptions of Expressive Choral Performance of High School Musicians Attending a Summer Choral Camp," *International Journal of Music Education* 31 no. 3 (2013): 329.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

expressive, Napoles states that the study “lends support to continuing to teach expressivity in collegiate conducting classes, especially given that conductors and their ensembles will be adjudicated on a regular basis.”<sup>14</sup>

In addition to movements and gestures, the horizontal conducting plane indicates perceived expressive conducting. Silvey and Fisher state that the invisible plane is “where a conductor's pattern lies in relation to the body.”<sup>15</sup> The researchers instructed participants, graduate conducting students, to practice highly expressive gestures at three different horizontal conducting planes: high, medium, and low. The researchers also instructed participants to use expressive gestures, including “fluid right-hand gestures, independent left hand, maintaining constant eye contact, and varied facial expression.”<sup>16</sup> Results suggested that musicians perceive high conducting planes as less expressive than low or medium conducting planes. The conductors with high conducting planes might have obstructed their faces, resulting in lower expressivity ratings despite executing the same expressive gestures.<sup>17</sup> The results coincide with previous research that suggests that a combination of facial expressions and hand gestures contribute to more perceived expressivity, requiring that conductors’ hands and faces be visible.

#### Multimodal Approach of Conducting Gestures and Verbal Instructions

The role of the band or choral director requires that he or she demonstrates proficiency in conveying ideas with both verbal and nonverbal means as both educator and conductor. An educator must be effective at communicating information in a digestible manner. A conductor

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<sup>14</sup> Napoles, “The Influences of Presentation Perceptions of Expressive Choral Performance,” 329.

<sup>15</sup> Brian Silvey and Ryan Fisher, “Effects of Conducting Plane on Band and Choral Musicians’ Perceptions of Conductor and Ensemble Expressivity,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 63 no. 3 (2015): 370.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 372.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 381.

must be skilled at demonstrating information congruent with verbal instructions. Napoles states, "Ideally, the teacher transmits clear instructions using either method."<sup>18</sup>

Napoles investigated whether verbal instructions or gestures more effectively elicited desired sounds, articulations, and syllabic stress from a chorus. It also examined how experienced conductors perceived consistent and inconsistent cueing.<sup>19</sup> The researcher found that the highest-rated performances were in which both modes of communication were consistent and conveyed the same message.<sup>20</sup> Results of the study also suggest that verbal instructions are more effective than conducting gestures.<sup>21</sup> Such findings indicate that conductors should use a combination of verbal instructions and gestures when communicating with their ensembles.

### **Rehearsal Strategies and Conducting Techniques**

The modern music educator instructs musicians through verbal communication and nonverbal gestures. He or she balances the two modes of communication to utilize rehearsal time effectively. Grey stated, "Effective ensemble directors must skillfully demonstrate a variety of conducting behaviors. These skills frequently include nonverbal and expressive gestures in rehearsal settings."<sup>22</sup> Conducting emblems, gestures considered universal in interpretation, are tools conductors use to convey their musical intent. As previously indicated, the collaborative reinforcement of words and corresponding gestures provides the most effective results in

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<sup>18</sup> Jessica Napoles, "Verbal Instructions and Conducting Gestures: Examining Two Modes of Communication," *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 23 no. 2 (2014): 10.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 17

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Alyssa Grey, "Conducting and Rehearsal Skills in Preservice Music Education: A Review of the Literature," *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 32, no. 1 (2022): 83.



perceived intent.<sup>23</sup> Students and performers receive consistent information via two different modes of communication.

### Rehearsal Strategies

For a conductor to effectively lead from the podium, he or she must demonstrate proficiency in utilizing various teaching strategies to foster music-making among the performers. Watkins and Scott state, “Music students are taught technique before musicianship so that the skills are well-established when it is time to create a musical sound on the instrument.”<sup>24</sup> The music educator must communicate both technique and expressivity to diverse learners within the music program of his or her school.

A productive rehearsal is the result of thorough planning. The effective music educator plans with visions of what he or she expects students to accomplish within a specified timeline. The timeline may be as short-term as the end of one rehearsal or long-term, spanning for a semester, a year, or several years, such as the instance of high school band directors who could potentially have students for four years. Duke suggested that educators begin planning with “a vision of students as accomplished learners.”<sup>25</sup> Effective planning requires a vivid vision of success and implementing tasks to guide students into becoming accomplished learners.

### Sequencing Instruction

In his book *Intelligent Music Teaching*, Duke detailed six principles that “increase the likelihood that the sequence of instruction will culminate in students’ thorough understanding

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<sup>23</sup> Jessica Napoles, “Verbal Instructions and Conducting Gestures,” 10.

<sup>24</sup> Cornelia Watkins and Laurie Scott, *From the Stage to the Studio: How Fine Musicians Become Great Teachers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 13.

<sup>25</sup> Robert A. Duke, *Intelligent Music Teaching*. (Austin: Learning and Behavior Resources, 2014), 74.

and mastery.”<sup>26</sup> Each of the six principles serves to simplify complex tasks and concepts into digestible ideas for the music educator to implement in the classroom.

The six principles are as follows:

1. Start from scratch every day.
2. Utilize small approximations.
3. Include only essential information.
4. Each step approximates the end goal.
5. Inch forward and leap backward.
6. Perform multiple correct repetitions at each step.<sup>27</sup>

The first principle of simplification is to have students start from scratch every day. Duke posited that instead of starting where the student is because there are realistically several levels of ability within one classroom, the music educator should begin with the most fundamental component of the lesson.<sup>28</sup> The music educator has tremendous control over the students’ level of accomplishment. Duke provided an example of assigning tasks at two different levels. He stated the following:

You could ask a student who is just learning to play the trumpet to hold the instrument as you have demonstrated (which has a relatively high probability of success), or you could ask the same student to hold the instrument, take a breath, and play second-line G in the treble clef (which has a relatively low probability of success).<sup>29</sup>

The principle of starting from scratch every day may seem counterproductive to new teachers wishing to progress quickly. However, it will save time and prevent frustration when

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<sup>26</sup> Robert Duke, *Intelligent Music Teaching*, 92.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 92-117.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

students do not have to “back up” and repeatedly fix errors the teachers did not previously address. Duke suggested that teachers may address fundamental skills and habits either after the student performs unsuccessfully or before the student performs. The latter thus prevents many errors.<sup>30</sup>

The second principle in planning a lesson is to utilize small approximations. The music educator must know which short-term tasks the students can consistently accomplish and guide them toward the target goal in small increments. As previously stated, the teacher's objective is to have students perform each slightly more challenging task correctly to build proper habits.<sup>31</sup> Utilizing small approximations gives students higher chances of successful performance trials.

The third principle of simplification is to include only essential information. Teachers are required to explain certain topics verbally when leading a class. However, Duke argued that “student learning is not a result of what teachers say, but a result of what teachers have students do.”<sup>32</sup> The educator's role is to plan lessons in a way that allows students to practice, discover, and learn. If teachers effectively utilize the first two principles, students should accomplish learning targets without excessive verbal directives.

The fourth principle is that each step approximates the end goal. Closely related to the second principle, this principle involves planning with the end goal in mind. When developing lesson plans, the music teacher should have students accomplish similar or directly transferable tasks to the final learning target. Duke states, “Planning often goes astray when the elements that the individual steps comprise are practiced in ways that are unlike the final performance goal.”<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Robert Duke, *Intelligent Music Teaching*, 97.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

While blowing into a balloon to build a young trombone student's lung capacity may be helpful over time, Duke posited that playing the trombone might better serve the student's breathing technique.<sup>34</sup>

The fifth principle is to inch forward and leap backward. As stated in the first and second principles, it is the teacher's job to place students in situations where they will be successful. In an instance that the small approximations discussed in the second principle are still too challenging for students, the teacher must return to a task in which students can consistently perform correctly. By leaping back, the teacher prevents "numerous, successive, unsuccessful experiences."<sup>35</sup> In addition to maintaining fundamentals and avoiding frustration, this strategy demonstrates proper practice habits for students when there is no teacher to guide them. Inching forward and leaping backward ensures that a task has more correct repetitions than incorrect repetitions.

The sixth and final principle of simplification is having students perform multiple correct repetitions at each step. Duke defines repetition as "the mechanism through which habit strength develops."<sup>36</sup> One correct repetition of a performance task would not be enough evidence of proficiency if students performed incorrectly seven times. In such a situation, a teacher might have neglected to utilize some of the other principles discussed, leading to many failed performance tasks. However, the teacher may still ensure that students learn the task by having them demonstrate multiple correct repetitions.

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<sup>34</sup> Robert Duke, *Intelligent Music Teaching*, 109.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

Students do not learn solely because their teacher talks to them. Duke stated that “students learn as a result of what teachers have students do.”<sup>37</sup> Because students learn musicianship through the act of performing, music educators must transform themselves into conductors capable of leading from the podium and communicating ideas as students are playing their instruments. While verbal communication is an effective tool for relaying information, “relying on verbal communication as the primary mechanism for developing skills is almost always unsuccessful,” according to Duke.<sup>38</sup> As band directors become more competent conductors, they spend less time talking and more time having students play their instruments.

### Conducting Gestures as Instructional Tools

Conducting is a nonverbal mode of communication requiring body movement and facial expressions to convey musical ideas. In a previous section, specific conducting gestures were defined and described in the context of performing. This section discusses conducting as a valuable tool in rehearsals. The most rudimentary conducting gesture involves demonstrating the time in which the arm and baton move in tempo, changing directions at each beat. The first beat is generally the strongest and, thus, the biggest gesture. The first beat involves the arm moving downwards. The penultimate, or second to last, beat usually moves to the right, and the final beat moves left and up. Each beat passes through a point on the imaginary horizontal plane above waist level to visually portray the tempo and meter of the music.<sup>39</sup> While the expectation for all musicians is that they maintain accurate tempo, one role of the conductor is to ensure that the

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<sup>37</sup> Robert Duke, *Intelligent Music Teaching*, 116.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Gary Donn Sousa, “Musical Conducting Emblems: an Investigation of the Use of Specific Conducting Gestures by Instrumental Conductors and Their Interpretation by Instrumental Performers,” (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 1988), 33.

ensemble stays together, requiring that his or her beat pattern is clear and precise to unify the various potential interpretations that performers may have. To demonstrate tempo changes, the conductor must consciously change the speed of his or her beat pattern either gradually or suddenly as the music dictates.<sup>40</sup> If the music calls for a sudden tempo change, the conductor must strike the ictus at one speed and use the rebound or anacrusis for the next beat to communicate the new desired tempo.

Conductors portray dynamics in various ways. One method of showing a crescendo involves raising the left hand with the palm outstretched. While ambiguous about how loud the ensemble should play, this gesture is considered a conducting emblem because of its widespread use.<sup>41</sup> More effective gestures include increasing the size of the beat pattern, leaning in towards the performers, and reaching out the left hand from the center of the chest to portray the intensity of the tone.<sup>42</sup> Increasing the intensity of sound is a more specific command than merely having the band play louder.

Decrescendo, or diminuendo, is demonstrated inversely in the crescendo. The conductor may lower his or her hand with the palm outstretched.<sup>43</sup> As with the crescendo, this conducting emblem may be less effective in providing specific nonverbal commands. For more specificity, decrescendo conducting gestures may include a smaller beat pattern and leaning away from the ensemble with the left hand closer to the body with the palm facing outward. Conductors portray gradual dynamic changes with hands, body posture, and facial expressions.

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<sup>40</sup> Gary Donn Sousa, "Musical Conducting Emblems," 40.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 34

Conductors portray subito, or sudden, dynamic changes by changing the size and speed of the beat pattern at the ictus of the preparation beat.<sup>44</sup> The speed of the beat pattern changes only to account for more or less distance that the arm travels as dynamics suddenly change. A sudden increase from piano to forte requires that the arm move faster to cover a larger distance as the conductor increases the size of the beat pattern. For a sudden decrease from forte to piano, the conductor must alter the speed of the beat pattern to maneuver a smaller space across the horizontal plane. The tempo of the beating pattern remains unchanged as the baton navigates each ictus. Balancing individual musicians or sections to maintain the ensemble's integrity of dynamics requires a facial expression, eye contact, and the left hand to indicate more or less.<sup>45</sup>

Conductors use stylistic gestures to indicate how the musicians should perform the piece. Sousa stated, "Your conducting must 'look like' the music."<sup>46</sup> The manner in which the conductor approaches and departs each ictus conveys the style or character of each piece of music. Legato is demonstrated with smooth and even gestures as the baton glides from one ictus to the next.<sup>47</sup> Conductors show tenuto in a similar fashion with the addition of a drop in the baton at the ictus, portraying heaviness or weight suggesting emphasis on particular musical notes to the performers. Conductors portray the staccato style with short and jerky movements involving momentary stops in motion at the top of the rebound.<sup>48</sup> The conductor's pauses in the staccato indicate separated notes for the performers. The marcato gesture is similar, adding a heavy and

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<sup>44</sup> Gary Donn Sousa, "Musical Conducting Emblems," 34.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 36.

weighted motion with the baton to portray more aggression.<sup>49</sup> The speed of the gesture is faster while swinging into the ictus, contributing to the weighted appearance of the marcato gesture.<sup>50</sup> Sousa stated, “The neutral or passive style lacks expressive quality and intensity.”<sup>51</sup> Conductors use this technique when rhythmic precision is the primary focus of a musical passage.

A conductor’s visual preparations and releases are tools used to unify the ensemble’s entrances and cutoffs. The preparatory beat provides musicians with enough information to anticipate tempo and style, thus allowing for a precise and unified entrance from the ensemble. Conductors execute the cutoff gesture by creating a circular motion in which the right hand moves counterclockwise or the left hand moves clockwise.<sup>52</sup> Conductors generally use smaller motions when communicating the end of a phrase, in which larger motions depend on the tone and style of the piece’s conclusion.<sup>53</sup>

Conductors use a combination of facial expressions, body posture, and gestures with their arms, hands, and batons to communicate a fermata or a cue. To portray a fermata, conductors continue motion in the direction of the next beat but at a much slower rate of movement to signal to the performers that the sound should continue. At the conclusion of the fermata, the conductor will either cut off the musicians or continue beating the pattern depending on the phrase of the composition. Cuing requires that the conductor position his or her body towards the specific performers before the intended musical entrance and make eye contact. The conductor then

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<sup>49</sup> Gary Donn Sousa, “Musical Conducting Emblems,” 37.

<sup>50</sup> Stephen P. Kerr, email message to author, April 30, 2024.

<sup>51</sup> Gary Donn Sousa, “Musical Conducting Emblems,” 38.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*



gestures towards the performers with an outstretched arm and a facial expression of encouragement that acts as confirmation for them.<sup>54</sup> Much of the visual cuing process occurs one beat before the specified entrance to ensure that the performer is ready in time to execute the musical phrase when it arrives. Rehearsing with appropriate conducting gestures encourages confidence and familiarity when applied to the performance setting in which performers know what to expect and how to respond accordingly.

### **Summary**

The literature reviewed reflects that conducting gestures serve a purpose in the music classroom. While the various studies drew several conclusions, it is evident that educators need consistency in the multimodal approaches: verbal and nonverbal communication. As teachers strive towards communicating effectively and efficiently, researchers must conduct more studies on the universality of conducting techniques as they relate to successful musical performances. Minimal literature discusses the nature of conducting musical ensembles in rural schools of low socioeconomic status. With minimal resources and less exposure to conductors outside of the one primary educator, research involving students in a rural school of low socioeconomic status is essential for a music educator new to the profession in such a setting.

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<sup>54</sup> Maiello, *Conducting: A Hands-On Approach*, 53.

## Chapter Three: Methods

### Introduction

This chapter presents the research methods, design, rationale, and role of the researcher and all participants. This quantitative study sought to discuss differences between two groups: band students in a rural high school of low socioeconomic status when conducted with expressive gestures and band students in a rural high school of low socioeconomic status when conducted with non-expressive gestures. This research study also discusses differences between the perceptions of students in both the Black Band, the wind ensemble conducted with expressive gestures, and students in the Gold Band, the wind ensemble conducted with non-expressive gestures.

### Design

This study utilized descriptive statistics to discuss the performances of two musical performances of band students at a rural high school of low socioeconomic status when led with expressive and non-expressive conducting gestures. The study also sought to determine which gestures contributed to increased performance qualities of tone, intonation, technique, balance, and musicality. The researcher employed the Welch  $t$ -test because equal variance was not assumed.<sup>1</sup> The control group was the ensemble that performed the three musical selections with non-expressive conducting gestures. The experimental group was the ensemble that performed the three musical selections with expressive conducting gestures. The researcher utilized nonrandomized assignments to place students in groups. This process eliminated the possibility that the principal wind players ended up in one ensemble. The researcher systematically placed

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<sup>1</sup> Robert West, "Best Practice in Statistics: Use the Welch  $t$ -test When Testing the Difference Between Two Groups," *Annals of Clinical Biochemistry* 58, no. 4 (2021): 268.

students into the two ensembles to maintain the study's validity by ensuring that student skill level did not significantly influence the musical performances of either group. The researcher sought to determine which gestures contributed to differences in performance qualities of tone, intonation, technique, balance, and musicality.

The use of descriptive statistics to discuss musical performances was appropriate for this study because it clearly summarizes data gathered through rubrics and judges' scoring regarding the quality of the musical performances. The use of Welch's unequal variances *t*-test was appropriate when discussing student perceptions of expressive and non-expressive conducting styles because all student participants are members of one high school band program. The high school band students had to be systematically placed into two ensembles based on chair placement to maintain comparable skill levels between the two ensembles. By systemically placing students into two smaller wind ensembles instead of random placement, the researcher sought to minimize the variable of uneven skill levels within the two ensembles.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions emerged from the problem and purpose statements. The quasi-experimental research for this study relied on the following research questions:

Research Question One: Does the quality of musical performance as measured by the Georgia Music Educators Association Large Group Performance Evaluation (GMEA) rubric defined as tone, intonation, technique, balance, and musicality differ between students who were conducted with expressive gestures and students who were conducted with non-expressive gestures?

Research Question Two: What are the specific gestures contributing to differences in performance qualities of tone, intonation, technique, balance, and musicality?

### **The Role of the Researcher**

The researcher is a music educator with over ten years of music education experience who has worked in suburban and rural areas in Georgia. His experience as a band director has allowed him to understand the unique challenges present in rural communities. As the current band director of a rural high school in Georgia of low socioeconomic status, the researcher's background relates to the study about the universality of communicating through conducting gestures.

The role of the researcher in this quantitative research study was to select three pieces of music approximating the pieces that would be permissible at the GMEA event, Large Group Performance Evaluations (LGPE). The researcher's role also included teaching the three pieces of music to every class of high school band students using his regular rehearsal strategies. Strategies utilized throughout the learning process include verbal directives, modeling, performance tasks, and critical listening exercises of the pieces as performed by professional musicians. In addition to preparing all students in heterogeneous classes of various instrumentation and diverse skill levels for a performance of three pieces, the researcher's secondary role was to avoid disclosing the purpose of the study to students to maintain validity. The researcher was not present for the performances of either the Gold Band or the Black Band.

### **Participants**

Participants in this study included high school band students, three band directors serving as judges, and a guest conductor. The guest conductor is the Assistant Director of Bands at a public university in Georgia. The three band directors serving as judges are music educators in Georgia with ten or more years of teaching experience and consistently receive superior ratings

with their band programs. The researcher split the high school band students into two wind ensembles, designated Gold Band and Black Band, per the school colors.

The researcher systematically placed students into two wind ensembles. The band program's first chair-flute player was placed in the Gold Band, while the first-chair clarinet player was placed in the Black Band. The second-chair flute player was placed in the Black Band, while the second-chair clarinet player was placed in the Gold Band. Due to the nature of the musical selections, certain instrument groups had similar parts with identical doubling. The clarinet and flute parts were doubled. Alto saxophone and French horn parts were doubled. Trombones and euphoniums were doubled. Tubas occasionally played the same parts as the trombones and euphoniums but also had unique parts throughout the three pieces. By systematically placing high school students into two wind ensembles, each group's intended population had student participation, resulting in both ensembles performing at comparable levels of technical proficiency. The systematic band placement helped to maintain validity and prevent outside variables from influencing the musical performances (see Appendix A). Additionally, all students received the same instruction when rehearsing the three pieces to limit the presence of unintended variables.

Three judges, current band directors, served as judges to evaluate two audio recordings of three pieces performed by two high school wind ensembles. One audio recording was the performance with expressive conducting gestures. The other recording was the performance with non-expressive conducting gestures. The judges used the LGPE rubric as designed by GMEA to assign scores. The LGPE rubric utilized a reverse scoring system in which there were five possible ratings, and the lower numerical ratings equated to a more musical performance. A

rating of one was considered a superior performance, and a rating of five was considered a poor performance.

### **The Role of the Student Musicians**

The student participants were high school band members of various ages and skill levels. While some students had seven or more years of experience with their instruments, others had been playing them for one or two years. The role of the student musicians was to perform three selections under the direction of a guest conductor. The pieces were rehearsed under the direction of their usual band teacher in the weeks leading up to the performance. Students were split into two ensembles on the day of the performance. While they previously knew that there would be two bands, the personnel of each band was not disclosed to them until performance day. The purpose of the study, to evaluate musicality under the conditions of expressive and non-expressive conducting gestures, was also not revealed to students. Upon completion of their performances in the high school theater, students returned to the band room to complete a Likert survey (See Appendix B). There was no communication between members of the different bands to prevent contamination of data if students knew what to expect before performing. When one band was on stage, the other band was in the band room. When it was time to transition from one band to the next, two different routes were utilized so that members of one band did not cross paths with members of the other band.

### **The Role of the Judges**

The judges involved are current music educators who have all participated in Large Group Performance Evaluations either as the director of a band or as an adjudicator. The role of the judges included listening to audio recordings of two wind ensembles performing the same three pieces and scoring them using the LGPE rubric. The purpose of the study, to evaluate

musicality under the conditions of expressive and non-expressive conducting gestures, was not revealed to judges to maintain the validity of the results. The judges were instructed to evaluate the two bands just as they would for LGPE events. Judges were then instructed to complete a Likert survey about their perceptions of the two bands (See Appendix C). Judges did not gain access to the survey until LGPE rubrics were filled out to prevent the chance that the purpose of the study was revealed to them via the nature of the survey.

### **The Role of the Guest Conductor**

The guest conductor is a music educator at the collegiate level with over twenty years of music education experience. His experiences as a band director at the middle school, high school, and collegiate levels allowed him to demonstrate various conducting styles effectively. The guest conductor utilized simple time-beating or non-expressive gestures, as required for the Gold Band's performance. The guest conductor also utilized expressive gestures such as complex body movements and facial expressions as required for the Black Band's performance.

The role of the guest conductor in this study was to conduct two performances of the same three pieces as performed by two high school wind ensembles. The first performance, the Gold Band's performance, necessitated non-expressive gestures or mere time-beating. The second performance, the Black Band's performance, necessitated expressive gestures. The guest conductor was instructed to introduce himself in the same manner for each of the wind ensembles to maintain the study's validity. Verbal communication between the guest conductor and the students of each ensemble was limited until after both performances had concluded and all students had completed their Likert surveys.

### Parameters of the Guest Conductor

The guest conductor was instructed to utilize non-expressive gestures when conducting the Gold Band. Non-expressive conducting was defined as simple time-beating, in which there was no visual reminder for students to incorporate dynamics, articulations, or dynamics. The guest conductor did not cue musicians for their entrances. The guest conductor was also instructed to use expressive gestures during the Black Band's performance. While specific guidelines were given when describing the limitations of non-expressive conducting, no such specificity was provided when describing permissible expressive conducting gestures. The guest conductor was trusted to gesture in whatever ways he felt would help the student musicians perform to the best of their abilities. The sole limitation was the prohibition of verbal commands even if students were lost in the music. This limitation was necessary to maintain the study's validity by allowing the researcher to measure musical responses to nonverbal commands via conducting gestures.

The researcher provided the guest conductor with parameters regarding communicating with students. The guest conductor was instructed to introduce himself in the same way to the two ensembles. The researcher sought to limit preconceived ideas and bias in student perceptions of the conductor. The researcher also directed the guest conductor to use any brief warm-up or tuning exercise he wanted to use as long as he utilized the same exercise and directives for each band. The researcher, the students' band director, was not present during the performance. The guest conductor was allowed to communicate with students only to explain the warm-up or tuning exercise. The tuning exercise was only allowed to happen once prior to the start of the first musical selection. Beyond the initial tuning exercise, tuning would have to be adjusted via the conductor's nonverbal directives and students' critical listening skills.



## **Setting**

The research setting for student participants took place in two locations at their local high school: the high school band room and the high school theater. Students arrived at the band room to collect music and instruments. They then traveled to the theater to perform three musical selections with the guest conductor. After the performance, the students returned to the band room to complete online surveys on school computers and laptops. The three judges listened and evaluated the audio recordings at locations of their choosing. The researcher sent audio recordings to the judges via email. The judges submitted their evaluations through an online survey sent via email.

## **Instrumentation/Data Collection Method**

This quantitative research study sought to discuss the performances of wind ensembles when conducted with expressive and non-expressive gestures as measured by the Georgia Music Educators Association (GMEA) Large Group Performance Evaluation rubric defined as tone, intonation, technique, balance, and musicality. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the quality of two musical performances as rated by judges via rubrics developed by GMEA for LGPE. Welch's unequal variances *t*-test was used to compare student perceptions when conducted with expressive and non-expressive gestures collected via a Likert survey.

## **Research Plan**

Students from one rural high school band program, receiving identical instruction from the same band director, were systematically placed into two wind ensembles to maintain balanced instrumentation and comparable skill levels. Each wind ensemble performed three musical selections. Three band directors evaluated audio recordings of the two ensembles via the Large Group Performance Evaluations rubric designed by the Georgia Music Educators

Association. One wind ensemble, designated Gold Band, performed the three pieces with minimal gesturing by the conductor. The other wind ensemble, designated Black Band, performed the same three pieces with prescribed expressive gestures by the conductor.

A guest conductor was utilized to prevent any bias on the part of the high school band director or the students. The band director taught and rehearsed the musical selections with the high school band classes in the weeks prior to the performance. The guest conductor did not rehearse with the ensemble. On the day of the experiment, the guest conductor conducted two performances of the three pieces. The guest conductor gestured non-expressively when conducting the Gold Band. The guest conductor gestured expressively when conducting the Black Band. Both ensembles had their performances recorded and emailed to three impartial band directors, who then evaluated each performance according to the LGPE rubric. The scores were analyzed to determine if differences in musical performances could be perceived when members of high school wind ensembles were conducted with expressive gestures and when they were conducted with non-expressive gestures as measured by the Georgia Music Educators Association Large Group Performance Evaluation rubric, defined as tone, intonation, technique, balance, and musicality.

Recordings of the two performances were emailed to the three band directors selected to act as judges for this experiment. The three judges evaluated both performances based on technical proficiency and musicality using the Georgia Music Educators Association's Large Group Performance Evaluations rubric.

### **Procedures**

To simulate an LGPE experience, the researcher first programmed three pieces for a high school band program. Two of three pieces were chosen from the approved selections list as

required by GMEA regulations.<sup>2</sup> One of the three pieces, the “warm-up selection,” was required by GMEA to be either a chorale or a march. However, the warm-up selection was the only piece that was not required to be drawn from the list of approved selections. The pieces chosen were *March Zuma* by John O’Reilly (2000) as the warm-up selection, *Aztec Sunrise* by John Edmonson (1990), and *The Tempest* by Robert W. Smith (1995). All three pieces were considered level one, or easy to medium-easy, by the publishers or GMEA. The researcher selected level-one pieces to limit the variable of technical proficiency hindering the students’ musical performance and to maintain a balance of instrumentation and skill levels when the band split into two separate ensembles.

Next, the researcher systematically placed students’ names into two ensembles, designated “Gold Band” and “Black Band.” The researcher utilized school colors to identify the ensembles, as opposed to numbers or letters such as Band 1 or Band A, to eliminate bias or preconceived notions that one ensemble was superior to another. Using a previously conducted chair placement test, the researcher placed even-numbered chairs of one section in one ensemble and odd-numbered chairs in the other. The first and third chair flute players were placed in the Black Band. The second and fourth chair flute players were placed in the Gold Band. The first, third, fifth, and seventh chair clarinet players were placed in the Gold Band to account for the principal flutist participating in the Black Band. The second, fourth, sixth, and eighth-chair clarinet players were placed in the Black Band. This systematic placing was necessary to ensure the validity of the results by maintaining comparable skill levels across both ensembles. The researcher used the same system for all instrument groups, with saxophones and French horns and trombones and euphoniums paired (see Appendix A). The level-one pieces contained much

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<sup>2</sup> Georgia Music Educators Association, “GMEA Handbook,” last modified March 4, 2024. <https://opus.gmea.org/>.

doubling within the flute and clarinet parts, the saxophone and horn parts, and the trombone and euphonium parts. The pieces chosen contained no uniquely specific bassoon or oboe parts.

The researcher had three weeks to teach the three pieces. The researcher conducted rehearsals in the usual manner. The researcher conducted all rehearsals during classes throughout the regular school day. The researcher utilized identical instruction in the heterogeneous band classes of mostly randomly placed students based on predetermined school schedules. Students did not know which of the two ensembles, Gold Band or Black Band, they were in until the day of the performance.

The researcher selected a guest conductor to lead the two ensembles. The guest conductor received specific instructions to introduce himself the same way for both ensembles and to perform any brief warm-up exercises desired as long as both ensembles received the same instruction. The guest conductor was to lead the first ensemble, the Gold Band, with non-expressive gestures. He was to lead the second ensemble, the Black Band, with expressive gestures. The guest conductor had two months to study the scores and prepare for the performance.

On the day of the performance, the researcher set up audio and video recording devices in the theater. During the last two classes of the day, all band students reported to the band room for instructions and to set up instruments. The guest conductor waited in the theater for the first ensemble, the Gold Band, to arrive in the theater with instruments and music in hand. As they performed the three pieces with non-expressive conducting gestures, members of the Black Band waited in the band room. Once the Gold Band departed the stage, taking an alternate route to the band room to prevent any communication between members of the two ensembles, the Black Band entered the theater to perform the three pieces with expressive conducting gestures. While

the Black Band performed, members of the Gold Band completed a Likert survey, asking them for their perceptions of the guest conductor and how the gestures utilized affected students' personal performance (see Appendix B). Upon completion of their performance on stage, members of the Gold Band packed up equipment and returned to class. Once the members of the Black Band finished performing, they returned to the band room and completed an identical survey. Once completed, they packed up the remaining equipment and then returned to class.

After the performance, the researcher emailed audio recordings to three experienced band directors in Georgia. The three judges listened to both ensembles and utilized the GMEA rubric to evaluate the two performances based on tone, intonation, technique, balance, and musicality (see Appendix D). As indicated in Appendix D, a lower numerical rating indicated a more musical performance. Finally, the judges submitted their completed rubrics and were asked to complete a Likert survey.

The attitudes expressed in the students' Likert survey served as mediating variables that supplement the investigation of the secondary research question of specific gestures that contributed to differences in musical performance.<sup>3</sup> The opinions expressed in the judges' survey also contributed to the investigation detailing the relationship between expressive conducting gestures and musical performance. At the conclusion of the study, the researcher received three rubrics with scores and comments from the Gold Band, three rubrics with scores and comments for the Black Band, sixty Likert survey responses from student participants, and three Likert surveys from the judges.

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<sup>3</sup> John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (5th ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994), 196.

### **Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the judges' scoring for the quality of two musical performances under different conditions. The two independent groups for this study were the Gold Band, the ensemble that performed with non-expressive conducting gestures, and the Black Band, the ensemble that performed with expressive conducting gestures. Data collected included descriptive statistics that summarized the judges' scores as they rated both musical performances in the categories of tone, intonation, technique, balance, and musicality. Additionally, as supplemental data, an independent samples *t*-test was used to determine differences in student perception between the Gold Band and Black Band members.

### **Summary**

This chapter presented the research methods, design, rationale, and role of the researcher and all participants. The methodology centered around two research questions regarding expressive conducting gestures and their effects on a developing ensemble's performance qualities of tone, intonation, technique, balance, and musicality. Participants included one guest conductor, three judges, and 60 high school band students. All participants were contacted via email. Procedures included recruiting participants, scheduling the date of the performances, recording the performances, and emailing the two audio recordings to each of the three judges to evaluate utilizing the GMEA rubric. Descriptive statistics were used to discuss the quality of musical performances of both the Gold and Black bands. An independent samples *t*-test was also used to compare differences between the attitudes and perceptions of the students participating in both the Gold Band and the Black Band as they pertained to the style of conducting they experienced.

## **Chapter Four: Results**

The purpose of this quantitative descriptive research study attempted to address the gap in the literature about the relationship between expressive conducting gestures and musical performance of band students at a rural high school of low socioeconomic status. This study utilized descriptive research to analyze judges' evaluations and an independent samples *t*-test to gain insight into the opinions of high school band students regarding the conducting style they experienced. This chapter presents the research findings, including the descriptive data gathered and an analysis of the differences between Gold Band and Black Band members, as detailed in the student surveys.

### **Performance Evaluations**

Members of the Gold Band performed three musical selections with the guest conductor utilizing non-expressive conducting gestures. Members of the Black Band performed three musical selections with the guest conductor utilizing expressive conducting gestures. The students of either band were not informed of the true nature or purpose of the research study. The researcher sought to prevent preconceived notions and biases from corrupting the data. Using the Large Group Performance Evaluation (LGPE) rubric, three judges scored both bands in the categories of tone, intonation, technique, balance, and musicality for each of the three pieces (See Appendix D). The judges were not informed of the true nature or purpose of the research study until after the LGPE rubrics were filled out. The nature of the Likert survey statements provided the judges with some indication of the purpose of the study. The surveys were not accessible to the judges until the conclusion of the evaluation process (See Appendix C). The LGPE rubric utilizes a reverse scoring system in which the lower numbers indicate higher levels of proficiency in musical performance. A rating of one equated to a superior performance. A

rating of two equated to an excellent performance. A rating of three equated to a good performance. A rating of four equated to a fair performance. A rating of five equated to a poor performance. Georgia Music Educators Association (GMEA) provided the following descriptions of each rating:

Superior (1): Outstanding performance. Worthy of distinction of being recognized as among the very best. Excellent (2): Unusually good performance in many respects, but not worthy of the highest rating due to minor defects. A performance of distinctive quality. Good (3): A good performance, but not one that is outstanding. Shows accomplishment and marked promise, but lacks one or more essential qualities. Fair (4): A performance that shows some obvious weaknesses, generally weak and uncertain. Poor (5): A performance which reveals much room for improvement. The students reveal almost a complete lack of preparedness and understanding.<sup>1</sup>

The overall rating for each selection was determined by the band's scores in each of the five categories. The overall scores determined the final rating, and written comments justified the judges' scores (see Appendix D). Table 4.1 details the scoring system used by the judges to determine the final rating.<sup>2</sup> To receive an overall Superior rating, two of the three judges must score the performance with a rating of one or Superior. To receive an overall Poor rating, two of the three judges must score the performances with ratings of five, or Poor. Table 4.1 illustrates the possible combinations of scores that lead to the final ratings in which "S" is one or Superior. "E" is two or Excellent. "G" is three or Good. "F" is four or Fair. "P" is five or Poor.

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<sup>1</sup> Georgia Music Educators Association, "GMEA Handbook," 2023. *Opus*. Georgia Music Educators Association. Accessed October 18. <https://opus.gmea.org/>.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*.



**Table 4.1. LGPE Adjudication Table**

<b>1: Superior</b>	<b>2: Excellent</b>	<b>3: Good</b>	<b>4: Fair</b>	<b>5: Poor</b>
SSS	SEE	SGG	SFF	SPP
SSE	SEG	SGF	SFP	EPP
SSG	SEF	SGP	EFF	GPP
SSF	SEP	EGG	EFP	FPP
SSP	EEE	EGF	GFF	PPP
	EEG	EGP	GFP	
	EEF	GGG	FFF	
	EEP	GGF	FFP	
		GGF		

#### Gold Band Overall Performance Evaluation

The Gold Band, the ensemble conducted with non-expressive gestures, received the final rating of two, or excellent, as shown in Table 4.2. All judges (n=3) scored the Gold Band with the final rating of two, or “excellent.” The judges’ overall scores were identical in the second and third musical selections. However, the judges’ scores differed in the first musical selection, with one judge providing a score of three, or “good,” while the other judges provided scores of two. The judges’ scores did not exceed a one-point range in the categories of overall scores and final ratings, indicating relative agreement among the judges.

**Table 4.2. Descriptive Analysis of Gold Band’s Overall Scores Final Ratings**

	<b>Selection 1</b>	<b>Selection 2</b>	<b>Selection 3</b>	<b>Final Rating</b>
Valid	3	3	3	3
Missing	0	0	0	0
Mode	3.000	2.000	2.000	2.000
Median	3.000	2.000	2.000	2.000
Mean	2.667	2.000	2.000	2.000
Std. Deviation	0.577	0.000	0.000	0.000
Range	1.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Minimum	2.000	2.000	2.000	2.000
Maximum	3.000	2.000	2.000	2.000

#### Black Band Overall Performance Evaluation

The Black Band, the ensemble conducted with expressive gestures, received the final rating of two, or excellent, as shown in Table 4.3. All judges (n=3) scored the Black Band with an overall rating of two, or “excellent.” The judges’ overall scores were identical in the first selections. However, the judges’ scores differed in the second and third musical selections, with one judge providing a score of one, or “superior.” In contrast, the other judges provided scores of two, or “excellent.” The judges’ scores did not exceed a one-point range in the categories of overall scores and final ratings, indicating relative agreement among the judges.

**Table 4.3. Descriptive Analysis of Black Band’s Overall Scores Final Ratings**

	<b>Selection 1</b>	<b>Selection 2</b>	<b>Selection 3</b>	<b>Final Rating</b>
Valid	3	3	3	3
Missing	0	0	0	0
Mode	2.000	2.000	2.000	2.000
Median	2.000	2.000	2.000	2.000
Mean	2.000	1.667	1.667	2.000
Std. Deviation	0.000	0.577	0.577	0.000
Range	0.000	1.000	1.000	0.000
Minimum	2.000	1.000	1.000	2.000
Maximum	2.000	2.000	2.000	2.000

### LGPE Category of Tone

The LGPE rubric lists “tone” as the first category to be evaluated. As stated in the GMEA Handbook, tone is scored based on “beauty, blend, and control.”<sup>3</sup> Judges scored tone in each of the three musical selections (see Appendix C).

#### Gold Band Performance Evaluation in the Category of Tone

The Gold Band, the ensemble conducted with non-expressive gestures, received mixed ratings, as shown in Table 4.4. In the category of tone, the judges’ scores differed in all three musical selections, with one judge providing a score of three, or “good,” while the other judges provided scores of two, or “excellent.” The judges’ scores exceeded a one-point range in the category of tone, indicating much disagreement among the judges. In the second musical selection, one judge rated technique as superior. Another judge rated technique as “excellent.” The third judge rated technique as “good.”

**Table 4.4. Descriptive Analysis of Gold Band’s Scores in the Category of Tone**

	Selection 1	Selection 2	Selection 3
Valid	3	3	3
Missing	0	0	0
Mode	2.000	2.000	2.000
Median	2.000	2.000	2.000
Mean	2.333	2.333	2.333
Std. Deviation	0.577	0.577	0.577
Range	1.000	2.000	1.000
Minimum	2.000	2.000	2.000
Maximum	3.000	3.000	3.000

<sup>3</sup> Georgia Music Educators Association, “GMEA Handbook,” 2023.

### Black Band Performance Evaluation in the Category of Tone

The Black Band, the ensemble conducted with expressive gestures, also received mixed ratings, as shown in Table 4.5. In the category of tone, the judges' scores differed in two of the three musical selections. In the first musical selection, all judges provided scores of two, or "excellent." In the second and third musical selections, one judge provided a score of two, or "excellent," while the other judges provided scores of one, or "superior." The judges' scores did not exceed a one-point range in the category of tone, indicating relative agreement among the judges.

**Table 4.5. Descriptive Analysis of Black Band's Scores in the Category of Tone**

	Selection 1	Selection 2	Selection 3
Valid	3	3	3
Missing	0	0	0
Mode	2.000	2.000	2.000
Median	2.000	2.000	2.000
Mean	2.000	1.667	1.667
Std. Deviation	0.000	0.577	0.577
Range	0.000	1.000	1.000
Minimum	2.000	1.000	1.000
Maximum	2.000	2.000	2.000

### LGPE Category of Intonation

The LGPE rubric lists "intonation" as the second category to be evaluated. As stated in the GMEA Handbook, intonation is scored based on "chords, melodic line, and tutti."<sup>4</sup> Judges scored intonation in each of the three musical selections (see Appendix C).

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<sup>4</sup> Georgia Music Educators Association, "GMEA Handbook," 2023.

### Gold Band Performance Evaluation in the Category of Intonation

The Gold Band, the ensemble conducted with non-expressive gestures, received mixed ratings, as shown in Table 4.6. In the category of intonation, the judges' scores differed in all three musical selections, with one judge providing a score of three, or "good." In contrast, the other judges provided scores of two, or "excellent." The judges' scores did not exceed a one-point range in the category of intonation, indicating relative agreement among the judges.

**Table 4.6. Descriptive Analysis of Gold Band's Scores in the Category of Intonation**

	Selection 1	Selection 2	Selection 3
Valid	3	3	3
Missing	0	0	0
Mode	3.000	3.000	3.000
Median	3.000	3.000	3.000
Mean	2.667	2.667	2.667
Std. Deviation	0.577	0.577	0.577
Range	1.000	1.000	1.000
Minimum	2.000	2.000	2.000
Maximum	3.000	3.000	3.000

### Black Band Performance Evaluation in the Category of Intonation

The Black Band, the ensemble conducted with expressive gestures, also received mixed ratings, as shown in Table 4.7. In the category of intonation, the judges' scores differed in two of the three musical selections. In the first musical selection, all judges provided scores of two, or "excellent." In the second and third musical selections, one judge provided a score of two, or "excellent," while the other judges provided scores of one, or "superior." The judges' scores did not exceed a one-point range in the category of intonation, indicating relative agreement among the judges.

**Table 4.7. Descriptive Analysis of Black Band’s Scores in the Category of Intonation**

	<b>Selection 1</b>	<b>Selection 2</b>	<b>Selection 3</b>
Valid	3	3	3
Missing	0	0	0
Mode	2.000	2.000	2.000
Median	2.000	2.000	2.000
Mean	2.000	1.667	1.667
Std. Deviation	0.000	0.577	0.577
Range	0.000	1.000	1.000
Minimum	2.000	1.000	1.000
Maximum	2.000	2.000	2.000

#### LGPE Category of Technique

The LGPE rubric lists “technique” as the third category to be evaluated. As stated in the GMEA Handbook, technique is scored based on “articulation, facility, precision, and rhythm.”<sup>5</sup> Judges scored intonation in each of the three musical selections (see Appendix C).

#### Gold Band Performance Evaluation in the Category of Technique

The Gold Band, the ensemble conducted with non-expressive gestures, received mixed ratings, as shown in Table 4.8. In the category of technique, the judges’ scores differed in the first musical selection, with one judge providing a score of three, or “good,” while the other judges provided scores of two, or “excellent.” The judges’ scores were identical in the second and third musical selections. The judges’ scores did not exceed a one-point range in the category of technique, indicating relative agreement among the judges.

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<sup>5</sup> Georgia Music Educators Association, “GMEA Handbook,” 2023.

**Table 4.8. Descriptive Analysis of Gold Band's Scores in the Category of Technique**

	<b>Selection 1</b>	<b>Selection 2</b>	<b>Selection 3</b>
Valid	3	3	3
Missing	0	0	0
Mode	3.000	2.000	2.000
Median	3.000	2.000	2.000
Mean	2.667	2.000	2.000
Std. Deviation	0.577	0.000	0.000
Range	1.000	0.000	0.000
Minimum	2.000	2.000	2.000
Maximum	3.000	2.000	2.000

**Gold Band Performance Evaluation in the Category of Technique**

The Gold Band, the ensemble conducted with expressive gestures, also received mixed ratings, as shown in Table 4.9. In the category of technique, the judges' scores differed in all three musical selections. In the first and second musical selections, two judges provided scores of one, or "superior," while one judge provided a score of two, or "excellent." In the third musical selection, judges' scores exceeded a one-point range, indicating much disagreement among the judges. One judge rated technique as "superior." Another judge rated technique as "excellent." The third judge rated technique as "good."

**Table 4.9. Descriptive Analysis of Black Band's Scores in the Category of Technique**

	<b>Selection 1</b>	<b>Selection 2</b>	<b>Selection 3</b>
Valid	3	3	3
Missing	0	0	0
Mode	2.000	2.000	2.000
Median	2.000	2.000	2.000
Mean	1.667	1.667	2.333
Std. Deviation	0.577	0.577	0.577
Range	1.000	1.000	1.000
Minimum	1.000	1.000	2.000
Maximum	2.000	2.000	3.000

### LGPE Category of Balance

The LGPE rubric lists “balance” as the fourth category to be evaluated. As stated in the GMEA Handbook, balance is scored based on “ensemble and sectional” work.<sup>6</sup> Judges scored balance in each of the three musical selections (see Appendix C).

#### Gold Band Performance Evaluation in the Category of Balance

The Gold Band, the ensemble conducted with non-expressive gestures, received mixed ratings, as shown in Table 4.10. In the category of balance, the judges’ scores differed in the first and second musical selections, with one judge providing a score of three, or “good.” In contrast, the other judges provided scores of two, or “excellent.” The judges’ scores were identical in the third musical selection. The judges’ scores did not exceed a one-point range in the category of balance, indicating relative agreement among the judges.

**Table 4.10. Descriptive Analysis of Gold Band’s Scores in the Category of Balance**

	Selection 1	Selection 2	Selection 3
Valid	3	3	3
Missing	0	0	0
Mode	3.000	3.000	2.000
Median	3.000	3.000	2.000
Mean	2.667	2.667	2.000
Std. Deviation	0.577	0.577	0.000
Range	1.000	1.000	0.000
Minimum	2.000	2.000	2.000
Maximum	3.000	3.000	2.000

#### Black Band Performance Evaluation in the Category of Balance

The Black Band, the ensemble conducted with expressive conducting gestures, also received mixed ratings, as shown in Table 4.11. In the category of balance, the judges’ scores differed in two of the three musical selections. In the first musical selections, two judges

<sup>6</sup> Georgia Music Educators Association, “GMEA Handbook,” 2023.



provided scores of two, or “excellent,” while one judge provided a score of one, or “superior.” In the second musical selection, judges’ scores exceeded a one-point range, indicating relative agreement among the judges. One judge rated balance as “superior.” Another judge rated technique as “excellent.” The third judge rated technique as “good.” In the third musical selection, the judges’ scores were identical.

**Table 4.11. Descriptive Analysis of Black Band’s Scores in the Category of Balance**

	<b>Selection 1</b>	<b>Selection 2</b>	<b>Selection 3</b>
Valid	3	3	3
Missing	0	0	0
Mode	2.000	1.000	2.000
Median	2.000	2.000	2.000
Mean	1.667	2.000	2.000
Std. Deviation	0.577	1.000	0.000
Range	1.000	2.000	0.000
Minimum	1.000	1.000	2.000
Maximum	2.000	3.000	2.000

#### LGPE Category of Musicality

The LGPE rubric lists “musicality” as the fifth and final category to be evaluated. As stated in the GMEA Handbook, musicality is scored based on “expression, phrasing, style, tempo, artistry, and fluency.”<sup>7</sup> Judges scored musicality in each of the three musical selections (see Appendix C).

#### Gold Band Performance Evaluation in the Category of Musicality

The Gold Band, the ensemble conducted with non-expressive gestures, received mixed ratings, as shown in Table 4.12. In the category of musicality, the judges’ scores differed in all three musical selections. The judges’ scores exceeded a one-point range in each of the three musical selections, indicating much disagreement among the judges. One judge provided scores

<sup>7</sup> Georgia Music Educators Association, “GMEA Handbook,” 2023.

of three, or “good.” Another judge provided scores of two, or “excellent.” The third judge provided scores of one, or “excellent.”

**Table 4.12. Descriptive Analysis of Gold Band’s Scores in the Category of Musicality**

	Selection 1	Selection 2	Selection 3
Valid	3	3	3
Missing	0	0	0
Mode	3.000	3.000	3.000
Median	3.000	3.000	3.000
Mean	2.667	2.667	2.667
Std. Deviation	0.577	0.577	0.577
Range	1.000	1.000	1.000
Minimum	2.000	2.000	2.000
Maximum	3.000	3.000	3.000

#### **Black Band Performance Evaluation in the Category of Musicality**

The Black Band, the ensemble conducted with expressive gestures, also received mixed ratings, as shown in Table 4.13. In the category of musicality, the judges’ scores differed in two of the three musical selections. In the first musical selection, the judges’ scores were identical. In the second and third musical selections, two judges provided scores of two, or “excellent,” while one judge provided a score of one, or “superior.” The judges’ scores did not exceed a one-point range in any of the musical selections, indicating relative agreement among the judges.

**Table 4.13. Descriptive Analysis of Black Band’s Scores in the Category of Musicality**

	Selection 1	Selection 2	Selection 3
Valid	3	3	3
Missing	0	0	0
Mode	2.000	2.000	2.000
Median	2.000	2.000	2.000
Mean	2.000	1.667	1.667
Std. Deviation	0.000	0.557	0.557
Range	0.000	1.000	1.000
Minimum	2.000	1.000	1.000
Maximum	2.000	2.000	2.000

Cronbach's Alpha was used to measure reliability. Morgan states that "alpha should be positive and usually greater than .70 in order to provide good support for internal consistency reliability."<sup>8</sup> As indicated in Table 4.14 and Table 4.15, the intraclass correlation demonstrated strong evidence for rating reliability among the three judges ( $\alpha = .86$ ).

**Table 4.14. Reliability Statistics of Judges' Scores of the Gold and Black Bands**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.857	1.000	3

Throughout the evaluations of all three pieces for both bands, the three judges only used ratings of one, two, and three, indicating superior, excellent, or good performances. The judges never used ratings of four or five, indicating fair or poor performances, in any category.

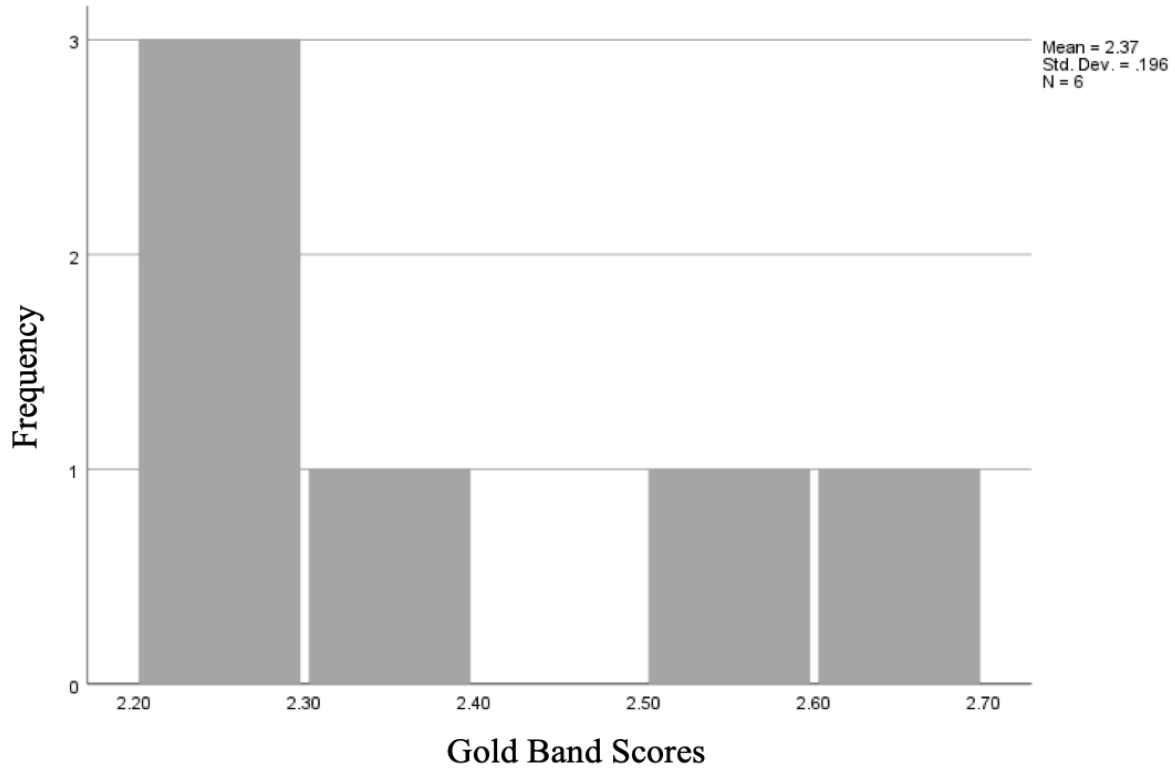
**Table 4.15. Reliability Statistics of Judges' Scores of the Gold and Black Bands**

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Judge 1 Scores	39.5000	2.12132	2
Judge 2 Scores	38.0000	11.31371	2
Judge 3 Scores	41.5000	7.77817	2

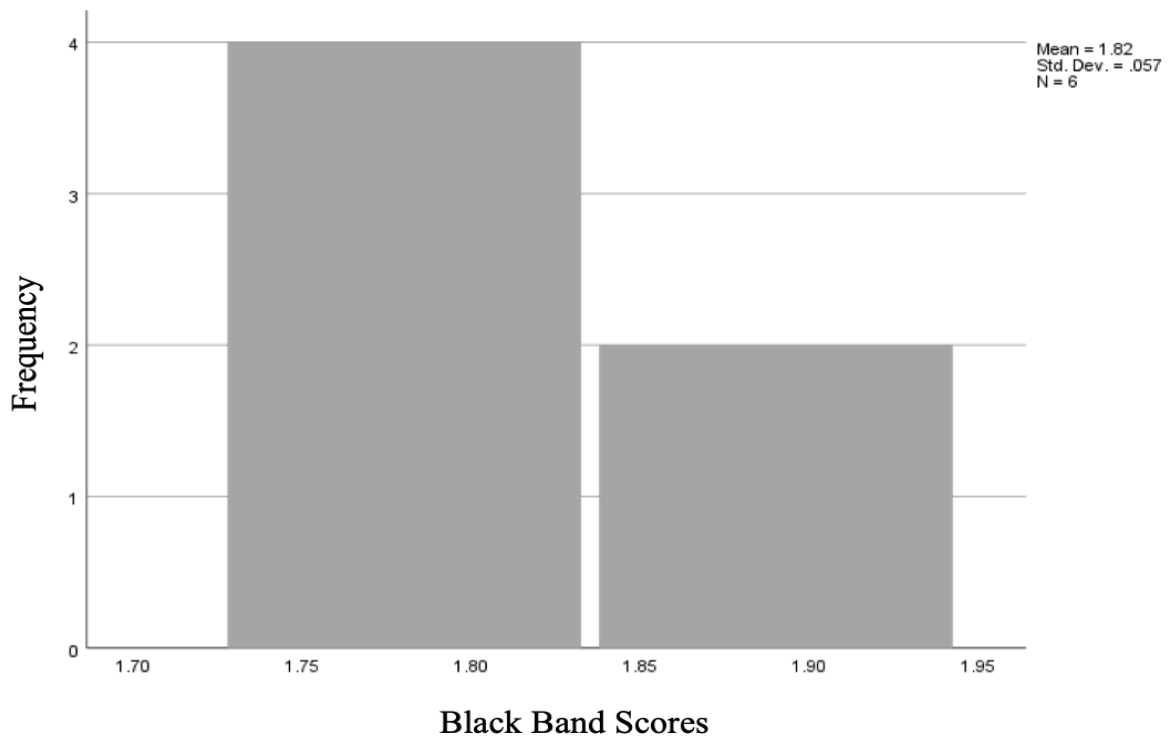
Histograms, or frequency distributions, were created to determine the normality of the data.<sup>9</sup> As indicated in Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2, the data was skewed, and normality was violated. Although normality was violated, results were skewed in the same direction for the scores of both the Gold and Black Bands.

<sup>8</sup> George A. Morgan, *SPSS for Introductory Statistics: Use and Interpretation*, (2nd ed., Mahwah, N.J: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2004), 122.

<sup>9</sup> Andy Field, *Discovering Statistics Using IBM SPSS Statistics* (4th ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2013), 127.



**Figure 4.1. Histogram of Judges' Scores of the Gold Band**



**Figure 4.2. Histogram of Judges' Scores of the Black Band**

A one-sample *t*-test was conducted despite violating normality because the *t*-test is robust. Morgan states, “Robust means that the assumptions can be violated quite a lot without damaging the validity of the statistic.”<sup>10</sup> The mean score from each of the six rated categories of tone, intonation, technique, balance, musicality, and overall rating. As shown in Table 4.16, the results of the *t*-test showed a statistically significant difference between the Gold Band scores and the Black Band scores, indicating that the participants who experienced the treatment of expressive conducting produced more desirable ratings ( $p = <.001$ ). Table 4.16. One Sample *t*-Test of Judges’ Scores of the Gold and Black Bands

	t	df	One-Sided P	Two-Sided P	Mean Difference	95% CI of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Gold Band Scores	29.644	5	< .001	< .001	2.36833	2.1630	2.1630
Black Band Scores	78.338	5	< .001	< .001	1.81667	1.7571	1.8763

Cohen’s *d* was used to determine effect size for both the Gold Band and the Black Band. As indicated by Table 4.17, Cohen’s *d* revealed a small effect size for both bands ( $d = .20$  and  $d = .06$ ). While the effect size is considered smaller than normal, Morgan states, “The researcher . . . should make a judgment about whether the result has practical or clinical significance or importance.”<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Morgan, *SPSS for Introductory*, 52.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

**Table 4.17. One Sample Effect Sizes of Judges' Scores of the Gold and Black Bands**

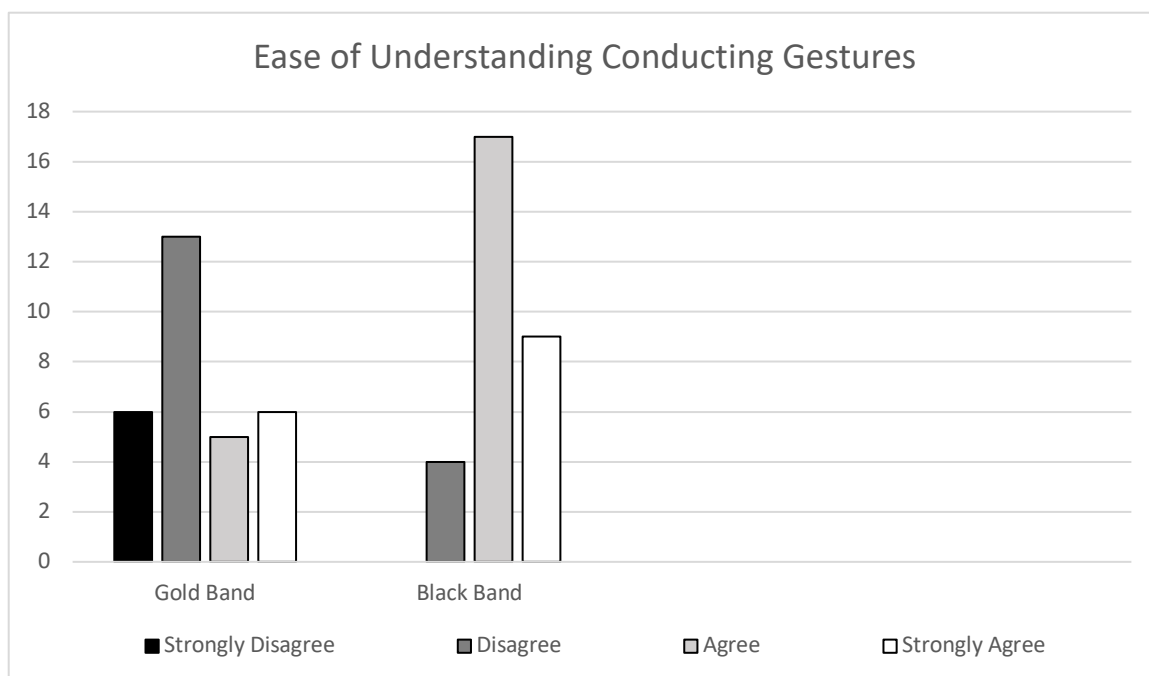
		Standardizer	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Gold Band Scores	Cohen's <i>d</i>	.19570	12.102	4.881	19.426
	Hedges' Corrections	.23276	10.175	4.104	16.332
Black Band Scores	Cohen's <i>d</i>	.05680	31.981	13.020	51.250
	Hedges' Corrections	.06756	26.888	10.946	43.088

### Quantitative Results on the Student Perceptions of Conducting Styles

After performing three musical selections, student participants (n=60) completed a Likert survey containing seven statements to which students strongly disagreed, disagreed, agreed, or strongly agreed. The student participants were all band students at a rural high school of low socioeconomic status. Members of the Gold Band (n=30) answered the questions based on their experiences performing with non-expressive conducting gestures. Members of the Black Band (n=30) answered the questions based on their experiences performing with expressive conducting gestures.

#### Ease of Understanding Conducting Gestures

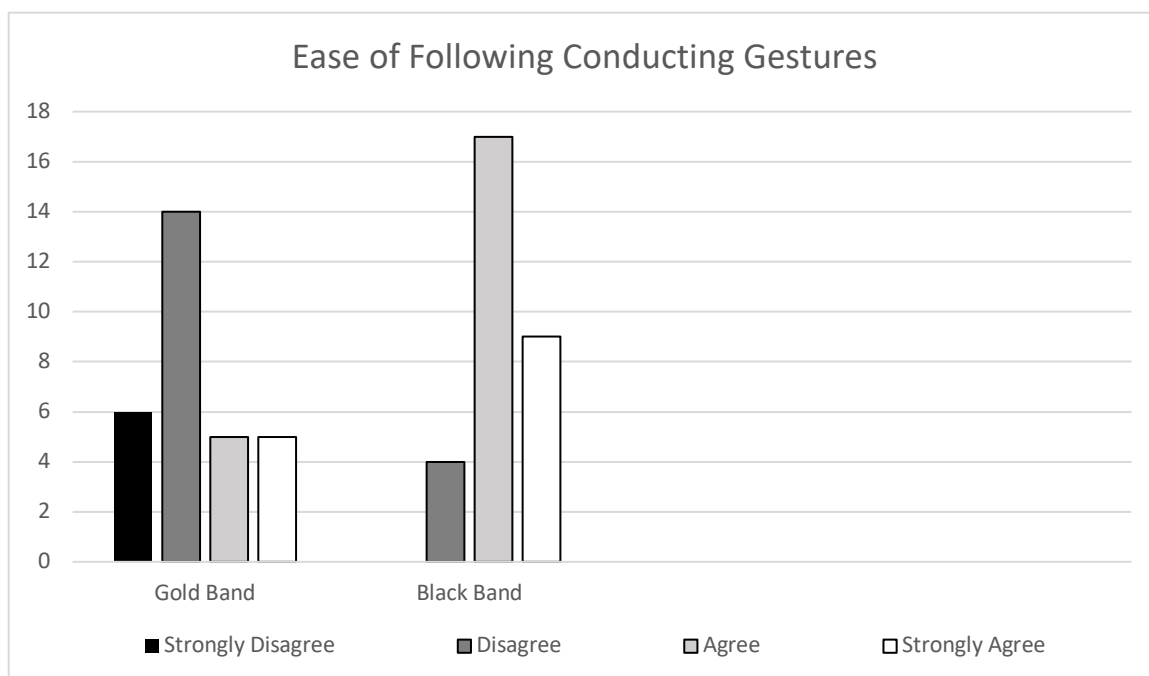
Figure 4.1 displays respondents' answers when asked to rate their agreement with the statement, "The conductor's gestures were easy to understand." Thirty Gold Band participants responded to the survey question, with eleven participants (36.6 percent) indicating that they either agreed or strongly agreed that the conductor's gestures were easy to understand. Thirty Black Band participants responded to the survey question, with twenty-six participants (86.6 percent) indicating that they either agreed or strongly agreed that the conductor's gestures were easy to understand.



**Figure 4.3. Responses to Ease of Following Conducting Gestures**

#### Ease of Following Conducting Gestures

Figure 4.2 displays respondents' answers when asked to rate their agreement with the statement, "The conductor was easy to follow." Thirty Gold Band participants responded to the survey question, with ten participants (33.3 percent) indicating that they either agreed or strongly agreed that the conductor's gestures were easy to follow. Thirty Black Band participants responded to the survey question, with twenty-six participants (86.6 percent) indicating that they either agreed or strongly agreed that the conductor was easy to follow.

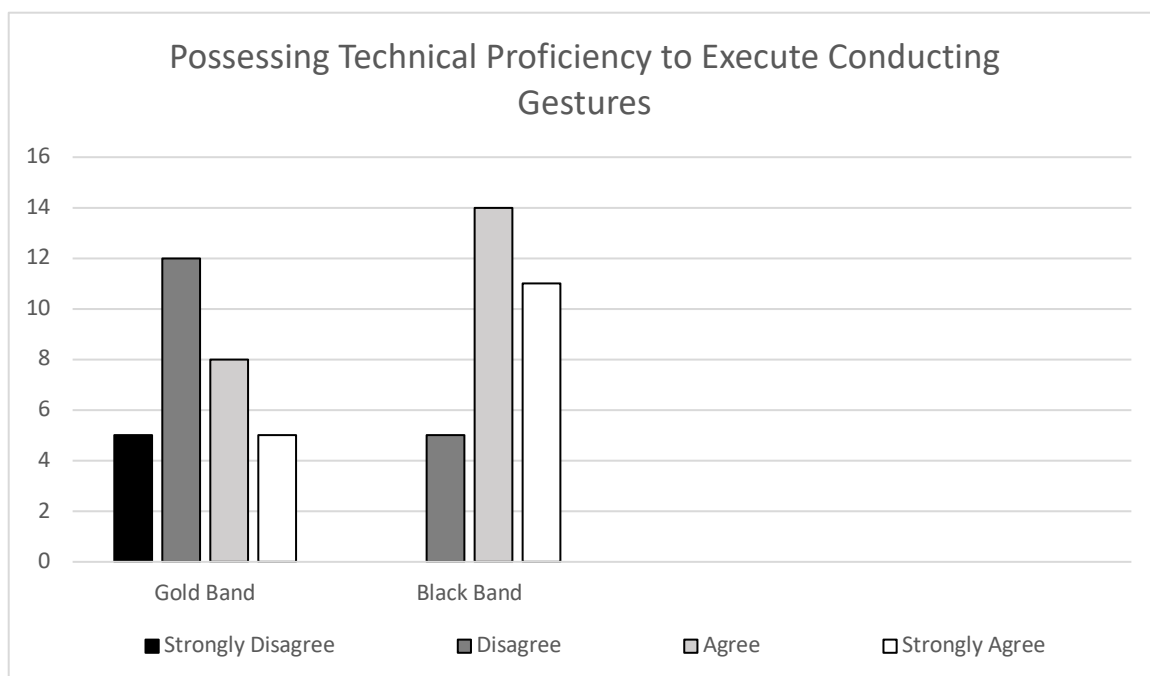


**Figure 4.4. Responses to Ease of Following Conducting Gestures**

#### Possessing the Technical Proficiency to Execute Conducting Gestures

Figure 4.3 displays respondents' answers when asked to rate their agreement with the statement, "I possess the technical proficiency to execute all of the conductor's nonverbal commands." Thirty Gold Band participants responded to the survey question, with thirteen participants (43.3 percent) indicating that they either agreed or strongly agreed that they possessed the technical proficiency to execute the nonverbal commands of the conductor. Thirty Black Band participants responded to the survey question, with twenty-five participants (83.3 percent) indicating that they either agreed or strongly agreed that they possessed the technical proficiency to execute the nonverbal commands of the conductor.

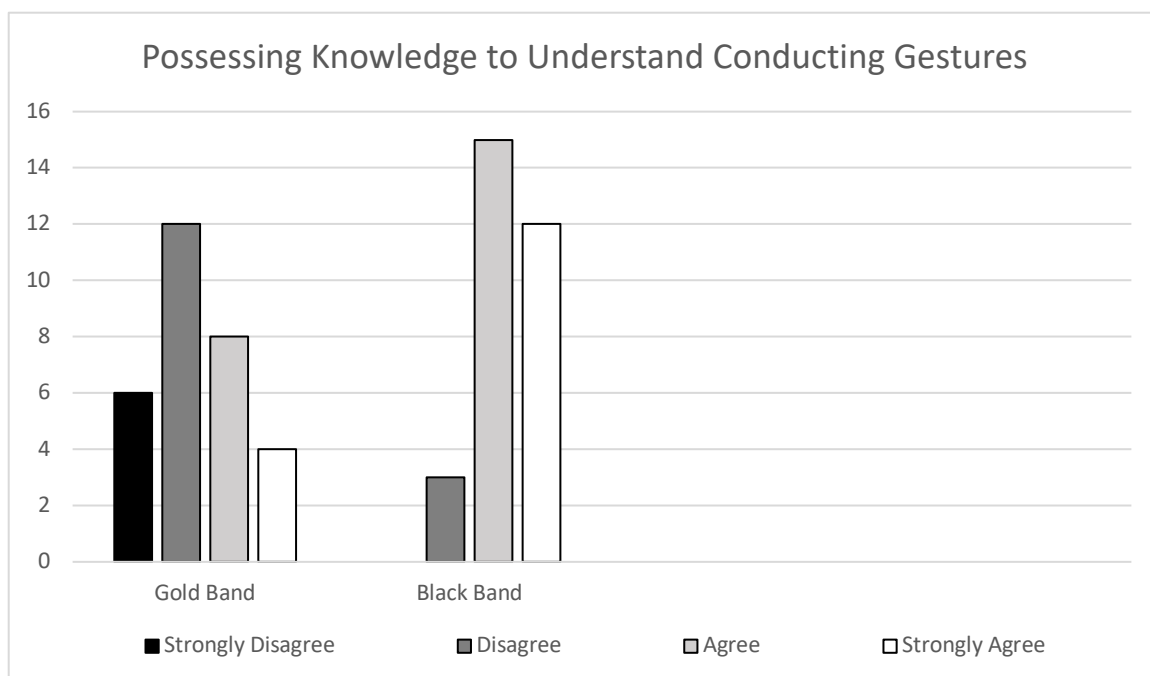




**Figure 4.5. Responses to Possessing Technical Proficiency to Execute Conduct Gestures**

#### Possessing the Knowledge to Understand Conducting Gestures

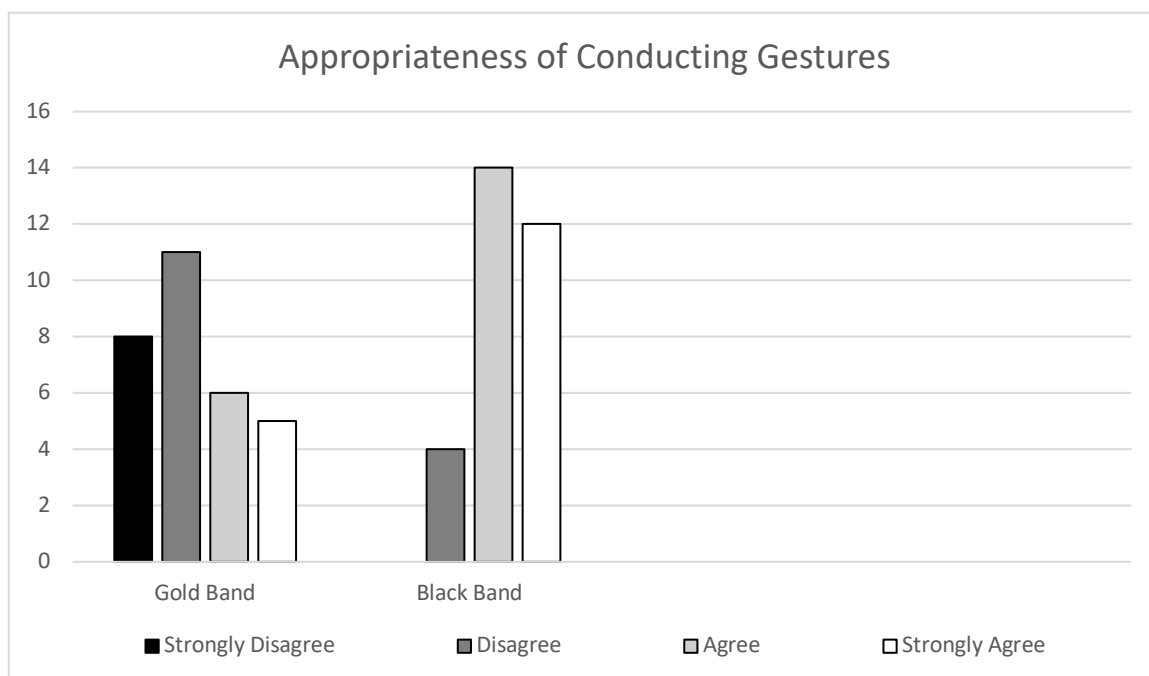
Figure 4.4 displays respondents' answers when asked to rate their agreement with the statement, "I possess the knowledge to understand what was being asked of me through the gestures of the conductor." Thirty Gold Band participants responded to the survey question, with twelve participants (40 percent) indicating that they either agreed or strongly agreed that they possessed the knowledge to understand what was being asked of them through the conductor's gestures. Thirty Black Band participants responded to the survey question, with twenty-seven participants (90 percent) indicating that they either agreed or strongly agreed that they possessed the knowledge to understand what was being asked of them through the conductor's gestures.



**Figure 4.6. Responses to Possessing Knowledge to Understand Conducting Gestures**

#### Use of Conducting Gestures Appropriate to the Style of the Piece

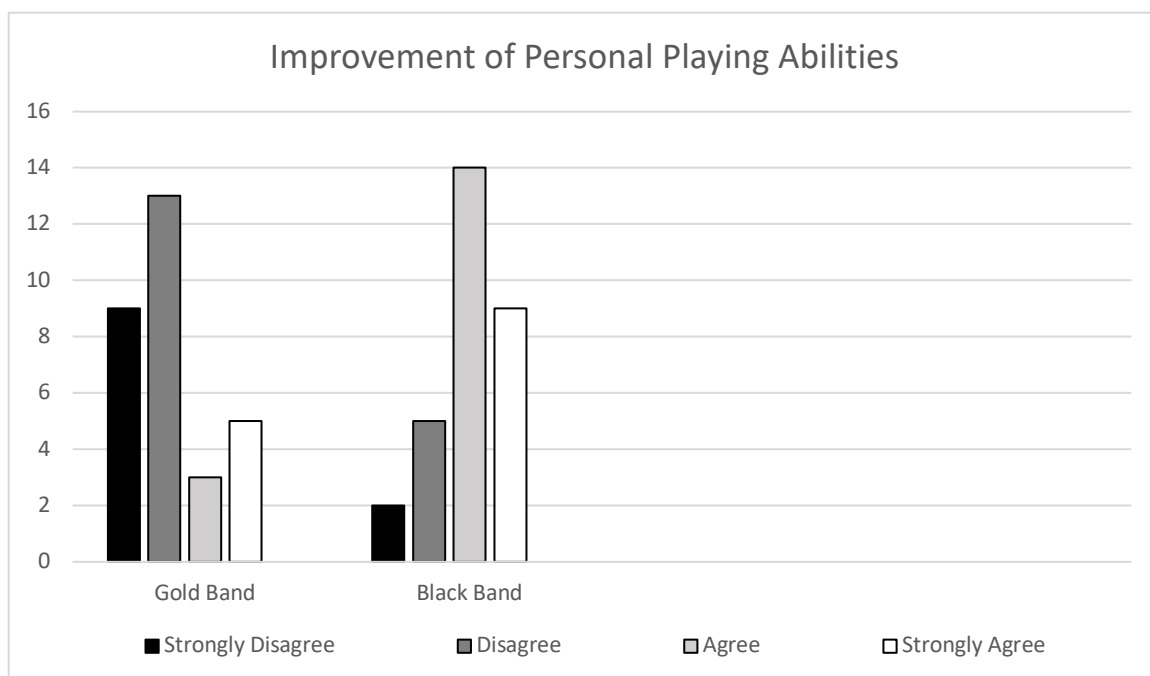
Figure 4.5 displays respondents' answers when asked to rate their agreement with the statement, "The conductor used gestures that were appropriate to the styles of the pieces." Thirty Gold Band participants responded to the survey question, with eleven participants (36.6 percent) indicating that they either agreed or strongly agreed that the conductor used gestures that were appropriate to the styles of the pieces. Thirty Black Band participants responded to the survey question, with twenty-three participants (76.6 percent) indicating that they either agreed or strongly agreed that the conductor used gestures that were appropriate to the styles of the pieces.



**Figure 4.7. Responses to Appropriateness of Conducting Gestures**

#### Improvement of Personal Playing Ability

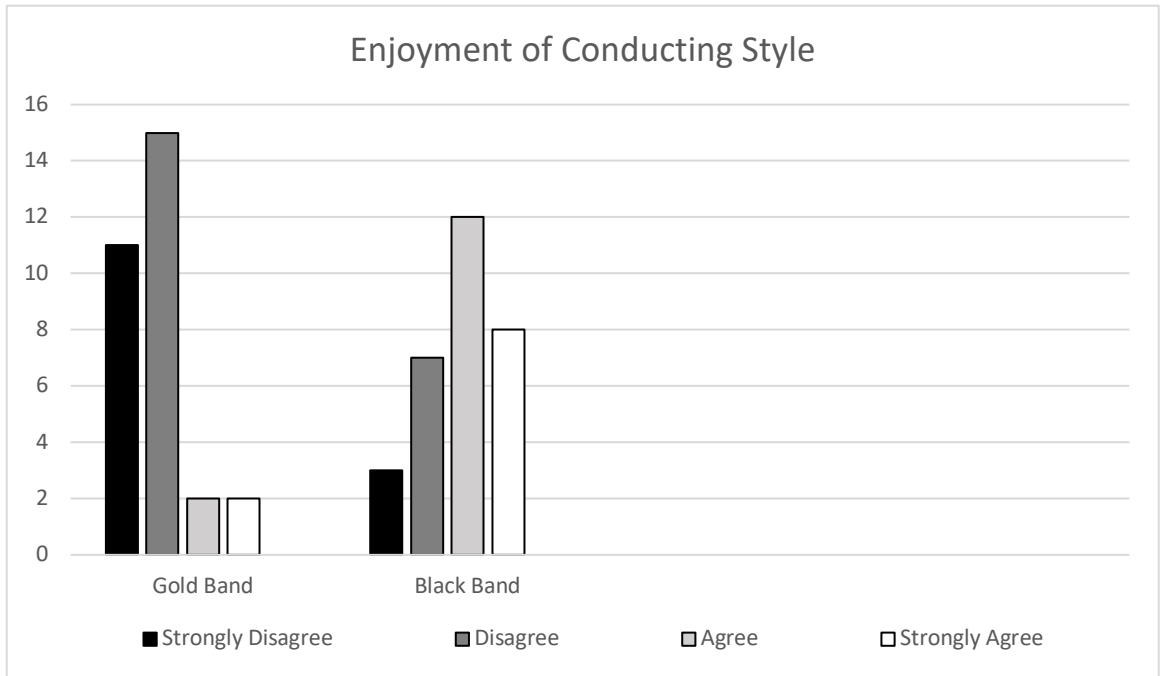
Figure 4.6 displays respondents' answers when asked to rate their agreement with the statement, "The conductor's gestures helped me improve my personal playing ability." Thirty Gold Band participants responded to the survey question, with eight participants (26.6 percent) indicating that they either agreed or strongly agreed that the conductor's gestures helped them improve their personal playing abilities. Thirty Black Band participants responded to the survey question, with twenty-three participants (76.6 percent) indicating that they either agreed or strongly agreed that the conductor's gestures helped them improve their personal playing abilities. This survey question also marks the first instance in which any participants in the Black Band indicated that they strongly disagreed with a statement. Two participants in the Black Band (6 percent) indicated that they strongly disagreed that the conductor's gestures helped them improve their personal playing abilities.



**Figure 4.8. Responses to Improvement of Personal Playing Abilities**

#### Enjoyment of Conducting Style

Figure 4.7 displays respondents' answers when asked to rate their agreement with the statement, "I enjoyed the conducting style of the conductor." Thirty Gold Band participants responded to the survey question, with four participants (13.3 percent) indicating that they either agreed or strongly agreed that the conductor's gestures were enjoyable. Thirty Black Band participants responded to the survey question, with twenty participants (66.6 percent) indicating that they either agreed or strongly agreed that the conductor's gestures were enjoyable. This survey question also marks the second instance in which any participants in the Black Band indicated that they strongly disagreed with a statement. Three participants in the Black Band (10 percent) indicated they strongly disagreed that the conductor's gestures were enjoyable.



**Figure 4.9. Responses to Enjoyment of Conducting Style**

**Independent Samples *t*-Test of Students’ Perceptions on Conducting Gestures**

Participants of both ensembles (n=60) completed a Likert survey after performing three musical selections. The researcher found that the responses of students who performed in the Black Band, the ensemble in which the conductor used expressive gestures, were higher in agreeability with each statement than the Gold Band. Table 4.18 displays an analysis of students’ perceptions of conducting gestures with Welch’s unequal variances *t*-test.

**Table 4.18. Independent Samples *t*-Test of Students' Perceptions on Conducting Gestures**

	t	df	p	Mean Difference	SE Difference	95% CI for Mean Difference		Cohen's d
						Lower	Upper	
The conductor's gestures were easy to understand.	3.593	48.741	< .001	0.800	0.223	0.352	1.248	0.928
The conductor was easy to follow.	4.018	50.045	< .001	0.867	0.216	0.433	1.300	1.038
I possessed the technical proficiency to execute all of the conductors' nonverbal commands.	3.482	53.269	0.001	0.767	0.220	0.325	1.208	0.899
I possessed the knowledge to understand what was being asked of me through the gestures of the conductor.	4.568	51.059	< .001	0.967	0.212	0.542	1.392	1.179
The conductor used gestures that were appropriate to the style of the pieces.	4.362	50.220	< .001	1.000	0.229	0.540	1.460	1.126
I enjoyed the conducting style of the conductor.	4.333	57.043	< .001	1.000	0.231	0.538	1.462	1.119
The conductor's gestures helped me to improve my personal playing ability.	3.496	56.237	< .001	0.867	0.248	0.370	1.363	0.903

*Note.* Welch's *t*-test.

A *t*-test was used to analyze differences between two groups: the Gold Band and the Black Band. In each statement of the Likert survey, the probability value (*p*-value) is below .05, indicating statistical significance, as shown in Table 4.18. Cohen's *d* was used to determine the effect size. Cohen states a small effect size is achieved when  $d = .2$ , a medium effect size is

achieved when  $d = .5$ , and a large effect size is achieved when  $d \geq .8$ .<sup>12</sup> In each statement of the Likert survey, a large effect size was determined by Cohen's  $d$  as shown in Table 4.18 indicating that conducting style had a large effect size on student perceptions. The large effect size suggests that students prefer to be conducted with expressive gestures, which leads to increased enjoyment and fulfillment when performing.

### **Quantitative Results on the Judges' Perceptions of the Black and Gold Bands**

Three judges listened to two performances of the same three musical selections. The Gold Band performed first, and the Black Band performed second. The student musicians of the Gold Band performed all three musical selections, with the guest conductor utilizing non-expressive gestures. The student musicians of the Black Band performed all three musical selections, with the guest conductor utilizing expressive gestures. The judges scored both ensembles using the LGPE rubric. The judges also responded to a Likert survey comprising three statements in which they strongly disagreed, disagreed, agreed, or strongly agreed. "Strongly disagree" is indicated with the number "four." "Disagree" is indicated with the number "three." "Agree" is indicated with the number "two." "Strongly Agree" is indicated with the number "one."

As shown in Table 4.19, there was no statement in which all three judges unanimously agreed with each other. For the first statement, "Students in the Gold Band performed musically," one judge agreed. The other two judges disagreed with the statement. For the second statement, "students in the Black Band performed musically," all judges either agreed or strongly agreed. For the third and final statement, "I am able to distinguish which band was conducted with expressive gestures and which band was conducted with non-expressive gestures," one

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<sup>12</sup> Jacob Cohen, *Statistical Power Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences* (2nd ed., Hillsdale, N.J.: L. Erlbaum Associates, 1988), 25.

judge disagreed while the other two agreed. Descriptive statistics were used to discuss and compare factors between groups.<sup>13</sup> The data collected details three judges' opinions, who all rated the Black Band as the more musical ensemble. A summary of the data also indicated that two of three judges agreed with the statement, "I am able to distinguish which band was conducted with expressive gestures and which band was conducted with non-expressive gestures."

**Table 4.19. Descriptive Analysis of Judges' Perceptions of the Gold and Black Bands**

	<b>Students in the Gold Band performed musically.</b>	<b>Students in the Black Band performed musically.</b>	<b>I am able to distinguish which band was conducted with expressive gestures and which band was conducted with non-expressive gestures.</b>
Valid	3	3	3
Missing	0	0	0
Mode	2.000	2.000	3.000
Mean	2.333	3.000	2.667
Range	1.000	2.000	1.000
Minimum	2.000	2.000	2.000
Maximum	3.000	4.000	3.000

### Summary

Utilizing descriptive statistics and an independent samples *t*-test, the researcher sought to investigate differences in both the quality of musical performance and student perceptions when conducted with expressive and non-expressive gestures. A descriptive statistical analysis revealed that all three judges perceived the Black Band's performance to be of higher quality than the Gold Band's performance. Statistical significance was determined via a one-sample *t*-test. Welch's *t*-test revealed that students enjoyed the expressive gestures of the guest conductor, believing them to be helpful, informative, and meaningful. The same *t*-test also revealed that the

<sup>13</sup> Kenneth Phillips, *Exploring Research in Music Education and Music Therapy*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 155.



participants in the Gold Band did not enjoy the non-expressive gestures of the guest conductor, believing them to be unhelpful, uninformative, and unmeaningful.

## **Chapter Five: Conclusion**

The final chapter presents a summary of the study, procedures, findings, and prior research. Limitations and Recommendations for future study are included in this chapter. Implications for practice are also included in this chapter. The chapter concludes with a summary for further clarification.

### **Summary of Study**

This study explored differences between musical performances of band students at a rural high school when conducted with expressive and non-expressive gestures. Participants included sixty high school band students, a guest conductor, and three impartial band directors serving as judges. The high school band students were separated into two wind ensembles, designated Gold Band and Black Band, per the school colors. The guest conductor utilized expressive gestures with one ensemble and non-expressive gestures with the other. The researcher selected three pieces at the easy to easy-medium level of difficulty. This level of difficulty is called level one. The researcher selected three pieces to simulate a Large Group Performance Evaluation (LGPE) experience in accordance with GMEA (Georgia Music Educators Association) guidelines. The researcher rehearsed the three pieces with students throughout the regular school day in heterogeneous classes of various skill levels and instrumentation in the week prior to the recorded performance.

On the day of the performance, the researcher set up two recording devices. The first device recorded both video and audio. The recording device was set up behind the band, facing the conductor to record video of his gestures and the audio of the bands' performances. The sole purpose of the first recording is for the researcher to have a record of what the conductor did in each performance. A second recording device was placed in front of the band and behind the

conductor. The second device recorded audio only. The purpose of the audio-only recording is for the judges to evaluate the musical performances without knowing which performance was conducted with expressive conducting gestures and which performance was conducted with non-expressive conducting gestures.

The Gold Band performed the three musical selections first with non-expressive conducting gestures while members of the Black Band waited in a different room. Once finished, the members of the Gold Band moved to a different room to complete a Likert survey, asking for their opinions on the conducting style of the guest conductor. Simultaneously, the members of the Black Band moved into the performance area and performed the same three pieces with expressive gestures. Once the performance was concluded, members of the Gold Band moved to a different room to complete the Likert survey, asking for their opinions on the conducting style of the guest conductor. Members of one band had no contact with members of the other band throughout the performances or transitions from one room to the next to maintain the study's validity.

The researcher emailed audio recordings of both bands to three highly qualified band directors with several years of LGPE experience each. Each judge scored both performances using the LGPE rubric provided by GMEA without knowing which group was conducted with expressive gestures and which was conducted with non-expressive gestures. The results of the study indicate that expressive gestures may contribute to more musical performances.

### **Summary of Findings and Prior Research**

In this study, judges utilized the LGPE rubric to score two musical performances. All three judges scored the Black Band, the ensemble that performed with the expressive conducting gestures, with higher ratings than the Gold Band, which performed with the non-expressive

conducting gestures. The higher scores for the Black Band indicate that the judges perceived the Black Band as more musically proficient than the Gold Band, corroborating some previous research. Previous studies suggest significant variation in the effectiveness of expressive conducting gestures on musical ensembles. A study by Napoles indicated that participants rated performances more expressively when conducted with more expressive gestures across various presentation modes.<sup>1</sup> However, research conducted by Silvey and Koerner did not indicate that expressive gestures specifically lead to more expressive performances based on expert and adjudicators' evaluations.<sup>2</sup>

In this research study, results suggest that the Black Band performed slightly better than the Gold Band, receiving more "superior" and "excellent" ratings in categories such as tone and balance despite receiving the same final rating of "excellent." The categories in which it is the conductor's role to respond to the sounds of the ensemble, such as tone, intonation, or balance, experienced the most improved scores. With the Gold Band, the conductor provided only time-keeping gestures and provided no visual response to any shortcomings of intonation, balance, or tone. With the Black Band, the conductor utilized a combination of facial expressions and dynamics to indicate solutions to problems, such as gesturing for the melody to be louder to maintain balance or for performers to listen and adjust intonation to remain in tune with one another.

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<sup>1</sup> Jessica Napoles, "The Influences of Presentation Modes and Conducting Gestures on the Perceptions of Expressive Choral Performance of High School Musicians Attending a Summer Choral Camp," *International Journal of Music Education* 31 no. 3 (2013): 329.

<sup>2</sup> Brian Silvey and Bryan Koerner, "Effects of Conductor Expressivity on Secondary School Band Members' Performance and Attitudes Toward Conducting," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 64, no. 1 (2016): 39.

### Specific Gestures Utilized by the Guest Conductor

A video recording of the two bands' performances was used to corroborate the scores of the three judges and investigate the specific kinds of gestures contributing to differences in performance qualities of tone, intonation, technique, balance, and musicality. Only the researcher had access to the video recording. The following notes were the researcher's observations from watching the video recording. The guest conductor employed only time-beating gestures for the Gold Band's performance of the three musical selections. The first selection, *March Zuma* by John O'Reilly (2000), required a two-beat conducting pattern at a tempo of 100 beats per minute. The second selection, *Aztec Sunrise* by John Edmonson (1990), required a four-beat conducting pattern at a tempo of 72 beats per minute. The final selection, *The Tempest* by Robert W. Smith (1995), required a four-beat conducting pattern at a tempo of 136 beats per minute.

The guest conductor employed expressive gestures for the Black Band's performance of the three musical selections. Two of the three judges rated the categories of balance and musicality for the first musical selection, *March Zuma*, with higher proficiency levels in the Black Band than in the Gold Band. The guest conductor adjusted his body to face the musicians performing the melody. Dynamics were demonstrated by altering the size of the beat pattern. Small beat patterns indicated softer dynamics, and large beat patterns indicated louder dynamics. Additionally, the conductor leaned in or away from the ensemble in conjunction with the altered size of the beat pattern. He also utilized a lower conducting plane when requesting a softer dynamic from the full ensemble. Additionally, the guest conductor offered an encouraging nod to the trumpet players after they executed a cued entrance at the correct moment and entered at the desired volume of the conductor. The combination of clear nonverbal communication and reassurance via a head nod may have contributed to the higher scores indicated by two of the

three judges in the categories of balance and musicality. Finally, stylistic gestures, such as forceful, jerky movements, were employed to indicate accents and staccato articulations throughout the march. Two of the three judges rated the category of technique with higher levels of proficiency in the Black Band than in the Gold Band. One of the two judges who scored the Black Band with improved evaluations in the category of technique provided the ensemble with the best possible score for the first musical selection, *March Zuma*.

The second musical selection, *Aztec Sunrise*, was a lyrical piece in which the conductor used smooth, sweeping gestures to convey style. The gestures were kept at a low conducting plane throughout most of the piece to indicate softer playing throughout most of the selection. At one moment of *Aztec Sunrise*, the trumpet players were speeding up the tempo, presumably not watching the conductor. In response, the guest conductor walked off the podium towards the trumpets and motioned toward his eyes with two fingers. This gesture indicated to the trumpet players that they needed to watch the conductor to stay with his tempo of 72 beats per minute. One of the three judges provided the second musical selection with superior ratings in all five categories of tone, intonation, technique, balance, and musicality. Two of the three judges rated the category of musicality of *Aztec Sunrise* with higher proficiency levels in the Black Band than in the Gold Band. The stylistic gestures utilized in this lyrical piece may have contributed to the perceived increase of musicality. Additionally, the ability to respond to flaws in the performance and adjust, as the guest conductor did with the trumpet players, may have led to the Black Band's improved score in technique. While the judges also scored tone and intonation with higher proficiency levels, the researcher could not determine if the conductor implemented any visible means of correcting or responding to tone quality and intonation.

The third musical selection, *The Tempest*, revealed improved scores for the Black Band in the categories of tone, balance, and musicality. The guest conductor utilized low and high conducting planes to demonstrate piano and forte dynamics, respectively, in conjunction with varying the size of his beat pattern. Stylistic gestures included smooth gestures for the lyrical moments of *The Tempest*, including the piece's introduction. For the more aggressive moments of the piece, jerky, forceful motions were utilized, similar to the ones used in the first musical selection, *March Zuma*. Cueing gestures were employed with the whole body and an outstretched hand with the palm facing up. As the most technically demanding musical selection, the conductor responded to the sounds of the ensemble, constantly adjusting the balance and dynamics of individual sections. Possessing the ability to respond to the sounds of the Black Band and correct problems in real time may have contributed to the improved scores over the Gold Band.

### **Limitations**

Limitations of this study include the utilization of only one rural high school. The data collected from this study only represent sixty students and one teacher of a single high school. The data does not necessarily apply to other schools, even those of similar socioeconomic backgrounds. Additional limitations include a lack of instrumentation and personnel. However, rural schools of low socioeconomic status often experience such challenges, thus potentially providing a realistic depiction of rural schools.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Christopher Libby, "Competing with Small Town Football: The Challenges of Teaching High School Band in Rural America," (DME diss., Liberty University, 2022), 8.

### **Recommendations for Future Study**

Only one rural high school was utilized, requiring that members of the band program be evenly divided into two smaller ensembles of comparable skill levels. Future research may implement similar experiments at numerous high schools of varying socioeconomic backgrounds to investigate the universality of expressive conducting gestures. Additionally, allowing the guest conductor to rehearse with the two groups before performing instead of the usual band director would provide insight into how integrating rehearsal strategies and conducting techniques leads to more expressive performances. This research study also suggests that gestures involving the conductor responding to the sounds of the ensemble, such as correcting style or indicating that a change in dynamics should occur, influenced members of the Black Band to perform more expressively than members of the Gold Band. Future research may more precisely pinpoint the exact motions and facial expressions that lead the students to adjust and fix flaws in real time as they perform. Due to the statistically significant results of the students' perceptions of expressive conducting gestures and the large effect size of the data, future research may also be conducted on the relationship between expressive conducting gestures and retention of band students throughout middle and high school.

### **Implications for Practice**

The findings within this study contain significant implications for band directors teaching in rural high schools and music students of various ages. This section discusses implications for band directors of rural high schools and music students of various ages.



Band directors working at rural high schools of low socioeconomic status do not always have access to the same resources as larger school systems.<sup>4</sup> The results found in this study indicate that band directors working in rural school systems are capable of teaching musicality and expressivity through effective rehearsal strategies and appropriate conducting gestures. Results found in this study also revealed how a lack of resources, such as other experts in the field of music education or private lesson instructors, may hinder the development of some skills.<sup>5</sup> While students in the Black Band successfully executed many of the expressive qualities demonstrated by the guest conductor, the inconsistency of tempo and blending, as evidenced in the lower scores in the categories of tone and balance, indicated that the students may have been uncomfortable when introduced to a conductor who was very different from their usual band director. As suggested in the previous section, allowing the guest conductor to rehearse with both ensembles may lead to improved performance scores due to increased familiarity. Band directors of rural high schools must be incredibly diligent about consciously striving to introduce new ideas to their students to provide comparable levels of diverse approaches and educational adaptability to that of school systems in urban areas.

This research study suggests that judges may perceive musical performances as more musical when conducted with expressive gestures. While this study revealed a small effect size for the scoring of both bands, the practical helpfulness of utilizing expressive conducting gestures to convey information may still benefit musicians' performances.

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<sup>4</sup> Shawn C. Batten, "The Success of Instrumental Music Programs in Public Schools in Rural Communities: A Guide in Organization and Instruction for the Development of Successful Student Musicians" (Master's Thesis, Longwood University, 2011), 127.

<sup>5</sup> Frank James Poolos, "Secondary School Band: Student Retention and Director Issues-Challenges and Strategies" (Master's Thesis, Liberty University, 2019), 7.

Implications for students include opportunities to enjoy the process of music-making and create more expressive music due to a sense of fulfillment. This study suggests that students prefer to be led by an enthusiastic director who conducts with expressive gestures. Student responses indicate that even if students did not understand every expressive gesture, the visual representation of what the music should sound like made it more meaningful to the students as they tried to figure out what was being asked of them.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this quantitative research study was to investigate the relationship between expressive conducting gestures and the musical performance of band students at a rural high school of low socioeconomic status. The results of this study suggest that while some conducting gestures are intuitive for the developing musician, some musical ideas may be more effectively communicated through means of verbal communication and rehearsal strategies that extend beyond the scope of this study regarding conducting gestures and expressivity. Some level of familiarity among performers and conductors may increase the effectiveness of communicating through nonverbal means. This study identified gaps in the literature regarding the universality of conducting gestures as a means of nonverbal communication and how a lack of familiarity may contribute to a lack of understanding. Additional research is needed to test these findings. However, findings from this study indicate the importance of possessing knowledge, skill, and passion when utilizing expressive conducting gestures to provide students with fulfilling educational experiences and foster a love for performing music.

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### Appendix A: Band Placement Roster

Instrument	Chair Placement	Ensemble Placement
Flute	1	Black Band
Flute	2	Gold Band
Flute	3	Black Band
Flute	4	Gold Band
Flute	5	Black Band
Flute	6	Gold Band
Clarinet	1	Gold Band
Clarinet	2	Black Band
Clarinet	3	Gold Band
Clarinet	4	Black Band
Clarinet	5	Gold Band
Clarinet	6	Black Band
Clarinet	7	Gold Band
Clarinet	8	Black Band
Clarinet	9	Gold Band
Clarinet	10	Black Band
Clarinet	11	Gold Band
Clarinet	12	Black Band
Saxophone	1	Black Band
Saxophone	2	Gold Band
Saxophone	3	Black Band
Saxophone	4	Gold Band
Saxophone	5	Black Band
Saxophone	6	Gold Band
Saxophone	7	Black Band
Saxophone	8	Gold Band
Saxophone	9	Black Band
Saxophone	10	Gold Band
Saxophone	11	Black Band

Horn	1	Gold Band
Trumpet	1	Black Band
Trumpet	2	Gold Band
Trumpet	3	Black Band
Trumpet	4	Gold Band
Trumpet	5	Black Band
Trombone	1	Gold Band
Trombone	2	Black Band
Trombone	3	Gold Band
Trombone	4	Black Band
Euphonium	1	Gold Band
Euphonium	2	Black Band
Euphonium	3	Gold Band
Euphonium	4	Black Band
Tuba	1	Gold Band
Tuba	2	Black Band
Tuba	3	Gold Band
Percussion	1	Black Band
Percussion	2	Gold Band
Percussion	3	Black Band
Percussion	4	Gold Band
Percussion	5	Black Band
Percussion	6	Gold Band
Percussion	7	Black Band
Percussion	8	Gold Band
Percussion	9	Black Band
Percussion	10	Gold Band
Percussion	11	Black Band
Percussion	12	Gold Band
Percussion	13	Black Band
Percussion	14	Gold Band

**Appendix B: Students Survey****Survey – Band Students**

1. Which band did you perform with?
  - Gold Band
  - Black Band
  
2. The conductor's gestures were easy to understand.
  - Strongly Agree
  - Agree
  - Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree
  
3. The conductor was easy to follow.
  - Strongly Agree
  - Agree
  - Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree
  
4. I possessed the technical proficiency to execute all of the conductors' nonverbal commands.
  - Strongly Agree
  - Agree
  - Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree
  
5. I possessed the knowledge to understand what was being asked of me through the gestures of the conductor.
  - Strongly Agree
  - Agree
  - Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree
  
6. The conductor used gestures that were appropriate to the style of the pieces.
  - Strongly Agree
  - Agree
  - Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree
  
7. The conductor's gestures helped me to improve my personal playing ability.
  - Strongly Agree
  - Agree



- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

8. I enjoyed the conducting style of the conductor.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

## Appendix C: Judges Survey

# Survey – Band Judges

1. Students in the Gold Band performed musically (style, articulations, dynamics, etc).
  - Strongly Agree
  - Agree
  - Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree
  
2. Students in the Black Band performed musically (style, articulations, dynamics, etc).
  - Strongly Agree
  - Agree
  - Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree
  
3. I am able to distinguish which band was conducted with expressive gestures and which band was conducted with non-expressive gestures.
  - Strongly Agree
  - Agree
  - Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree

## Appendix D: Large Group Performance Evaluation Rubric

### BAND LARGE GROUP PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Classification: \_\_\_\_\_ No of Players: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Performing Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Selections: 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. \_\_\_\_\_

Final Rating
--------------

Use of no Plus or Minus in final rating

Adjudicator will grade principal items **A, B, C, D or E** or numerals in the respective squares **for each selection**. Comments must deal with fundamental principals and be constructive. Minor details may be marked on music furnished to adjudicators.

<b>TONE</b> (beauty, blend, control) _____	1.	2.	3.
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____			

<b>INTONATION</b> (chords, melodic line, tutti) _____	1.	2.	3.
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____			

<b>TECHNIQUE</b> (articulation, facility, precision, rhythm) _____	1.	2.	3.
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____			

<b>BALANCE</b> (ensemble, sectional) _____	1.	2.	3.
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____			

<b>MUSICALITY</b> (expression, phrasing, style, tempo, artistry, fluency) _____	1.	2.	3.
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____			

\*May be continued on other side

<b>OVERALL</b>	1.	2.	3.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**OTHER FACTORS** (not included in the graded evaluation)  
 Choice of music, appearance, stage presence

Signature of Adjudicator: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix E: IRB Approval Letter



January 29, 2024

Cole Smith  
Stephen Kerr

Re: IRB Approval - IRB-FY23-24-874 Quantitative Correlation Between Expressivity of Conducting Gestures and Musicality of a High School Wind Ensemble

Dear Cole Smith, Stephen Kerr,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB). This approval is extended to you for one year from the following date: January 29, 2024. If you need to make changes to the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit a modification to the IRB. Modifications can be completed through your Cayuse IRB account.

Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which is applicable to specific, minimal risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies. (NOTE: Some research in this category may be exempt from the HHS regulations for the protection of human subjects. 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) and (b)(3). This listing refers only to research that is not exempt.)

For a PDF of your approval letter, click on your study number in the My Studies card on your Cayuse dashboard. Next, click the Submissions bar beside the Study Details bar on the Study Details page. Finally, click Initial under Submission Type and choose the Letters tab toward the bottom of the Submission Details page. Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found on the same page under the Attachments tab. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

**G. Michele Baker, PhD, CIP**  
*Administrative Chair*  
**Research Ethics Office**

## Appendix F: Guest Conductor Recruitment Letter

Dear Potential Participant:

As a doctoral candidate in the School of Music at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of the study is to discuss the relationship between expressive conducting gestures and the musical performance of high school band students, and I am writing to invite you to join my study.

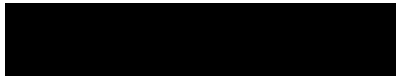
The participant must be a university lecturer serving as the assistant director of bands at an R1 public research university in Georgia. The participant, if willing, will be asked to conduct in an in-person, audio and video-recorded musical performance and participate in a survey via Google Forms about the performance experience. It should take approximately 30 minutes to complete the band performances and 5 minutes to complete the survey. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the participant's identity will not be disclosed.

To participate, please contact me for further information.

A consent document is attached to this email. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the music performance evaluation.

Sincerely,

Cole Smith  
Doctoral Student



## Appendix G: Judges Recruitment Letter

Dear Potential Participant:

As a doctoral candidate in the School of Music at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of the study is to discuss the relationship between expressive conducting gestures and the musical performance of high school band students, and I am writing to invite you to join my study.

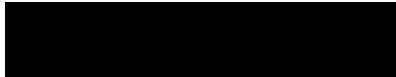
Participants must be currently licensed band teachers in the state of Georgia who currently have or have had their bands participate in Large Group Performance Evaluations (LGPE). Participants, if willing, will be asked to listen to two audio-recorded musical performances, complete a GMEA evaluation rubric via email, and participate in a survey via Google Forms evaluating the performances. It should take approximately 30 minutes to complete the procedures listed. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but participant identities will not be disclosed.

To participate, please click [here](#) to complete the screening survey. If you meet my participant criteria, I will contact you to schedule the music performance evaluation.

A consent document is attached to this email. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the music performance evaluation.

Sincerely,

Cole Smith  
Doctoral Student



## Appendix H: Parents Recruitment Letter

Dear Potential Participant:

As a doctoral candidate in the School of Music at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of the study is to discuss the relationship between expressive conducting gestures and the musical performance of high school band students, and I am writing to invite your child to join my study.

Participants must be band students at Washington County High School who are ages 14-17. Participants, if willing, will be asked to perform musical selections and respond to an online survey via Google Forms. The performance will be audio recorded. It should take approximately 15 minutes to complete the procedures listed. Participation will be completely anonymous, and no personal, identifying information will be collected from your child as part of this study other than a consent signature, which the researcher will not be able to link to your child's survey responses.

For your child to participate, please click here ([Participant Screening-Band Students \(google.com\)](#)) to complete the screening survey. If your child meets my participant criteria, I will contact him/her to schedule the music performance evaluation.

A consent document is attached to this email. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the music performance evaluation.

Sincerely,

Cole Smith  
Doctoral Student



## Appendix I: Students Recruitment Letter

Dear Potential Participant:

As a doctoral candidate in the School of Music at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of the study is to discuss the relationship between expressive conducting gestures and the musical performance of high school band students, and I am writing to invite you to join my study.

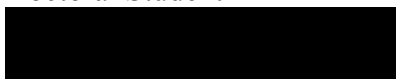
Participants must be band students at Washington County High School who are 18 years of age. Participants, if willing, will be asked to perform musical selections and respond to an online survey via Google Forms. The performance will be audio recorded. It should take approximately 15 minutes to complete the procedures listed. Participation will be completely anonymous, and no personal, identifying information will be collected from you as part of this study other than a consent signature, which the researcher will not be able to link to your survey responses.

To participate, please click here ([Participant Screening-Band Students 18+ \(google.com\)](#)) to complete the screening survey. If you meet my participant criteria, I will contact you to schedule the music performance evaluation.

A consent document is attached to this email. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the music performance evaluation.

Sincerely,

Cole Smith  
Doctoral Student





## Appendix J: Conductor Consent Form

### Consent: Conductor

**Title of the Project:** Quantitative Correlation Between Expressivity of Conducting Gestures and Musicality of a High School Wind Ensemble

**Principal Investigator:** Cole Smith, Doctoral Student, School of Music, Liberty University

#### Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be a university lecturer serving as the assistant director of bands at an R1 public research university in Georgia. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to participate in this research.

#### What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to discuss the relationship between expressive conducting gestures and the musical performance of high school band students.

#### What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

1. Prepare to conduct musical selections to include score study and individual practice on non-expressive and expressive conducting. The scores will be provided two months in advance.
2. Travel to Washington County High School from Georgia State University will take approximately 3 hours.
3. Conduct two in-person, audio and video-recorded musical performances that will take no more than 30 minutes total to include transition time between groups and warm-up time for each group.
4. Participate in a survey via Google Forms about the performance experience that will take no more than 5 minutes.

#### How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to the music education profession include gaining information about the relationship between the instructional tool of conducting and student performance.

#### What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

#### How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

Liberty University IRB-FY23-24-874 Approved on 1-29-2024
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## Appendix K: Judges Consent Form

### Consent: Judges

**Title of the Project:** Quantitative Correlation Between Expressivity of Conducting Gestures and Musicality of a High School Wind Ensemble

**Principal Investigator:** Cole Smith, Doctoral Student, School of Music, Liberty University

#### Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be a currently licensed band teacher in the state of Georgia who currently has or has had your band participate in Large Group Performance Evaluations (LGPE). Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

#### What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to discuss the relationship between expressive conducting gestures and the musical performance of high school band students.

#### What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

1. Listen to two audio-recorded performances that will take no more than 20 minutes.
2. Complete a GMEA evaluation rubric that will take no more than 5 minutes.
3. Participate in a survey via Google Forms about the musical performances that will take no more than 5 minutes.

#### How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to the music education profession include gaining information about the relationship between the instructional tool of conducting and student performance.

#### What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

#### How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential by replacing names with pseudonyms.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.

#### How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Liberty University IRB-FY23-24-874 Approved on 1-29-2024
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## Appendix L: Students and Parents Combined Consent Form

### Combined: Parental

**Title of the Project:** Quantitative Correlation Between Expressivity of Conducting Gestures and Musicality of a High School Wind Ensemble

**Principal Investigator:** Cole Smith, Doctoral Student, School of Music, Liberty University

#### Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

Your child is invited to participate in a research study. To participate, he or she must be a band student at Washington County High School who is 14-17 years of age. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to allow your child to participate in this research project.

#### What is the study about and why are we doing it?

The purpose of the study is to discuss the relationship between expressive conducting gestures and the musical performance of high school band students.

#### What will participants be asked to do in this study?

If you agree to allow your child to be in this study, I will ask him or her to do the following:

1. Participate in an in-person, audio-recorded musical band performance that will take no more than 10 minutes.
2. Participate in a survey via Google Forms, while at school, about the performance experience that will take no more than 5 minutes.

#### How could participants or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from participating in this study.

Benefits to the music education profession include gaining information about the relationship between the instructional tool of conducting and student performance.

#### What risks might participants experience from being in this study?

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks your child would encounter in everyday life.

#### How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses to the online survey will be anonymous. Participants involvement in the band performance will not elicit any identifying information.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Audio-recordings will be stored on a password-locked computer for three years and then deleted. The researcher will have access to these recordings.

Liberty University IRB-FY23-24-874 Approved on 1-29-2024
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## Appendix M: Student Consent Form (18+)

### Consent: Students 18

**Title of the Project:** Quantitative Correlation Between Expressivity of Conducting Gestures and Musicality of a High School Wind Ensemble

**Principal Investigator:** Cole Smith, Doctoral Student, School of Music, Liberty University

#### Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be a band student at Washington County High School who is 18 years of age. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether you want to participate in this research project.

#### What is the study about and why are we doing it?

The purpose of the study is to discuss the relationship between expressive conducting gestures and the musical performance of high school band students.

#### What will participants be asked to do in this study?

If you agree to participate in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

1. Participate in an in-person, audio-recorded musical band performance that will take no more than 10 minutes.
2. Participate in a survey via Google Forms, while at school, about the performance experience that will take no more than 5 minutes.

#### How could participants or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from participating in this study.

Benefits to the music education profession include gaining information about the relationship between the instructional tool of conducting and student performance.

#### What risks might participants experience from being in this study?

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

#### How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses to the online survey will be anonymous. Participants involvement in the band performance will not elicit any identifying information.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Audio-recordings will be stored on a password-locked computer for three years and then deleted. The researcher will have access to these recordings.

Liberty University IRB-FY23-24-874 Approved on 1-29-2024
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